

# Intercontinental Press

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**Angola:**

## **Kissinger Calls for Stepped-up Intervention**



State Department chief scolds congressional critics for keeping strings tied on funds for deeper involvement in Angolan civil war.

***Spain: The Rise of the Mass Movement***

***Portugal: Lecciones del Intento Golpista***

Ernest Mandel on State of the Economy

## **Waiting for the Upturn**

## Francoist Thugs Unveil 'Spanish Democracy'

By David Frankel

After more than two months of delay and vague promises of change, the regime of King Juan Carlos I finally came out January 28 with its program for what it called a "Spanish democracy." It was a blueprint for changes that Franco himself "might have desired" were he still alive, Premier Carlos Arias told the Cortes (parliament), which applauded the mention of the late fascist dictator.

The speech was an insult thrown in the face of the masses.

Arias, the longtime functionary of a regime that established itself with the help of Hitler and Mussolini and savagely repressed all opposition for nearly four decades, took it upon himself to warn the masses against totalitarian dictatorship. There will be no legality, he announced, for those "who aspire, with outside help and with unscrupulous methods, to establish totalitarian Communism and the dictatorship of a party."

The Francoist thug talked about tax reform, but he refused to give any guarantees concerning the right to demonstrate.

The demand for amnesty, heard in every corner of the Spanish state, was passed over with the promise of a few additions to the phony pardon announced by Juan Carlos in November.

The right to strike and the right to form trade unions independent of the state apparatus were not mentioned by Arias. He described the strikes and labor demonstrations that have hit every important city in Spain as "a maneuver" against the government.

Arias also made clear that the "Spanish democracy" he was talking about did not include allowing the oppressed nationalities such as the Basques and Catalans to exercise their right to self-determination. Those who advocated separatism, he said, would not be allowed legality. Even the limited autonomy enjoyed by the Basques and Catalans under the old Spanish Republic of the 1930s was ruled out.

Franco's appointees were incapable of offering the peoples of Spain a single genuine step toward democracy. Even in the case of its biggest concession—a two-chamber parliament that would supposedly be "representative"—the regime took away with one hand what it offered with the other.

In a display that summed up the character of the government's "democratiza-

tion," Arias did not say whether the lower house would be elected by popular vote. In any case, the upper house will definitely *not* be elected, and it will have equal power, thus giving it a veto over all decisions.

Furthermore, Arias said that the upper house will be composed of the 109-member National Council—an integral part of the fascist structure established by Franco. Thirty-nine of the council's members were appointed by Franco to serve permanently until the age of seventy-five. The others are elected through the bureaucracy of the fascist National Movement.

The regime was encouraged in its brazen disregard of the demands of the masses by two factors: its success in weathering the massive wave of strikes that shook the country in January, and the signing of its new treaty with Washington on January 24.

"The Spanish Government entered an important political week today with what was considered well-timed support from the United States," *New York Times* correspondent Henry Giniger reported in a January 25 dispatch from Madrid. Kissinger, who signed the accord, commended the "hopeful political evolution" presided over by the monarchy.

According to the British financial weekly the *Economist*, during his visit Kissinger urged the Spanish regime not to legalize the Communist party. Stating its own view on democratization, the *Economist* said in the lead article in its January 31 issue that "the

real argument against delay is that it might provoke an impatience in Spain that then gets out of hand. . . ."

This fear was uppermost in the minds of other capitalist commentators. The editors of the *New York Times* said February 2, "The program for liberalization presented by Mr. Arias to Parliament and country is so vague and so limited as to raise serious doubts among Spanish moderates that a peaceful evolution to a freer society will be possible."

An opinion column in the January 29 *London Times* stated, "The people at large, who have waited so long and so patiently for an end to the dictatorship, can hardly be expected to abandon without a struggle all the hopes raised by Franco's death."

Giniger described the problem facing Franco's appointed heirs in more vivid terms in a January 18 dispatch from Madrid. He said, ". . . Spain's first Government of the post-Franco era is having to contend with a vast psychological change that has come over workers, journalists, politicians, priests, housewives and labor leaders. People are striking, marching, assembling, sounding off against the Government and in general shedding the inhibitions fostered by 40 years of authoritarian rule."

This ferment is what the capitalist rulers fear. They are doing their best to hobble it and to blunt the drive of the masses for democracy. They know that the struggle for political rights cannot be separated from the use of those rights to advance the social and economic demands of the working class and the oppressed nationalities.

The Spanish regime has given its answer to the demands of the masses in the miserably restrictive plan outlined by Arias. But the striking, marching, assembling, and sounding off against the government has just begun. □

## Kissinger's 'Operation Mercenaries for Angola'

In face of the widespread opposition in the United States to getting involved in the civil war in Angola, the White House and the CIA have stepped up their recruitment of an "undercover" mercenary army to fight in that war-torn African country. The decision to escalate the mercenary operation came as a result of the sagging military fortunes of the FNLA and UNITA, particularly after the withdrawal of South African troops from the frontlines in central Angola in late January.

The most intense effort to recruit mercenaries is being made in Britain and the United States. An organization called the Security Advisory Services (SAS) succeeded in hiring about 200 British mercenaries, most of them former infantrymen or former

Royal Marines. On January 28 nearly 100 of these mercenaries flew to Kinshasa, Zaïre, en route to Angola. One mercenary commented to a reporter, "This is a spearhead and there will be a lot more following."

One of the British recruiters, Leslie Aspin, said in a television interview that the mercenaries would be paid US\$300 a week and that they had signed six-month contracts. "This is the beginning of a long campaign," he said.

Although these mercenaries are British, their paymaster appears to be American. "The soldiers' departure follows an extraordinary series of manoeuvres in which thousands of American dollars have changed hands at London hotels, among

them the Piccadilly and the Tower," London *Sunday Times* reporter Tony Geraghty said in the January 25 issue.

The U.S. participation in the British mercenary operation, however, was not limited to financial aid. The February 1 New York *Daily News* reported that according to the London *Observer*, "U.S. Army Maj. James E. Leonard, assistant military attache at the United States Embassy in London, was the 'liaison officer'" with the SAS.

Although the CIA-organized recruitment of mercenaries reportedly shifted from the United States to several European capitals in early January, following disclosures of the operation in the U.S. press, it appears that Americans are still being hired to fight in Angola.

*Washington Post* correspondent Leon Dash reported in the January 27 issue, "About 200 Black Vietnam war combat veterans in the Washington area are organizing to go to Angola and fight on the side of the U.S.-backed forces in the civil war there."

One of the recruiters, Larry Mitchell, told Dash that he started the mercenary operation in November 1975, but that it was speeded up in mid-January after the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) agreed to provide transportation to Angola.

Mitchell said he hoped to hire about 500 U.S. mercenaries, who would each be paid about \$1,500 a month. He also told a reporter for the *Washington Star* that the mercenaries would probably be trained at an undisclosed site in New York state or perhaps at Fort Benning, a U.S. military base in Georgia. Mitchell said that two CORE-recruited units were already in Angola and Zaïre.

Mitchell refused to comment on whether the CORE operation was serving as a front for the CIA. "He did say, however," the *Star* reported, "that he 'wouldn't be surprised' if the money for the American guerrillas were coming from the CIA.

"Who else could afford something this large?" he remarked."

A report in the January 30 *Wall Street Journal* said that in testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa January 29, Kissinger "concluded that some CIA funds may be financing recruitment of mercenaries in the U.S. currently." Kissinger tried to justify the U.S. intervention in Angola by citing Washington's need to maintain a "balance on the ground" to strengthen its bargaining hand with Moscow.

The continued flow of mercenaries into Angola underlines the Ford administration's determination to press as far as it can in Angola, by whatever means possible, to advance its imperialist aims. There can be no relaxation of antiwar forces in their campaign to halt the U.S. intervention. □

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## Kissinger Calls for Stepped-up Intervention in Angola

By Steve Clark

During the last week of January, as the tide in Angola's civil war continued to shift toward the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA—People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola), politicians and diplomats in capitals around the world scurried to reassess their policies in light of the changing military situation.

The White House, under election-year pressure from the Republican party's right wing, is desperately trying to pin the failure of its Angola objectives on Congress. In a letter to Carl Albert, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Gerald Ford dredged up cold-war rhetoric that would almost embarrass his conservative rival, former California Gov. Ronald Reagan.

"I believe that resistance to Soviet expansion by military means must be a fundamental element of United States foreign policy," he said. The occasion for Ford's letter was the January 27 vote in the House on the so-called Tunney amendment to the defense appropriations bill. The amendment, passed in the Senate last December, bars the use of Defense Department funds for "any activities in Angola other than intelligence gathering."

Despite the White House plea, the Tunney amendment passed by a resounding 323-to-99 vote, including a majority of House Republicans.

Two days later Secretary of State Kissinger, testifying before the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, commented on this partial fund cutoff. Angola represents "the first time that the U.S. has failed to respond to Soviet military moves outside their immediate orbit," he said. "And it is the first time that Congress has halted the Executive's action while it was in the process of meeting this kind of threat."

Later in the same testimony, Kissinger said that having failed to gain congressional approval for "covert" aid, "the Administration is now considering overt financial aid and we will soon be consulting with Congress on this possibility."

Given the decisive margin of the House vote on the Tunney amendment, it is quite unlikely that White House odds-makers actually believe that a request for "overt" aid will fare any better. The mood in Congress was pretty well summed up by California Congressman John Burton, a Democrat. "... those members who want to give assistance and U.S. tax dollars to a civil war in Angola," he told his colleagues, "... should get ready to draw retirement."

Kissinger is aware that his worst problem is the impact on the American people of the Vietnam experience, which has been reinforced since 1973 by Watergate and the unraveling skein of CIA and FBI crimes. At the Senate hearings, Kissinger complained that the Soviet Union and Cuba have attempted "to take advantage of our continuing domestic division and self-torment." He implored the American people to recognize that "the time has come to put aside self-accusation, division, and guilt."

Washington had hoped to gain a firm foothold for U.S. imperialism in Angola when the civil war broke out there last year between the MPLA and two rival nationalist organizations—the Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA—Angolan National Liberation Front) and the União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola (UNITA—National Union for the Total Independence of Angola).

In supporting the UNITA and the FNLA, Ford and Kissinger sought to reach a military stalemate that would permit the White House to offer a plausible "compromise solution"—a weak coalition regime dependent on imperialism.

That plan has now been stymied. South Africa, unwilling or unable to carry the imperialists' burden by itself, has withdrawn from the battlefronts of central Angola to positions along the Namibian border, where its own reactionary interests are most directly at stake.

As long as full-scale American or South African intervention is ruled out by these factors, Kissinger must look elsewhere to salvage the situation. The January 29 edition of the Soviet newspaper *Izvestia* indicated that the Kremlin might be willing to lend a helping hand.

Kissinger returned from talks in Moscow with Soviet Premier Leonid Brezhnev only a few days before he testified before the Senate subcommittee. MPLA Foreign Minister José Eduardo dos Santos was in Moscow at the same time to meet with Boris Ponomarev, an alternate member of the Soviet Political Bureau.

The *Izvestia* article blamed the UNITA and the FNLA for provoking the current civil war, but added in a conciliatory tone, "The Soviet Union comes out for peace in Angola. It has never come out against a quest for a political settlement in Angola."

Kissinger learned of the article shortly after completing his Senate testimony, but according to a report by correspondent

David Binder in the January 30 *New York Times*, "... he was said to have declined to draw any conclusions because the Soviet Union had not communicated such a suggestion to the United States Government." However, given the options now open to Washington, Kissinger would most likely welcome such an offer.

Of course, this in no way spells the end of imperialist intrigues and intervention in Angola. No one lends any credence to the Central Intelligence Agency's disavowal of involvement there, especially in light of continuing reports of the recruitment of mercenaries in Europe and the United States. South African troops are still poised inside Angola along its southern border, giving every indication that Pretoria intends to keep them there until its interests are firmly guaranteed.

The *Izvestia* article, nonetheless, bolstered those sections of America's ruling circles who are eager to correct what they believe to be a disastrous Angola policy from the standpoint of U.S. economic and political interests.

After noting Kissinger's response, *Times* correspondent Binder reported, "Other State Department officials expressed some interest in the paper's commentary because, they said, they had held the belief for more than seven weeks that the Popular Movement would eventually propose coalition talks at least to the National Union for Total Independence of Angola. . . ."

