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CAMBODIA

the
dry season
offensive





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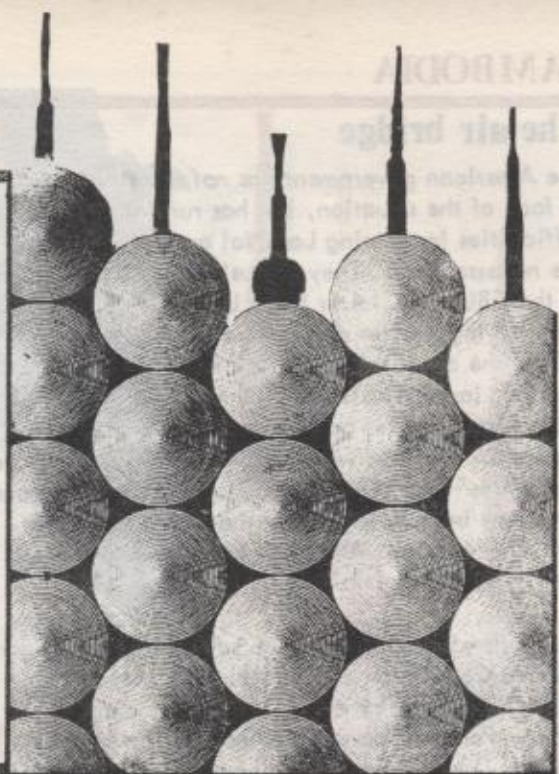
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cambodia

the dry season offensive



"Lon Nol's troops have lost the route of the Mekong, which was the principal supply line for Phnom Penh," said an Agence France-Presse dispatch printed in the February 19 issue of the French Communist party daily *l'Humanité*. The present FUNK offensive was unleashed at the beginning of January, with the belated arrival of the dry season. It has already proven to be one of the most important offensives of the FUNK during the five years of its existence.

Phnom Penh strangled

Above all, it is the first time that the Cambodian revolutionaries have seriously tried to take control of the Mekong, which links Saigon to Phnom Penh. And with success. During the 1973-74 dry season only the road network was cut. (See *INPRECOR*, No. 13, November 28, 1974.) The Cambodian capital remained open to air and river traffic. In fact, 80 percent of the supplies for Phnom Penh arrive via the Mekong. But for several weeks now no convoy has been able to penetrate the blockade, and the FUNK forces are now solidly holding both banks of the river along its entire length, apart from a few small pockets. Extensive operations have been mounted by Saigon and Phnom Penh, combinations of air, water, and land attacks, aimed at breaking the blockade. But in vain.

This is also the first time that the fighting has taken on such scope. The main effort is directed along the Mekong. But the FUNK has simultaneously intensified its pressure on the whole periphery of Phnom Penh and has launched attacks on most of the provincial capitals under puppet control: Siem Reap, Svay Rieng, Kompong Speu, Prey Veng,

Takeo, Kompong Chngang. The situation of the provincial centers is becoming all the more precarious in that Lon Nol has had to withdraw troops from the provinces in order to strengthen the defense of Phnom Penh.

On February 18 the fall of the city of Muong Russei, which had been surrounded for nearly six months, was reported. This center of 10,000 inhabitants is located in the western rice-growing province of Battambang. (The FUNK came into 2,000 tons of rice.) This victory demonstrates the presence of the revolutionary forces in a province that in spite of its traditions of peasant struggles had been less affected by the war than the other provinces. The FUNK had been avoiding offensives near the Thai border so as not to give Bangkok a pretext for intervention. Since then, the erosion of puppet positions in this province has continued.

The periphery of the Cambodian capital is now being subjected to strong pressure. The Pochentong airport has been especially threatened since the puppet army's loss of the important position of Tuol Leap. This could permit the FUNK to bring the airport within range of 105 mm. cannon, which are much more accurate than the 107 and 122 mm. rockets now being used. In the north Lon Nol's Seventh Division has suffered heavy losses, and the FUNK's retaking of the former royal capital of Oudong has significantly enlarged its routes of transport. In general, the vise has tightened around the entire periphery of Phnom Penh.

According to the March 3, 1975, *Newsweek*, during the first two months of the year the puppet army lost 10,000 men, that is, one-fifth of its total effective strength.

The air bridge

The American government has not remained passive in face of the situation, but has run into serious difficulties in assuring Lon Nol and his regime of the necessary aid. They are using new bombs, such as the CBU-55 (Cluster Bomb Unit), which, apart from having greater destructive power, absorbs oxygen in the air within a radius of thirty-two meters and thus instantly kills any human life. A real air bridge has been set up linking the U.S. base of Utapao in Thailand with Phnom Penh. The "private companies" World Airways and Airline International have now been bolstered by the CIA-controlled Bird Air company. American and Taiwanese pilots are flying transport planes.

A second air bridge has been set up linking Saigon and the Cambodian capital. But the cost of this aerial bridge is enormous. The Pochentong airport (Phnom Penh) is too small to handle the necessary traffic. It has already been bombarded by the FUNK, and this has destroyed some of its installations. Air traffic has already had to be suspended once because of rocket attacks; there seems to be difficulty maintaining traffic at maximum capacity.

Ford has insistently asked for an additional \$222 million in military credits and \$100 million in food aid to take care of Lon Nol's needs. But the U.S. Congress seems reticent. Senators Kennedy and Mansfield and former Senator Fulbright have opposed the government's demands and asserted that the security of the United States "is not threatened in Indochina. The costs are exorbitant and the peoples of these tortured countries have been subjected to a bloodbath that is still not over, even worse than anything that could happen after a Communist victory." (*L'Humanité*, February 19, 1975.)

In spite of the grand-style offensive being waged by Ford, Kissinger, and Schlesinger aimed at getting new aid funds, opposition in Congress seems to have mounted. The administration has been compelled to admit that even \$222 million may not save the regime and that what is involved is simply trying to foster the opening of negotiations, a prospect explicitly rejected by Sihanouk and the FUNK. The Pentagon, nervous about the future, has contradicted Kissinger, explaining that the loss of Phnom Penh would not change that much in Saigon's situation after all. The *New York Times* came out against granting the funds requested by the administration, while Senator Barry Goldwater declared that Cambodia is lost. In the meantime, CIA money and funds allocated to "Thailand" are being used. But already the financial question has ceased to be the essential one. It is not likely that Lon Nol will have an army capable of making use of a new influx of arms and ammunition. He lacks soldiers and morale.

Waiting for July

The FUNK offensive is probably only in its beginning stages. In April the waters of the Mekong will be at their lowest level. Today, the waterway is still 800-1,000 meters wide. By April it will be 100 meters in some places. It is only in June that the waters will recover their February levels. This means that the isolation of Phnom Penh should last for several more months and that the heart of the offensive is yet to come. It is not only military battles that are at stake. Foodstuffs are now rationed in the capital and the government is trying to make up for the losses of the puppet army with forced drafting. On January 27 Khieu Samphan, vice prime minister of the FUNK, issued an appeal to the populations of the urban centers under puppet control. He called on them to seize the rice depots, to unite with the People's Armed Liberation Forces to overthrow the regime, and, for those who cannot continue the struggle in Phnom Penh itself, to move to the liberated zones; he also invited foreign families to leave the country. (*Information Bulletin of the GRUNK*, February 2.) The following day, Hu Nim, minister of information, issued a similar appeal to the bonzes, and on January 31 Chey Chum, president of the FUNK committee in Phnom Penh, reaffirmed the terms of the appeal.

The Second National Congress called by the FUNK, which was held in the liberated zones February 25-26, also solemnly took up these appeals. The congress called "on the population of Phnom Penh and the provincial capitals temporarily under enemy control, on the bonzes and laymen, workers and employees of all categories, pupils, students, village school teachers, and professors to stand up and unite in the struggle in all its forms . . . from meetings, demonstrations, strikes, struggles against the draft and against famine, attacks on the rice and food stores of the traitors, to insurrections." (*Declaration of the Second National Congress of Kampuchea*, point 4, "Nouvelles brèves du Cambodge," March 1, 1975.)

The FUNK news agency has reported several cases of secret rice depots being seized (such as one of those belonging to the "prime minister," Long Boret) and of strike movements (notably among the personnel of Pochentong airport). Some cases of mutinies, still localized, have also been reported. Riots have taken place in the city of Battambang and in the port of Sihanoukville (Kompong Som). And a flow of population toward the liberated zones is going on in spite of the fighting. (The FUNK cites the figure of 60,000 people for the month of January and the first two weeks of February.)

According to Sihanouk, Peking has promised increased military aid, and Hanoi has guaranteed



*«the lon nol
regime
is in
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death
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that the "land bridge" supplying Cambodia would be strengthened in order to respond to the air bridge that now serves as the lungs of Phnom Penh. Moreover, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam has made gestures of solidarity and issued a declaration demanding the "immediate dismantling" of the air bridge linking the Cambodian capital to Saigon, affirming that "the people of South Vietnam . . . intend to punish this act of aggression." (Le Monde, February 28, 1975.)

The U.S. Embassy in Phnom Penh recognizes the gravity of the situation, but is nevertheless maintaining its optimism. But it has not been able to refrain from recommending that American citizens who are not indispensable leave the Cambodian capital, thus acceding in effect to the orders issued by Khieu Samphan in his January 27 message.

The FUNK is more than ever asserting its confidence in the outcome of the battle. Nevertheless, it refrains from predicting the fall of Phnom Penh during the current dry season. The same is true of Sihanouk,

who says that he has "always detested astrologers, unlike Lon Nol." (Le Monde, March 1, 1975.) But he does think that the liberation of the Cambodian capital will occur this year or next year. The Lon Nol regime is in its death agony. And the FUNK offensive of the 1974-75 dry season is already an important success.

Washington has decided to send a helicopter-carrier to the Gulf of Thailand off the coast of Cambodia. Marine units in Okinawa and puppet troops in Saigon have been placed on alert. The Pentagon claims that these moves are intended to prepare to evacuate American citizens. It realizes that in order to do this the Marines would have to intervene to open Pochentong airport. Apart from journalists, the only Americans remaining in Phnom Penh are U.S. advisers and members of the Embassy staff. Their presence may serve as the pretext for a last U.S. attempt to save the Lon Nol regime. This must be prevented!

—PIERRE ROUSSET

the elections and the Armed Forces Movement

by A. UDRY

Two weeks before the official opening of the election campaign, set for March 20, the main features of Portuguese political life are the publication of the "emergency economic plan," the debate on the "institutionalization of the Armed Forces Movement (AFM)," and the multiplication of workers struggles.

The "anti-monopolist" plan

The publication of the "emergency economic plan" — which was inspired essentially by Melo Antunes — will at least have the merit of making clear the function of the AFM and of opening the eyes, perhaps, of those who obstinately believed that the AFM was "the instrument of struggle for democracy and socialism."

The general introduction of the plan is extremely instructive. In it, for example, we read: "In the present phase, in which on the one hand the depressive economic situation is striking at profits and therefore at investment prospects, and in which on the other hand inflation is difficult to control, an increase in wages and distributed profits could aggravate both problems." The logical conclusion, if demagoguery did not compel the addition of the mention of profits, is simple: Limiting wages is the decisive way to restore the rate of profit. Thus, the whole plan is a response to the essential change that has occurred since May-June 1974: the organizational and political strengthening of the working class, which has led to a deterioration of the position of the employers and to a decline in the rate of profit.

The antimonomopolist demagoguery that runs through the introduction to the economic plan is not at all exceptional in Portugal today. For example, the PPD (People's Democratic party) asserts in its program: "The PPD is not a party in the service of capitalism; it wants capitalism to be modified through an anti-monopolist strategy, through the expansion of efficient management of the public sector and through the transformation of the status of the factory." This "antimonopolist" demagoguery must be viewed in the light of the excessive protectionism that marked the development of the Portuguese economy.

In fact, protectionist trade policies and laws on industrial development stimulated the emergence of a very deformed industrial structure under which a few great trusts (CUF, Champalimaud, Borges e Irmao, Fonecas e Burnay, Espirito Santo, Banca Nacional Ultra-Marino) coexisted with a multitude of small companies that developed in the sectors that were more or less abandoned by the principal industrial groups. The low wage levels permitted the survival of the companies of this second category. Of the 47,000 companies enrolled in the Portuguese Industrial Confederation, 36,000 employ fewer than five workers and only 186 employ more than 500. Hence, "antimonopolism" must be understood as the attempt to partially break through the hegemony of the key groups of industrial concerns, which on the one hand monopolize some types of investments and on the other hand play a role in holding the present economic structures together.

As Gonçaves promised in November 1974, the plan does not go wild on the subject of "nationalization."

In the rare cases in which the possibility of nationalization is envisaged, it is clearly combined with compensation. Essentially, the plan proposes an expansion of state participation in the sectors in which the state already has investments: in the petroleum and natural gas industries and in the mining industries (wolfram, copper, zinc, uranium, pyrite, bauxite). In these areas, state participation will be raised to 51 percent. But the state will renounce any majority participation in refining and distributing petroleum and its by-products, in petrochemicals, in the arms industry, in the tobacco industry, etc. The banks and insurance companies are not affected by the nationalization measures or by the measures of majority state participation. That had been one of the demands of the Communist party, which later turned out to be more than moderate on all questions concerning industry. The possibility of creating state holding companies is foreseen. Such companies would play the role that ENI (Ente Nazionale dei Idrocarburi) plays in Italy or INI plays in Spain. The essential aim of the holding company would be to offer certain critical products to the private sector at low prices by socializing the losses; that has already been done in the fertilizer industry.

In agriculture, the reforms proposed by the economic plan are nothing but a joke. Here again the CP had waged a battle for a "radical reform"! In substance, the large-scale holdings in the South are threatened only if the land is not properly cultivated. If the big landlords do not abide by the cultivation programs laid down by the plan, they can be hit with decrees requiring compulsory renting or expropriation of the land — with compensation. As for the response offered for the problem of the "minifundios" of the North (where in some regions the average holding is on the order of one acre), it is limited to providing agricultural credit and technical assistance and to recommending the development of cooperatives. These measures will be ineffective unless they are combined with nationalization of the banks, large agricultural trading companies, the agricultural machinery industry, and so on. But there will be no such nationalizations, and it is for that reason that the "agrarian reform" is so limited.

The development — or more exactly, the stagnation — of Portuguese agriculture must be understood not only in the context of the country's agrarian structure, but also in terms of agriculture's function in relation to an industrial structure that was developed primarily with a view toward exports and therefore with a limited need to expand the domestic market. The accentuated crisis, which arose during the late 1960s, will certainly not be eased by the measures proposed in the economic plan.

Finally, the door is left wide open to imperialist investment. This was predictable, given the important role of these investments in the development of Portugal. (Between 1969 and 1973 imperialist investments in Portugal increased fourfold.) The only measure called for in this sphere amounts to trying to channel these investments somewhat. In 1973 only 3 percent of imperialist investments in the country were directed toward transformation industries, while 34.8% went into real estate (in 1972 that figure had been 35.8%). By eliminating all restrictions on the repatriation of profits for companies exporting more than 75% of their production — whereas the others can take only 15% of their profits out of Portugal — the "plan" hopes to stimulate investments that "strengthen Portugal's position" relative to the Common Market. To complete these initial measures and to maintain the advantages now held by sectors that have profited for a long time from protectionist policies, severe restrictions on imperialist investments are proposed in the cement, paper, transport, banking, insurance, and advertising industries. These restrictions are portrayed as a defense of the interests of the Portuguese workers. In reality, they are concessions to the Portuguese bourgeoisie, which wants to maintain its own private game preserves. Thus, in the paper industry — in which production has increased 14% a year since 1968 — the productive capacity of the largest mills is about 150,000 tons per year, while in Europe the average is something like 300,000 tons. The Portuguese companies active in this industry include CUF (CELBI), Espirito Santo (INAPA and Sociedade Industrial de Celluloses), and Champalimaud (Companhia do Papel do Prado). The significance of the restrictions on imperialist investment in the paper industry is thus quite clear: They are aimed at protecting Portuguese capital.

In the "social sphere" the plan calls for no serious or rapid measures on points like medical care and housing; there are only a few measures, like compensation for layoffs lasting less than three months. On the other hand, the plan insists on telling the workers that "making demands is legitimate, but they (the demands) must take into account the particular historical situation we are in. The working class can turn its arms against itself if it ignores political reality." As for the far left, a warning is issued, because "its demonstrations (read: its influence in rather broad sections of the working class) can cause a loss of confidence in private enterprise, which is sincerely disposed to participate in the construction of the new society."

An ensemble of laws

It is not accidental that the newspaper of the bankers of Geneva characterizes the economic plan this way: "At the same time, this plan displays extreme



LCI meeting in solidarity with Chile.

THE LCI

Our comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League), sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal, have attained a remarkable success. Despite the obstacles of the electoral law — which requires that an organization have 5,000 members in order to run in the elections, that is, 5,000 people who declare their adherence by signing on their elector's card and having the card stamped by a notary — our comrades have succeeded in obtaining 6,000 adherents. This in itself is indicative of the audience the revolutionary Marxist movement has in Portugal today.

The campaign for adherents went on throughout the country. Dozens of meetings were organized in the cities, neighborhoods, and villages. Tens of thousands of posters and leaflets were distributed in Lisbon, Porto, Setubal, Leira, and elsewhere. A massive propaganda campaign based on a program to be presented in the elections was carried on in the factories, neighborhoods, schools, and the university. Thanks to this campaign, our comrades will be able to make the views of revolutionary Marxism heard during the electoral campaign, which will open on March 20. They will have the right to radio and television time and to a regular column in the daily newspapers. The comrades of the LCI will present candidates in four workers districts: Porto,

Lisbon, Leira, and Setubal.

After the two presidential campaigns of the French section of the Fourth International, this will be the third time in Europe that the Trotskyists will have waged such a massive campaign in a country in which social confrontation and the class struggle are on the rise.

Eight other far-left organizations also obtained ballot status: the Maoist PUP (Party of Proletarian Unity); the AOC (Workers and Peasants Alliance), which came out of the Communist party of Portugal (Marxist-Leninist); the UDP (People's Democratic Union), a fusion of three Maoist organizations; the FEC (Communist Electoral Front), created by the Maoist organization in Porto; the OCM(M-L), best known under the name Grido do Povo (Cry of the People); the MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Proletarian party), another Maoist organization; the FSP (People's Socialist Front), led by Manuel Serra; and the MES (Movement of the Socialist Left). The very fact that so many far-left organizations obtained the 5,000 or more signatures of adherents definitely illustrates the process of maturation of a broad vanguard in Portugal; this is not the least of the factors that will come to bear in the future political evolution of Portugal.

prudence in regard to the structures of the economy, which have already been shaken. The companies will remain under private ownership and will obey the laws of the market; they will not be drained of capital by excessive taxes . . . and, finally, foreign investments will benefit from precise guarantees contained in a specific code." (Journal de Genève, February 22-23, 1975.)

The plan itself must be viewed in the context established by a number of laws: the law on the "right to strike and lock out," the trade-union law, and the press law. The strike law outlaws factory occupations and political strikes and requires that seven days notice be given the Ministry of Labor and the employer before a strike is launched; it also sets a thirty-day period during which every effort must be made to reach an agreement, and it outlaws strikes that challenge an already existing collective bargaining contract. It was the proposals of the PPD and the Portuguese Industrial Confederation that were decisive in determining the terms of this law.