Many top Washington politicians, State Department officials, and business interests recognized very early in the Angolan civil war that from a bourgeois standpoint the differences among the three groups are not decisive, particularly with regard to their attitudes toward imperialist investments in Angola. These critics also questioned Kissinger's contention that an MPLA-dominated government would inevitably convert Angola into little more than a Soviet naval stronghold.

Many also held the opinion that among the three groups the MPLA was the most likely victor, and recent events have deepened their conviction on this score.

On January 25 Mark Moran, an aide to California Senator John Tunney, completed a week-long stay in Luanda, where he met with many top MPLA leaders. "My impression is that there are several positions in the M.P.L.A.," he said, "and that the

moderates are in a bit of a quandary over what they recognize as the need for eventual U.S. economic and financial assistance. They need a softening of Washington's position to legitimize their own standing in the movement."

Moran continued, ". . . the people I spoke with went to great lengths to indicate that their position was not against the multinational companies, which they felt should operate here in a mutually profitable arrangement with the Government."

Moran also brought back a memorandum that MPLA leaders say was presented to an MPLA representative in Washington, D.C., by T.A. Wilson, chairman of the board of Boeing Aircraft Company, on the instructions of the U.S. State Department. The MPLA official had come to Washington to consult with Wilson about the State Department's decision to block the sale of two Boeing 737 aircraft to the Luanda-based group.

According to Tunney, who released the memorandum January 28, its implied threat of further economic sanctions similar to the Boeing incident was viewed by MPLA leaders as a "virtual ultimatum that slammed the door on further discussions or a possible rapprochement with our country." Tunney said that the memorandum pushed the MPLA "into closer collaboration with the Soviet Union"—a frequent refrain among Washington critics of White House Angola policy.

Shortly after the memorandum was issued, the State Department pressured Gulf Oil Company to suspend its operations in Angola's Cabinda oil fields, which are located in MPLA-held territory. It also ordered Gulf to suspend all tax and royalty payments to the Luanda government.

The Gulf operation in Cabinda was far and away the largest U.S. investment in Angola. At the same time, it was the MPLA's largest single source of revenue, paying the group \$116 million last September and October with millions more scheduled.

Luanda is eager to provide ammunition to critics of Ford and Kissinger's policies. In an interview with several British and American journalists January 31, MPLA leader Lopo do Nascimento said that Luanda was trying to "sensitize American public opinion through the press and through infrequent contact with U.S. legislators and their staffs."

"Dr. Kissinger knows that our economy has been traditionally geared to Western technology," Nascimento said, also pointing out that the bulk of Angola's petroleum and coffee trade has been with the United States.

He charged that Washington has declared an economic war against the MPLA. "It was not us who caused problems with the American companies in Angola," he

said. "It was the U.S. government. The United States considers this economic aspect more important than the military one, but they won't win. Cuba should have been a lesson to the United States."

Nascimento warned that if Gulf does not reopen its Cabinda fields, the MPLA will negotiate with other oil-producing concerns to operate them. He said that Gulf has informed Luanda by cablegram that it will decide on its course in Cabinda at a February 10 board of directors meeting.

To allay fears in Washington of "Soviet domination," Luis de Almeida, another MPLA leader, stressed in an earlier interview that the constitution of the Luanda government specifically states that "the republic will not join any international military organization or allow any foreign power to establish bases on its territory."

The MPLA's efforts to convince American politicians and business officials of its willingness to cooperate with imperialist interests has scored some notable successes. Senator Dick Clark, head of the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, stated his view of the group in opening remarks before Kissinger's January 29 testimony.

"After 500 years of colonial rule and more than a decade of liberation struggle," Clark said, "it is unlikely that a new government in Angola will give up its hard-fought freedom to become a Soviet satellite." Fear of increased Soviet political influence in Africa has been a prime motive behind White House policy toward Angola.

Clark has invited representatives of all three Angolan liberation groups to testify before his subcommittee February 6.

Similar attitudes were expressed time and again during the January 27 House debate on the Tunney amendment. Congressman Herman Badillo said on the House floor, "Ironically, Gulf Oil did not apparently perceive the MPLA to constitute a greater threat to its operations than the FNLA or UNITA and had good relations with the MPLA until the State Department required Gulf to end its operations last December."

"Washington should be laying out lines to the MPLA with a view to strengthening the hands of its moderate factions," the editors of the *Christian Science Monitor* advised January 27. "It is not a foregone conclusion that this Marxist-oriented group will impose a Soviet-style regime on the country. . . ."

"In view of the involvement of American oil companies in Angola, the U.S. certainly is not without political leverage in seeking a moderate course by the MPLA. . . ."

Most European capitals are taking a "wait-and-see" stance toward the Angolan groups, according to a dispatch from London by Associated Press correspondent Richard Blystone. "Although Portugal, West Germany, Belgium, and Britain—and to a lesser extent other European

countries—have economic stakes in Angola's oil, agriculture, and mineral industries," he said, "analysts point out that they do not necessarily stand to lose everything with an MPLA victory." (*Christian Science Monitor*, January 28.)

The Armed Forces Movement in Portugal, which has officially been neutral but generally favorable to the MPLA, appears on the verge of formalizing that bias. Portuguese Foreign Minister Maj. Ernesto Melo Antunes said at a January 28 news conference in Brussels, "We are waiting for the right moment to recognize a government in the capital which is in a position to control most of the territory with the support of the people."

"I think at the moment the MPLA is well-placed for being that government."

Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, while conferring with Cuban Premier Fidel Castro in Havana recently, remarked that Castro had sent Cuban troops to Angola to back the MPLA only after "a great deal of thought and feeling for the situation."

Even the government of Angola's neighboring Zaïre, which has served as the FNLA's external base of operations and has provided funds and troop support in the war against the MPLA, appears to have some second thoughts. In an interview published January 24 in the government-controlled press, Zaïre's President Mobutu Sese Seko said, ". . . sentimentally, we support the F.N.L.A. of Holden Roberto." But he continued, "Things having turned out the way they have, no more sentimentality on our part."

Whatever tactical differences have developed in Washington, American imperialism still has its eyes fixed firmly on Angola's oil, coffee, diamonds, and other resources. The same can be said for the South African and European imperialist powers.

It remains to be seen exactly what Washington will do next, given the recent developments in the civil war between the contending liberation groups. But one thing can be said for sure. The need to raise the slogan "Hands off Angola!" is just as pressing today as it has ever been. □

### Pinochet Demands 'Monolithic Unity'

". . . the monolithic unity and ironclad discipline of our armed and security forces will never be broken," said Chilean President Augusto Pinochet at a January 27 ceremony, receiving pledges of "absolute loyalty" from the other three members of his junta. Three weeks earlier the head of the joint chiefs of staff, Gen. Sergio Arellano, resigned abruptly from the junta, apparently for political reasons.

## Cambodia: Refugees Report Another Forced Migration

By Steve Clark

Reports from camps housing Cambodian refugees inside Thailand indicate that another massive transfer of the population may have been undertaken by the Khmer Rouge government last October and November.

Confirmation of the reports has been made difficult by the tight censorship imposed on the country by the Khmer Rouge since the downfall of Washington's puppet Lon Nol regime last April. Cambodia's borders have been closed to reporters and almost all other foreign visitors.

According to foreign correspondents who were in Pnompenh last April 17 when Khmer Rouge forces entered the city, a mass evacuation of the population was immediately carried out. Even the hospitals were emptied, forcing the sick and disabled to join the forced march to the countryside.

It has been estimated that approximately three million city dwellers throughout Cambodia were sent against their will to work in rural areas.

The Cambodian government has had little or nothing to say about its goals in ordering that evacuation. The Washington-based Indochina Resource Center, which is sympathetic to the new government, claims that the threat of famine and the desire to increase yearly rice yields were the primary motivations. The resource center says that its information comes from Pnompenh.

Some credence was lent to this view by Cambodian Deputy Premier Ieng Sary, who attended the nonaligned nations conference in Peru last August. According to an August 28 Reuters dispatch from Lima, Ieng Sary told the conference that "his country was one great workshop, with people struggling to restore industry, agriculture and communications destroyed in the Indochina war."

A somewhat different view was attributed to Prince Norodom Sihanouk by Wilfred Burchett, who writes for the Maoist-leaning American weekly the *Guardian*. Sihanouk, officially president of Cambodia, is little more than a figurehead, according to most reports.

Burchett said that Sihanouk told him during an interview conducted in Pyongyang, North Korea, that the evacuation "was absolutely necessary to make a clean-up. Phnom Penh had become a Sodom and Gomorrah under Lon Nol. . . . There was no other solution but to empty it out." (*Guardian*, November 12, 1975.)

Whatever the reasons for this massive



PRINCE SIHANOUK: Claims forced evacuation was "absolutely necessary" because "Phnom Penh had become a Sodom and Gomorrah."

forced migration, it took place at the cost of great human suffering and the total disruption of the lives of hundreds of thousands of Cambodians, according to the eyewitness accounts of foreign correspondents. These journalists not only saw what happened in Pnompenh but encountered many refugees clogging the same roads they were traveling, as government caravans escorted foreigners to the Thai border for their final expulsion from the country.

The most recent forced migrations were primarily to the agriculturally rich province of Battambang in northwest Cambodia, according to residents of the refugee camps along the Thai border. "As in the first migration, according to refugee accounts, many have died on the rigorous journeys—the precise numbers may never be known—either of disease, or simply weakness and the hardships of the journey . . .," *New York Times* correspondent David Andelman reported January 19 from the Aranyaprathet refugee camp. More than 9,000 Cambodians now live in such camps, according to a January 26 Associated Press dispatch.

Andelman continued, "Among the explanations advanced by those who took part—and they were never told the reason by Cambodian officials—were the great availability of vacant land in the new

areas, the need for workers to develop these regions and the desire to break up any possible anti-Government groupings that might be forming."

Andelman spoke to Chou Tri, a refugee whose home had been in Battambang. Chou Tri said that most of those transported to the province were settled in remote, uncleared areas of the jungle. According to Andelman, "Many, [Chou Tri] said, were seriously ill with malaria, typhoid, cholera and dysentery when they arrived. He said that he had seen 600 die in the first month after their arrival and before his departure."

Another of Andelman's interviews sheds a bit more light on reports last year, based on Radio Pnompenh broadcasts, that some of the evacuees may have later returned to the cities to help revive industrial production. Andelman reported, "Other refugees said that they had encountered workers from factories in Phnom Penh who had been forced out of the capital last April and several months later brought back to their factories.

"There, they were told to begin operating the machinery again, particularly in the textile works and rubber factory, and at the same time were told to instruct Government officials in the operations of the factory. When the officials had mastered the techniques last fall, these refugees said, they were put on trucks and shipped up to the northwest to join those from the rural areas."

London *Sunday Times* correspondent Jon Swain also visited the refugee camps in Thailand. In the January 25 *Sunday Times* he reported: "According to the refugees, a day in the new settlements begins at dawn when the villagers, controlled by a Khmer Rouge chairman and his four subordinates, begin work in the fields. Villagers often have difficulty completing tasks in the allotted time because they are weak from hunger and short of tools. There is a two or three-hour break at midday followed by more work till dusk."

Cambodian schools have also remained closed since last April, Andelman reported in a January 27 dispatch from Bangkok. Only "political reeducation" has been instituted, while instruction in the basics has yet to be revived in the resettlement villages. Cambodia's few colleges also are still shut down.

Some refugees, Andelman said, even reported that the Khmer Rouge have

exhibited a deep hostility toward former students and teachers. "By contrast," he continued, "schools in South Vietnam and Laos are reopening and functioning, though in somewhat different formats than under the former regimes."

The need to restore vast areas of the Cambodian countryside destroyed by Amer-

ican terror bombing during the Indochina War is one of the factors behind the widely reported evacuations, mass migrations, and forced labor.

Battambang, for example, which is a key rice-producing region in Cambodia, suffered heavily from U.S. bombing raids. Andelman said in his January 19 dispatch that

one refugee—whom he called the "unofficial president" of the Aranyaprathet camp—pointed to the extensive damage inflicted on dikes and irrigation systems during the war. Repair and reconstruction of these vital facilities, the refugee said, was one goal of the forced resettlement of thousands of Cambodians. □

## Miners, Students Go Out on Strike

# Bolivia: Biggest Working-Class Upsurge in Five Years

The firing of 820 workers at a shoe factory has sparked the most serious crisis for the Bolivian military dictatorship since it came to power in August 1971.

On January 26, declaring their action "an elementary duty of class solidarity," 36,000 miners went out on strike to back up the shoe workers. The miners were followed by university students, who struck the following day. Workers at another shoe factory threatened to go out on strike as well.

The conflict began at the Manaco shoe factory in Quillacolla, about 275 miles southeast of La Paz. Manaco, the largest shoe factory in Bolivia, is Canadian-owned. The 820 workers employed there went on strike for higher wages and improved conditions January 14, but they were ordered back to their jobs by the government January 22.

Interior Minister Juan Pereda denounced the strike, declaring that the shoe factory was one of the targets of a "subversive" plot against the government.

The military dictatorship of Gen. Hugo Banzer announced January 24 that the striking shoe workers had been fired. The miners' strike was called in open defiance of the rightist regime.

In a news release quoted in the January 27 issue of the Mexico City daily *Excelsior*, the Federación Sindical de Trabajadores Mineros de Bolivia (Trade-Union Federation of Bolivian Mine Workers) denounced "the arbitrary and inhuman step of the foreign monopoly Manaco and the complacent and biased attitude of the governmental authorities."

In addition, *Excelsior* reported, "The miners of the state sector, the country's most combative trade-union group, warned that if the conflict is not resolved in a just way, shoes from Manaco will be boycotted in all the mining districts, and stores that offer them to the public will be taken over by workers committees."

The miners' strike was initiated by the trade union at the Siglo XX mine, which also demanded the release of political

prisoners and full legality for the unions.

Although the nationwide mine strike was originally called for a period of twenty-four hours, a January 27 dispatch from La Paz published in *Excelsior* reported that the strike might continue until a settlement at Manaco was reached. According to the same dispatch, almost all the Manaco workers had returned to work January 26; they then walked out again when the company refused to take back thirteen leaders accused of being "extremists."

In Cochabamba, not far from the Manaco factory, workers at the second largest shoe factory in the country threatened to go out on strike January 27 to protest the detention of several labor leaders. The military regime had already declared a state of emergency in that city in response to the Manaco walkout and the miners' strike.

Meanwhile, according to the January 27 *Excelsior*, "... miners and university students began campaigns to collect funds, medicines, and foodstuffs for the strikers."

## Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

# Against Imperialist Repression of the Saharan People!

[The following statement was issued December 22, 1975, by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

The Fourth International draws the attention of the international working class to the ruthless massacre of the Saharan people perpetrated by the Moroccan and Mauritanian collaborators of international imperialism since the invasion of the ex-Spanish Sahara by the troops of these two countries. The annexation of this territory by Morocco, under the pretext of a "self-

determination" move made by the Moroccan-controlled reactionary Yemaa, has in fact led to a massive slaughter of Saharan youth, and of defenseless women and children, both in the territory's capital and in the desert, by the Moroccan and Mauritanian armies. The Spanish army has covered up and collaborated with this slaughter.

The Fourth International calls upon the workers and soldiers of Spain, Morocco, and all other countries to actively oppose this vicious attack on the right of self-determination of a small people. It calls for active support of the Polisario Front, the

only organization trying to resist this neocolonialist massacre. It calls upon the Spanish, Moroccan, and Mauritanian soldiers to fraternize with the oppressed people of the Sahara and to turn their guns against those who ordered this inhuman slaughter, who are also their own oppressors.

*Down with the reactionary annexation of the Saharan people by Morocco!*

*For the full right of self-determination of the Saharan people!*

*Down with the bloody butchers of Rabat and Madrid!*

*Victory to the Polisario Front!* □

## Largest Shantytown in Mexico City Burned to the Ground

By Judy White

Three infants were killed, eight persons were injured, and three thousand persons were left homeless when "Dos de Octubre," a shantytown on the outskirts of Mexico City burned down January 25 following a mysterious explosion.

Reported by the Mexico City daily *Excélsior* to be the largest *ciudad perdida* ("lost city") of the nation's capital, Dos de Octubre was located beside a highway in the Iztacalco section of the city.

According to Francisco de la Cruz, the spokesman for the Dos de Octubre residents, the fire was immediately preceded by an explosion behind the wall of his room. Flames burst out and rapidly spread through the settlement. An unexploded Molotov cocktail was later found near the spot where the blaze began.

Dos de Octubre residents, who have been engaged in a struggle with the Echeverría regime to force it to comply with promises to upgrade their living conditions, charge that the government is responsible for setting the fire.

Leaders of the community pointed out that fire fighters and first-aid personnel on the scene were slow to act, allowing virtually the entire settlement to burn to the ground. They also called attention to the fact that on the very day of the fire they had accused the authorities of having ordered the destruction of their homes in an attempt to clear the area.

Following the fire, community leaders immediately called for a united march on the Zocalo, the seat of the federal government. They painted banners accusing the heads of Mexico's housing administration of the murder of the three infants and stating that the fire would not force them to give up their fight.

By January 27, De la Cruz was able to report to *Excélsior* that seventeen committees had been set up by the residents to deal with problems in the burned-out area and handle the aid coming in from dozens of private sources.

The community has taken special precautions to protect De la Cruz because of their suspicions that the explosion was a planned attack against him. *Excélsior* reporter Alejandro Ortiz Reza said that De la Cruz was under guard by "dozens of women" who conducted "interrogations, at times aggressive ones," of anyone who wanted to see the community leader.

Government functionaries claimed to be



Naranjo/Excélsior

"Excélsior" cartoon comments on fire that razed *ciudad perdida* ("lost city") Dos de Octubre. Government functionary at left says: "It would be more correct to call it a 'saved' city." To which the other replies, "Aha! Right on!"

outraged at the accusations. "Nonsense," said Federal District Regent Octavio Senties. Conveniently overlooking the 1968 massacre of hundreds of demonstrators at Tlatelolco, he said: "We don't resolve social conflicts in this city with fires, violent attacks, or the use of the police."

The director of low-cost housing, José Parcero López, also felt he had been wronged. Ortiz Reza reported him as saying that "his activity is eminently humanitarian because he develops socially useful programs, which up to the present have benefited 15,000 families from *ciudades perdidas*, who now occupy a decent room, and 15,000 more who were living in difficult circumstances."

Despite the discovery of the Molotov cocktail, the offices of the regent, district attorney, and fire chief of the Federal District all rejected the possibility that the fire had been deliberately set. They claimed it was caused by the explosion of two tanks

of bottled gas, probably the result of a leak.

When asked about the Molotov cocktail by an *Excélsior* reporter, Senties dismissed the discovery as "irrelevant," since the "expert opinion of the fire department is a serious one based on all possible considerations. The only unfortunate thing in this case would be to make a political spectacle out of the tragedy that has befallen so many people. But we hope that things will calm down and that everyone will understand that through a joint effort we will be able to solve this social problem definitively."

The authorities tried to explain the total destruction of Dos de Octubre on the basis of high winds and flammable building materials. In addition, they accused local residents of sabotaging efforts of the fire fighters.

With regard to an investigation of the causes of the blaze, Rafael Moreno González, an official of the attorney general's office, said January 27 that it would be virtually impossible since the squatters had "removed the greater part of the rubbish" from the area.

This "rubbish" most likely was the remains of the household goods of the former residents, who are reported to have started construction of a new settlement adjacent to the blackened remains of Dos de Octubre. □

### Urrestarazú and Salazar Arrested in Chile

Two students were arrested by Chile's political police, DINA (Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional—National Intelligence Bureau) New Year's Eve while they were attending a party in Santiago.

Hugo Urrestarazú Silva and Gabriela Salazar, his wife, are both fifth-year physics students at the University of Chile.

Although Chilean authorities were still denying any knowledge of the couple's whereabouts seventeen days later, an appeal on their behalf from Urrestarazú's sister charged that the two had been taken to "Villa Grimaldi," a secret DINA interrogation and torture center.

Elisa Urrestarazú asked that protests be sent to Junta Militar, Edificio Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile, with a copy to Manuel Contreras, Director de la DINA, Ministerio de Defensa, Santiago, Chile.



## Club-Swinging Cops Break Up Concert in Mexico City

Motorcycle police and *granaderos* (riot police) broke up a concert performance of the Centro Libre de Experimentación Teatral y Artística (CLETA—Free Center for Theatrical and Artistic Experimentation) in Mexico City's Plaza de las Tres Culturas January 25. The performance was organized to commemorate the October 1968 Tlatelolco massacre of hundreds of student demonstrators at the same plaza.

Swinging clubs and using karate chops, the cops charged the crowd of 1,000 persons attending the event. At least twelve persons were arrested and an unknown number injured as a result of the police attack.

The police launched the attack on the grounds that the CLETA program was interrupting another performance taking place in the plaza at the same time. This was a display of acrobatics by the motorcycle police, which was accompanied by music from three local bands, including one police band. The police also claimed CLETA was insulting government authorities and inciting public disorder.

CLETA explained what happened in a mimeographed leaflet, summarized in the January 28 issue of the Mexico City daily *Excélsior*. The theater group's program had been planned and publicized over a month in advance. When they learned that another organization, under government sponsorship, would also be using the site, they began their performance on the other side of the plaza so as not to interfere or provide a pretext for a confrontation. Suddenly, the

police stopped their show and charged the CLETA event. They ripped down CLETA's banners and began beating men, women, and children indiscriminately.

A woman who witnessed the attack told *Excélsior* she saw a local government functionary give the word to members of the Asociación Unica de la Juventud Tlatelolca (United Association of Tlatelolco Youth) to storm the platform where CLETA was performing. The Asociación Unica de la Juventud Tlatelolca was the main organizer of the other event.

According to an account in the January 26 *Excélsior*, those who fled were chased into nearby alleys and passageways by motorcycle police and *granaderos* with riot shields and masks.

Speakers began the CLETA performance by reviewing the events of the 1968 massacre and protesting the burning of the Dos de Octubre squatter settlement (see article elsewhere in this issue). They were singing protest songs at the time of the police attack.

Among those seriously injured were a member of the Liga Socialista (Socialist League, a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Mexico) and a reporter from *Excélsior*. The reporter was struck by the chief of the motorcycle cops when he tried to interview Enrique Salgado Cordero, the assistant director of police and traffic.

The twelve persons arrested were Laura Trejo Moreno, Rosalina and Eduardo Her-

nández Vargas, Jenaro Gómez Chávez, René Castañeda Dimayuga, Fernando Fuentes Luna, Víctor Cruz Jiménez, Samuel Díaz Rueda, Alejandro Gómez de la Rosa, Sergio Balcázar Minero, Juan Martínez Ramos, and Víctor Manuel Angeles Soto.

They face possible charges of disturbing the peace, intentionally damaging the property of others, assaulting and injuring government authorities, and inciting disorder.

The police attack was so obviously unwarranted that even the editors of *Excélsior* commented on it. In the January 28 issue they stated:

"... both the actors, whose meeting was dispersed and several of whom were arrested, and the leaders of a group of residents of the housing complex surrounding the spot agree—apparently without any connection between the two—on denouncing a possible police provocation. It would lie in the deliberate prolongation of a festival, which in normal circumstances does not last as long as the one did Sunday, and in having included in the program a group of motorcycle traffic police, who participated in the act of dispersing and arresting the artists.

"Such extreme actions cannot be viewed with tranquillity. The police have the duty to prevent rallies that threaten the public peace, but they cannot exceed their authority to the point of preventing the free expression of ideas in ways appropriate within the existing laws." □

## Argentine AAA Announces Campaign of Mass Murder

In an open statement of its murderous aims, the fascist-minded Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance (AAA) has declared that it plans a campaign of mass killings aimed at "all individuals, regardless of their nationality, religion, race, or creed, who obey unpatriotic Marxist, Masonic, anti-Christian, or international reactionary Jewish interests."

The announcement came in the form of a press statement distributed January 26 to reporters as they left President Isabel Perón's residence, according to a report in the January 28 issue of the Mexico City daily *Excélsior*.