The declared objective of the trade-union law is to "regulate trade-union activity . . . so as to create in the factories the proper conditions of equilibrium and justice in labor relations." This is a law that strikes at the independent organizations of the workers by stipulating that only the trade-union commission can call an assembly of the workers in a factory and that the assembly must tell the employer about the meeting and then try to find a compromise between the workers and the employer.

The law on trade-union unity (which does correspond to the will of the workers, although that does not mean that we support the law) must be seen in the light of the Bonapartist function of the AFM. As a commentator of the Financial Times wrote: "The message behind both pieces of legislation is that the AFM is determined to control the labour movement and prevent economic disruption by discouraging the formation of large union groupings along purely political lines." (Financial Times, December 3, 1974.) Once again, this does not mean that the January 14 demonstration for trade-union unity, for example, did not go well beyond the objectives of the AFM and even the objectives set for it by the Trade Union Federation and the Portuguese CP; nor does it mean that the workers did not gain confidence in their own strength through the "victory" represented by the demonstration.

Finally, the law on the press, which deals with attacks against the AFM and any writings that "place in danger the discipline and cohesion of the army," rounds out the measures taken by the government, the Junta of National Salvation, and the AFM. The totality of these measures establishes the function of the AFM beyond any doubt: to permit the

substantive maintenance of the class relations and relations of production inherited from the Salazarist regime and at the same time to guarantee that certain adjustments will be made.

A new period

Prepared secretly and discussed for more than three months within the cabinet — the AFM and the provisional government have learned a lesson from the public discussion of the trade-union law — this plan was published just at the moment when a new phase of workers struggles was opening. But the plan was prepared at a time when the dominant impression was that a decline of struggles after the explosion of May-June 1974 was certain. For example, in a special supplement devoted to Portuguese industry the December 3, 1974, Financial Times wrote: "Today, although the newspaper can generally be counted on to reveal some new labour story every day, the climate of protest has cooled. Government officials and businessmen all tell the same story of a quiet labour front and co-operation and understanding between all workers' leaders and management. . . . The initial outburst of strikes, sit-ins, and workers' occupations has largely evaporated and the number of days lost through industrial action during November was probably much lower than in Britain or France."

Things have changed. It is no accident that the introduction to the plan also strongly attacks "anarchists" and insists on the "responsibilities and discipline" of the working class.

During the second week of February more than 250 struggles were officially recorded in the country. From the beginning of January to the second week of February the number of strikes, work stoppages, occupations, and active occupations was larger than it was for the entire period from September to December 1974.

More and more in these strikes, two features stand out: occupations of the factories (sometimes with continued production under the control of the workers themselves), and struggles for *saneamento* (that is, for the expulsion of managers and employers who were notorious fascists in the past or are "simply" sabotaging the factory or managing it disastrously).

In the small factories, hit both by the rise in raw materials prices and by the changes in wages, there have been many occupations to counter layoffs or the threat of layoffs and to combat the "bad management" that appears to predominate in thousands of small companies that survived only thanks to the ferocious exploitation of the workers. Before the April 25, 1974, coup the Portuguese CP had de-

manded a minimum wage of 6,000 escudos a month, while the present minimum wage is only 3,300 escudos. But in the textile industry, which employs 400,000 workers, the going rate used to be monthly wages of 1,500 escudos. In many companies of this type, occupation and continuation of production under workers control has become a commonly used weapon of the workers. Obviously, the dynamic of these experiences in self-management is quite varied and depends above all on whether there are vanguard militants in these factories.

In the glass industry in Marinha Grande in the North, for example, the M.P. Roldao company was taken over by the workers on February 2 after a strike that had gone on for more than three weeks. The workers elected a seven-member commission that included two technicians and began managing the enterprise. This commission called for a government administrator, setting his maximum salary at 10,000 escudos a month. No demand for nationalization was raised. The limits of this experience are obvious, particularly when viewed in the light of the immense technical backwardness of the company and the plans for restructuring the glass industry.

In the Portugalia dye works, on the other hand, the struggle that has been going on for several months indicates other possibilities. In January the employer refused to consider the workers' wage demands (minimum monthly salary of 4,500 escudos) and "offered" a minimum wage of 3,900 escudos. The women workers of the factory occupied the plant and continued production. In an attempt to soften them up, the employer proposed that the workers participate in the management. The workers commission rejected this proposal and asserted: "We reject it (participation) because we know that to participate can only create illusions that we are controlling the firm and its management." In response to the employer's proposal, the workers commission demanded unlimited and constant control of the company's books and the management of the plant "in order to safeguard our interests as workers." In addition, when the employer made some threats, the commission barred the employer or any member of his family from entering the factory.

On January 10 the demand for nationalization was raised. It was explained this way: "This demand is just, because it is the only way to guarantee wages and jobs; because we produce services that are in the interest of the entire population and therefore must be guaranteed and must not depend on the good will of an ex-member of the legion (the employer had been a member of this fascist organization); because April 25 and September 28 (the date when a massive workers mobilization blocked an attempted comeback by the right) did not occur in order that ex-Nazis might continue to do as they please against

the interests of the workers; because everything that exists in the factory has been produced by workers — the initial capital was 175 contos (175,000 escudos) and now it has risen to thousands of contos." Besides all that, the workers at Portugalia affirmed their solidarity with another company, Camburnac, where the workers have also demanded nationalization.

More and more, a political dimension is being introduced into the struggles of the Portuguese workers, a dimension that will be more strongly asserted in opposition to the measures called for in the economic plan. For example, the workers of the Vialonga da Sociedade Central de Cervejas (a brewery) began with a movement around demands based on denunciation of the management and the fabulous income of the administrators; but they rapidly moved to the demand for "immediate nationalization" of the company. Clearly, this takes on great significance for the whole food industry, which is in large part controlled by multinational companies. Recently the workers of the CUF demanded the nationalization of an important factory of this multinational group.

Progress and limits of class consciousness

This new rise of struggles expresses an advance in the combativity and anticapitalist class consciousness of the Portuguese workers, an advance that has occurred more rapidly than could have been hoped, given the effects of forty years of the corporatist regime. The maturation of consciousness is a striking manifestation of the repercussions of the fundamental tendencies now at work in capitalist Europe, tendencies that have found expression everywhere since the conjunction occurred between the structural and conjunctural crises of capitalism. In Portugal the convergence of these two crises has been more violent and explosive than in most European countries, a result of the structure of the Portuguese economy. Moreover, it must be stressed that the working class has grown very much during the past two decades. Its social weight is strongly felt today. A few figures may illustrate this consolidation of the working class. The following figures, which refer to three industrial areas (see *Análise Social*, No. 39, 1973), show the evolution of the ratio of wage earners to the active population between 1930 and 1970:

Porto:	1930 - 52.3%;	1970 - 82.3%
Lisbon:	1930 - 56.1%;	1970 - 86.3%
Setubal:	1930 - 52.7%;	1970 - 87.3%.

Obviously, this development did not occur evenly throughout Portugal. Nevertheless, it does demonstrate the qualitative change that has taken place in the regions that form the most solid bases of the workers movement today.

The qualitative strengthening of the working class has suddenly begun to find organizational expression. In a few months the trade-union federations (which include 200 unions) have recruited more than 2 million workers. To this must be added the influence of the experiences in struggle gained by the Portuguese immigrant workers in West Europe and the role of the far left, which has been strongly influenced by the French and Italian examples. Taken together, all these factors account for the rapidity of the political maturation of workers combativity. Only last June and July, that combativity was often expressed by the juxtaposition of the two slogans: "Long live Spínola!" and "6,000 escudos a month!"

The crude betrayal of struggles by the CP, the SP, and the Trade Union Federation during the last summer and early autumn, combined with the very rapid and massive growth of the trade unions and the CP (despite the betrayals), accounts for the present fluidity within the reformist organizations and the progress made by the far left.

In the first place, the reformist grip on the workers is still relatively limited. The Portuguese CP did not have a daily newspaper until the middle of February 1975. It did not have a weekly with a very large circulation. Instead, it had placed priority on penetrating the "official" mass media. It suffers from a crying lack of cadre, even though it has a rather large apparatus. Hence, the response the far left groups are able to receive among the rank-and-file members of the CP is palpable. (This is much less true in the case of the AOC and the MRPP which center their campaigns on attacking "social fascism.") More exactly, there is a possibility of having debates and discussions with the CP rank and file. This has been confirmed in all the public meetings the far left has held in areas in which the CP's grip on the workers is limited. Important opportunities are open to an organization able to inject itself into this process of debate. Our comrades of the LCI have already done this in the industrial periphery of Lisbon and Porto.

Moreover, because the Trade Union Federation was unable to respond to the movements and demands of the workers, the bodies that arose during May and June in the big factories, the workers commissions, have gained strength as organs that permanently include the workers vanguard and occasionally are able to rally all the workers, outside the control of the reformists. These sorts of bodies have emerged essentially in the large enterprises of Lisbon and the surrounding area, in companies like Lisnave, Setenave, Timex, Eface-Intel, TAP, the postal system, Plessey, etc. They can play an important role in the current mobilizations. But a double danger is already visible: first, that the commissions, under

the influence of a sectarian, anti-trade-union Maoist current could harden the lines of the cleavage between the workers vanguard and the mass of the class; and second, that an overestimation of the present role of the commissions could lead revolutionaries to forget the necessity of waging a struggle within the unions themselves for the building of a class-struggle tendency, to forget that the work within the commissions must be combined with work within the trade unions themselves.

These two elements — the CP's relatively limited control over its own rank and file and the strengthening of bodies like the workers commissions — account for both the attacks by CP leader Cunhal against the far left and the injunctions of the AFM against "anarchists" who are eroding "confidence in private enterprise." Nevertheless, it is necessary to grasp the limits of the maturation of class consciousness in Portugal today so as to be able to foresee the broad outlines of the future evolution of the society. Yes, combativity in the factories and the development of consciousness have taken rapid strides forward. Yet a new step forward has been taken with the movement for nationalizations. But it remains the case that the Portuguese working class still bears the effects of forty years of fascist rule. These effects assert themselves in a very specific way: The workers' capacity for independent intervention into political life is limited; the capacity of a broad layer of workers to take the political field putting forward a clearly independent policy against both the maneuvers of the AFM (the "defense of democracy") and the policies of the CP is weak. To act in this way requires a long experience of the sort that thousands of cadres of the Italian, French, or Spanish working class possess, and it requires a revolutionary organization to lead significant sectors of the class in practice. The experience simply does not exist in Portugal, and in the present phase the Maoist grip does not help the political understanding of the workers vanguard. This Maoist hegemony is itself a function of the element of frustration in the political consciousness of the working class and of the fact that in the history of the Portuguese workers movement since the 1920s the Maoist break of 1963 is the only point of reference.

Bonapartist role of the AFM

The basic dynamic of socioeconomic development can be glimpsed. Given the deepening economic crisis, there is no doubt that struggles and confrontations with the employers will multiply. Consequently, the precondition for the implementation of the economic plan, that is, a stabilization of the relations between labor and capital, will not be easily attained.

The question of the capital-labor relationship will not be settled in the elections. An electoral victory for the PPD and the SP will not mean very much. These parties do not command the means (political personnel, trade unions, etc.) to implement their policies. Of course, a victory for these parties would provide a possible cover for the strictest measures against the working class. The application of the strike law would be an example. But who would be charged with applying it? Certainly not the SP and the PPD alone! L'Espresso, the magazine of an important member of the PPD, writes: "The employers — who have at their command a legal instrument with which to respond to illegal strikes and therefore to occupations, namely the lockout — appear to have lost all the offensive and 'defensive' capacities they were manifesting several months ago; they are characterized by declining vigor." (February 22, 1975.)

In this situation of social confrontation the bourgeoisie, whose penchant for democratic methods is not extremely strong anyway, will have to leave to the AFM the role of preserving what really is essential. And the essential thing, as is made so clearly explicit by the introduction to the Melo Antunes plan, is to safeguard private property, free initiative, and the laws of the market. In this context, the Bonapartist role of the AFM can only expand, and the legal instruments for intervening and "stabilizing" the situation already exist.

This prospect has been provided for, not only in the legal machinery, but also within the AFM itself. To be sure, it need not be denied that progressive forces exist in the AFM, some militants even claiming allegiance to the revolutionary left. But all analyses that begin from a supposedly subtle sociological examination of the AFM and an analysis of its "ideological currents" forget the essential point: the analysis of the function and role the AFM has fulfilled up to now. Moreover, within the AFM, Fabiao's offensive has achieved success. The offensive consisted in bringing the sergeants, who represent a regressive corps, into the AFM. Thus, a "social base" was created to support the policy of the center and right of the AFM and to respond to the "leftish oscillations" of a section of the coordination commission or of the editors of the AFM bulletin. In addition, Fabiao, Antunes, and others are playing a slick game by putting stress on the "unity of the AFM." For example, when a reporter from L'Espresso asked him about the significance of a proposal about self-managed socialism that had been made at a general assembly of AFM delegates, Fabiao answered: "As in any assembly, programs are discussed. The methods and suggestions that are the most unitary are the ones that are dominant. All the delegates are fully conscious that our strength lies in our unity and that unity is therefore the es-

sential value to conserve. Human beings are allowed to make mistakes." (Espresso, January 18, 1975.) The "human beings" making the mistake being the advocates of self-managed socialism!

This unity is the constraining framework that limits the expression of the left tendencies that may exist in the AFM, for there is no doubt that any open division in the AFM would lead to a confrontation in which they would be the losers. Thus, beginning from unity, a shifting of tendencies occurred that has led to the predominance of the tendencies that worked out the present economic plan. And if the balance becomes unstable, there is the possibility of a constitutional maneuver: The powers of the junta can be increased. In this way the complex of tense relations between the various tendencies of the AFM and the provisional government is resolved and, at the same time, the initial elements of the institutionalization of the AFM are set up.

The expansion of the Bonapartist role of the AFM is coming to the fore very strongly in the discussion around the theme of institutionalization of the AFM. This discussion points to the form that a strong state could take in Portugal: a system of rule that excludes the intervention of the trade unions, the political parties, or parliament. For the moment, the institutionalization of the AFM is being prepared by granting it veto power over the election of the president, by guaranteeing that it will retain certain ministerial posts (defense and economics), and by delegating many powers to the junta or to a state council.

The most clear-sighted bourgeois forces have understood this function of the AFM and that it is necessary to the bourgeoisie that the AFM play this role in the event of an intensification of the confrontations between the two basic classes. For example, the bourgeois economic review Tempo Economico writes: "In the turn through which Portuguese society is now going, the role of the AFM is essential in that it is in the Armed Forces Movement that we will be able to find the new factors that make the traditional alternatives, which are inappropriate to the gravity of the present situation, impossible for us. We are thinking especially of the electoralist dynamic of the political parties . . . and in a crisis situation that sharpens class conflicts, political compromises (between the parties) become incomprehensible to the ranks of the parties, and incompatible objectives proliferate. If we accept this schema, which is simply a derivative of the analysis of the many crises since April 25, then we must conclude that the major homogenizing factor in the Portuguese social system is the action of the AFM and that it would be very dangerous to leave the orientation of the political system to the dynamic of the political parties." (December 13, 1974.)

The same article called for the publication of a plan that would restore the confidence of the employers and clearly indicate the necessity of shifting the present relationship of forces between capital and labor. The two "demands" seem to have found an echo in the AFM.

Response of the workers movement

The Socialist party is pouting about the measures of institutionalization of the AFM. Nevertheless, after making a few pretenses, SP leader Mario Soares insisted on the fact that he was not averse to "institutionalization of the AFM." The debate evidently revolves around the exact form of the compromise that will be acceptable to all the participants in the provisional government. This compromise must facilitate the establishment of the "three-year contract for progress," which is a straitjacket for the working class.

The SP's maneuvers, like its declarations about the "predominance of the civilian power" and its "resolute opposition to the Prague coup," have an electoral purpose. In fact, the SP can in no way compete with the CP in the trade-union field or in the area of organization of the agricultural workers. Hence, it must try to bolster its electoral potential in order to strengthen itself against the CP and to get a center-left coalition government set up.

As for the CP, it is manifestly annoyed. According to all predictions, its electoral score will not be commensurate with the effective role it is now playing. It therefore finds itself caught between two sorts of obligations. Its collaboration in the government requires it to endorse "the broadest alliance of the people with the AFM" and, consequently, it must proclaim the necessity of maintaining the government coalition, "despite the internal conflicts." (*Jornal de Noticias*, interview with Cunhal, March 5, 1975.)

But the rise of workers struggles, the necessity of responding to the gains of the far left, and the urgency of strengthening its base in the working class and among the peasantry before the elections compel the CP to make tactical left turns. These turns range from the CP's support to the strikes of the fishermen, the glass workers of Marinha Grande, and the textile workers of Porto to the stimulation of peasant struggles in the Alentejo. Of course, the CP often shows up once the struggle has already begun only in order to support and organizationally co-opt it. Such turns, even though limited in time, reduce the political space for the Maoists. In fact, the UDP, which has won over a not negligible section of the workers vanguard in the industrial zone

around the capital, is not very different from the CP politically; in fact, the CP is even in position to influence the periphery of the UDP because of the latter's political weakness. This is all the more true in that adherence to the Maoist current expresses radical trade-unionist combativity rather than an increase in political consciousness.

To the extent that the exacerbation of workers struggles continues and the maturation of anticapitalist political consciousness goes on among the working class, it will be difficult for the CP not to seek a solution that would temporarily allow it to get out of this impasse; remaining in the impasse would threaten to lead to an accentuated cleavage between the party and its base in the working class. Within this perspective, a temporary departure of the CP from the government coalition and a division of labor between the MDP/CDE and the CP should not be ruled out. The objective result would be obvious: acceleration of struggles, with attempts by the CP to co-opt them, and a redoubled offensive by the AFM under the cover of "defending the process of democratization."

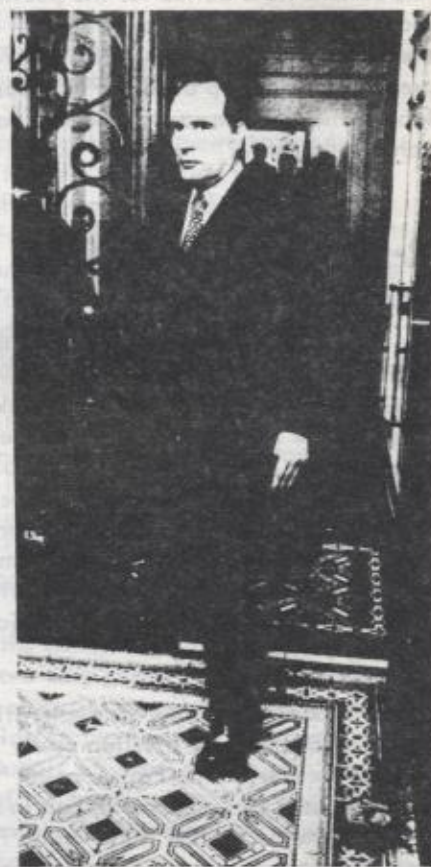
The weak capacity of the Portuguese working class for independent political intervention certainly threatens to manifest itself both in the present phase and in the event of a direct or indirect departure of the CP from the government coalition. In fact, the inclination of the workers to respond to the maneuvers of the AFM, all of which will be conducted under the cover of opposing the danger of a rebirth of the right, of a reactionary power play, seems weak in the present period. Hence, the possibility of a certain temporary retreat, or more exactly of a political defeat (which must not be confused with a crushing of the working class), is a variant of social and political development that must be taken account of during the coming year.

This makes the tasks of the far left in the present situation even more important. It is ever more urgently necessary to utilize all opportunities to bolster the workers' experiences of self-management, to regionally and nationally coordinate bodies like the workers commissions, to develop a class-struggle tendency in the unions on a national scale. Then the possibility of using the electoral campaign — through the daily press and radio and television — to present an overall alternative to the plan proposed by the government can be a decisive weapon for our comrades of the LCI in their struggle to raise the consciousness of the working masses and in the political confrontation with the reformists and the Maoist currents. This intervention will be decisive in preparing the coming stages of the Portuguese revolution.

March 6, 1975



Georges Marchais



François Mitterrand

CP/SP

A DEBATE WELL UNDER CONTROL

by ANTOINE PUECH

The polemic

For several months the Parti Communiste Français (PCF — French Communist party) has been engaged in an escalating polemic against the Socialist party, its privileged ally in the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left).

It began with some sharp comments on the fact that the SP was using the Union de la Gauche to bolster its own organization and to try to eat into Communist electoral strength; it wound up turning into a real polemic. Georges Marchais, the general secretary of the PCF, has gone so far as to reproach Mitterrand, the first secretary of the SP, for being "overbearing and too sure of himself."

The PCF is attacking the SP for not having completely abandoned its plans for class collaboration with the bourgeoisie: "The big bourgeoisie . . . is maneuvering to find a political escape from its difficulties. Above all, it would like to weaken our party and, at the same time, to create the conditions both for a breakup of the Union de la Gauche and, as Mr. Giscard d'Estaing has said outright, for the return by the Socialist party to a policy of loyally administering the interests of big capital. . . .

That is a new feature of the political situation after the presidential election (of May 1974). . . . All the more so in that the Socialist party has not clearly rejected Giscard's solicitations." (G. Marchais in *l'Humanité*, the organ of the CP, March 11, 1975.)

That is what the leaders of the PCF are hammering on, and they are going as far as to refer to the history of the French Social Democracy, to the role of Léon Blum in the Popular Front of 1936. The PCF leaders are explaining that there has been a difference "in character" between the PCF and the SP ever since the split in the SP at the 1921 congress in Tours, when a minority of the Socialists refused to join the Communist International. The alleged difference is that the PCF is a "revolutionary party" defending the interests of the working people and the SP is a "reformist party."

The PCF retaliated for the "turn" of the SP by refusing to organize common meetings with the SP in the major cities of France!

For several days now, the polemic has eased up, but it has not disappeared. After a meeting of the Committee of Liaison of the Left, the PCF, the SP, and the Left Radicals decided to engage in a united

campaign to defend jobs and protest the high cost of living and to conduct the campaign on the basis of the proposals contained in the Common Program, which has been signed by all three parties. A series of united meetings in the big cities has even been planned. But even so, the PCF has not completely suspended its polemic. Paul Laurent, a member of the Political Bureau of the PCF, hailed the plan for the common campaign and portrayed it as a consequence of the policy of his party; but at the same time he expressed regret about the limits of the agreement, declaring: "We would have wished for even greater clarity on the problem of nationalizations and their extension."

When Giscard d'Estaing paid a visit to Marseille, whose mayor is Gaston Deferre, one of the principal leaders of the SP, the PCF made some criticisms, reproaching Deferre for having received Giscard d'Estaing and for having prepared the visit secretly so as to head off any "popular response." In an article in the March 4 *L'Humanité* Roland Leroy, another member of the PCF Political Bureau, hailed the united action that had been "rediscovered" by the left parties, but nevertheless reaffirmed the Communists' intention to make whatever criticisms of the SP they felt were necessary in any event.

A «left turn» by the PCF?

Some people have quickly analyzed this "hardening" of the PCF as a sort of "class reflex" against the Social Democracy and have simply reproached the PCF for not going far enough. For example, the Parti Socialiste Unifié (PSU — United Socialist party, a centrist formation) observed that in the present crisis situation "the choice is between a policy of 'egalitarian' austerity of the Delors or Rocard type(1) and a resolutely anticapitalist policy not restricted to just a few nationalizations." Then it continued by explaining: "While rejecting the first solution, the PCF has not opted for the second. But as long as it has not chosen its strategy, it will continue to make its peace with the Social Democracy." (*Tribune Socialiste*, the weekly of the PSU, No. 636.)

As if the PCF had not long ago clearly chosen a reformist strategy concretized in the Common Program! As if it had some possibility of putting forward another policy! The reasons for the hardening of the PCF must be sought neither in some "class reflex" nor in the alleged evolution of the international situation toward a new period of "cold war" between the United States and the USSR and a consequent new "left course" by the various Stalinist parties.

If there is a reflex on the part of the PCF, it is a reflex of self-preservation. The PCF began to open fire on the SP just after the legislative by-elections

of the end of 1974, which confirmed that the SP was gaining ground on the PCF on the electoral field. This was a supplementary confirmation of a tendency that the PCF leaders had already noted in the legislative elections of 1973 and the presidential elections of 1974. During those elections, in some regions the PCF suffered losses of about 5 percent, while the SP made gains of about the same magnitude. Marchais then observed that "for the first time, the unity that has been realized profited the SP more than it profited us."

While these particular warning signals were the most visible ones, they were not the only ones. On the eve of the presidential elections the Communist Youth had 6,000 fewer membership-card holders than it had had a year before. In the big factories there is a stagnation or even decline in the number of members and supporters of the Confédération Générale du Travail (CGT — General Confederation of Labor, the CP-led union federation) and a strengthening of the Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail (CFDT — French Democratic Confederation of Labor). (See table.) While the leaders of the PCF may have expected that their policy of unity would result in a certain strengthening of the SP, they had not counted on such a leap forward by the Social Democracy.

The development of the SP is part of the same process that is reflected in the development of the CFDT and, on another level, of the revolutionary groups: a process of recomposition of forces within the workers movement that has been going on since 1968 and is tending to place in question the PCF's hegemony over the organized workers movement.(2)

The PCF could accept an electoral growth of the SP, but its aim was for the SP to become the party of the "new middle classes," for the SP to eat into the electorate that normally votes for the center parties. The aim was not for the SP to eat into the PCF's electoral support and link up with the CFDT to challenge the PCF's hegemony in the workers movement. For one of the strong points and special features of the PCF as a Stalinist party is precisely its ties with the working class. To maintain these ties is virtually a matter of survival for the PCF. By "hardening" its position it hopes to shift the relationship of forces in its favor in anticipation of the next elections (legislative elections are set for 1978).

In addition, the polemic opened by the PCF, the "scrapping" that is going on in the Union de la Gauche, and, finally, the PCF's relative loss of political credibility all serve as excuses for the PCF to postpone the anticipated date of its entry into the government and to wait for the next elections. Indeed, if the unity between the PCF and

the SP had been strengthened after the presidential elections, if the parties of the left had appeared more united than ever, and if they had been increasing their political weight, how then could it be explained to the workers that it is necessary to wait until 1978 before getting rid of the Giscard regime? How could the refusal of the reformists to engage in a test of strength with the regime during the strike of the postal workers and public service employees this past autumn be explained? How could the absence of a centralized response to the massive rise of unemployment be justified, when workers combativity clearly exists?

The PCF's polemic denouncing the SP as being responsible for the situation has some demoralizing effects within the working class and thus serves as a diversion from all these problems and as a justification for waiting for the next electoral dates that have been set by the bourgeoisie.

A right turn by the SP?

Because of the needs of the moment, the PCF analyzed the congress of the Socialist party that took place in Pau in February 1975 as a "right turn."

Actually, things are not that simple. The big event of the congress was that the "left opposition" of the SP, the Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Socialistes (CERES — Center of Socialist Research and Study), was removed from the central leadership positions of the party. Let us note that the CERES is a very pale left opposition, a left reformist current that "fights" within the SP in the name of the Common Program and of unity in action with the PCF; it is not at all a centrist current balancing between reform and revolution. Rather than reflecting a turn to the right, the eviction of the CERES from the leadership represents a tactical maneuver by Mitterrand within the SP.

The significant gains that the CERES was making (it had 25 percent of the votes at the congress) forced Mitterrand to react. He had a choice: Either he could keep the CERES in the leadership of the party, which would have had the advantage of reducing the "left" maneuvering room of the CERES, but would have led the SP into a polemic with the PCF (among other things) with a heterogeneous leadership and also would have amounted to Mitterrand's sanctioning the gains of the CERES and its plans for gradually nibbling away at the party apparatus. Or else, he could have issued a warning to the CERES by excluding it from the leadership, at the risk of seeing it fall into opposition and thus intensify its "leftist" aura. Aware of the limits of the leftist evolution of the CERES and under pressure from his base,

Mitterrand opted for the second solution. Between two evils, you have to choose the lesser one!

But all this was absolutely not accompanied by the significant development of rightist currents within the SP questioning the alliance with the PCF, currents on which Mitterrand would have drawn support.⁽³⁾

Furthermore, the SP reaffirmed its determination to "accept its governmental responsibilities" even if the PCF maintained its refusal to enter the government under a Giscard presidency: "The Constitution of 1958," Mitterrand declared, "grants the prime minister, the head of the government, the right to refuse to step down if he preserves the majority in parliament."

Let us note that although today the PCF refuses to envision a leftist government under a Giscard presidency, before the legislative elections of 1973 Marchais had made it known that the PCF would not challenge Pompidou's election by universal suffrage if Pompidou would reciprocate by drawing the conclusions of a possible victory by the left in the legislative elections. In other words, the PCF was prepared to govern along with Pompidou.

Mitterrand's statement must not be understood as the expression of a will to break the alliance with the PCF in order to make a turn toward some party of the present presidential majority; rather, it must be understood as an assertion of the SP's independence of the PCF, as an expression of the will to show that if they were in power, the Socialists, while they would maintain the alliance with the PCF, would also not refrain from seeking allies in the center to act as a counterbalance to the PCF.

A breakup of the Union de la Gauche?

The breakup of the Union de la Gauche is far from the most likely variant.

The PCF's reactions of self-preservation have accentuated the party's contradictions rather than expanding its maneuvering room. Of course, "dumping on the SP" can get a response from a small fringe of old PCF militants, but it also throws into disarray the whole new electoral base and membership that the PCF has recruited on the basis of its "new policy of overture," its policy of unity with the SP.

The fact is that both politically and in terms of day-to-day action, the leadership of the PCF has no real alternative to the alliance with the SP and the strategy of the Union de la Gauche. The only action the PCF took to assert its cleavage from the

MEMBERS OF THE CGT IN THE METAL INDUSTRY
IN THE PARIS AREA

Department	Workers	CGT Members 1973	CGT Members 1974
Paris	158,993	8,373 5.2%	6,234 3.9%
Seine et Marne	35,967	4,010 11.1%	3,596 9.9%
Yvelines	105,186	6,551 6.2%	5,607 5.3%
Essonne	38,816	4,171 10.7%	3,641 9.3%
Hauts de Seine	239,277	26,623 11.1%	22,260 9.4%
Seine St Denis	105,577	16,172 15.3%	13,862 13.1%
Val de Marne	54,440	8,001 14.6%	7,090 13.0%
Val d'Oise	33,640	3,899 15.1%	2,787 8.2%
TOTAL	771,896	77,800 10%	65,437 8.4%

SP — the refusal to organize common meetings — is so ridiculous as to reveal this fact. Neither the Communist Youth's preparing for their national assembly by taking a few actions like occupying some offices of the National Employment Agency nor the CGT's hardening its tone a bit before its congress can offer political perspectives to the PCF membership.

On the contrary, without a basic change in the international situation, without a new cold war that could justify in the eyes of the workers an isolation of the PCF and an absence of any political prospects, a breakup of the Union de la Gauche would put the PCF in an embarrassing position in face of the rise of the workers that characterizes the current period. The PCF could not get away with taking a stint in the opposition and hardening its tone while not offering political perspectives for this combativity of the working class.

In response to l'Humanité Mitterrand cried at the last congress of the SP: "We would like to break the Union de la Gauche and renew an alliance with the center? We would have to be complete fools! At least grant us the concession of admitting that we are not so stupid."

It is true that while Mitterrand has an interest in asserting the position of the SP in relation to the PCF, in making clear the place he will demand in a Union de la Gauche government, he has no reason to saw off the branch he is sitting on.

What makes the SP a credible alternative to the present regime (credible even as a solution for the bourgeoisie) is exactly its ties with the workers movement, its alliance with the PCF — an alliance, yes, but also an assertion of the SP's position in the relationship of forces and even Mitterrand's own maneuvering room within the alliance. This is all the more true in that although the SP has grown since May 1968, it has done so within the frame-

work of an alliance with the PCF. A breakup of this alliance and Mitterrand's entry into the government in alliance with the center parties would strongly threaten to trigger off splits within the SP (in view of the size of the "leftist" currents). In exchange for a tactical operation with no great future, Mitterrand would find himself without a party and with no political or electoral credibility; he would be led into being not the head of government, but simply one component of a presidential majority. In the present situation, that would be a form of suicide.

In short, the polemic between the SP and the PCF is not the expression of an inevitable rupture between two different strategies. It is simply the reflection of the "different reactions" of the two reformist workers parties functioning within the same reformist strategy, for which they have no political alternative. Obviously, these "different reactions" are related to the difference in character of these two parties: As a Stalinist party, the PCF simply cannot tolerate seeing its hegemony over the working class challenged. That is what explains its reactions of self-preservation, although the PCF has nevertheless been unable to draw any substantial profit from these reactions. The relative tendency toward the PCF's loss of hegemony is not a conjunctural phenomenon. It is the product of an evolution of the relationship of forces that emerged out of 1968, an evolution that is beginning to go beyond the scale of molecular processes and is crystallizing politically in the PCF's suffering losses on its right and on its left.

That is why the most likely hypothesis is that this polemic and these tensions will continue up to the time of the next electoral campaigns, although of course there will be ups and downs in their intensity. At the same time, the alliance between the PCF and the SP will be maintained in the framework of the Union de la Gauche.

Revolutionaries ought not to comment disdainfully about this PCF-SP polemic. That would be to underestimate the demoralizing impact it can have to a certain extent on the workers, who do not understand the stakes involved — and for good reason.

Neither should revolutionaries take advantage of the opportunity to "jump on the bandwagon" either of the PCF or of the SP. From the standpoint of the struggle for power and of strategy, these are two parties of class collaboration; the Common Program illustrates their plans.

Revolutionaries, by beginning from the objective needs of the masses, by basing themselves on the combativity and struggles of the workers, and by developing their own initiatives, must put forward a series of demands and forms of struggle and must demand that the PCF and the SP take up their responsibilities and base themselves on the mobilizations of the workers in order to force through the satisfaction of their demands; and, if it is necessary, they must engage in a test of strength with the re-

gime in order to impose a workers government.

March 6, 1975

FOOTNOTES:

1. Jacques Delors was formerly chief of the cabinet of Prime Minister Chaban-Delmas during the Pompidou regime; recently, he joined the SP. Michel Rocard was formerly secretary of the PSU; along with a section of the members of this organization he joined the SP, of which he became a leader, at the recent SP congress.

2. On the recomposition going on in the SP, the PSU, and the CFDT and on the latest congress of the PCF, see INPRECOR, No. 12, November 14, 1974.

3. If to the 25% of the vote won by the CERES we add the 15% won by the "left" amendment that Martinet (a defector from the CERES) made to Mitterrand's motion, we can say that 40% of the membership of the SP stands to the "left" of their leadership.

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after the October days in Thailand: AN AMBIGUOUS SITUATION

A new National Assembly was elected in Thailand last January 26, the country's first since the Assembly elected in 1969 was dissolved by the November 17, 1971 coup. No party or "natural" coalition of parties holds a majority in this assembly. On February 6 a man of the old regime of the military dictatorship was elected president of the assembly: Prasit Kancha Nawat, the ex-minister of trade, a rich merchant and confirmed right-wing politician. On February 13 the same assembly named Seni Pra-
moj as prime minister. Considered a "leftist" by Thai standards (which are inapposite, as we shall see), he leads the Democratic party, a traditional

by PIERRE ROUSSET

opponent of the military regime. The government was formed on February 21. It includes eighteen ministers of the Democratic party, nine who belong to no party, and three ministers from the Social Agrarian party, whose president, Sawet Piumpongsorn, has become vice prime minister and minister of finance. The Social Agrarian party is one of the formations directly arising from the very regime that the Democratic party had opposed. This rather curious government remains a minority in the assembly, controlling only 91 seats out of 269.

What these chaotic elections reflect is the ambiguity of the situation born of the October days of 1973. At that time, in five days of demonstrations — which turned into riots when the police opened fire — the Thai students forced the military triumvirate (Generals Praphas and Thanom and Colonel Narong) to flee the country. It was, in fact, a virtual popular uprising involving 300,000 people, an event unprecedented in the country's history. (1)

But it is a long way from the flight of the dictators to the overthrow of the regime. In spite of the establishment of a civilian government, the structures of the country remain unchanged. The "student insurrection" of October 1973 was used by a part of

the ruling class (represented under the given circumstances by the king, and probably supported by the CIA) to gain ground at the expense of another section of the ruling class (tied to the traditional military command). In this sense, the students were the victims of a con game. But the eruption of the popular masses into the streets of Bangkok cannot be reduced to a clever political maneuver. It illustrated the acuteness of the social crisis, and, in turn, it deepened that crisis.

The Thai October opened a period of transition that would see the class struggle go through a sharp upswing, a period that the bourgeoisie and imperialism would be unable to bring to a rapid end. Sixteen months later, the elections and the formation of the new government gave yet another demonstration of this, if any were needed.

Economic conjuncture and structural crisis

The moral authority of the king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, remains very great in Thailand. This prestige allowed him to designate a new prime minister just after the mobilizations of autumn 1973. The new head of state was Sanya Dharmasakti, former rector of Thammasat University, the heart of the student movement. He was not tainted with association with the circles of the military dictatorship. Supported by the king, he gained the support of a majority of the members of the National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT). The general view was that in spite of its initial confidence, the Sanya government would merely survive and would remain incapable of offering a solution to the political and social crisis shaking the state.

Nevertheless, Sanya took advantage of an exceptionally favorable economic conjuncture in these times of international recession. Obviously, the increase in oil prices strikes heavily at a country that has to import 85 percent of its energy supplies. The "oil bill" for 1974 was \$512 million, compared with \$180 million in 1973. But Thailand's exports

were sharply stimulated by the rise in world market prices for the country's major export products: rice, corn, sorghum, sugar, rubber, tin, etc. From the first half of 1973 to the first half of 1974 the export price of rice increased 183%, rubber was up 73%, corn 57%. The 1972-73 rice harvest was a bad one because of a drought. But the 1973-74 harvest was very good, approaching 14 million tons of paddy rice (unhusked rice). This enabled Thailand to double the value of its exports of rice in 1974 compared with the previous year. Rubber exports increased 20% in volume and 120% in value. Corn exports increased less than 8% in volume but more than 30% in value. Tourism provided a large currency income (about \$190 million), twice as high as four years earlier. There was no recession in the country then. (2)

Nevertheless, the very favorable economic conjuncture did not permit the stabilization of the social situation. The structural crisis of the Thai economy is too serious, and the grip of bourgeois and imperialist interests is too strong.