This statement, and one the following day directed to the foreign press, said that the AAA had merged operations with two ultraright terrorist groups—El Comando

Libertadores de América (Liberators of America Commando Group) and El Comando Fuerzas Conjuntas (Joint Forces Commando Group). The announcement of the murder campaign followed a joint conference the three groups held in Córdoba December 29, 1975. The groups set a "maximum deadline of six months" to implement the campaign.

"In particular we will execute economic criminals and functionaries—especially ministers of state, judges, senators, deputies, mayors, and councilmen—who are evil and corrupt," the AAA said. "Also corrupt trade-union leaders, priests from the Third World movement, international reactionary forces, and leftist infiltrators in our Catholic church.

"But we will also execute pitilessly

members of the two guerrilla organizations—the Montoneros and the ERP [Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo—Revolutionary People's Army]—and of the Communist party, the Authentic party, the Revolutionary Workers party, the Revolutionary Youth of the Radical Civic Union, and the Revolutionary Communist party."

The AAA said, "There will be no pardons. We will be unmerciful. We will pass summary judgment and execute in the place we find them" all who "carry out activities at variance with our most cherished principles, who act against the religious well-being of our country."

The offensive will be so powerful, the AAA said, that "the enemies of the homeland will not have a single chance to raise their heads." □

## 'República' Handed Back to Its Stockholders

By Gerry Foley

Portuguese authorities announced January 28 that the Revolutionary Council had decided to return the newspaper *República* to its stockholders.

Since June 12, 1975, *República* had been controlled by a "workers committee" and published under the administration of former business manager Alvaro Belo Marques and Col. Jorge Pereira de Carvalho. The latter was appointed by the military government as the legally responsible editor required by the press law adopted by the government of Gen. Vasco Gonçalves.

It was Belo Marques, allegedly a sympathizer of the Communist party, who inspired the occupation of the paper by a group of noneditorial workers on May 19, 1975, under the pretext that the line of the Socialist party editors and journalists was responsible for a drop in circulation that threatened the jobs of some workers. Criticisms of the Communist party and the Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA—Armed Forces Movement) were thought to be particularly unpopular.

In their book *Portugal—La Révolution en Marche*, Carlos Rossi, Daniel Ben Said, and Charles-André Udry note the following:

"The business manager, Alvaro Belo Marques, is said to have sounded the alarm. The workers felt that their working conditions, living conditions, and job security were threatened by this decline. Whereas in October 1974, 67,000 copies of the paper were sold, by December circulation had fallen to 50,000 copies."

After the occupation of *República*, circulation fell to 20,000 copies, even though copies were distributed by Communist party-controlled unions and sold in the streets by young volunteers enthused by the example of workers control the paper was supposed to represent. The "workers committee" was forced to ask for a subsidy, which was refused by the sixth provisional government, in which the SP plays the main political role.

Following the abortive November 25 putsch, the position of the paper became politically more difficult. It was identified with the forces opposing the sixth government; that is, the Communist party and particularly left-centrist groups linked to the "military left" involved in the putsch. These included the organizations of the Frente de Unidade Revolucionária (FUR—Front for Revolutionary Unity) and even more the União Democrática do Povo (UDP—People's Democratic Union).

However, *República* was untouched by the purge of pro-CP and pro-FUR journalists and editors that followed the November 25-27 debacle. The government was anxious to present its moves as in harmony with the democratic aspirations of the masses. It claimed that the CP and its allies in the FUR had gained an influence in the nationalized press not justified by mass support. Furthermore, the people could not be asked to pay, through their taxes, for papers that they did not agree with.

So, it was only the nationalized press that was "reorganized." Control of the daily papers was redivided among the parties, with the CP retaining full control only of *Diário de Lisboa*.

*República* was spared because its stock was in the hands of individuals and not held by the big banks that were nationalized. There were about 5,000 stockholders. Many of these were liberals, leftists, and supporters of the SP who had bought shares as a way of maintaining the paper under the Caetano regime, when it was repeatedly shut down by the authorities. The main stockholders, reportedly, were SP leaders such as Mário Soares, Salgado Zenha, José Magalhães Godinho, and the former editor, Raul Rêgo.

The authorities may also have felt that there was no need to move against *República*, since it was already as good as dead. In fact, they did not have to take responsibility for repressing or even starving out the "workers committee." The fate of the "journal of workers control" was sealed on the very eve of the November 25 putsch.

Alvaro Belo Marques and Colonel Pereira de Carvalho resigned, depriving the paper of legality under Vasco Gonçalves's press law. *República* was nevertheless published through December, but stopped coming out after the Revolutionary Council formally accepted the colonel's resignation in January.

In his letter of resignation, dated November 18 and addressed to Colonel Pereira de Carvalho, Belo Marques wrote:

After being away from the paper thirty days, recovering from nervous exhaustion largely caused by this work, I returned to find the office just as it was in the early days of May.

1. There was a tendency to adopt extreme positions, people were shoved aside, partisan struggles were going on.

2. Among the comrades shoved aside, or whose enthusiasm was destroyed, I found Júlio Moreira, António Santos, Delmar da Silva, and Eduardo

Gonçalves. The director himself [Colonel Pereira de Carvalho] was in a similar state.

3. These persons had thought that they could constructively offer a reorganization of services and sections, which could improve the working conditions on the paper and thus automatically improve the possibilities for *República*.

4. They held two meetings with the workers committee and the administrative committee and with Colonel Pereira de Carvalho, and for the first time, according to António Santos, there was constructive work.

5. This first plan was to be completed, adjusted, and approved by the workers in a general assembly.

6. As you know, this preplan (only lines for study) for the future was immediately destroyed at a meeting of the administrative committee with the workers.

7. With the assenting silence of the workers present, the editorial board judged the preplan as an administrative coup. It was the general consensus that:

- I had been absent from *República* for thirty days and it had not collapsed.

- That petty-bourgeois persons have no place in the revolution and far less in *República*.

- That the petty-bourgeois persons in question were drawing too high pay.

8. All these points referred to me. It is true that on May 19, I was classified as petty-bourgeois and had the highest salary on the staff. That, however, did not prevent my struggle from being useful to the workers of this paper, and all of them benefited from it.

9. As is well known, revolutions utilize some people when they are useful for a certain end, and when that end is achieved immediately cast them aside.

10. In fact, I agree completely with the various opinions expressed.

- I am not needed on the paper.

- Since I'm not needed, it is even worse to draw a big salary.

- The paper is not financially able to maintain an unneeded employee.

11. I would add that I feel my struggle has been betrayed.

12. When we all decided to fight for a nonparty paper in the service of the workers, I thought we would achieve it. But in the end we did not.

We have a paper that is anti-Communist, anti-FUR, and anti-other things besides.

In his letter of resignation, to go into effect November 25, Colonel Pereira de Carvalho concurred with Belo Marques's complaints:

This deterioration was shown in the ever more frequent reshuffles, in the lack of confidence evident in all exchanges of impressions I participated in, in the adoption of procedures I regard as unacceptable, in the sectarian and often partisan spirit I consider pernicious to the functioning of this paper.

The process of deterioration culminated with the presentation by the administrative committee of a plan for reorganizing the paper based on

incontrovertible facts of an economic nature. This plan, bad or good, was submitted for discussion by the workers.

Immediately it was shouted down by speeches that did not refute it but diverted the discussion to the political level, in an apparent attempt to cover up the facts. The maneuver was completely successful, because of the lack of attention shown by the assembly and the lack of time for discussion.

The colonel also complained that he had had no control over running the paper since he took his post in June.

In the November 25 issue of *República*, a resumé was published of the discussion in the last general assembly of the staff. Most of this seemed to revolve around the question of whether it was the União Democrática do Povo that set the line. For example, one person, identified as "Comrade Vladimiro from the printshop," was quoted as saying:

"In Sorefame [one of the largest factories in Lisbon], they tell me the paper belongs to the UDP. I deny this, because it won't be as long as I am here. It is not a UDP paper in my opinion, but one that represents the Marxist-Leninist line of several groups."

A member of the editorial staff, Miguel de Oliveira, expressed the view that was described as "representing that of several comrades":

"At the moment, this paper has mainly an ML [Marxist-Leninist] line, although it is not the only one. Let me make myself clear: I do not think the paper has a UDP line, but I think it has mainly an ML one."

Joaquim Dias, who played a major role in the "workers committee," tried to answer Belo Marques's complaints:

"The struggle at *República* was not against this or that party. I entered it on May 19 because Sr. Belo Marques was put in a position where he could not do his job."

Dias went on to say: "*República* will only cease appealing to the large number of groups that exist now when there is a party of the working class with a correct line. Then *República* will be the organ of that party."

The author or authors of the article summarized other points:

"There was talk about 'new bosses.' The workers committee was criticized. It was said that this paper had reached the point of being indistinguishable from a barracks paper, that it was a cemetery for communiqués."

Another interesting point was raised but not explained: "Jorge Almeida discussed the criticisms of us by the FUR and the call for insurrection recently launched by the PRP."

In the opening paragraph, it was said that one of the main questions was whether "the decline or stagnation in sales stems from the political-ideological line of the paper or from the lack of a system of distribution."

The fact that this discussion took place and was published indicates that the occupation of *República* was not accomplished by a single disciplined force, but that there was a political campaign that rallied support on a number of grounds. This, of course, does not exclude the possibility that relatively small groups of activists played a decisive role.

*República* did not follow a uniform line. At first, it reflected largely the concerns of the Communist party. Over time, it came to reflect more and more the outlook of the UDP, with articles suggesting that capitalism had been restored in the Soviet bloc. But criticisms of the UDP were also expressed on at least one occasion.

What really characterized the political line of *República* at the decisive time was support for the "people's power" demagoguery of sections of the MFA, which was supported by the CP. This also involved characterizing and opposing the Socialist party as a bourgeois force, since it stood in the way of this scheme. For example, *República* added its voice to the campaign to prevent the SP rallies of July 18 and 19, 1975. Hours before the massive SP rally in Oporto, *República's* correspondent wrote:

The people's and working-class forces, which have just liberated themselves from the party leaderships because they have recognized that the power that will move history forward lies in themselves alone, are looking forward to a great day in this city that may prove historic.

At 5:00 p.m., tens of thousands of workers, radiant with the joy inspired by the recent decisions of the MFA, which are designed to transfer power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to the hands of the people, which has ever been enslaved, will surge into the streets to affirm their will to take control of the destiny of this country. . . .

In the air this city breathes at the start of the afternoon, the conviction spread that the SP rally . . . will never take place.

The power that bans it is People's Power, which is not willing to give any margin for maneuver to its class enemy.

The city will certainly be controlled by the might of the people.

It is expected that the entrances will be sealed to prevent the forces of the bourgeoisie from concentrating. Probably there will even be clashes, such is the desperation of the bourgeoisie.

Before the SP rally in Lisbon, *República* said: "The workers and soldiers are on the watch, in a national situation dominated by a sharp conflict between two poles of power representing respectively the interests of the bourgeoisie (the Socialist party) and those of the workers (the MFA)."

After the fall of the Gonçalves government, attempts continued to make *República* the organ of "self-organization of the masses." As the crisis at the paper in late November dramatically showed, this project was doomed to failure. The idea was in fact a kind of anarcho-syndicalist or anarcho-workerist pipedream.

There is no such thing as a "nonparty"

organ of "self-guided organization of the workers." The working class cannot act as a class without organizations that have specific points of view, without parties.

The *República* "workers committee" did not represent any organized section of the workers, or, in an open way at least, any political tendency. It represented a bloc of the CP and left-centrist groups on false pretenses, and thus could not long survive. It was torn apart by political differences. Moreover, it could never have existed without the support of the CP and a section of the MFA. When this was withdrawn, it died.

The losers are the workers who believed the political pretenses for taking the paper away from its SP editors or who stayed because they had no choice.

After the resignation of the administration, the "workers committee" tried to negotiate with the stockholders, who refused to deal with it. According to a report in the January 9 *Jornal Novo*, the general feeling among the workers was that they had been "locked out." Some workers also complained of threats of repression by the government if they put out the paper illegally.

A report in the January 29 *Diário de Notícias* indicated that the workers accepted the government's action and were discussing how to "cut down" the number of firings. The problem is made worse by the fact that the SP and the former *República* editors are now publishing a more modern and attractive paper, *A Luta*, and no longer have any material need for the antiquated journal.