Not so long ago Thailand was still being described as a country of small-scale agricultural property in which there was a surplus of land. That used to be generally true, and it explains in large part the prolonged passivity of the Thai peasantry (as in Cambodia). But there has now been a concentration of landed property, and the grip of absentee landlords over rural land has gone so far that 60-65 percent of the rural population are landless peasants, either tenant farmers or agricultural workers. (Some 80 percent of the population of the country lives in rural areas.) In the April 10, 1974, *Financial Times*, Kevin Rafferty showed why the increase in the world market price of rice has not at all benefited the peasantry. The export price for a ton of white rice was 11,000 baths (about US\$550). But the peasants sell a ton of paddy rice for 1,800 baths, or, more frequently, 1,500 baths, which means that the peasants receive about 2,300 baths per ton of white rice. To be sure, during the past two years the rice income of the peasantry has increased 50 percent a year. But this increase was more than absorbed by the price increases for the products that the peasants have to buy: fertilizer, clothing, tools, and even rice for consumption, for the peasants often do not husk their own rice. For a peasant family to begin to benefit from the price increases, it would have to cultivate at least 8 rai (nearly 3 acres) in the rich central plain. Further, the average monthly interest rate on debt can approach 20-30 percent, so it can be seen that the debts of the peasantry will continue to mount and land ownership will be increasingly concentrated. There is no lack of rice, but the social system creates artificial shortages and a tendency toward famine.

The social condition of the urban workers is not much better. The government buys a certain quantity of rice at reduced prices from merchants who intend to export it. This rice is destined to be sold in the state stores of Bangkok for 40 baths for a thirty-three-pound sack (as compared with 70 baths on the free market). This measure, which affects only 10 percent of the population, has no significant impact: Only a small part of the rice bought through this procedure reaches its destination. It serves most of all to guarantee superprofits to people "on the scene" and passes to the free market or goes into the smuggling network to be sold on the world market.

Above all, the economic development of Bangkok has been deeply deformed by imperialist domination. Thailand experienced one of the highest rates of expansion of any country in the region during the 1960s, a result of the war in Vietnam and the considerable American investment. The U.S. army remains the second-largest employer in the country (after the state), with 80,000-100,000 civilian employees. But the withdrawal of the American expeditionary force from Vietnam dealt a sharp blow to the inflow of currency. American servicemen on leave had been spending \$5 million a month in the bars and brothels of Bangkok. The "Vietnam boom" has now run down.

While there has been a relative industrialization based mainly on durable consumer goods (like automobiles, for which there are about ten assembly lines), it is not at all oriented toward the country's development needs (especially agricultural needs). Machine tools and fertilizers are imported. Exports are based above all on raw materials. The world market prices for raw materials now seem to have moved toward a real collapse because of the international recession. The source of the economic upswing of past years has run dry.

The economy is under imperialist control. Japanese capital controls 11.5% of investment, U.S. capital 5.7%, and Taiwanese capital 5.2%. And that is enough: Foreign capital orients production and imports its own crisis.

The social consequences are there to see. According to a report of the National Economic Development Bureau, 5,500 children under the age of five died of malnutrition in 1972; the figure was the same for 1973. Some 70 percent of the children of the suburbs of Bangkok receive only 70 percent of the necessary daily caloric intake. (3)

Thailand is the largest rice granary of Southeast Asia, and for the first time there is beginning to be a shortage of rice. Inflation (25 percent per year) is striking the urban workers hard and the un-

employment rate among the active population in Bangkok is 6-7 percent. That is something new in the history of Thailand.

Awakening of class struggle

Outside of the peripheral regions inhabited by national minorities, Thailand did not experience significant social struggles up to 1973. The "revolution of 1932," which put an end to the absolute monarchy, was the affair only of the top echelons of the social hierarchy. And the changes in regime that have occurred since then have been palace revolts rather than popular movements.

The first strike movements began a few months before the fall of the military dictatorship. Later, these movements took on considerable scope. In one year more than 400 strikes broke out, with more than 300,000 working days lost. That is higher than the figure for the previous twenty years combined! At the end of 1973, following the student struggles, there were three months of strikes (especially in industry, banks, and transport) and some violent demonstrations. The beginning of 1974 was marked by a rise of peasant struggles, in addition to a short strike by fishermen. The struggles took on a new scope in June and July. Some 5,000 textile workers went on strike. For the first time they got the support of thirty-four associations including 400,000 workers who issued an "ultimatum to the government" demanding that the labor laws be modified. The demands of the textile workers concerned the labor code, working conditions, and wages. They demanded that their daily wage be increased from 16 to 25 baths (that is, from about \$0.90 to \$1.40!).

At the end of June and the beginning of July hundreds of peasants from eleven provinces came to demonstrate in Bangkok. That again was unprecedented in Thailand. They occupied the big square of Saman-Luang and threatened to plow up the streets of the Thai capital. They considered the government agrarian reform program to be inadequate, protested against the usury to which they are subjected, demanded the restitution of their expropriated lands, and called for prosecution of absentee landlords.

Strikes and demonstrations continued throughout the summer (the strike of hotel employees being a notable example) and frequently ended by winning partial success. Significant trends of radicalization appeared among the bonzes. In December five superior bonzes went on hunger strike to protest against autocracy, political repression, and corruption in their church; they were supported by 2,000 of their followers. The student movement, although weakened, remained active. On January 22, 1975, some 10,000 demonstrators led by students set fire to the

residence of the governor of the southern province of Nakhonsi-Thamara, who was accused of corruption.

The struggles in Thailand, both in the city and the countryside, began immediately as class struggles and then moved toward becoming anti-imperialist struggles, the opposite of what happened in Vietnam. They have drawn in all the sectors that had not been affected by the communist guerrilla movement. But despite its scope, this explosion of struggle did not directly threaten the regime and the ruling classes. The Thai proletariat and peasantry suffered from too great a lack of tradition of organization. To be sure, the Thai Communist party, founded thirty-two years ago, has not turned toward reformism. But its base has remained peripheral, centered among the national minorities. Until October 1973 the CP did not play an active role in Bangkok or the surrounding regions. There was no real trade-union organization; it was forbidden by the dictatorial laws. Only "associations of workers" with limited functions were allowed. This was so much the case that very often when workers of some factory went on strike they had to call on the central headquarters of the associations to negotiate their demands with the employers, because none of the workers on strike had the necessary experience. Before the fall of the dictatorship there was no independent political organization of the working class having a mass base in Bangkok, not even a reformist organization. The dominant ideology is that of individualist "Theradava" ("small vehicle") Buddhism. Many Thais still believe that social inequality stems from birth. Nepotism and corruption sometimes appeared natural.

Under these conditions, it fell to the student movement to play the role of catalyst and political vanguard. But the student movement also lacked tradition. The first (very limited) nuclei of the movement were formed only in 1965 in the form of "study and discussion groups." The members of these groups oscillated between revolutionary romanticism and social action (in education and health, among the slum dwellers, etc.). Very belatedly, the National Student Center of Thailand was formed; it began by denouncing Japanese imperialism, an issue around which it was sure to find a favorable response, even in some government circles. Then it attacked the university structures, denounced corruption, and demanded a constitution, progressively gaining broad popular support. The October 1973 demonstrations were touched off by the arrest of militants of the Movement for the Constitution.

In the very course of the October demonstrations a division appeared between those who tended to accept the first compromise with the dictatorship and those who wanted to press the mobilization forward

and bring the dictatorship down (Saeksan Praserkul being an example of the latter). The majority of the members of the NSCT rallied to the support of the newly formed Sanya government (the overwhelming majority of the student milieu comes from the middle bourgeoisie and the urban intellectual layers), while the more radical left wing called for support to workers struggles.

Several currents and organizations were born of these divisions. One of the student leaders, Sombat Thamrong Thanyawongse, joined a bourgeois formation. Thirayuth Boonmee, who had been opposed to continuing the demonstrations, founded the People for Democracy group and later left it. This group, under the leadership of Pirapon, became one of the most radical currents, based essentially in student circles (especially in the provinces). Finally, Saeksan Praserkul created the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST). This organization, especially strong at Thammasat University, played a driving role in the mobilizations and seems to have succeeded in breaking out of the university ghetto. The National Student Center of Thailand, having been set up by university delegates, has an orientation that fluctuates according to the sentiment of the majority of students.

In addition to these political divisions, there were increasing numbers of violent clashes (sometimes with the use of homemade bombs) among technical colleges. Little by little, the student movement lost a good part of its audience. The bourgeois reformist wing participated in the government propaganda aimed at preparing for the campaigns for the "new democracy." But the radical wing of the movement gradually established links with the struggles of the workers and peasants. Some coordination and cooperation thus seems to have been set up, which will permit the centralization of the peasant movements around Bangkok. An Anti-Dictatorship United Front has been set up, for example.

The bookstores have suddenly begun stocking Marxist works. The Thai Communist party, which had ignored the urban intellectual milieu, is now becoming a point of reference for the student movement, even if its own implantation remains, apparently, very weak.

What is going on today is a whole process of formation of mass workers and peasants movements and of a political vanguard in the Thai cities and provinces in which the Communist party is not active.

The Communist guerrillas

This is one of the paradoxes of the Thai situation. In the provinces in which it has a base, the CP has

succeeded in resisting many operations conducted against it by the Thai army, which commands considerable resources. The CP has regularly extended its zones of action and has strengthened its movement. But beyond these provinces it has not been a political force capable of carrying out its own intervention, until recently.

The CP leads a guerrilla movement, the Thai Patriotic Front (TPF). The main armed actions have been fought in three zones: The Northeast, the plateau sloping down toward the Mekong (and the Laotian border), is inhabited by 16 million people, mostly Lao-Thai; it is the poorest region of the country. That is the cradle of the CP. The North, where the CP is organizing the Meo minorities (Hmong) in the mountains and valleys. The South, where four provinces — Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat, and Songkhla — are inhabited by Muslims. The latter are probably in contact with both the Thai CP and the Malayan CP, which operates on the other side of the border, although there is also a separatist Muslim movement that is not oriented toward the far left.

In all, armed actions have been reported in forty of Thailand's seventy-one provinces. A spokesman of the TPF in Bangkok told a journalist of the monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique* that "the partisans are now coordinated from Bangkok."

"We can distinguish two sorts of zones," he continued, "those that we control by night (representing one-eighth of the Northeast, one-tenth of the North, and one-twentieth of the South) and those that we hold permanently. It is not correct to speak of liberated zones exactly. The authorities can still go there, but only under heavy military escort. But these zones escape the rule of the authorities completely: no taxes, no draft, no cooperation. The villages live in a closed economy."⁽⁴⁾ Since then, the CP has proclaimed the existence of liberated zones. (See *Le Monde*, September 25, 1974.)

Varying figures on the strength of the guerrillas are given by American and Thai services. Nevertheless, that strength is increasing constantly. According to the latest figures, published in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, there were 8,000 guerrillas in 1974, compared with 5,000 the year before and 3,500 in 1972.⁽⁵⁾ The U.S. Lowenstein-Moose report evaluated the strength of the guerrillas in 1972 at 7,340-7,770.⁽⁶⁾

The Thai CP, of Maoist ideology but also linked to the Indochinese Communist movements, favorably greeted the demonstrations of October 1973. But it also denounced the Sanya "civilian" government, as it denounces the Seni Pramoj government today. Hence, the military operations have sometimes been of particular importance. One of the latest to date,

conducted in mid-February, resulted in nine dead and about 100 wounded among the government troops in the Northern province of Chiang Rai, according to an official communiqué. More than 500 functionaries and soldiers are said to have been killed during the past ten months.(7)

The peripheral character of the CP's base is partially accounted for by a number of objective factors. First, the border regions are often inhabited by very poor peoples subjected to national oppression, while the central regions of Thailand have lagged behind in the development of class struggle. Second, because of the absence of direct colonial rule and of an acute agrarian crisis (at least for a long period), Thailand served in effect as a "buffer zone" between the French and British territories of the region. Further, the urban proletariat and the commercial bourgeoisie arose out of the Chinese immigration. Even in Thailand, where the assimilation of these immigrants was more pronounced than it was in many other countries of the region, the Chinese or Sino-Thai population had great difficulty winning political rights. A final reason for the CP's peripheral implantation was that the development of Bangkok, a cancer grafted onto Thailand, was very rapid beginning with the start of the exodus from the rural areas. Bangkok today has between 3 million and 4 million inhabitants (including the adjacent city of Thonburi). In 1950 it had only 780,000, and 1.7 million in 1960. Chiang Mai, the second largest city in the country, has a population of only 200,000.

There are also political problems. First of all, it is possible that the orientation chosen has had some weight in the absence of extensive urban work by the CP. Second, the Thai CP today still has a Maoist ideology. And Peking's diplomacy does injury to the CP's orientation. The New China News Agency waited nearly a year before drawing a balance of the CP's activities after October 1973. And Peking Review has not accorded much space to the statements and radio broadcasts of the Thai CP. Worse yet, Chou En-lai told a Thai diplomat that U.S. troops should remain in the country to act as a counterweight to Soviet influence in the Indian Ocean. The National Student Center of Thailand protested this statement(8) and the CP did not change its combative policy. A contradiction exists between the Thai CP's ideological references to Maoism and its relations with Peking. Finally, the CP has developed essentially within the framework of guerrilla activity during the past several years. Now it is confronted with more or less spontaneous mass movements among the peasantry, the urban proletariat, and the student milieu, movements that are engaging in struggles for economic and political demands, at least in the present period. The junction of the guerrillas with these movements is not necessarily easy to make. These questions are

important: The CP is the only revolutionary organization that has existed for a long period. Many possibilities may arise out of its development.

Shadow of the military

In spite of the flight of the three dictators, the formation of a "civilian" government, and the election of the National Assembly, the shadow of the military still hangs over Thailand. "Three tiles of the roof (Marshals Thanom and Prapas and their relative, Colonel Narong) have fallen over the garden wall, but the rest of the house has not been touched," said a disillusioned student leader.(9) The army has not been lying low since October; its power remains intact. Many facts attest to this — apart from the absence of any deep reforms.

Many people assume that there will be a coup. That assumption was quite prevalent when Marshal Thanom Kittikachorn returned to Bangkok on December 27, 1974. Despite the fact that the government had forbidden his coming, he evaded the police and customs controls and came in by airplane. Then he went directly to the military airport, where he met with some officers. Upon the announcement of his arrival, the students assembled at Thammasat University. A united front of twenty organizations was formed including Saeksan Praserkul's FIST and the People for Democracy. This assembly was attacked by right-wingers using handmade bombs. Gunshots were fired in return. In the end, Thanom was forced to go to Singapore after a hesitation waltz by the government and some pressure from the army, which made Sanya abandon the plan, supported by the students, to bring the former dictator to trial. This episode enabled the student movement to recoup a good part of the audience it had lost among the population, and it was the radical wing of the movement that benefited. Above all, it brought to light the military connections that continue to be operative.

The army is not the only semi-hidden power. A scandal broke out in Bangkok when the daily *The Nation* revealed that a CIA agent had sent negotiating proposals to the prime minister — in the name of a Communist leader in the Northeast! In July 1974 riots broke out in the "Chinese neighborhoods" in the center of the capital when the police, who are detested, tried to arrest a taxi driver. The riots lasted for three days and resulted in 30 dead and 200 wounded. The students had to call off the demonstrations that had been planned for July 4 — U.S. independence day — to protest against the presence of American imperialism. The left tended to see the hand of the Taiwanese Kuomintang in these events. (Let us recall that Taiwan is the third-largest foreign investor in Thailand.) They were considered attempts at postponing the elections through a "strategy of tension."

Thai political life is thus dominated by uneasiness about a coup. But a coup could not be carried out without raising problems. Social struggles have not run their course. A coup would force all the opposition into clandestinity and the CP would then threaten to rapidly gain a mass base nationally. The outcome of such a coup would be uncertain. That is why the army is still lying low and waiting, certain that the "civilian regime" will not betray its interests. General Kris Sivara, one of the main superior officers today, did not participate in the electoral battles, apparently holding himself in reserve for a Bonapartist role later on. Nevertheless, he did indicate his preferences: He would like a coalition of rightists.

The results of the elections reflect this ambiguous situation. Forty-two parties contested the elections, with 2,199 candidates running for 269 seats. It is not easy to define these parties. The "patronage" phenomenon is still predominant. The programs of various parties were often very similar. And each of the major formations includes a part of the military apparatus, the industrial and banking interests (which the officers have extensively penetrated), and a privileged imperialist power. Nepotism reigns supreme.

The direct continuity of the political apparatus of the dictatorship is guaranteed by four parties: the Thai Nation party (Chat Thai), the Social Justice party (Dhamma Sangkhorn), the Social Agrarian party (Kaset Sangkhom), and the Social Nationalist party (Sangkhom Chat Niyom). Among the leaders of the Thai Nation party are General Paitun Inkathawatt, the commander of Thai troops in Laos; Brigadier General Chatichai Chunhaven, a former minister of foreign affairs; and General Pramarn Adireksan. The party is linked to Japanese interests and to the textile and sugar industries. It won twenty-eight seats in the elections. The Social Justice party, which won forty-five seats, is led by Dewit Klinprathum, a very rich businessman. The Social Agrarian party and the Social Nationalist party are two smaller formations allied to the first two parties; together they won thirty-seven seats. In spite of the millions that were spent by these parties during the electoral campaign, they suffered a relative defeat. This defeat is an expression of the unhesitating rejection of the pro-Thanom right by the population of the most politicized areas.

The Social Action party (Kit Sangkhom) led by Kulkrit Pramoj also suffered a defeat, winning only eighteen seats. A royalist and loyalist, Kulkrit wants to found a party in the image of Lee Kuan Yew's party in Singapore. Probably linked very closely with the United States and Israel, Kulkrit is surrounded by bankers and industrialists, notably the president of Thailand Coca-Cola. It was the Democratic party, led by his brother, Seni Pramoj,

«the next stage of the asian revolution may well unfold... in thailand»



that won a relative victory, winning seventy-two seats, among them twenty-three of the twenty-six seats in Bangkok. The Democratic party is the only old party, formerly an opposition party, and is supposed to represent the indigenous bourgeoisie; it is considered to be "liberal." Seni Pramoj has a reputation for honesty. That is the likely reason for the success of the Democratic party. Nonetheless, Seni is very close to his brother Kulkrit, and now that he is prime minister, the government has taken on Kulkrit's political hue. The minister of foreign affairs is Pichai Ratakul (Democratic party), a businessman who was the Southeast Asian director for Rotary International eleven years ago; the vice prime minister and minister of finance is the leader of the Social Agrarian party. The ministry of defense is still under the direction of the military; General Thawich Seniwongse is minister.

The New Forces party (Palang Mai), known as the party of young technocrats and intellectuals, has been called "barely left of center" by a reporter for the International Herald Tribune. (10) This party won twelve seats. Finally, there are two socialist parties, the United Socialist Front (ten seats) and the Socialist party of Thailand (fifteen seats). The former includes old leftist elements, some of whom had been imprisoned. The latter won seats especially in the politicized and radicalized regions of the Northeast. Its best-known leader is Boonsanong Punyodyana, a sociology professor at Thammasat



Bangkok, October 1973.

University. It is probably the most leftist party, although it remains very heterogeneous politically. In an interview granted the journalist Norma Peagam(11) Boonsanong explained that there are in his party about thirty former political prisoners and many militants of October 1973. Significantly, he refused to condemn the Thai CP and, on the contrary, explained that "it is certainly natural that the freedom-loving people of this country will not cease resisting" in view of the exploitative and oppressive character of the government and that "the communists are a good example of such patriotic, freedom-loving people." That is rather unusual language in the very anticommunist political society of Bangkok. Reformist currents, personalities identifying with Pridi Banomyong, one of the promoters of the 1932 revolution, who was in exile in China and then in Paris(12), and radical militants coexist side by side in the Socialist party of Thailand.

The minority government has been formed by a center-right/far-right coalition. The strongest bloc of parties in the National Assembly is that of the pro-Thanom right-wing parties. But alone this bloc does not command a majority. The Democratic party remains the winner of these elections, thanks to its reputation for "probity." The royalists are a very small minority in the National Assembly, as is the left. But 60 percent of the electorate abstained in Bangkok, and the Northeast voted for the Democratic

party or for the left. Thus, the elections opened rather than closed a new period of political instability.

Washington

The military coup — always a possibility — seems to have been postponed. The future of struggles will depend to a large extent on the ability of the new young generation of militants that has come out of October 1973 and the subsequent battles to regroup their forces, centralize the student, worker, and peasant struggles and offer them political perspectives for the period of transition that has now opened. At the same time, the new militants must remain prepared to respond to any other eventuality. But U.S. imperialism is also intervening as an active factor in the process now under way. Thailand is a key to its regional strategy. A hinge linking Indochina, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent, Thailand has a 1,350-mile common border with Laos and Cambodia and a 485-mile coastline on the Indian Ocean. A founding member of SEATO, Thailand has benefited from rarely equaled aid from its protector and master. The air bridge supplying Phnom Penh today originates from the U.S. base at Utapao in Thailand. Anticipating the possible fall of the Lon Nol regime and the establishment of the Pathet Lao rule over Vientiane, Washington has made Thailand its next line of defense, while at the same time it has begun consolidating its rear areas in the Pacific.

The next stage of the Asian revolution may well unfold, at least partially, in Thailand. ■

FOOTNOTES:

1. See *Quatrième Internationale*, No.13 (January-March 1974) and *Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 22, 1973.
2. See J.C. Pomonti, *Le Monde*, May 28, 1974; Kevin Rafferty, *Financial Times*, April 10, 1974; and the *Bulletin Commercial of the Banque de Bruxelles*, December 26, 1974.
3. *Le Monde*, December 20, 1974.
4. Marcel Barang and Nayan R. Chanda, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 1974.
5. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 17, 1975.
6. *Le Monde Diplomatique*, February 1974.
7. *Le Monde*, April 23, 1974.
8. *The Voice of the Nation* (Bangkok daily), January 20, 1975.
9. J.C. Pomonti, *Le Monde*, April 28, 1974.
10. *International Herald Tribune*, January 28, 1975.
11. *Far Eastern Economic Review*, January 17, 1975.
12. Contrary to what is asserted by F. Fetjå in his book *Dictionnaire des PC et Mouvements Révolutionnaires*, Pridi is not the president of the Socialist party of Thailand.

MOROCCO

THE PALACE FACES A CRISIS

by ABBAS TARIQ



HASSAN II

In Morocco today the crisis of the regime is combining with the crisis of imperialism, one of whose most explicit manifestations is world capitalist inflation. In Morocco, as elsewhere in economically peripheral areas, the inflationary push asserts itself as repeated attacks on the standard of living of the masses. The deterioration of buying power has been very sharp, despite wage increases on the order of 15 percent that were won by a combative proletariat.

The economic and social review *Lamalif* (No. 66, November 1974) revealed that "the wholesale price index rose 5.4% in July, while the retail price index rose 1.3%, which brings to 14% the retail price increase between July 1973 and July 1974 and a wholesale price increase of 21.6% during the same period." This publication stressed that "if the figures for August and September were made public, the increase would be doubled or tripled, even given the adjustments that are made in the official index." In fact, the distortions of this index are such that it no longer has any meaning; the state services themselves recently demanded that another index better reflecting reality be set up. (The index now in use was initiated in 1959.)

How can an economy that depends essentially on exploitation of the soil and the subsoil and is oriented basically toward exports escape from dependency and avert being subjected to the effects of the crisis of the capitalist system?

If the state of foreign trade for the first six months of 1974 is examined, it is seen that Moroccan imports increased 73% (from 2,215 million DH in 1973 to 3,829 million DH in 1974; 1 DH = US\$0.24). During the same period, exports rose only 66% (from

2,037 million DH to 3,373 million DH). The deficit thus passed from 178 million to 456 million DH. The growth in exports is especially significant in that it results above all from the export of spring wheat (the value of which increased from 144 million to 414 million DH), sugar (from 174 million to 311 million DH), oil (from 98 to 432 million DH), vegetable oil, and lumber.

The value of exports of semifinished products rose from 573 million to 978 million DH, an increase of 65.8%.

In 1974 export of vegetable products represented only 27.99% of total exports (as compared with 51.4% in 1973). On the other hand, export of phosphates now accounts for 51.7% of exports as compared with 25.11% in 1973. The value of phosphate exports rose from 388 million DH to 1,514 million DH, an increase of 290%. Nevertheless, the increase in exports is far from sufficient to compensate for the deterioration of the trade balance.

Imperialist control & plunder

French imperialism structures its intervention in Morocco around the banking system. The major imperialist banking concerns are the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas (500 million transactions), the Banque Rothschild, the Banque de Suez (to which must be added the BNDE, which is under the control of foreign capital), the Morgan Guarantee Trust, the Société Financière Internationale, not to mention the operations of the World Bank, which is controlled by the United States. Of the twenty-three banks operating in Morocco, twenty are controlled by France or the United States.

in the automobile industry and related branches, General Tire, Chrysler, Renault, and Goodyear have recently moved in along with Berliet and Fiat.

The mining industry, with the exception of phosphates, is under imperialist domination:

- Fluorine: Omnium Nord-Africaine (ONA), a holding of the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas; Eugène-Kuhlmann; Preussag (West Germany);
- Copper: France and Japan; silver mine owned by ONA; cobalt (ONA);
- Oil: Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (ENI, Italy);
- Manganese: the Zellidja mines (Penarroya).

Finally, the tourist industry is dominated by the "Club Méditerranée-Trigano," controlled by the Banque Rothschild and ITT.

These few figures impel the least credulous to ask themselves some questions about the reality of a "national" Moroccan economy.

One of the consequences of the domination of the rural regions is unemployment and an exodus to the cities. In the Haouz region alone the National Immigration Office estimates the number of people prepared to look for work in capitalist Europe at 10,000. The market in "human commodities" is a fruitful one. There are now more than 500,000 Moroccan workers in capitalist Europe.

As for unemployment, it has become banal to say that it is structural. It affects more than 45% of the active urban population; more than 50% of small peasants are affected by underemployment. "Moroccan" industry presently accounts for only 11% of gross production and provides (according to official figures) only 127,000-157,000 jobs.

While imperialism, U.S. imperialism in the first place, intervenes directly in setting down the economic and political orientation that the country is supposed to take, it does not do this in order to aid

the independent development of a national bourgeoisie conscious of its own interests. It does it primarily to defend its own interests, which in the long run are threatened by the anarchy and weakness of the existing regime.

This is the only way to understand the two attempted coups (July 1971 and August 1972). The aim of these two warning blows, which occurred in the framework of options taken by the Pentagon and the CIA, was to head off the rise of the mass movement and to avoid both the bourgeois solutions of the Istiqlaal party and the solutions of the petty bourgeoisie of the UNFP. U.S. imperialism's objective in July 1971, and even more clearly in August 1972, was to destroy the anachronistic apparatus of the monarchy and replace it with a strong state militarily capable of damming up both the claims of the various opposition political groups and the rise of struggles of the working masses. If one of these coups had succeeded, the strong state that would have emerged from it would have moved to open and extend the Moroccan market to the whole Arabo-African economy.

Imperialism cannot content itself with the Moroccan market alone, which is too narrow either to absorb the capitalist industrial surplus-product or to intensify the investments of international financial companies.

Imperialism has always dreamed of making Morocco an important pole in its economic and political strategy. The obstacles presently standing in the way of such designs are the weakened monarchy and the hybrid and timid bourgeoisie. After the failure of the two coups, there was no alternative but to seek another road. The safest road was the construction of an alliance of the ruling classes and layers against the disinherited masses: against the proletariat, which was becoming more and more militant (with protracted strikes in the mining

TABLE OF ORGANIZATIONS

<u>UNFP</u>	Union Nationale des Forces Populaires (National Union of Popular Forces), result of a split from the Istiqlaal party. Principal leader: Ibrahim.
<u>USFP</u>	Union Socialiste des Forces Populaires (Socialist Union of Popular Forces), arose in 1972 from the Rabat branch of the UNFP. Principal leader: Bouabid.
<u>UMT</u>	Union Marocaine du Travail (Moroccan Union of Labor), trade union whose apparatus is under the influence of the UNFP. Principal leader: Ben Sedik.
<u>PI</u>	Parti Istiqlaal (Independence party).
<u>PPS</u>	Parti du Progrès et du Socialisme (Party of Progress and Socialism, formerly the Communist party). Principal leader: Ali Yata.

industry and among the dockers, crane operators, and truck drivers, who outflanked the trade-union apparatus of the UMT); and against the poor peasantry (which confronted the army in Oulad Khalifa and Sidi Sliman).

This alliance thus compelled the autocratic monarchy to try to put an end to the political struggles being waged by the radicalized youth of the high schools and the university and to the armed struggle that was arising in the Atlas Mountains, unleashed by radical nationalist elements who broke in practice with the legalism of the UNFP.

The present turn

The monarchy promulgated a "plan of economic initiative" in order to offer some so-called response to the crisis of the Moroccan economy. According to the monarchy's own declarations, this plan "is to be applied to a liberal economy and therefore has an indicative character marked by the absence of constraints and thus the greatest latitude in the choices and actions of economic agents." Fundamentally, this whimsy about indicative planning will only perpetuate the same industrial, agricultural, financial, and fiscal choices as before.

The annual growth rate for gross domestic production has been set at 7.5% for the period 1973-77 (which represents twice the previously recorded rate).

The overall increase in investments foreseen in the plan is 29,000 million DH, with an average annual rate of investment of 18%, rising to 23% by the end of the plan.

The comments this plan calls for would be numerous if it were not for the one enormous question that must be raised right from the beginning: Where will the investment funds be found?

The 29,000 million DH in investment funds that is called for and normally should have been raised has not at all been collected. Sales of phosphates, whose price has quadrupled (reaching \$68 a ton) can be a source of only 4,500 million DH, the best part of which has to be diverted to the compensation fund whose function is to maintain the prices of cereals, sugar, oil, and fertilizer.

Foreign capitalists, solicited with great urgency and attracted by the prospect of big superprofits, are hesitating. The Arab investments promised by the oil emirates are so far very low. Abu Dhabi has advanced only 150 million DH; Saudi Arabia has granted a \$50 million loan. The Arab dollars are being sent elsewhere. But how much of these funds will actually be usable?

The plan insists on the development of "modern agriculture," that is, agriculture that is essentially oriented toward export products and that is consequently buffeted by the fluctuation of world market prices.

Moroccanization

In the final analysis, the burden of the objectives of this plan can be summed up as a "Moroccanization" operation that the regime had already launched some four years ago.

This formula conjures away a whole orientation subjected to the imperatives of the imperialist economy. But two aspects of this operation should be stressed: First, the encouragement of the purchase of small and middle-sized companies from the former colons (this has some mobilizing potential and alienates a middle-layer commercial bourgeoisie from the regime); and second, the offer of guarantees to the various nationalist currents that the recovery of the national product will really and continuously occur.

This "Moroccanization" operation is not unrelated to the crisis of imperialism and the exacerbation of interimperialist competition. The monarchy wants to play on these conjunctural interimperialist contradictions. But since Morocco itself is not a significant power, all these maneuvers will amount to nothing. This is a policy on which from time to time many an Arab regime has broken its neck.

Nevertheless, the gimmick of "Moroccanization" has also been taken up by the opposition (Istiqlal, UNFP, USFP, PPS). For the monarchy, whose back is to the wall, the launching of this plan was dictated by the need to rapidly defend its own interests from those of the bourgeoisie. In the final analysis, the role of the technocrats in the planning system consisted of studying the situation and proposing a rationalization of the plunder of the country by sketching out a bill of fare and profits that would take account of the interests of foreign capital (imperialism), comprador capital (the palace and the parasitic layers), and "national" capital (the bourgeoisie of the Istiqlal).

Apparently, these technocrats made a mistake in their optimism and idealism, for one year after the announcement of the plan (which had satisfied the bourgeoisie), the regime is gradually abandoning it! The abandonment of the plan, or more exactly the switch in options on industrialization and "agricultural development," is explained by the reality of imperialist domination of the Moroccan economy.

Last November 19 King Hassan, referring to the economic difficulties Morocco is experiencing because of the "price increases in raw materials,"

stated that the country would careen into disaster if it did not alter its mode of living. "Only a grand effort in the area of agriculture will be able to save us from catastrophe and win us prosperity, dignity, and respect among nations," he said.

For the regime, the solution to the vital problems of undernourishment, employment, and generalized poverty requires the development of the agricultural sector. The ruling clique is counting on the facilities for access of Moroccan goods to the European market established through the customs convention signed in 1969 with the European Economic Community. (The development of exports is presented as an "inevitable necessity and precondition for economic growth.")

The bourgeoisie of the towns, which had believed in the sand castle of the 1973-77 five-year plan, is now being asked to invest in the primary sector. It has to throw itself into expanding landed property, developing an agro-industrial sector, and assuring a significant rate of exports.

Apart from a few fine points, the economic map will remain nearly the same as before: Imperialism will retain privileged control of the industrial, mining, and banking sectors; the same parasitic comprador sectors will cluster around imperialism. The bourgeoisie will try to accumulate in the agrarian sector by developing and diversifying the capitalist mode of production in the countryside.

This will lead to an extension of the domination of the capitalist mode of production over the whole of society, especially through the growth of agricultural production and productivity.

The beginning of the application of an agrarian reform will engender the development of a layer of kulaks, of middle-layer proprietors, the indispensable hookup in this domination. For the moment, the representatives of the bourgeoisie (the Istiqlal party) and their "historic allies," the UNFP and the PPS, have not reacted to these about-faces by the regime. They seem to be counting more and more on the prospect of their integration into the state apparatus in the near future.

The Sahara operation

Given its inability to fulfill its economic promises, the regime has cleverly launched a series of unprecedented political operations. These operations are directed at the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, and Stalinist political formations. The first is "operation Sahara"; the second consists of some measures of liberalization.

The monarchy needed a major trump card to break out of its isolation and move away from the brink of collapse and decomposition on which its regime was teetering. Following Sadat's example, the monarchy chose the "territorial question."

The Spanish-controlled Sahara was the choice prize that was to constitute the pole around which national consciousness would be polarized and crystallized. Since the end of 1974, the Sahara has become the number one theme of domestic and foreign policy.

The proclaimed objective is national liberation, or more exactly, the completion of national liberation by the bankrupt monarchy. Hassan's cleverness lies in the timing of his move. Taking advantage of the deep response of the masses to the struggles of the African peoples of Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola, of the defeat of Portuguese fascism, and of the October War (in which Morocco got off cheaply by sending a few battalions), he succeeded for a time in forging unity around the throne by putting forward the theme of liberation of the Sahara.

In the space of a few months this mystifying theme managed to unite behind Hassan the sworn enemies of the throne, the Boucettas, the Bouabids, and the Ali Yatas. Overnight, these general secretaries and presidents of parties, these "glorious oppositionists," became royal emissaries defending the "patriotic and national cause" at the United Nations and before other governments, with the same status and the same rights as the ministers of the palace.

It was not long before this regime hated by the masses, this lackey regime, this watchdog of imperialism, became "national" and "patriotic" in their eyes. Once again, betrayal and opportunism came to the fore, endorsing the crimes of the throne. The list of these crimes and massacres is a long one: the suppression of the mass insurrection in the Rif in 1958 and in Casablanca in 1965, the massacre of the peasants in Ouled Khalifa, the execution of Dakhoun (a UNFP militant and fighter of the Palestinian resistance) and fourteen of his comrades, the shooting of striking miners in Jerrada and of agricultural workers in Sidi Sliman, the execution of seven nationalists last August 27.

Hassan did want such obvious groveling and servility from these parties. Having gotten more from them than he had hoped on the Sahara question, he had only to move to the second phase of his strategy; for the aim of the ruling camarilla was clear from the beginning: to seek the broadest possible support both nationally and internationally to impose a negotiated solution on Spanish fascism.

The regime's objective was to bring a part of the Sahara under its administration and preserve the economic and military interests of imperialism in the region, all the while intensifying the fusion of comprador capital with imperialist capital through stepping up the exploitation of the phosphate and petroleum deposits of the region. In fact, a new economic reality has arisen in the Sahara since the discovery in 1964 of phosphate, iron ore, natural gas deposits, and, most recently, off-shore oil.

The Bouakraa and Tichli phosphate deposits are among the richest in the world: 3,300 million tons (exploited by Krupp, producing 10 million tons a year).

The oil in the Adiat Amercaba region near Smara is exploited by the CGG. The INI controls the ferrous ore centers in Rio de Oro, whose deposits are estimated at more than 70 million tons, the iron content of the ore reaching 65 percent.

Hassan's operation succeeded partially; the intense diplomatic bludgeoning managed to produce an overwhelming UN vote postponing the Spanish plan for a referendum on self-determination in the Sahara.

The International Court in The Hague gave its advice and worked out in the smoky language of international bourgeois law a neocolonial pact between the Spanish fascist bandits and their apprentices Hassan and Ould Dadah. To gain credit for this plan and to show that his ambitions did not go beyond it, Hassan rejected any support to the armed struggle in Sahara and reassured imperialism. In a press conference last September 17 he stated: "I have already asked the Spanish either to police their own territory, for it still is their territory, or to allow me the freedom to prevent the secessionists from acting, because I know the people of the FLS (Sahara Liberation Front). My troops are in large part down there to do a policing job if the Spanish government does not do it.

"I want the German interests with investments in the Sahara to know that as far as I am concerned it is not only Spanish interests that are involved. There are the interests of all the financial groups that have invested in the Sahara and in phosphates." No commentary is necessary.

Neither the PPS nor the USFP nor the UNFP reacted. Once again they did not consider the point essential. For them, any bargaining with the throne is acceptable, provided the throne deigns to allow them to sit side by side with it on the government benches of the future parliament.

Liberalization measures

The regime was not blinded by its own success (in the Sahara, in options for economic development). The only thing remaining was to establish the elements for politically capitalizing on the gains already made by its strategy and for breaking out of its isolation.

The regime itself realizes that neither the throne nor the big bourgeoisie nor the Stalinist or reformist current can have any success in holding back the rise of struggles unless some adaptation to the period is made. In order to avoid being trapped in its incapacity to contain the present struggles and the struggles to come, the monarchy had to seek an alliance with the political parties. The convergence of the interests of the monarchy and those of the opposition had to be effected through a sharing of political power.

The royal promises concerning the establishment of a parliament by October 1975 and a government of national union beginning in January 1975 must be seen in this framework. In making this move the monarchy showed how well it understands the reformist, legalist, and collaborationist character of these political formations. The throne understood how much it still retains the ability to isolate the political parties and render them incapable of basing themselves on the struggles of the masses in order to shift the relationship of forces in their favor.