However, in the program they issued after leaving the government in July, the SP leaders called for "safeguarding the jobs of the *República* workers within the framework of the nationalized publishing industry." Perhaps now they can be called on to honor that pledge. □

## 9 Political Prisoners Shot in Iran

Nine opponents of Shah Reza Pahlavi's dictatorship were murdered by a firing squad in Tehran January 24.

The nine had been accused of belonging to an urban guerrilla group and had supposedly confessed to several killings. However, only the testimony of the regime is available, since no open trial was ever held.

Death sentences for nine men and one woman had been upheld by a military court on January 22, but there was no report explaining why nine were executed instead of ten. An eleventh defendant, a woman, was sentenced to fifteen years in solitary confinement. □

## The Rise of the Mass Movement in Spain

[The following interview was obtained January 13 with a member of the Political Bureau of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria/Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna-VI (LCR/ETA-VI—Revolutionary Communist League/Basque Nation and Freedom-VI), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Spain. It was published in the January 22 issue of *Inprecor*, the fortnightly news bulletin published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

*Question. How would you describe the political program of the dominant sectors of the bourgeoisie after the death of Franco and the coming to power of Juan Carlos?*

*Answer.* The government program now supported by big capital can be summed up in two words: reform Francoism. There are two aspects to this reform: first, give the bourgeoisie a chance to organize into political parties, and second, grant some recognition to the organizations of the workers movement, without "going beyond the limits" of the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español—Spanish Socialist Workers party, the Social Democracy). The bourgeoisie wants this carried out as a medium-term project to be fulfilled within two years. But there is more than one reason to expect that the calendar will be upset. I won't say much about the pressures of the international bourgeoisie; more important and decisive are the limits the mass movement is going to impose on the concretization of this bourgeois plan. Besides, things are still going to be complicated by the resistance of the personnel of the Francoist apparatus. This apparatus is not inclined to accept any reform of Francoism, because this would imply the loss of its privileges within the state apparatus.

But fundamentally, the crucial question for the government lies in the difficulty in what you could call coordinating the pace of the expression of the mass movement and the pace of the "reform of Francoism." The mobilizations for amnesty and against the wage freeze during the past few weeks point to the real limits of the government's whole project. As far as deciding how fast to move is concerned, they have to take several factors into account. The regime promised the bourgeoisie a series of reforms within the perspective of making sure that there would be some stability and that the mass movement would be kept under control.

Now, on two important questions (amnesty and the wage freeze), if the dictatorship gives up, this will stimulate the rise of the mass movement and the government's plans will be placed in question. But if no concession is made, there is a risk that the illusions that now exist among the sectors generally under the influence of the reformists will be dissipated; the reformists justify their policy on the basis of the results achieved by their tactic of putting pressure on the government. As for the bourgeoisie, it cannot be satisfied with a solution that on the one hand offers no clear perspective for the future and on the other hand is incapable of preventing the ruling class from being bypassed by the mass movement. That is the impasse of the present situation.

*Q. What have been the most important developments of workers struggles in the past period?*

A. The first important struggles were the ones for general amnesty for all political prisoners, including those accused of "crimes in which blood was shed," who the regime wants to exclude from future *indultos* (amnesties), and for the return of all political exiles. The first demonstration took place in Madrid on the very day of the coronation of Juan Carlos. On December 7 a total of 30,000 people demonstrated in front of Carabanchel prison and in various neighborhoods around Madrid. In San Sebastián in Euzkadi (the Basque Country) there was a demonstration of 8,000 people, a very militant demonstration, with people marching through the streets for three hours chanting "Txiki, Otaegui,<sup>1</sup> we will avenge you!" and "Dissolve the Civil Guard!"<sup>2</sup> There was a massive movement to get petitions in all the cities and villages. But the most important thing was the extension of these mobilizations to cities where there had never been street demonstrations before. For example, 2,000 people marched in Salamanca and 5,000 in Alicante. This movement for amnesty brought new layers onto the political scene, and the CP clearly played a big role in the mobilizations, if only because of the form taken by the mobilizations for the moment (demonstrations that were sometimes officially tolerated, petition campaigns, and so on).

1. Basque political prisoners executed by Franco last fall.—*IP*

2. The Francoist riot police.—*IP*

The struggle for amnesty was also linked up with the struggle for workers demands against wage freezes and for the renegotiation of contracts. Sector after sector came into the battle: bank employees, telephone workers, metalworkers, construction workers, and so on.

One of the key demands of these mobilizations was "amnesty in the workplace," which means the rehiring of all employees laid off because of their political or trade-union activities. This demand was at the center of the platform drawn up at SEAT, for example. (SEAT is the big auto factory in Barcelona—*Inprecor*.) At the present time, the CP doesn't agree to this demand. So getting it into the platform was an important political victory for the masses of workers. In fact, with the figure of unemployed at one million, the rehiring of more than 25,000 workers would represent both a victory against the employers' policy on jobs and, above all, a de facto recognition of political and trade-union activity.

Workers struggles have been developing since the beginning of January and are tending to become generalized. Strikes have begun to break out in the big workers bastions like Standard Electric, ITT and all its state-run affiliates, Pegaso, Kelvinator, and so on. A unification of demands is taking place: equal monthly wage increases of 6,000 pesetas, social security payments to be made by the companies, forty-hour workweek, thirty days vacation a year.

The general strikes of December 11 in Madrid, Barcelona, and Euzkadi and of December 16 in Asturias were successes and marked an important stage in the rise of the movement.

The subway strike in Madrid marks the beginning of the post-Christmas extension of struggles. It is the first strike to occur since the subway was built. And it triggered a solidarity movement in other sectors: banks, telephones, metals. The solidarity was militant and economic. On January 9 about 18,000 people marched in a solidarity demonstration with the strikers in Getafe, an industrial suburb of the capital where there are many metal factories. There were demonstrations in the center of Madrid on Saturday and Sunday, January 10 and 11. The support mobilization culminated with the January 12 general strike in Madrid. In Getafe on that day there were 30,000 strikers. In the whole Madrid area, about 120,000 people were on strike. On the same day, thousands of bank employees walked

out in Barcelona. The strike also extended to the dockers in the Barcelona port and to the workers of the FESCA electricity company (Electrical Power of Catalonia). About 24,000 SEAT workers took part in the solidarity mobilization. And so on. All the signs of an acceleration of the movement for workers demands throughout the Spanish state came to the fore during that week.

This development of struggles clearly shows what the next step can and must be: a centralization of struggles and the preparation of a call for a general strike throughout the territory of the Spanish state for the overthrow of the dictatorship.

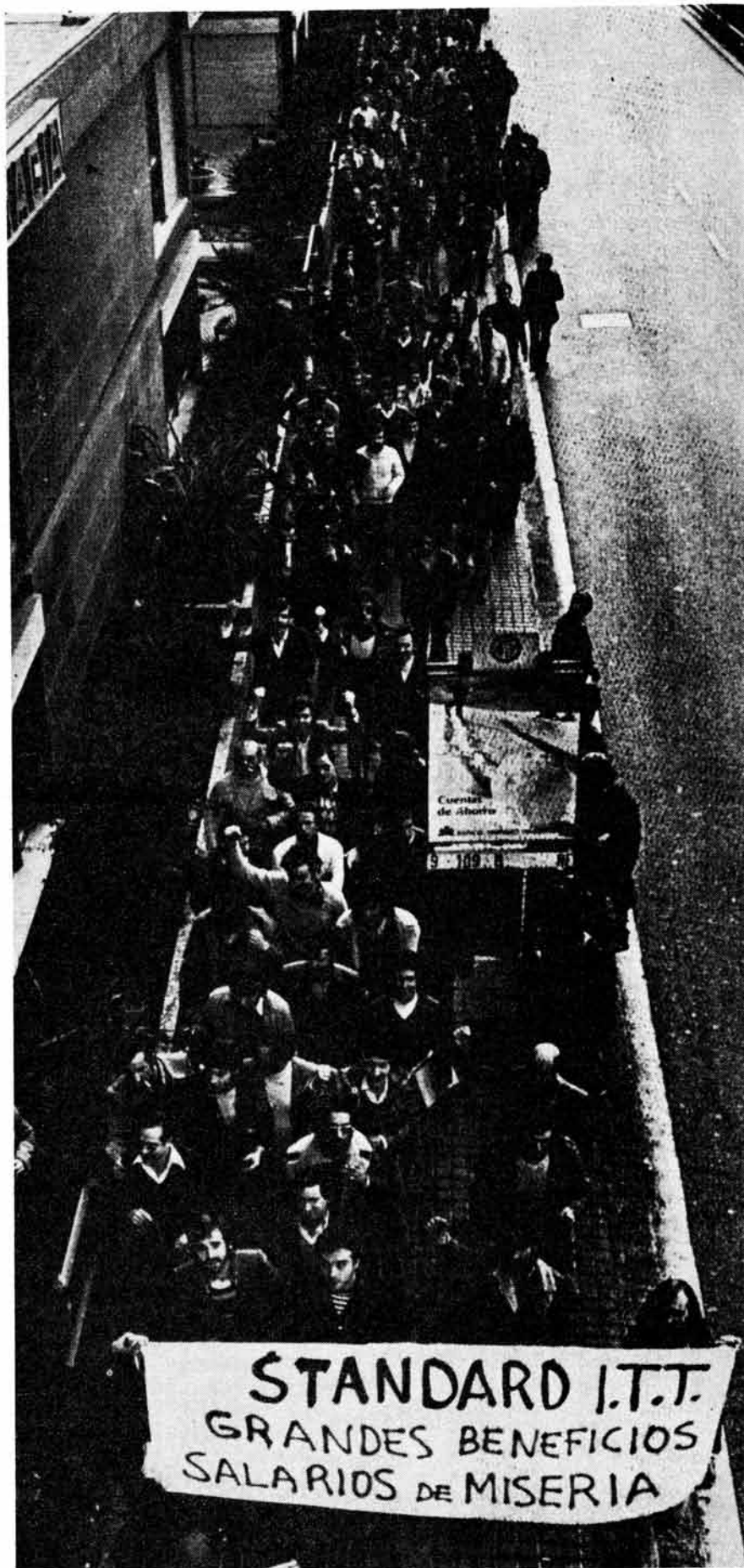
*Q. In this context, how is the process of recomposition of the workers movement occurring?*

A. To answer that question I have to first explain the meaning of the massive participation of the workers in the trade-union elections. The entire working class feels the need to have some representation and a permanent organization that can defend its interests. The elections of the *enlaces* (the delegates of the CNS, the official, vertical union) were a success for the CUD (Democratic United Candidacies, dominated by the CP). The platform on which these delegates were elected is identical to the one that has been put forward in the present mobilizations. It includes a clause on the necessity of holding general assemblies to ratify any agreements that the *enlaces* may be led to sign.

This victory of the CUD was reflected within the workers commissions. In its relations with the mass movement, the CP is now giving priority to the *enlaces* rather than to the united structures of the workers vanguard in the factories: the workers commissions. For example, the CP now issues appeals for general strikes from meetings of *enlaces*. The December 11 general strike in Madrid was called by an assembly of 3,000 *enlaces*.

Nevertheless, under the pressure of the workers vanguard, the experiences in self-organization, and the basic thrust toward workers democracy, a "discussion" is now going on inside the CP. More precisely, various positions are being put forward about the future role of the workers commissions.

One strong current, concentrated in Catalonia in the PSUC (United Socialist party of Catalonia, which is the CP in Catalonia), explains that from now on the CUD should take the leadership of struggles. This goes in the direction of liquidating the workers commissions and



Strikers demonstrate in Madrid. Banner says, "STANDARD I.T.T.: Big Profits—Starvation Wages."

F. Elvira/Mundo

relying only on the trade-union structures. On the other hand, some of the leaders of the workers commissions, Camacho among others, are proposing a sort of combination, using the enlases on the legal level and the workers commissions on the factory level. Carrillo (the head of the CP), who stands in the middle, says that the enlases cannot be the sole channel of expression for the mass movement, but that the workers commissions themselves are too narrow a framework to encompass broad sectors of the masses during general mobilizations. So he puts the emphasis on the maintenance of the apparatus of the workers commissions, controlled by the CP; the workers commissions would then be not membership organizations but a sort of movement. Also, a discussion is developing within the CP about the role of committees elected in general assemblies during struggles. This discussion covers some of the same ground as the discussion about the "delegate councils" in Italy in 1969.