The regime controls the process of "liberalization" from top to bottom, laying down the dates and conditions of its implementation. Manifestly, the regime is not giving way to panic, for the relationship of forces is still favorable to it. It showed this by authorizing the formation of the PPS, which amounted to a de facto legalization of the thrice-banned Communist party. It made a similar demonstration by lifting the ban on the Rabat branch of the UNFP, which was reconstituted as the USFP.

No one should be fooled. None of these concessions were made under the pressure of the organized mass movement. In fact, while authorizing these parties to raise their heads, the regime executed their radical, extremist elements.

Since Hassan has extended his hand to these parties and promised them that he will share power with them, they are remaining silent. They are promising the masses that many changes will be granted by a government of national unity based on a common program and placed under the control of the monarchy.

To be continued.



THE WORLDWIDE RECESSION

RESOLUTION ADOPTED BY THE INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The following resolution was adopted unanimously by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International at its meeting in January.

Despite the years of propaganda that it would never again occur, the capitalist world has plunged into its first generalized recession since the 1930s. While it would be hazardous to forecast that world unemployment levels will rise as high as in the Great Depression, the threat has not been eliminated. A heightened offensive of capital against labor's living standards is under way everywhere. No long-term respite from inflation is possible in any of the major powers.

1.

1. The current recession of the international capitalist economy was predicted by revolutionary socialists long in advance. Between 1948 and 1973 capitalist world production increased three and a half times at an average rate of 5 percent a year. There was no growth in 1974. By the last quarter of 1974, industrial output of all major imperialist countries was declining. The United States is in its deepest postwar economic downturn, with the Gross National Product (GNP) down 2.2 percent from 1973. It is falling fast. The GNP fell 3 percent in Japan, after 25 years of expansion.

Only some of the minor capitalist countries have as yet escaped the immediate effects of the decline (Sweden, Switzerland, Norway, Austria), either

because of exceptional circumstances (the discovery of North Sea oil for Norway), or because of their particular relationship to the world market.

The physical volume of world trade has not yet declined, although the rate of growth has dropped sharply. The major powers are seeking to step up foreign sales, if possible, to counteract the recession at home. Whether the volume of world trade will decline depends on the length of the downturn in the major countries (above all the United States, West Germany, and Japan), and on the extent of protectionist measures undertaken by the competing powers.

While the actual downturn in industrial output is still small (except in the United States) the rise in unemployment is pronounced. Indeed, official figures in the imperialist countries for the winter of 1974-75 may show that unemployment has risen above 15 million. This will certainly prove to be the case if in addition to those listed as unemployed account is taken of those who work only part-time because full-time jobs are not available to them. Unemployment is probably around 8 to 10 million in the United States; 1.5 million in Italy; 1 million each in West Germany, France, and Britain; 1 million in the minor imperialist countries of Western Europe (Benelux countries, Spain, Denmark, etc.); 1 million in Japan; and 1 million in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand taken together.



The reasons for this disproportionate increase in unemployment are twofold:

(a) The present worldwide economic crisis follows a long period of rapid technological progress (automation) in which productivity rose steeply, especially in Western Europe and Japan (this occurred earlier in the United States). The technological advance was accompanied as always by a slow erosion of the rate of profit, which capital attempted to offset through speedups, "rationalization," and other methods of reducing labor costs. But when the rate of increase of productivity is high, only a substantial increase in output can avoid massive unemployment. If there is an actual decline or even mere stagnation in output, unemployment will soar.

(b) In the imperialist countries since World War II, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of women seeking employment. There are two main reasons for this development. One is that average wages for males (whether industrial or "white collar") are no longer adequate to satisfy the basic needs of a working-class family. The other is that women are displaying a greater economic and social independence, a reflection internationally of the women's liberation movement.

This growing trend, together with that of mounting seasonal appearances of students on the labor market, has increased the potential supply of labor power in the job market independently of the cyclical fluctuations of the economy. Among the workers seeking employment in the imperialist countries are growing layers that are sexually, racially, and nationally oppressed (in the United States, Blacks, Chicanos, and members of other oppressed nationalities; in Western Europe, immigrant workers), a fact that has facilitated the formation of a large actual or potential industrial reserve army of labor, even during periods of high employment levels.

2.

2. The current international capitalist recession constitutes a turning point in postwar developments of immense significance.

(a) It is the first generalized recession since the thirties. There have been many recessions since World War II: Indeed, today as in the past, capital cannot avoid cyclical fluctuations of its economy. But the staggered character of these recessions (for example, the absence of a recession in West Germany, Japan, Italy, and France during the severe 1957-58 U.S. downturn) limited their breadth and depth. A country with shrinking internal markets could export surplus goods and capital.

But with all the major imperialist countries caught simultaneously, the export markets are pinched off. The possibility of finding a solution by increasing exports to the bureaucratized workers states and the oil-exporting countries of the Middle East is likewise excluded. These potential markets are minimal compared to what is required to absorb the mounting surplus of capital and commodities.

Because it occurs simultaneously in many countries, the recession can build up as a whole with extraordinary force, the recession in each country aggravating the recessions in the others, and all of them combining to make the crisis much graver than any recession since the thirties. The danger is particularly great if the recession in the United States lasts through 1975. The United States produces almost as much as all the other 23 member nations of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a group comprising all the major capitalist countries. Because of its massiveness, the U.S. economy tends to draw the others into its orbit.

(b) The present international recession clearly confirms previous observations that the long postwar capitalist boom had come to an end.

The long period of accelerated economic growth following World War II included cyclical downturns; but they were shorter and less intense than those of the twenties and thirties; and the economic and social consequences for the masses were much less dramatic. In addition to the impulse given to world capitalism by the rebuilding of Europe and Japan following the devastation of World War II, the massive use of "anticrisis" measures by the imperialist governments tended to soften economic downturns, although the end result was merely to postpone the reckoning and entrench permanent inflation.

Particularly important has been armaments spending in the United States. Year after year Washington has poured colossal sums into the national and world economy to arm and finance military forces in the United States and abroad, and to pay the increasingly large interest on accumulated military debts. The budget deficits to carry out these operations have become staggering (figures ranging from \$52 billion to \$70 billion have been mentioned for the U.S. budgetary deficit in the fiscal year beginning July 1975).

The "pump-priming" nostrum of government deficit spending was not limited to the United States. By 1973 all the major capitalist powers were throwing huge amounts into deficit spending. The rapid expansion of credit on a world scale drove up prices everywhere.

Moreover, each successive recession required bigger

doses of inflationary deficit spending to block a worse slump. This became a vicious circle.

Increasing inflation of the dollar led to a series of crises and ultimately to the collapse in 1971 of the international monetary system set up at Bretton Woods in 1944, marking the end of the long postwar boom.

The short inflationary boom of 1971-73 was merely a passing phase in the opening of a new long-term period of increasingly aggravated contradictions of world capitalism (including much slower growth) that began in 1967-68 and that became still more clearly manifested in the present world recession.

3.

3. The present recession is fundamentally a classical crisis of overproduction caused by the inner contradictions of the capitalist mode of production. It is not an accident, allegedly caused by the "oil sheikhs," any more than the 1929 depression was caused by "speculation" in stocks, or previous serious economic crises were caused by "overextending" railway construction or overseas trade.

To be sure, each crisis of overproduction appears as a combination of general phenomena arising from the very nature of capitalist production, and particular phenomena brought to the fore at a given phase of its worldwide expansion and ups and downs. But the very fact that these "accidents" occur with a regular periodicity, that they can be foreseen and predicted, shows that they are bound up structurally with the capitalist system itself. Neither the pre-capitalist nor the postcapitalist economies undergo these cyclical fluctuations of employment, industrial output, and national income.

Likewise, the ultimate causes of the present worldwide recession are the inner contradictions of the capitalist mode of production long ago laid bare by Marx. After a period of economic growth, the tendency of the rate of profit to decline necessarily becomes more prominent. This holds with all the greater force the longer the period of growth and the faster its rate. The organic composition of capital increases as automation and semiautomation reinforce the preponderance of machinery and other forms of stored up "dead labor" in production. The classical avenues for offsetting the effects of the rising organic composition of capital are more and more obstructed.

High employment levels and the growing social and organizational strength of the working class make it increasingly difficult for capital to significantly

raise the rate of exploitation (the rate of surplus value).

The very attempts of capital to cheapen raw materials create divergent trends in prices and profits in primary products on the one hand and manufactured goods on the other. This leads to a growing disproportion in capital investments and current production in both sectors. Sooner or later this results in a relative scarcity of raw materials and in a radical increase in their prices as compared to those of manufactured goods.

The decline in the rate of profit combined with an intensification of competition, in turn, creates the need for borrowing a larger and larger part of the capital needed for additional investments. This is the source of the increasingly severe "liquidity crises" of private companies both nationally and internationally.

But even the biggest corporations can meet unsurmountable difficulties in raising the funds required for profitable investment. At a given point all these forces pressing down on the rate of profit must lead to a growing number of capitalist firms being threatened by bankruptcy or actually becoming bankrupt, to an overall decrease in the volume of investment (of capital accumulation), to a massive curtailment of production, to massive layoffs, which by their cumulative effects create a generalized downturn in economic activity.

On the other hand, there is an inherent trend in capitalist production to extend productive capacity beyond the limited purchasing power of the masses, which is determined in the last analysis by the antagonistic class relations within bourgeois society. Each capitalist boom creates a tendency toward excess capacity and overproduction and the consequent stockpiling of unsellable commodities in key sectors of the economy. As this excess capacity and overproduction increases, current output and employment are correspondingly curtailed, and the crisis is worsened accordingly.

In the present recession, overproduction began in the automobile industry and the building trades. It spread rapidly to electrical appliances, petrochemicals (plastics and synthetic fibers), textiles and clothing, the tourist trade, and aviation industries. It has now reached even the steel industry, which a few months ago was still in the midst of one of its biggest booms resulting from the drastic concentration and curtailment of investment in that industry in the late 1960s, and relative scarcity of steel that resulted in the beginning of the 1970s.



4.

4. While stressing the general structural causes of the present world recession, the analysis should pinpoint the special aspects that differentiate it from previous overproduction crises, especially the big slumps of 1929-33 and of 1937-38:

(a) The main distinguishing feature is world inflation. A sharp increase in prices coincided with the opening of the recession. The world capitalist economy passed from an inflationary boom through "stagflation" toward "slumpflation." In the past, a sharply downward movement if not an actual collapse of prices occurred in depressions. Inflation coincided with crises only in exceptional circumstances — lost wars, civil wars, complete disruption of the economy and output; and then only for a short time.

Today world inflation is continuing (and in certain countries like the United States, Britain, Italy, France, even increasing!), in spite of a downturn in production and employment. This disrupts the "normal" function of an overproduction crisis. It is supposed to restabilize the economy by eliminating the more backward firms, clearing out inventories, and increasing the rate of exploitation, thereby paving the way for renewed investment.

But the inflationary expansion of credit prolongs inventory buildup, concealing the actual weaknesses of firms. For a time the increase in nominal wages cloaks the erosion of real wages. Artificial purchasing power is created — artificial for firms that ultimately will not be able to remain competitive; artificial for workers who simply cannot repay debts once the lowering of real wages and outright unemployment has reached a certain point. Thus the expansion of credit can go too far. It can prepare the way for unexpected bankruptcies and the closing of banks; in other words, precisely the kind of credit collapse nationally and internationally that characterized the depression of the 1930s. The imperialists themselves do not rule out this danger.

(b) Another distinguishing factor of the world recession is the combination of recession in most sectors of output, including key raw materials, with an acute shortage in two central sectors of the world capitalist economy: energy (especially oil) and food (especially grain and sugar).

This combination is not a result of "natural catastrophes," nor does it express the "limits of growth" of the productive forces. It is a result of disproportions created by monopoly competition.

Relatively low prices of raw materials lead to an outflow of capital from this sector into other sectors.

Shortages are a means of increasing profits and attracting new capital. This objective process, in turn, can be accelerated by deliberate decisions of the monopolists.

The international petroleum cartel (the seven "oil majors") curtailed refinery capacity and oil production as part of a policy of driving up world energy prices and profits. In the interest of higher prices and profits, U.S., Canadian, and Australian "agri-business" curtailed food production. This is the root cause of the current famines in the African Sahel countries and the Indian subcontinent.

These specific features of the world recession have to be taken into account to evaluate its economic, social, and political effects on various countries, parts of the world, and social classes. But they in no way change the estimate of the world recession as a deep crisis of the capitalist system as a whole.

5.

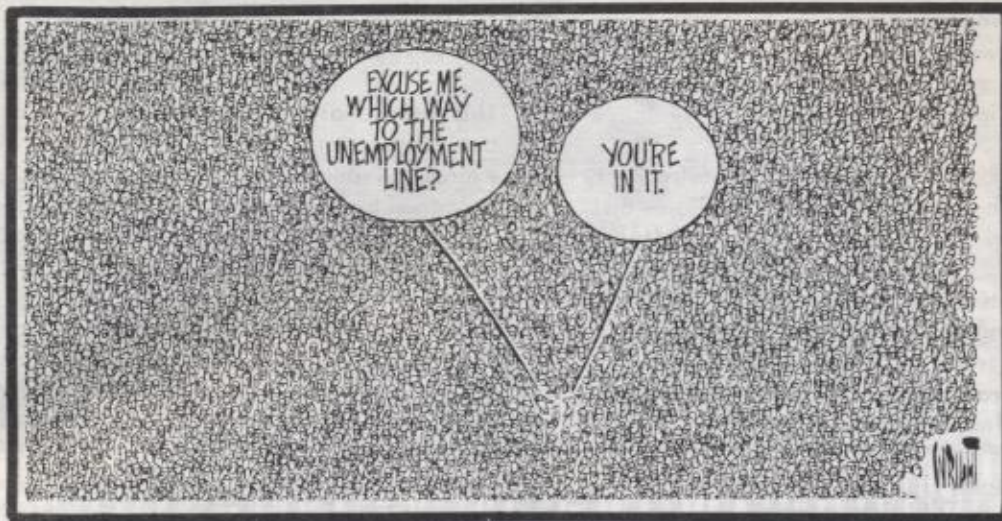
5. Theoretically and technically, a transformation of the present world recession into a depression of the 1929-32 type is not excluded. It could occur if the governments of the imperialist countries fail (for objective or subjective reasons) to follow economic policies aimed at mitigating the downturn. Such a depression could occur if aggregate demand in the key imperialist countries were cut by strong reductions of government outlays and by major curtailment of credit coinciding with big increases in unemployment and sharp declines in wages and profits.

Such an occurrence would imply:

Either (a) that for some objective reason outside of the control of the capitalist governments (for example, a collapse of confidence in paper money, including the dollar, the Deutsche Mark, etc., leading to a return to gold as the only final means of payment for international operations) a strong deflationary trend appears in money and credit in all the major imperialist countries, a trend that coincides with overproduction. This is what happened in 1929-32, ultimately provoking international bank failures.

Or (b) that a trend appears among the capitalist governments to press for general deflation of the volume of money and credit in order to radically "cure" inflation even if it means 30 to 40 million unemployed on a world scale.

While the second course is technically possible, it is highly unlikely. Even an unemployment level of



a half or a third the scale of the 1930s is frightening enough to governments to induce them to revive inflationary policies (as is already the case in Washington and Bonn).

The world recession occurs at a time in the class struggle when the level of working-class organization and the capacity for resistance are immensely stronger than in 1929 or 1937. It occurs at a time when the world relationship of forces between imperialism and its various antagonists is much more unfavorable to world capital than before World War II. Under these circumstances a catastrophic economic depression of the 1929-32 type would engender an explosive social and political crisis not only in Western Europe but also in Japan and North America.

If unemployment levels reached 15 million in the United States, 5 million in West Germany, 5 million in Japan, 3 million unemployed in Britain, France, and Italy, short-term palliatives would not avert the intense anger and explosive reaction of the working class. The example of large-scale non-capitalist planned economies that are able to avoid unemployment and inflation despite their bureaucratic deformations would help inspire the Western working class to break out of the private profit system, giving the thrust toward socialism immense force as the masses noted the most effective tactical expedients used in other lands. A repetition of a 1929-32 type of depression would, under the present international and national sociopolitical relationship of forces, clearly initiate the gravest crisis of the capitalist system since its inception.

To avoid such a catastrophe for themselves, the imperialist governments will likely refrain from the ruthless kind of deflation of money and credit volume that made the 1929-32 depression unavoidable. The strongest ones still have sufficient reserves to

follow such a course. They have no alternative but to continue in their characteristically pragmatic, and sometimes even panicky way, to oscillate between anti-inflationary and antirecessionary measures in such a way as not to trigger "too much" unemployment or "too high" prices. They can stop neither!

Nevertheless the question can legitimately be asked: Is it not possible that even the key imperialist governments will lose control over the situation? It seems obvious that inflation cannot continue indefinitely without exhausting its antirecessionary effects and even transforming itself from a motor into a brake on capitalist economic growth. The collapse of the speculative boom in 1973 and early 1974; the bankruptcies of several important banks; the huge losses met by speculators in currencies, in raw materials, and in land; the collapse of stock prices in the main stock exchanges throughout the capitalist world — all these were ominous signs of a potential worldwide panic. The tremendous extension of the Eurodollar market (additionally fueled by petrodollars); the threat of a massive balance of payments deficit in nearly all the imperialist countries (with the exception of West Germany) as a result of the steep increase in their oil import bill, threatened to provoke a sudden collapse of confidence and a resulting worldwide run on the banking system.

Following the collapse of the Franklin National Bank in the United States, I.D. Herstatt of West Germany, and the crisis of the "fringe banks" in Britain, major central banks promised to support rescue operations in behalf of the depositors and, to a certain extent, they will attempt to do this in other cases so as to head off a crash. But these cases also illustrated the limits of such operations. When West Germany refused at first to back Herstatt deposits, the United States retaliated by threatening to freeze West German assets and brought the inter-



national monetary system grinding to a halt until the secret deals were arranged. The European-American Bank which was formed to take over Franklin National has warned that it will take almost none of Franklin's foreign accounts.

In the same category, the United States has recently warned all U.S. banks to review their medium- and long-term loans to Italian industry and to the Italian government itself. The anti-Arab and anti-Iranian propaganda mounted around "petrodollars" by the imperialist banking circles is aimed at helping to force the oil-exporting nations into international credit rescue operations that the imperialists themselves are unwilling to undertake.

All of these examples illustrate the fact that the self-interest of national capitalism places severe limits on the degree to which central bankers can alleviate the international crisis.

The deeper and more lasting the inflation, the greater the danger becomes that speculation, debts, and liquidity crises of the banking system will mount to such proportions as to touch off a panicky run on the banks, resulting in a collapse of the banking system and a consequent catastrophic crisis, if not now, then in a future recession. That is why the world bourgeoisie is so worried about inflation. That is why it is trying to alter the class relationship of forces sufficiently to make feasible the eventual use of radical deflationary measures.

6.

6. What makes the present situation so grave for world capitalism, however, is not so much the fact that the economic crisis is the worst yet experienced in the postwar period — it is still much milder than those that occurred between the two world wars — but that it is combined with an exceptionally high level of organization, striking power, and militancy of the working class. The situation in the working class is a resultant of two decades of relatively high economic growth, of a relatively high level of employment, of extensive (Japan, Italy, France, Spain, Canada, Australia) and intensive (United States, West Germany, Britain) industrialization, and a general increase in the level of skills and education (even if spread very unevenly and accompanied by massive downgrading, marginalization, and scrapping of workers). Additional factors have strengthened the working class subjectively. These include the worldwide radicalization of youth and women; the advances of the world revolution in the semicolonial countries from China to Cuba; the appearance of a new generation of workers who did not experience the two and a half decades of de-

feats following the October 1917 victory; the crisis of Stalinism; and a generalized increase in opposition to imperialist war.

This means that the present social crisis of the world capitalist system, which began with the May 1968 events in France, will be seriously and significantly deepened by the present recession, and that the central role of the industrial working class will become increasingly accentuated.

But it also means that the general trend points to increasing tensions and explosive conflicts between capital and labor, of more and more acute political crises in key imperialist countries. Attempts of the capitalists to "buy off" workers will decline relatively while attempts to inflict serious defeats upon the working class will increase, the objective being to "solve" the crisis at the expense of workers by reducing real wages, thereby enabling the rate of profit to rise again. Such an onslaught on the living standard and level of employment of the working class entails serious restrictions on the democratic rights of the working class (statutory wage controls, government arbitration of labor disputes, onerous limitations on the right to strike, antiunion legislation, etc.).

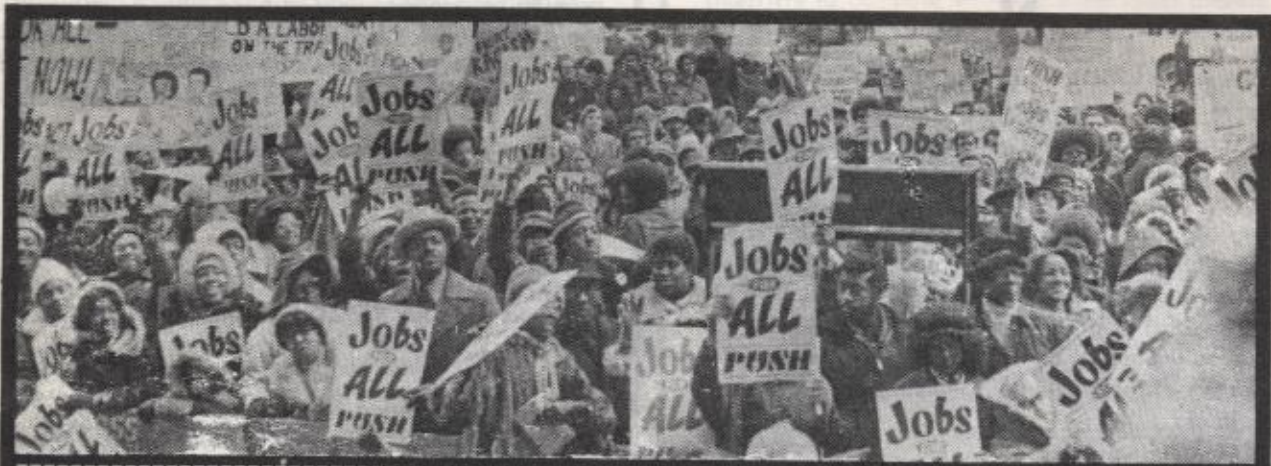
Experience has shown, however, that as long as capital is unable to succeed in significantly changing the existing relationship of forces between the classes, the attempts to apply such policies generally fail.

This does not exclude short-term attempts to head off revolutionary victories through reforms and concessions. But, as in the 1930s, these will amount to no more than stopgap measures. The aggravation of the world economic situation rules out any significant period of decreasing tension between the classes. It brings class confrontations closer to a showdown. The broad perspective is either the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, or grave defeats of the working class that will enable capitalism to apply its solution — fascism even more brutal than that of the 1930s.

7.

7. In the present world recession, the proletariat stands in much stronger position than was the case in the 1929-32 depression. Among other things, unemployment is not of such scope and duration as in the Great Depression and has had less of a debilitating effect.

Massive unemployment for a long period is generally highly demoralizing. The most favorable moments



«the immediate effect of the world recession will be to fortify the upsurge of workers struggles»

for workers actions are either when unemployment starts (that is why the international bourgeoisie is so afraid that sudden massive unemployment could provoke an immediate reaction in the proletariat) or when it begins to decline after an economic revival has started. But during a period of mass unemployment those who do hold jobs are exceptionally fearful of losing them, the employed and unemployed become pitted against each other, as do the partially and fully employed, and those who have a relatively high level of job security and those who lack it. All these factors tend to limit the number and duration of strikes.

Of course, certain modifications have to be made in this general analysis. In particular, it is necessary to take into account the "built-in stabilizers" such as unemployment insurance, social security, the dole, low-cost health services, etc., that were introduced during or after the 1929-32 crisis.

However, unemployment on a limited scale, such as still exists in the major imperialist countries, has none of these debilitating effects, especially in view of its combination with inflation and with the growing level of organization and militancy of the working class. Therefore it can be safely predicted that the immediate effect of the world recession will be to fortify the upsurge of workers struggles (with the short-term exception of West Germany, for specific reasons linked with the whole postwar

cycle of class struggles and class consciousness in that country).

In Western Europe, the recession will impel a sharpening of class struggles and class tensions especially in those countries where the working-class upsurge has reached the highest level: France, Italy, Britain, Spain, Portugal, but also in minor capitalist countries like Denmark. It will tend to shift the axis more and more away from partial struggles to generalized struggles, and give increasing impulse to the search for overall political solutions to the deepgoing social crisis of capitalism.

The upswing of working-class radicalization and militancy in the United States and Japan (as well as Australia, New Zealand, and Canada) will tend to be accelerated by the generalized recession, the proletariat in these countries thereby beginning to fall more into the pattern seen in Western Europe since 1968. It is still too early, however, to predict the forms and rates of this process. The more the Japanese, American, and Canadian working classes move into action in the coming years, adding their weight to the present upsurge of struggle in Western Europe, the greater will be the impact on an international scale and the more difficult it will be for world capitalism to "solve" its present crisis at the expense of this or that sector of the world working class.



8.

8. The intensification of interimperialist rivalries was one of the causes that precipitated the world-wide recession in 1974. Far from responding as a whole in ways that would tend to ward off a world recession and possible financial collapse, the competing capitalist nations have mainly pursued narrow policies of self-interest. Moreover, no imperialist power or group of imperialist powers, including the most powerful of all — the United States itself — is able to impose its own competitive interests on all sectors of the world bourgeoisie as operative guidelines.

Interimperialist rivalries have aggravated the contradictions underlying the recession. From the standpoint of the overall interests of international capitalism, the use of anti-inflationary (mildly deflationary) policies simultaneously in all the major imperialist countries obviously does not make sense. But from the standpoint of each capitalist class taken separately, it makes sense to "fight inflation" and to try to save its currency and banking system from collapse.

Here are three concerns: to keep foreign goods out of the domestic market by keeping the prices of domestic goods lower; to penetrate foreign markets to a greater degree because prices of foreign goods are higher; and to stabilize the domestic currency by maintaining a less rapid rate of inflation. Thus, in the era of simultaneous world inflation, the fight to keep one's "own" rate of inflation lower than the rates of competitors becomes a central preoccupation of the competing bourgeoisies. Each major power would like to shift part of the burden of inflation and the recession onto its competitors.

West Germany, for example, maintained deflationary policies right up to December 1974, when the specter of world collapse had already been haunting stock exchanges for most of the year. It held to this course despite increasing pressure from its competitors for "reflation" of the Deutsch Mark, since West Germany is the only major imperialist country that is not suffering from a balance of payments deficit as a result of the increase in oil prices.

A strong reflation of the West German economy would mean that German exports (which have now overtaken those of the United States) would suffer seriously, while the West German internal market would yield a larger share to imports from its British, French, Italian, Japanese, and U.S. competitors.

But when unemployment reached 3.5 percent in West Germany and threatened to go to 4 percent, Bonn dropped its anti-inflationary program. Pump-

priming government expenditures were announced, the central bank's discount rate was lowered, and West German capitalism will now try another round in gambling against the rates of inflation elsewhere.

The 1973-74 oil crisis marked a shift in the inter-imperialist relationship of forces in favor of U.S. imperialism, since the United States is less dependent on oil imports than the other major imperialist powers and the capitalists in Western Europe had for years paid less for oil (and energy) than those in the U.S.

Meanwhile, however, the stepped-up export drive especially of West Germany and Japan has partially annulled the results gained by Wall Street through the successive devaluations of the dollar and the oil crisis. Yet France, and especially Britain and Italy, have been less successful with their export drives and as a result have been harder hit by the worldwide rise in oil prices, both Britain and Italy undergoing very severe economic and financial difficulties.

Furthermore, the failure to seriously advance their economic integration during the present recession, which threatens to bring down the Common Market, prevents the West German and West European capitalists from offering a plausible alternative leadership to the world capitalist system.

Under these conditions, the crisis of leadership of international capitalism as a whole is compounded by the crisis of leadership of the bourgeoisies in each of the major imperialist nations. This will not change in the near future, all the more so as the intensification of the class struggle adds to the crisis in each country. The first bourgeoisie to succeed in imposing a major social and political defeat on "its" working class would, as in the 1930s, gain a significant margin for maneuver, enabling it to engage in dangerous attempts at changing the world relationship of forces in its favor. But again, this is unlikely to occur in the near future.

The outcome will be endless consultations, horse-trading, and shady deals, a rigamarole that will become all the more agonizing as the recession drags on.

9.

9. In the semicolonial countries, the effect of the world recession varies according to the relation of their economies to oil, grain, and sugar imports and exports. Those that are large exporters of these vital raw materials, and that have only a small deficit (or no deficit) of these high-priced commodities, have, so far, not suffered from the present recession.

(A collapse of sugar prices and a sharp decline of oil prices cannot be excluded if the recession is long-lasting, although even in this case, oil prices will not drop to pre-October 1973 levels.)

The ruling classes of the major oil-exporting countries have benefited the most. They gained much more in oil revenues than they lost because of increases in the prices they paid for imports, or because of a narrowing of markets for exports other than oil because of the recession.

In fact, the big influx of income and gold-and-currency reserves to the oil-exporting countries expresses a redistribution of the surplus value produced by the world proletariat, including the proletariat of the semicolonial oil-exporting countries, in favor of the ruling classes of the oil-exporting countries and at the expense of the imperialist bourgeoisies. This redistribution (the appearance of a high mining rent appropriated to a large extent by the local ruling classes) is a result of the economic disproportions underlined above and of a political shift in the relationship of forces on a world scale.

Imperialism was forced to switch from direct to indirect rule over its former colonies after World War II because the anti-imperialist liberation movement became too strong and could not be defeated militarily on a worldwide scale. The imperialist powers tried first to transform the ruling classes in the colonies into junior partners without payment of a substantial economic price for this changed form of rule. Today, through the oil crisis, the bill is being presented by history. Some junior partners are able to demand and obtain a significantly increased portion of the spoils.

While the world balance of forces does not favor an imperialist attack on the Middle East and while U.S. imperialism favors higher world oil prices to a much larger degree than it publicly pretends, no imperialism favors even the partial redistribution of its wealth to subalterns. The danger of renewed war in the Middle East is consequently very real, especially because of the explosive relations between the Palestinian liberation struggle, the Arab regimes, and Israel.

While the oil-exporting countries will generally strengthen their economic growth, including capitalist industrialization to a limited extent, for the other semicolonial countries the combination of a world recession with sharp increases in the prices of oil, food, and fertilizer has become a major economic disaster — the greatest to hit any part of the world since World War II. The countries of the Indian subcontinent have been hit hardest of all. The increased food, fertilizer, and oil bills; the decrease in their own exports as a result of their

inability to compete with the imperialist powers in a period of intensified trade warfare; the decline of their own industrial production triggered by all these developments, which in turn leads to serious difficulties in buying the raw materials necessary for normal industrial production; the ruthless profiteering and hoarding of food reserves by the indigenous ruling classes; the collapse of the "green revolution" as a result of the steep increase in fertilizer and energy costs — all these factors have brought about an explosive increase in misery, underemployment, and outright starvation both in the countryside and the towns.

The ingredients for a social explosion have thus been assembled. But the crisis of proletarian leadership, which is nowhere near its solution, has increased the danger that reactionary right-wing forces will take the initiative in turning the crisis to account at the expense of the masses, who will pay for it in blood and starvation.

10.

10. The noncapitalist character of the economies of the bureaucratized workers states has been strikingly confirmed — contrary to all the mystifications of the supporters of the theory of "state capitalism" — by the fact that they have not been caught up in the vortex of mass unemployment and decline in production engulfing all the major capitalist countries. On the other hand, those who stick to the parallel mystification of "socialism in one country" will encounter new difficulties in trying to explain why these supposedly "socialist" countries cannot completely cut their ties with the world market, thereby remaining subject to the effects of the world capitalist recession.

These effects can be summarized in four points:

(a) The world recession reduces the export markets of the bureaucratized workers states in the capitalist countries (except oil, grain, sugar), export markets which these economies urgently need in order to increase their imports of modern equipment. The bureaucracy will try to compensate for this relative decline in its export markets by stepping up the search for loans, in return for which it will be all the more willing to pay the political price of not exploiting the mounting social crisis in the West. The bureaucracy has gone out of its way in giving assurances that it is not going to seek to turn the recession into a revolutionary crisis and that it will see to it that the Communist parties do their utmost to keep the workers within the bounds of class-collaborationist reformism.

(b) The shortage of oil and grain upsets some of the

economic plans of the workers states, especially the heavy importers of these commodities like the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and Cuba. In these instances it could cause a slowdown of the rate of economic growth, especially in combination with a decline of exports to the West.

(c) The shortage of oil and grain, combined with the effects of the recession, creates new stresses and tensions in the relations between the bureaucracies. To sell oil at world market prices to other workers states (GDR, Cuba, North Vietnam, Hungary, etc.) becomes so lucrative for exporting bureaucracies like the USSR, Rumania, and China that charges will be leveled of exploitation.

(d) The change in the world economic situation increases interest among the imperialist powers in probing the bureaucratized workers states both as markets for exported goods and as sources of raw materials. The tendency will mount to seek big trade deals like those already made to exchange oil and natural gas of the USSR and China for pipelines, petrochemical plants, petroleum refineries and other equipment. However, quantitatively, this is not large enough to offset the results of the deceleration in the growth of the volume of world trade which is occurring. Moreover the deals are of such a long-term character that their effect will be felt only over a period of years.

11.

11. In view of the general increase in social and political contradictions and tensions as a result of the worldwide recession, imperialism will be increasingly tempted to block social explosions by local wars, and to "absorb" some of the major effects of the long-term decline in the rate of growth by stepping up the armaments race. In spite of the policy of detente and peaceful coexistence pursued with complete sincerity by the Stalinist bureaucracies, there are areas in the world where, for obvious reasons, i.e. self-defense, the bureaucracies cannot retreat indefinitely without endangering their own security. Factions prepared to adopt a policy of unlimited retreat in the face of renewed imperialist aggression in those areas would probably meet stiff opposition, in the first place from the army commands.

The Middle East obviously is such a key area of potential conflict today. The economic recession spreading throughout the international capitalist economy combined with the steep increase in oil prices has created a dangerous climate of imperialist aggression, politically and economically, in this area. This is the first time since the 1949 recession that a serious downturn in the economic situation

of imperialism has coincided with a sharp increase in international tension in an area where a direct military confrontation between imperialism and the armies of the Warsaw Pact is possible.

Up to a certain point U.S. imperialism can carry on maneuvers, horsetrading, and military blackmail with both the Arab ruling classes and the Zionist leaders with the aim of imposing a "settlement" in the Middle East, essentially at the expense of the liberation struggle of the Palestinian masses. The objective of retaining essential control over Middle East oil is to be accomplished through joint ventures with the Arab ruling classes, including massive investments of petrodollars in Western property, the better to tie the Arab rulers to the "economic order" of international capitalism.

The Zionist leaders are not simply puppets of imperialism; they have their own independent interests to defend. Seeing that time works against them, that the relationship of forces in the Middle East could become more and more adverse to the maintenance of an expansionist colonial settler state in the area, they could be tempted to exploit a temporary military superiority at a given moment and undertake a preemptive strike against the neighboring Arab countries. In case of partial failure or in face of heavy retaliation, they might resort to extreme measures, including the use of atomic weapons. This could lead to incalculable consequences through involvement of the world's two major nuclear powers.

The fact that the international working class and toiling masses, including those in the United States, are strongly opposed to warlike adventures is a deterrent to such desperate adventures by the capitalist class. While not underestimating the dangers of a "brush-fire" war in the Middle East, it is unlikely that imperialism will seek a military showdown with the bureaucratized workers states as long as the international working class has not suffered a disastrous defeat.

Nevertheless, the graver the economic difficulties of world capitalism become, the more the social and political tensions increase, the more will certain sections of the capitalist class tend to intensify war preparations and play with military adventures. Either the danger of war will intensify and along with it the danger of forms of the "strong state" and anti-working-class dictatorships coming to power, or the proletariat will impose its own solution for ending the death agony of capitalism — the conquest of power by the toiling masses, the victory of the socialist revolution. ■

BELGIUM

glaverbel: SUCCESS!



The strike of the 600 workers of the Glaverbel glass factory in Gilly against the decision by the owners, the multinational BSN trust, to close the factory has ended in success after six weeks. (See INPRECOR, No. 20, February 27, 1975.) The factory will not be closed. There will be no layoffs. Three hundred workers have received guarantees from both the company and the government that they will continue to work at Glaverbel-Gilly. About one-third of the workers will be transferred to other glass-making factories in the same area; the transfers will be voluntary, decided in agreement with the trade-union organizations and the workers concerned. Those workers who are transferred will receive the same pay and benefits that they now receive. The remainder of the workers (about 100) will be progressively called back to Glaverbel-Gilly to perform new jobs; within a year, all of them will be taken back. These workers will continue to be listed on the personnel rolls; the workweek will be shared, though reduced; whatever part of the workers' wages that is not covered by partial unemployment insurance will be made up by the company (as will all benefits).

As Comrade André Henry, Glaverbel-Gilly trade-union delegate and member of the Central Committee of the Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs

(LRT — Revolutionary Workers League), Belgian section of the Fourth International, asserted in an interview published in the LRT's weekly paper, *La Gauche*: "It is quite clear that without our struggle the factory would have been closed by the beginning of February and 600 workers would have been unemployed. The management of the factory had said so."

The case of Glaverbel, like that of the workers of the Lip watch factory in Besançon, France, provides one of those rare examples in recent years of a tenacious, resolute, and effectively led workers struggle succeeding in preventing the closing of a factory and in saving the jobs of the wage workers and salaried personnel. In this respect the Glaverbel strike and its success stand as an exemplary fight for all Belgian workers, as well as for workers in other countries.

To be sure, the manner in which the Glaverbel-Gilly strike ended was not a 100 percent victory. One of the objectives for which the Glaverbel strikers had fought was not only to prevent the closing of the factory, but also to oppose any dismantling of the plant whatsoever. This objective was not completely attained, for employment at the factory will be reduced by one-third.

It is obvious that in a test of strength between 600 workers and a multinational trust that employs a total of more than 70,000 people in various countries, total victory for the workers is possible only if the broadest and most active solidarity is organized around the workers in struggle. In this case, the Glaverbel-Gilly strike committee and all the vanguard workers of the region were of the view that total victory depended on the organization of a strike to the finish by all the workers of the glass industry, backed up by generalized strikes by all the workers of the Charleroi region.