It is important to note that during the struggle of the Madrid bank employees there was a linkup between the workers commissions and the CUD. In fact, a coordinating body of delegate assemblies elected by the employees during the struggle worked in close relation with the enlases; all the decisions taken in common were ratified by general assemblies.

*Q. What are the prospects for the reconstruction of the trade-union movement?*

A. The corporatist trade union was one of the pillars of the regime. So any "reform of Francoism," not to mention any bigger upheaval, poses the question: What kind of trade union will be built? The position of the CP is to build an autonomous and independent union on the basis of positions that have been won inside the CNS, on the basis of the enlases. The majority of the PSOE calls for the building of the UGT (General Union of Workers). Thus, the problems that are posed are those of trade-union division and the democratic functioning of the union. In face of this, the LCR/ETA-VI raises the slogan of a "trade-union constituent congress" based on the factory trade-union sections, united and democratic, with the right of expression for the various currents of the workers movement, that is, the right to form tendencies. It is only on the basis of such positions that it will be possible not only to fight for the unity of the trade-union movement—to wage a battle against the divisionist line of the PSOE, for example—but also to combat the bureaucratic program and manipulations of the CP. Such an orientation also permits a more effective response to the ultraleftist sectarian tendencies that may develop positions of the "red union" type.

*Q. Apart from the struggles in the factories, have there also been mobilizations in the neighborhoods?*

A. Around the two themes of amnesty and support for the workers struggles there were mobilizations that were based on neighborhood organizations, legal or paralegal tenant associations.

These associations were formed to fight against the effects of wildcat urbanization, which was a product of the economic boom. Their first battles were waged over the question of improving public services (lighting, sewers, parks, school equipment). These problems of urbanization are still themes for mobilizations. In December 1,500 people held a nighttime torchlight march in the Orriol *barrio* in Valencia to protest against lack of street lighting.

These neighborhood associations have a strong base. They may include, for example, 1,500 to 2,000 people in a neighborhood of 15,000 inhabitants. But their politicization is mainly crystallized around the permanent bodies they set up, things like urbanization commissions or women's commissions, which usually are composed of housewives to engage in struggles around issues like child care.

In Barcelona, for example, in protest against the closing of schools for a week during the official mourning period after the death of Franco, the women of one neighborhood decided to take their children to their workplaces, thus forcing some of the banks to close. The women's commissions also played a very important role in supporting workers struggles, especially through their actions aimed at convincing shopkeepers to extend credit to the families of strikers.

*Q. With the emergence of the UDM (Democratic Military Union), for the first time there is a group inside the army that contests Francoist legitimacy. What is happening inside the army, the pillar of the Francoist order?*

A. The UDM includes about 200 organized officers and puts out a bulletin with a circulation of 3,000 copies. Although the UDM has broken with Francoism and "Juancarism," its major demand remains very limited: "a technical army," that is, a modernized spit-and-polish army. The events of November 25 in Portugal were salutary for Spain, because they opened the eyes of broad sectors of the vanguard who were full of illusions about the contribution a "Spanish MFA"<sup>3</sup> could make to the revolutionary process.

3. A reference to the Movimento das Forças Armadas (Armed Forces Movement) of Portugal.—IP

As for us, we insist on the necessity for the independent organization of soldiers, sailors, and airmen. The CP is working on building the UDM and subordinates all work among the soldiers to its attempts to sweet-talk a few officers. It thus sacrifices the autonomous organization of the soldiers to respect for the hierarchy, preservation of the unity of the army, and the myth of a "democratic army."

The LCR/ETA-VI, as well as other revolutionary currents, presses for the formation of committees of soldiers in the barracks. Our work is beginning on a minimal level, around the daily problems faced by the soldiers: quality of the food, compulsory mass every Sunday, content of the barracks libraries, that is, the right of free circulation of books, including Marxist books, of course.

The committees publish a review called *El Soldado*. In certain cases these committees have been able to link up with the workers movement. In Euzkadi on December 11, during the general strike against the death penalties, contacts were established between the central strike committee and the committees of soldiers.

Finally, we should stress the demoralization actions taken against the colonial activities of the army in Sahara. There were soldiers committees in the Sahara in which the militants of the Front Polisario<sup>4</sup> participated. At the time of the withdrawal of the Spanish troops, for example, a truck loaded with arms was "abandoned," to the great profit of the Front Polisario militants.

*Q. What are the main lines of the action of the CP and the PSOE?*

A. The reformist organizations of the CP and PSOE are trying to channel the rise of the mass movement toward political solutions of class collaboration.

The PSOE does not have any great political weight today, especially not in the working class. Obviously, this does not mean that there will be no favorable ground for a rapid development of this party in the near future. It is enough to recall the development of the Portuguese SP after April 1974, and that was an SP that was much less substantial than the PSOE.

There are various currents within the PSOE. One of these is prepared to collaborate semi-openly with the dictatorship and enter into the game of reform of Francoism being pushed by big capital. This current intends to make use of the maneuvering room it will be granted by the regime in order to try to grow, push itself forward, and bolster its positions against the CP.

4. Frente Popular para la Liberación del Sahara y Río de Oro, the main Saharan liberation organization.—IP

But another current is more sensitive to the dangers of any more or less open collaboration with the present government. The possibilities for future growth could be strongly compromised. Finally, a left wing is emerging in the Socialist Youth. It puts forward the necessity of overthrowing the dictatorship, rejects any collaboration with the bourgeoisie, and demands the dissolution of the repressive corps.

The CP represents the major force for controlling the mass movement. Now, the bourgeoisie has openly said that there is no possibility of reaching any agreement with the CP for the next two years. Because of this attitude of the central bourgeoisie, the CP is trying to prove that it is in fact the essential force with which an agreement must be reached in order to guarantee the viability of any project aimed at stabilizing the situation. These are the very words of Santiago Carrillo. He says to the bourgeoisie: "If you want to sign a social pact, first you have to agree to a political pact." That is: "Recognize all the political parties, including the CP, the major force of the workers movement, and we will commit ourselves to controlling the mass movement." The CP sees the fight for the trade-union contracts and for amnesty within this perspective.

But there are now some new elements in relation to the strategy of the Junta Democrática.<sup>5</sup> After the death of Franco, there were changes in the bourgeois camp, which facilitated the expression of the "peripheral" bourgeois forces, especially in Catalonia and Euzkadi. The CP approaches this situation from somewhat of a new angle. In Catalonia, where the CP is very strong and the bourgeoisie has a certain autonomy, the CP has reached a genuine political pact with the bourgeoisie. It has formed the Democratic Council of Catalonia, which is a body within which significant bourgeois forces are represented (the Catalan bank, currents of the Catalan Christian Democracy). In other words, it is not just a matter of window dressing or of "representative personalities," as is the case with the Junta Democrática. In Catalonia the CP has succeeded in carrying off an operation it has been unable to duplicate with the central bourgeoisie. In Euzkadi, in spite of the differences in the situation, a Democratic Assembly has been formed that includes the Basque CP and the PNV (Basque National party). It may be noted that in these bodies, unlike the Junta Democrática, the CP raises the national problem in some way.

*Q. What are the general orientations of the far-left organizations?*

5. Democratic Junta, a popular-front formation that includes the CP.—IP

A. Generally speaking, the right-centrist groups have a tail-endist attitude toward the CP and even toward the PSOE.

The MCE (Movimiento Comunista de España—Communist Movement of Spain) participates in the Convergencia Democrática,<sup>6</sup> while the Partido del Trabajo (Labor party, Maoist) is in the Junta Democrática, into which the Bandera Roja organization has already partially dissolved.

In Euzkadi, an Organismo Unitario (United Body) has been formed, which includes the MCE, the ORT (Organización Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores—Revolutionary Workers Organization), and the ETA-V. The OU is presented as a simple body for coordinating struggles, but the reality is otherwise. In fact, the organizations that make up the OU are either members of the workers movement (MCE, ORT) or petty-bourgeois (ETA-V); but they are organizations that politically tail-end the CP. Hence, the ORT and the MCE have programmatically capitulated to the CP's Democratic Assembly on two important questions:

- the question of the status of the 1936 republic, which amounts to a de facto negation of the right of self-determination;

- the formation after the fall of the dictatorship of a provisional government of Euzkadi along with the bourgeoisie, that is, with the PNV. We therefore rejected the invitation that was extended to us to join the OU. We presented the following alternative proposals: On the basis of united-front experiences, to develop bodies to coordinate struggles in close relation with the mobilizations that are rapidly developing on the scale of the entire state, based around three central themes: political freedom (right of association, assembly, demonstration); amnesty; response to the wage freeze (the platform of workers demands).

In fact, the priority remains the centralization of the movement on the scale of the entire state for a decisive offensive against the dictatorship. The experiences in coordination that developed in Euzkadi during September and October have to be extended throughout the whole Spanish state. This perspective is contrary to the tactic of "local general strikes" developed by the CP. But for such coordination to actually take place, to make sure that this extension becomes a reality, it is important not to have such coordinating bodies adopt the political program of one organization or the orientation of one party on post-Francoism. This would amount to an ultrasectarian attitude indicating a lack of any understanding of the means by which such unity could actually come about or the dynamic that would be touched off by such unity around these objectives.

6. Democratic Convergence, a popular-front formation.—IP

Such coordinating bodies could also be the embryos of bodies of workers democracy, and then of dual power on a zonal, local, and regional scale. The examples of the general strikes in Euzkadi are full of lessons on this point.

More and more, the centralization and self-organization of struggles, culminating in a general strike throughout the territory of the Spanish state for the overthrow of Francoism, is being seen as the essential requirement. Against the reformist bourgeois program, we propagandistically advance the slogan of a Constituent Assembly, with the right to vote at age sixteen, and we stress transitional political tasks like dissolution of the repressive corps, abrogation of the laws and institutions of Francoism, and trials of the fascist criminals. □

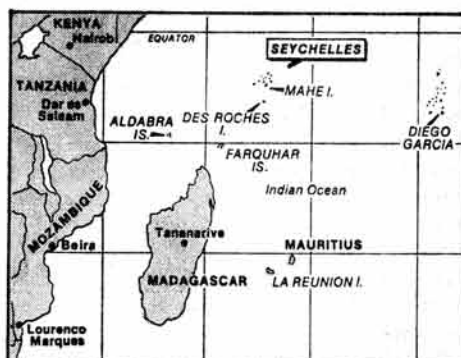
### Seychelles to Gain Independence

Pending expected approval by the Wilson government and Parliament, the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office agreed January 22 to grant independence to the Seychelles Islands next June 28.

The Seychelles are a cluster of about eighty islands located off the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean. The islands, which have a population of around 53,000, have been a British colony for 160 years.

Included in the agreement are the islands Aldabra, Farquhar, and Des Roches—leased by Britain to the United States for sixty years as part of the same deal through which Washington gained the use of Diego Garcia for a major naval base.

"The United States had indicated its readiness in principle to hand over the three islands to an independent Seychelles," reported Ted Rowlands, undersecretary of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. James Mancham, scheduled to be the first president of the independent Seychelles, said that his government will allow no foreign bases on the islands.



New York Times

## The Elections at the Leyland Cowley Auto Plant

By Tim Wohlforth

Alan Thornett, a leading member of the Workers Socialist League and a well-known trade-union militant, has been elected chairman of the 4,000-strong 5/293 branch of the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU) at the British Leyland Cowley assembly plant, near Oxford, England. The T&GWU is the largest union in England and somewhat like a combination of the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters union in the United States. The Cowley plant is the heart of the British Leyland auto empire, the only major British-owned firm in the industry. Because of this, the election received national press coverage.

The election also provoked considerable interest on the left in England because Thornett was running against Tom White, a member of Gerry Healy's sectarian Workers Revolutionary party, who received the endorsement of Reg Parsons, the chief convenor of the T&GWU in the plant and the leader of the right wing in the union.

This particular trade-union election received national attention because of the depth of the economic crisis now raging in England. Peter Kilborn described the situation in the January 12 *New York Times*: "Economists predict that unemployment, now at a postwar peak of 1.2 million, will keep rising well into the year. Living standards are falling as the Government struggles to exorcise the country's stubborn inflation."

While the whole capitalist world is economically sick, England, the oldest of the major powers, is the sickest. And the sickest section of British capitalism is the auto industry, which faces the stiffest international competition. Today the Wilson Labour government collaborates with the British capitalists in seeking to save capitalism by speeding up the belt line, increasing unemployment, and lowering the living standards of the working class.

This brings the reformists and capitalists square against the mass of British workers organized in one of the most powerful labor movements in the world. Within this context, conscious workers committed to socialism can and have played a critical role in defending the working class and preparing the way for the future.

Thus Kilborn, in the same article quoted above, interviewed Michael Bradstock, chairman of a company that owns four high-volume British Leyland dealerships:

"Leyland, he said, hopes a new workers

participation plan, under which workers will have say in management, will stifle labor unrest.

"Whether the industry can overcome the politically oriented gentlemen dedicated to its destruction, I don't know," he said."

These "politically oriented gentlemen," such as Alan Thornett, oppose the destruction of the livelihood and living standard of the mass of British workers and therefore favor the destruction of capitalism as a system.

The struggle at Cowley has a long history, and this history helps us to understand the meaning of the current stage of the conflict there. The British labor movement is organized differently from that in the United States and many other countries. There are several unions in any single plant. The main power, particularly in the past, has been in the hands of the shop stewards rather than in the national leaderships.

In an earlier period the British capitalists found it to their advantage to establish a piecework system. Thus even in assembly-line production, as in an auto plant, each section of the line, which carries out a particular task, has its own piece rate. When a new model is introduced, new rates must be negotiated in each section of the line with the local shop stewards. Under threats of strike actions, which in many cases can stop the entire production process, British workers were able to wrest a relatively high wage level and working conditions comparable to those of the rest of Western Europe.

Over the past decade the British capitalists have sought to do away with this whole system, thereby limiting or breaking completely the influence of the shop stewards, who are elected by their fellow workers and who are immediately responsible to them. Thus the drive for "American methods," time studies, and productivity schemes.

Known as Measured-Day-Work (M-D-W), these practices have been introduced throughout the British auto industry, the last holdout being the Cowley plant of British Leyland. Within that plant a whole layer of worker militants like Alan Thornett, who were influenced by Trotskyism, was able to block the introduction of M-D-W until very recently. They are still resisting its full implementation.

It was under these circumstances that the Leyland management began a witch-hunt, some nineteen months ago, intended to

isolate Alan Thornett. At the time, Thornett was deputy chief convenor of the T&GWU within the plant under Bob Fryor, the chief convenor, who was also influenced by Trotskyism. The T&GWU had over 7,000 members among the more than 12,000 workers in the plant. In addition, Thornett was the shop steward leading 150 internal drivers who moved parts within the plant. A local strike by these drivers could, and on occasion did, close down the whole plant on short notice.

Leyland's first move was to remove Thornett's credentials as a shop steward. Then they provoked a strike of the drivers by dismissing several workers. The company did its utmost to isolate this section of workers from the rest of the workers in the plant, from the workers in the Oxford area, and from the workers in the rest of the country.

The *Daily Mail*, for instance, wrote: "More than 12,000 men are laid-off because Leyland is bravely trying to stand up to the Trotskyist militancy on the shop floor at Oxford." The *Daily Mail* ran a photo of Thornett with the caption, "Thornett, head of the undercover extremists." It went on to say: "This is Alan Thornett, the rarely photographed shop steward, known as *The Mole*, who is at the center of the Cowley row. Mr. Thornett hates publicity because of his *behind-the-scenes* union work." (*Daily Mail*, April 25, 1974.)

To top it all off, the media dug up a wife of a Cowley worker by the name of Carol Miller. With national television coverage, she led a right-wing demonstration of a hundred or so workers' wives in front of the plant. They carried banners reading: "Workers In, Militants Out," "Sack Thornett," and "Commies Out." In return she received personal thanks from Lord Stokes, then head of the Leyland empire.

An attempt was even made to involve Thornett's divorced wife in this campaign. This was quashed when she called a news conference and supported Thornett and the striking workers.

It became necessary for Thornett and the drivers he represented to return to work, a tactical retreat that was required in view of the situation they faced. Then the management launched the next phase of its offensive against him and other militants.

The T&GWU branch in the plant was split into two new branches to divide the militants. Reg Parsons, a former member of Healy's Socialist Labour League (forerun-



ner of the WRP), was put forward as a right-wing candidate as part of a slate to defeat Thornett, Fryor, and others. In the confusion existing in the plant at that point, Parsons and the right-wing slate won the election.

It was only a few months after these events that Thornett would face an even more fundamental struggle—this time within the party he had for many years been a member of, the WRP. To Thornett, the Cowley experience revealed a certain weakness in the WRP as far as union work outside of that plant was concerned. He became more and more convinced that the union work in the west of England that he had led was not really being matched elsewhere, leaving the Oxford militants quite isolated in a major battle. At the same time, he was finding it increasingly difficult to carry out the sectarian and ultimatic policies thought up by the Healy leadership in London.

He proposed a discussion in the party on the question of strengthening trade-union work and returning to the method of the Transitional Program. He got no such discussion. Instead, he and 200 others in the western region, largely industrial workers, were expelled, wiping out the bulk of the trade-union base of Healy's party.

Only one man representing the Healy leadership remained in Oxford, a trade unionist by the name of Tom White, to whom we will return.

In the meantime, the car industry continued downhill. British Leyland faced complete bankruptcy; it survived thanks to massive infusion of government funds in the form of a "nationalization" that retains capitalist management and brings the government directly into the drive against the workers in the plant.

The next capitalist scheme was to set up joint worker-management productivity committees dominated by management and aimed at making the British car industry competitive with the Japanese.

Healy, in his paper, *Workers Press*, ran a campaign against such committees, characterizing them, in his typical ultraleft manner, as "corporatist," thus suggesting that England has already arrived at a fascist stage. However, this ultraleftism was a cover for opportunism in practice. Tom White, a member of the Central Committee of the WRP, joined the productivity committee in the Cowley plant with the full knowledge and approval of Healy. Thornett opposed participation, as did Bob Fryor.

This set the stage for the current plant elections. In the set of elections for chief convenor, where a ballot was conducted on the shop floor during working hours, Bob Fryor nearly defeated Reg Parsons with a vote of almost 1,000 to Parsons's 1,200 (Parsons had received 1,800 in the earlier election). In the meantime, Parsons issued a

leaflet listing the candidates he supported in the other elections in the plant. The list included WRP member Tom White against Thornett.

Then came the election for chairman of branch 5/293, one of the two new branches set up earlier in the maneuvers against Thornett. This election was held at a union meeting, as distinct from the shop floor. Of the 142 voting, 77 voted for Thornett, while 64 voted for White, including all the right-wing Parsons supporters present.

Since White's defeat in the branch elections, Gerry Healy's followers have been doing some fast footwork in their paper, the *Workers Press* (January 9-15), to seek to cover up the meaning of these events.

First they mention the election for deputy stewards, which followed the branch chairman election. This is a position between that of convenor, won by right-winger Reg Parsons, and the mass of the shop floor stewards. Before the 1974 witch-hunt in the plant, Thornett was a deputy steward, while the convenor position was held by Bob Fryor.

In this election White appears to have won a position, since he received the votes of the right wing. Bob Fryor also won, with a vote of 1,001 votes. With 526 votes, Thornett came in tenth in the list of thirty-four candidates.

Thornett explains that for seven days before the elections, a witch-hunt against militants in the plant was conducted in every national newspaper, over radio, and on TV. The main target of these attacks was Thornett. The management made it clear that if Thornett won, they would not recognize his credentials and the result could be a prolonged strike.

For instance, a major article appeared in the January 8 *Guardian* under the headline, "Maxi out of molehill." It began: "The Mole of Cowley—otherwise Mr Alan Thornett, the 38-year-old shop steward whose presence at the British Leyland plant near Oxford has become as much of a problem to the management as the business of making cars—has been burrowing away unobtrusively during the past few months. His effectiveness will become clear on Tuesday [January 13] when the results of the plant elections for the shop stewards' committee are announced.

"He and his supporters are among the candidates for the seven seats on the stewards' committee, nominations for which closed yesterday. Success for Mr Thornett, the Trotskyist shop steward who represents the plant's small but extremely powerful group of internal drivers, would indicate an important swing to the left in shopfloor politics at Cowley, now the cornerstone of British Leyland's fight for recovery."

A front-page article in the January 7 *London Times* began: "Management at

British Leyland's car assembly plant at Cowley says it will refuse to recognize Mr Alan Thornett, a leader of the extreme left-wing Workers' Socialist League, if he is elected as a deputy senior shop steward at the works next week.

"The management reiterated its opposition to Mr Thornett after a senior shop steward at Cowley had condemned the plant yesterday as 'a beehive for extremist activity' which might lead to the collapse of British Leyland.

"Mr Reginald Parsons, senior shop steward of the Transport and General Workers' Union, said: 'I am frightened for the future of my industry as a result of these subversive elements, and the activities of such people are eroding the real role of trade unionism. We have now got creeping paralysis, a growing cancer in the car industry.'

"He named three extremist groups operating in the plant as the Workers' Revolutionary Party, the International Marxist Group and the Workers' Socialist League."

London correspondent of the *Boston Christian Science Monitor* Takashi Oka reflected the way the press approached the election in an article in the January 15 issue: "Moderates have scored important successes in trade union elections at British Leyland's troubled Cowley assembly plant. An extreme leftist nicknamed 'The Mole' for his Trotskyist underground activities has been decisively defeated, and moderates swept five of seven shop steward positions."

Oka reported how the British government itself viewed the election: "The vote undoubtedly encourages both Prime Minister Harold Wilson, who has lashed out recently at trade union extremists, and the Labour government, which Wednesday met again with business and trade union representatives in an effort to carry forward a coordinated strategy to pull Britain out of its recession and to get the engine of economic growth started up once more."

Oka clearly viewed Tom White of the WRP as one of the five moderates. He explained: "The moderate victory at Cowley was not total. A former leading left-winger, Bob Fryor, was elected after having been defeated two years ago. Another left-winger, Cy Blake, was also elected. These men were not considered extremists, and Mr. Parsons has said he thought he could work with them. A third left-winger, Tom White, was actually supported by Mr. Parsons because 'he did not bring his revolutionary politics into union affairs.'"

When we consider the extent of the right-wing swing in 1974, which removed Thornett, Fryor, Blake, and many others, we can only interpret this series of elections as reflecting the beginning of an important turn among Cowley workers toward the left and toward militant struggle. Surely the

capitalist press was fearful of a far more sweeping swing to the left. And their main fears centered on Alan Thornett, who had behind him fourteen years of principled struggle in the plant and a strong base among rank-and-file workers.

Thornett also reports that White's vote was exactly the same as that of leading right-wingers and that as the ballot papers were counted, those carrying the right-wing slate included White.

According to the *Workers Press* (January 15): "In the capitalist newspapers White is described as a 'moderate' and as a candidate 'backed' by the right-wing leader Reg Parsons, the Cowley convenor.

"The Guardian' was typical. 'Mr Tom White, a left-winger, had the tacit approval of the moderate group,' said their correspondent Geoffrey Whiteley."

The *Workers Press* points out in White's defense that no less than three leaflets were issued at the plant by the WRP dissociating White from the Parsons endorsement. The interpretation offered by *Workers Press* is that a conspiracy existed between Parsons, the Tory press, and Thornett to discredit White and the WRP.

If it is a "conspiracy," it is indeed a strange one. The very same press that witch-hunted Thornett out of his union position a year and a half ago because of his association with Trotskyism and his militant leadership of the ranks must certainly be engaged in a very subtle game today of endorsing White, a support that won him a deputy steward's spot, although he lost in the chairman's election.

A somewhat more reasonable assessment of the action of the Tory press and the right-wingers in the plant is that they preferred White's actions within the plant to Thornett's. After all, White sits to this day on the productivity committee with management. The strategy of big business in England centers precisely on such committees, which it hopes will break the resistance of the British workers to the wholesale attacks now leveled on the working class.