But the trade-union bureaucracy maneuvered to stifle all efforts taken in this direction by the combative trade-union and political forces of the workers movement in Charleroi. The bureaucracy was forced to agree to some demonstrations and work stoppages in solidarity with the workers of Glaverbel-Gilly, whose cause became extremely popular among the whole working class of the region. But the bureaucrats succeeded in channeling this solidarity into paths that averted a decisive test of strength with the BSN multinational trust.

For example, a huge demonstration was organized in Charleroi on February 24; it drew between 30,000 and 40,000 workers to protest against unemployment and the reduction of employment in the region. But nothing was done to place in the center of the demonstration support for the Glaverbel-Gilly strikers until full and complete satisfaction of all their demands. And the organization of the demonstration was utilized to counteract the program of a general strike of unlimited duration in the whole glass industry. That is what the Glaverbel-Gilly strike committee was fighting for, and that is what would have enabled the workers to make the BSN trust capitulate completely.

Incontestably, the fact that the workers vanguard has not yet attained the weight in the whole industry that it already has at Glaverbel-Gilly aided the maneuvers of the union bureaucracy. The bureaucrats were able to play on the workers' fears of the spread of the threat of layoffs to other factories in order to block the organization of a general strike in the industry. But the success of the Glaverbel-Gilly strike will have lasting and deep repercussions in all the glass factories, as well as in the other factories of the Charleroi region. The workers have set up a control committee to oversee implementation of the agreement; the purpose of the committee is to give an impetus to the workers' vigilance and to work against any maneuvers by the employers aimed at taking back the concessions and promises that the tenacious struggle was able to extract from them.

The agreement that was concluded was approved

unanimously except for one vote after a democratic discussion at a general assembly of the Glaverbel-Gilly workers. They returned to work by marching into the factory in a contingent led by a red flag; they were singing the Internationale. Their combativity and their confidence in their own strength were considerably strengthened in this struggle, crowned as it was with success. An incident that took place the very day after the return to work testifies to this.

On his own authority, consulting neither the trade-union delegation in the factory nor the workers concerned, a trade-union secretary signed an adjunct to the protocol agreement promising to return to the employers the "combat funds" that the Glaverbel-Gilly workers had collected during the strike by selling the glass they produced in the factory while they were occupying it. When news spread through the factory about what the union secretary had done, the anger was so intense that it was decided on the spot to launch another strike. The strikers also decided to immediately divide up the "war booty" among all the workers in the plant. The trade-union secretary, summoned to account for his action, backed down before the resolute combativity of the workers. The BSN trust, which had made the question of the production and sale of glass by the workers themselves a matter of principle to be settled by the bourgeois courts, also ceased to press the issue. The adjunct to the protocol was thrown into the trashbin.

The attention of the Charleroi region has now shifted to Ateliers Hanrez, where the workers have been fighting for weeks against the layoff of a militant trade-union delegate. On Thursday, February 28, thousands of workers throughout the Charleroi region stopped work for one hour to express their solidarity with their comrades of the Ateliers Hanrez.

The rise of workers struggles in Belgium is now being manifested in many industries, although it remains modest compared to what is going on in some other countries of capitalist Europe. During the past several weeks there have been token strikes in the oil industry and among teachers. The workers of the Allard factory in the Mons area occupied the factory to fight against a plan to lay off 200 workers. On Wednesday, February 19, there was a spontaneous strike in two metal factories in Brugge. At the Caterpillar factory in the Grimbergen area (the large suburb of Brussels) the workers went on strike for four weeks. On Saturday, March 1, the postal workers refused to deliver the mail throughout Belgium. At Solvay-Solvic in the Mons region a strike broke out at the beginning of the first week of March. In Liège, at the Ferblatil-Tolmatil department of the Cockerill steel trust, 1,500 workers went on strike to protest the layoff of eighty "tem-

porary" workers. The list goes on. The "flash points" are many.

The fact that the social-democratic Parti Socialiste Belge (PSB — Belgian Socialist party) is now in opposition and is encouraging (although extremely moderately) some limited mass mobilizations against the right-wing government presently in power in Belgium has contributed to heating up the atmosphere now developing in the country. The PSB is organizing a "great national demonstration" for March 15, an attempt to divert these struggles to-

ward electoralist and parliamentary objectives. Nevertheless, this tactic has not received the unconditional support of the trade-union bureaucracy, on whom the social-democratic leaders have been counting. The unions would like to center the struggle on guarantees against layoffs and factory closings. But the PSB, which is preparing to reenter the government at the first possible opportunity, does not dare to move too far toward such guarantees.

March 5, 1975



news of the workers movement and the fourth international

SRI LANKA

REFORMISTS CANCEL GENERAL STRIKE

Once again the leaders of the trade unions controlled by the Lanka Sama Samaja party (LSSP — Ceylon Equal Society party) and the pro-Moscow Communist party, the reformist parties affiliated to the government of coalition with the bourgeois Sri Lanka Freedom party (SLFP), have capitulated to Prime Minister Bandaranaike and the Ceylonese bourgeoisie. On January 19 they withdrew the call for a twenty-four-hour general strike that had been set for January 31. (See INPRECOR, No. 19, February 13.) The pretext for the retreat was that Bandaranaike's cabinet had partially conceded one (!) of the twenty-eight demands advanced by the Sinhalese trade-union movement since 1973 and three "urgent" demands raised in January 1975. The wages of all workers (and pensioners) of Sri Lanka earning less than 800 Rs a month were raised 25 Rs. (The unions had demanded increases of 75 Rs a month.) In addition, the government agreed to open negotiations on a sliding scale of wages and the nationalization of basic industry; but it made no precise commitment on these questions.

The Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU), the only trade union other than the two unions representing

plantation workers that is not under the control of the government parties, had agreed to join in the January 31 general strike while expressing its distrust of the will of the reformist leaders to actually fight. After the capitulation of these leaders, the CMU maintained its call for a twenty-four-hour strike on January 31, a call that was nearly unanimously approved (with only three dissenting votes) during a mass general assembly held January 29 in Hyde Park, Colombo.

Comrade Bala Tampoe, who reported before the assembly, asserted that the reformist leaders never had any intention of really unleashing a general strike on January 31, but had simply been maneuvering in order to channel the growing discontent of the toiling masses. He also recalled that the contract concluded by the CMU for public-sector workers through 1966 included the sliding-scale clause, while those workers of the public sector organized by the unions controlled by the government parties still do not benefit from this clause.

Here is the call for the twenty-four-hour general strike issued on January 20 by the General Council of the CMU:

"The General Council has no reason to think that the JCTUO (Joint Committee of Trade Union Organizations — INPRECOR) has called for a token strike on that day in the interests of the working class even though it is reported to have called upon 'the entire organised working class to join the struggle to win three immediate demands' said to have been forwarded to the Government by the JCTUO.

"The General Council is of the view that the JCTUO cannot be expected to launch any genuine 'struggle' on the demands it has chosen to describe as 'immediate demands,' since it is controlled by the three parties represented in the Government, namely, the SLFP, the LSSP, and the CP (Moscow). The JCTUO is essentially a tool of the Government, whose basic policy is to maintain capitalist rule in this country at the expense of the working class and the broad masses of the people, and by suppression of all forms of mass action under it. This is patently evident from the fact of the continuance of the State of Emergency, long after the bloody suppression of the Janata Vimukthi Peramuna in 1971, with the continuing suppression of fundamental democratic rights and civil liberties, including the right of workers to strike, while lock-outs by employers are freely permitted. The reactionary policy of the Government in relation to the working class has also been manifested by the emergency regulation which permits employers to extend the normal working day beyond 8 hours in the conversion from a 6-day to a 5-day workweek, without payment of overtime.

"The political subservience of the JCTUO leadership to the reactionary policies of the Government has been borne out by the fact that they have only protested when the anti-strike Essential Services Order has been used against workers belonging to their unions, and when the powers of the Prime Minister to prohibit processions under the Emergency Regulations have been used against them, as in the case of the prohibition of the Ceylon Federation of Labour demonstration on 16th November last year. In the case of the application of the reactionary emergency regulation permitting the extension of the 8-hour working day by employers, without payment of overtime, they have not even raised a murmur of protest. . . .

"Even today, they have totally ignored the demand for the ending of the Emergency and the restoration of democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, including the right to strike. They are also not prepared even now to demand the freedom of public procession in the list of demands which they claim to have put forward to the Government on behalf of the working class.

"The General Council is nevertheless of the view that the fact that the JCTUO leadership has called

for a token strike on 31st January on demands that are of importance to the working class provides our Union and others with an opportunity to focus mass opinion not only on those demands but also on others of fundamental importance to the working class and the masses by having a token strike on such demands as well as the three demands announced by the JCTUO on the same day.

"The General Council considers that it is imperative for the working class to appreciate that the most immediate and fundamental demand that is necessary at the present time, not only in the interests of the working class but also of the broader masses of our exploited and suffering people, is for the ending of the Emergency and the restoration of the fundamental freedoms of the people.

"The General Council also considers it important, in the light of the threat of further blows at the stomachs of the people this year, on the pretext of insufficiency of locally grown food and high prices of foodstuffs in the world market, that the demand for compulsory food production on all plantations, as in World War II, must be implemented immediately to reduce the danger of outright starvation for large numbers of people.

"For the working class, in addition to the demand for an adequate all-round immediate increase of wages and automatic increases in wages for every point increase in the Cost of Living Index, the demand for the restoration of the right to strike and the prohibition of lock-outs by employers, as well as the demand for the restoration of the 8-hour day as a maximum by law, is also of immediate importance.

"The demand already publicised by our Union in its signature campaign and at the mass rallies on 26th July 1973, 20th December 1973, and 14th March 1974, for a guarantee of adequate rations of essential foodstuffs at reasonable prices, must also be pressed for as widely as possible by mass organisations, including the trade unions, at this juncture.

"The demands may be summarised as follows:

- *For the ending of the Emergency and the restoration of democratic rights and civil liberties, including the right to strike;
- *For the repeal of repressive and reactionary legislation like the Public Security Act and the Criminal Justice Commissions Act;
- *For the unconditional release of all political prisoners;
- *For the reinstatement of all workers dismissed under the Essential Services Order and the restoration of all rights taken away from workers under cover of the Emergency;

- *For compulsory food production on the plantations;
- *For adequate rations of essential foodstuffs at reasonable prices;
- *For the restoration of the 8-hour day as a maximum under the law;
- *For an all-round wage increase of Rs 75;
- *For an automatic increase of Rs 2.5 per point in the Cost of Living Index;
- *For the nationalisation of banks, plantations, and all major industries under workers' control, and not under bureaucratic capitalist state manage-

ments.

"The General Council has decided to place the above-mentioned demands before the whole country in connection with the token strike on 31st January. It is confident that our action on that date, on these demands, will not only widen and strengthen the action of the organised working class on that day, but will also serve to raise working class consciousness of the necessity to unite its forces under its own class banner, for effective action against capitalist exploitation and oppression under the present Government or any other capitalist government that may replace it." ■

FINLAND



*first
revolutionary
marxist
journal in
finnish*

Neuvostovalta - Sovjetmakt no 1 1975

The first revolutionary Marxist journal ever published in Finnish began appearing in Finland in February. It is called Neuvostovalta (Soviet Power). The new magazine will serve as a major instrument for the small revolutionary Marxist nucleus that now exists in the country in building itself into an organization capable of beginning to influence political events in Finland.

In the first issue the comrades explain that the magazine will be especially devoted to analyzing the theory and practice of the traditional workers parties in Finland. This is a particularly necessary task because of the extreme political narrowness and nationalism toward which the Stalinist party has

channeled the younger generations of students and workers.

In addition to the editorial describing the role of Neuvostovalta, the first issue contains articles on the working-class struggle in Finland, a polemic with the Stalinists on the history of the CP, a critique of the CP-led Chile solidarity committees, and articles on Spain and the Arab East.

We salute our Finnish comrades for this very important first step in the creation of a revolutionary Marxist organization that can begin to re-assert the heroic history and traditions of the Finnish working class. ■



MARCH AGAINST RACISM MAY 17

Since the opening of the school year in the city of Boston, the Black community there has been the target of racist attacks centered on trying to prevent the busing of Black students to white schools, a measure that had been ordered by the courts to desegregate the city schools. There has been almost daily intimidation of Blacks, the racist offensive sometimes reaching the level of lynch action. The mobilization of racist sentiment in Boston soon became a national political issue, and the Black and left movements began to respond. On December 14, more than 12,000 people participated in a National March Against Racism held in Boston. After the march, a group of about 250 students met and called for a national student conference against racism to be held in Boston on February 14.

That conference was attended by 2,000 people, who voted to establish an ongoing organization, the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR). The new organization decided at its conference to support a national march on Boston May 17, which was called by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the oldest civil rights group in the United States (founded in 1909). The demands for the march adopted by the NSCAR were "Desegregate the Boston schools now! Keep the buses rolling! Stop the racist attacks on Black students!" On April 4, the anniversary of the assassination of Martin Luther King, the NSCAR will begin a six-week campaign of local actions and educational activity leading up to the May 17 march. □

PRAXIS SUPPRESSED

The magazine Praxis, which for many years has been the principal intellectual pole for Yugoslav Marxists, has been suddenly banned by the ruling bureaucracy. Thus is manifested the increasingly repressive course of the Yugoslav regime, whose repression is more and more directed against the left.

Praxis had been published since 1965 by the philosophy department of the University of Zagreb. Among its editors were some of the most talented of the country's younger Marxists, as well as some old decorated fighters of the Yugoslav Communist party who had been in the vanguard of the partisan war during the Nazi occupation.

The editors of the review are resolute advocates of self-management and irreconcilable opponents of both Stalinist bureaucratic centralism and probourgeois and procapitalist tendencies. They had especially fought against the renaissance of Croatian nationalism, long before the leaders of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY, the CP) became concerned about this phenomenon.

But the editors of Praxis refused to be unconditional apologists for all the deformations, injurious to the interests of the workers and of socialism, whose emergence the Yugoslav bureaucratic regime had stimulated or tolerated. Like the eight critical professors of the University of Belgrade who were fired by the authorities in flagrant violation of the principles of self-management, the editors of Praxis particularly denounced the evils of the "socialist market economy," the rise of social inequality and material privilege, the abuses of power and the corruption of the ruling bureaucracy, and the return

of unemployment and the weakening of self-management as a consequence of the bureaucracy's monopolization of power. It is this courageous fight for which the group in power is attacking Praxis.

Neither the Praxis editors nor the Belgrade professors share Trotskyist political positions. The accusations to this effect that were made against Praxis during the last plenum of the Central Committee of the LCY were devoid of all foundation, and the leaders of the LCY are perfectly well aware of this. But revolutionary Marxists, faithful to the principles of international proletarian solidarity and of the broadest socialist democracy, support and will continue to support the fight of the professors and students of Belgrade and Zagreb against all violations of socialist legality, against any return to administrative and repressive measures aimed at cutting off ideological debate, against any suppression of political currents that are clearly part of the struggle to build socialism.

The experience of Praxis confirms what the Fourth International has ceaselessly asserted for years: Real workers self-management requires that workers councils and the congress of workers councils exercise power — not only political power, but also economic power, not only power in the factories but also power in the local areas, regions, and the country as a whole. Real workers self-management requires the broadest socialist democracy and the end of the monopoly of power by a single political group, for any such group can only be a transmission belt for the interests and appetites of a privileged bureaucracy fundamentally hostile to self-management. ■

FREE IVAN DEJMAL!

One of the favorite claims of the Czechoslovak government, which rules in the shadow of Soviet tanks, is that it owes its victory over "opportunists" and "other revisionists" solely to the use of methods that belong to the realm of political persuasion. But the reality is that in addition to the Soviet occupation army, which still numbers nearly 100,000 troops and represents a quite decisive "argument," there are many other instruments available to the rulers in defending their power. While the number of people imprisoned and sentenced testifies to the efficiency of the repressive apparatus, the manner in which this apparatus goes about disposing of opponents is equally significant.

The case of Ivan Dejmal, 28 years old and now in prison and in danger, is a case in point. It is true that this is not the first time he has been in jail, for the machine was set in motion against him in 1970 as well. In that year, shortly after finishing his studies at the Agricultural Studies Institute, he was arrested and charged with belonging to the "Movement of Revolutionary Youth." The arrest of those whom the Czechoslovak government called the "Trotskyist group of Petr Uhl and Company" was the prelude to the series of trials of the "normalization" period. Like all his codefendants, Dejmal was held in preventive detention under incredible conditions for a year and a half; but this did not keep him from conducting himself courageously in face of all the psychological and physical pressure put on him by the examining magistrates of the secret police. The secret police wanted to prove that the Movement of Revolutionary Youth had been aiming at "creating political crises." The Czechoslovak press, taken over by the "normalizers," spared no effort in spreading this propaganda, going so far as to assert that "like Trotsky, his inheritors (that is, the defendants) receive subsidies that run into the millions, that go beyond the means of individuals, and that the FBI and CIA must certainly know about."

When Dejmal came before the judges, he did everything he could not to go along with the prefabricated farce that was his trial. His conduct generated such rage among the personnel of the repressive bodies that after the expiration of his two-year sentence, and in spite of his bad physical condition (he has difficulties with his liver and suffers from the after-effects of jaundice), Ivan Dejmal was drafted into the army. Since he had just come out of prison, he was not considered a soldier like all others, but a "political" who had to be watched constantly. Harassed at every step by restrictions of all kinds and constantly surrounded by a swarm of informers,

Ivan Dejmal could not stand it any longer. During the summer of 1974 he tried to kill himself. The psychological pressure, consciously orchestrated by the secret police, appeared to have attained its goal.

After several weeks of "treatment" in the psychiatric department of the Prague military hospital (in which the conditions were nearly identical to those in prison), Ivan Dejmal was sent back to his unit. It took only a week for the secret police to send him back to prison. This time the charge carries a maximum penalty of three years in jail: damaging the morale of the troops. The police vendetta against Dejmal is easily comprehended when it is remembered that he is one of the thirty former political prisoners of the normalization period who signed a courageous manifesto declaring solidarity with Chilean workers and democrats. (See INPRECOR, No. 9, October 3, 1974.) This manifesto, which was widely distributed by the international press and was even handed out clandestinely in Chile itself, vehemently criticized the Czechoslovak authorities, whose official and hypocritical concern for the victims of repression in Chile has been no barrier to the "dynamism of trade between Czechoslovakia and the fascist Chilean junta and the refusal of Czechoslovakia to grant asylum to Chilean refugees." The manifesto concluded by asserting that the real friends of the Chilean resistance are those who have been repressed by the regime for acting in accordance with their socialist convictions — in Czechoslovakia. Of course, this manifesto was not published in the official Czechoslovak press; in fact, it drew blows from the secret police against its signatories. It was not long before four of them were arrested. Three of them are now out on bail, although the prosecutions against them are continuing. Only Dejmal remains in prison. According to the latest information, his trial was said to have been scheduled to begin early in February but was reportedly postponed. It may be held at any time and could result in a heavy sentence.

But what must be feared above all, even more than the possible sentence itself, is the psychological pressure exerted by the police methods that Ivan Dejmal will have to face alone. Without solidarity from progressive and democratic public opinion, any hope of saving Ivan Dejmal's life is small. Very small. After all, he would not be the first political prisoner in the 1970s to "choose freedom" while remaining in Czechoslovakia — by killing himself.

He must be saved!

FREE IVAN DEJMAL!

SOLIDARITY WITH ALL THE POLITICAL PRISONERS OF CZECHOSLOVAKIA!