The *Workers Press* continues to defend White openly on this matter. The January 9 *Workers Press* reiterates the position taken in the December 2 issue. Healy reasons this way: White opposed the productivity council as did the *Workers Press*. He absented himself from the stewards meeting at which the election for representative to that committee was held. He was elected by the stewards in absentia. He accepted the post and will continue to sit on the committee until such time as the stewards change their mind and oppose participation in the committee. With this reasoning, if the stewards should decide to endorse the Tory party and propose White as a Tory candidate, White would have to accept the Tory candidacy until such time as he convinced

the stewards they were wrong in the first place.

In any event, the *Workers Press* does not feel that all this matters too much. The heart of the question is political, they reason.

On political issues in England their position is truly unique. We will definitely grant them that point. No one else in the British labor movement today campaigns for the Wilson government to resign! Every militant in England realizes that under present conditions in England, if the Wilson government falls it will be replaced—not by a Gerry Healy government—but by a Tory government. Few workers feel that would be

a change for the better.

Of course there are others in England who favor the fall of the Wilson government—the leading Tories and their reactionary supporters.

Thornett and the WSL oppose Healy's ultraleft campaign, which aids the enemies of the working class. Instead they battle for the left to carry out a real fight for socialist policies. This can help expose the weakness of these forces and aid in constructing a mass revolutionary party dedicated to ending capitalism and building socialism, the only way forward for the people of Britain as well as the peoples of the world.

## Eight Released From Island's Jails

### Political Prisoners Expose Torture in Singapore

The spotlight has been cast on political torture in Singapore by publicity surrounding the December 1975 release of eight political prisoners, including lawyer Tham-poe Thamby Rajah.

The eight were among thirty-five persons arrested in a June 1974 dragnet of alleged members of the Malayan National Liberation Front (MNLF). They were accused of attending MNLF study groups and writing and distributing antigovernment publications. Rajah, according to Singapore authorities, used "the courts as a platform for anti-Government and communist propaganda."

Last June, while still in prison, Rajah and four other prisoners addressed a letter to Home Affairs Minister Chua Sian Chin detailing what they termed "extremely atrocious forms of physical torture" that three of them had been subjected to.

The torture sessions took place in underground interrogation cells at Singapore's Whitley Road jail.

The three prisoners said they had been confined for days on end, either naked or clad only in pajama trousers, in specially air-conditioned, extremely cold cells. Twenty-two-year-old Wong Hon Siak said cold water was poured over his head and body.

Tan Ek, thirty-five years old, reported that he was forced to stand in his cell, facing a high-power lamp, for six days. One of the prisoners was subjected to severe beatings and kept in solitary confinement for months without interrogation.

These three prisoners were released last August and banished from Singapore.

According to a report in the January 9 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, upon releasing the eight prisoners in December, the government claimed that "all of them have

been neutralised and nearly all of them have recanted their past involvement in communist activities."

Rajah says that authorities are using the release to "create confusion in the minds of the public." "I have not recanted and there is nothing to recant," he said. "On the contrary, my political convictions have been further steeled and strengthened as a result of the years of inhuman treatment and detention in prison."

Under the stipulations of Rajah's release, he is barred for two years from associating with "pro-communist" organizations. Other released prisoners have been placed under an 8:00 p.m. curfew, banned from overseas travel, and forced to report monthly to the police.

In addition to the thirty-five political arrests in 1974, eleven persons are known to have been detained in 1975 under the Internal Security Act, according to *Far Eastern Economic Review*. Nearly fifty political prisoners are being held without trial in Singapore's jails today, including some who have been held for more than thirteen years.

To strengthen its repressive network, the government in 1974 established a Community Security Force, which by June 1975 had grown into a 6,600-strong surveillance squad. □

### Lisbon Police Open Fire on Strikers

One person was left dead and six wounded January 21 after police in Lisbon opened fire on striking shopworkers protesting the government-imposed wage freeze. The shooting occurred when pickets tried to close down a shop. It came only three weeks after National Republican Guardsmen fired into a demonstration in Oporto, killing four persons.

# Capitalism Fouls Things Up



## Stink City

A proposed \$4.36 million cut in New York City's sewage treatment program may mean that raw wastes will be dumped into the waters surrounding the city during certain times of the day. New York Governor Hugh Carey's budget proposal could lead to 200 layoffs of sewage treatment workers, city Environmental Protection Administrator Robert Low reported January 20.

Low said the bathing season at New York City beaches might be shortened to less than two months if the cut goes through.

## Will Britain Ban Red Dye No. 2?

Britain's Department of Health is now considering whether to follow the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in banning Red No. 2, a commonly used food coloring agent. The FDA withdrew the dye from industrial use after tests suggested that it may cause cancer.

Red No. 2, a synthetic organic chemical, is used to color candy, gelatin products, cereals, lunch meats, sausages, canned fruit, vinegar, and many other processed foods. It is also contained in many lipsticks, cough syrups, and pill coatings.

British consumers are currently not able to determine whether products they are buying contain the potentially harmful dye, since laws demand only that the words "permitted colour" be contained on labels.

## 'An Accident Waiting to Happen'

One million persons living in the Denver metropolitan area are taking their chances with a more up-to-date version of the proverbial powder keg. They are neighbors of the U.S. Army's Rocky Mountain arsenal and the Energy Research and Development Administration's Rocky Flats nuclear weapon plant.

"Our safety record is one to be envied by any chemical company," one arsenal spokesman said.

Area residents have not been reassured.

The arsenal is nestled next to the busy runways of Stapleton International Airport.

Last fall, a Boeing 727 jetliner crashed on takeoff about a half mile short of the arsenal's rail yards and its stockpiles of obsolete nerve gas.

"Since hundreds of aircraft fly directly over those railyards each day, it is an accident waiting to happen," said Colorado Senator Gary Hart.

Others in the area have noted accidents in which poison gas has leaked into the air, and lawsuits totaling \$28.6 million have been filed to seek compensation for nearby land contaminated by plutonium.

Lloyd Mixson, a farmer who lives six miles southwest of Rocky Flats, charges that the facility is responsible for deformities and deaths among his farm animals.

An investigating commission appointed by Governor Richard Lamm and Congressman Tim Wirth reported in October 1975, "We believe it an inescapable conclusion that there is risk associated with the Rocky Flats plant."

The same conclusion has been reached by Colorado residents, who have launched a petition drive to put a referendum to restrict nuclear power on the 1976 ballot there.

## 58 Unsafe Nuclear Reactors

An explosion in one of the fifty-eight nuclear power reactors in the United States could release far more radioactive material into the atmosphere than resulted from the bombing of Hiroshima.

That is the conclusion of an article to be published in the February issue of *Environment* magazine. Biologist Kevin P. Shea, who based the article on an unpublished paper by a geophysicist specializing in volcanic explosions, said that his hypothesis challenges the assumption that the worst possible reactor-related disaster is a radioactive "meltdown accident."

Shea raises the possibility that a nonnuclear explosion in a reactor could shatter the container enclosing the radioactive materials, releasing massive doses of deadly radiation.

If this hypothesis were to be verified experimentally, Shea said, the implications could force a shutdown of the nuclear reactors currently operating.

## Atomic Wastes Leaking in Kentucky

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported January 14 that traces of plutonium and other radioactive wastes have been found in Kentucky hundreds of feet from where they are buried. The EPA said that shallow burial of atomic wastes was previously considered a solution to the problem of safe disposal. Now, an EPA spokesman commented, it can be considered only "a holdup technique" until another solution is devised.

Contaminated clothing and other nuclear wastes were buried in Kentucky between 1963 and 1972 in trenches in a shallow landfill. Other such burial sites are located in New York, South Carolina, Illinois, Nevada, and Washington state.

## You Can't Escape It

A report by Bell Laboratories researchers has shown that the most noxious effects of New York City rush-hour pollution are not suffered by the city dwellers themselves, but by those who live upwind in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

The researchers explained that it takes several hours for the hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides in exhaust fumes to react with the sun's ultraviolet rays to produce ozone. It is ozone that causes the irritation of eyes, throats, and respiratory tracts that is usually associated with smog.

The Bell study, which was published in a recent issue of *Science* magazine, said that ozone concentrations in some areas of Connecticut reached levels from .25 to .35 parts per million during periods following peak rush-hour traffic in New York City. The maximum permissible ozone level, according to federal standards, is .08 parts per million.

## Footnote to Japanese Pollution

The American Family Life Assurance Co. of Georgia reports that it has sold more than 400,000 cancer insurance policies in Japan in the last eleven months. (*Wall Street Journal*, January 15.)

## Waiting for the Upturn

By Ernest Mandel

[The following article appeared in the December 18, 1975, issue of *Inprecor*, a fortnightly news bulletin published by the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.]

\* \* \*

At the end of 1975 the international capitalist economy is still dominated by recession conditions. Granted, there were many signs of upturn in the economy of the United States during the third quarter. Economic activity in West Germany and Japan has ceased to decline. A small new rise in the prices of certain raw materials may reflect the beginning of a reversal of the trend in international trade. But the persistence of very high unemployment rates and, most important, the stagnation of productive investment in all the imperialist countries have put the brakes on any genuine upturn so far. These factors even threaten to cause a "rupture" in the upturn in the United States. The overall verdict is clear: the inflationary "pump-priming" measures of most of the imperialist governments have not had the desired effects within the time lapses counted on. A real general upturn of the international capitalist economy will probably not take place until well into the first half of 1976, perhaps not until the third quarter of 1976.

### Recession & Upturn

During the summer of 1975 industrial production continued to drop in all the imperialist countries without exception, driving home and intensifying by its cumulative effects the nature of the 1974-75 recession as a *generalized economic recession*. During autumn, industrial production turned up in the United States and registered a slight upturn in West Germany and Japan. While the fall in industrial production remains broadly inferior to the decline that occurred during the 1929-33 crisis and while the decline will be of shorter duration (which justifies designation of the present conjunctural phase as "general recession" rather than "slump"), it nonetheless goes considerably beyond any reductions in industrial production registered since the end of the Second World War:

### Fall in Industrial Production During the Year (in %)

|               | in August<br>1975 | in November<br>1975 |
|---------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| United States | -12.5             | - 8                 |
| Japan         | -14               | -10.5               |
| West Germany  | -12               | - 3                 |
| France        | - 9               | - 3                 |
| Britain       | - 6               | - 9                 |
| Italy         | -12.2             | -15                 |

As of November 1975 forecasts on gross national products (in real terms) for the whole of the year of 1975 were as follows:

|               |       |
|---------------|-------|
| United States | -4.0% |
| West Germany  | -3.5  |
| Japan         | +1.5  |
| France        | -2.0  |
| Italy         | -3.0  |
| Britain       | -0.7  |
| Netherlands   | -2.5  |
| Canada        | -1.0  |
| Sweden        | 0.0   |
| Belgium       | -1.8  |

(Source: *The Economist*, November 15, 1975, except for Canada and Belgium, for which: *National Institute Economic Review*, November 1975.)

Moreover, these predictions seem overly optimistic, especially with respect to Japan, Britain, and Italy, where there have been no signs of a recovery of the GNP during the last few months of 1975 that would be sufficient to neutralize the much more sharply pronounced rate of decline in economic activity during the first half of the year.

Granted, the upswing was lively in the United States during the third quarter of 1975. There is talk of a GNP growth rate of 11% between July and September 1975. But half of this increase results from so-called technical factors—that is, a deceleration of industrial inventory liquidation—and not from an increase in sales to the "final consumers." In spite of Gerald Ford's victory cries at the summit conference of the imperialist world in Rambouillet November 15-17, most capitalists (and their ideologues) remain skeptical about short-term prospects for an upturn in the United States, for the moment at least.

Moreover, this skepticism is justified by the appearance of contradictory signs in the American economy during the months of November and December, as well as by the retardation of the upturn in West Germany and Japan. In the United States, consumer demand ceased to grow during the autumn. Retail sales amounted to only \$50,000 million in October (and \$26,000 million for the first two weeks in November), compared with \$49,000 million in July. The volume increase in comparison to October-November 1974, when the recession was at its height, was only 4%.

In West Germany, industrial production increased slightly; it was 2% higher in September 1975 than in August 1975 and 1.5% higher for the two months August-September than for the two months June-July. (These indices are adjusted to eliminate seasonal fluctuations.) Industrial orders increased 12% in September compared with August. But this increase is very slow. As far as domestic orders are concerned, *they are still below 1970 levels*. As for foreign orders, they have developed as follows (based on an index, 100=1970):

|                      |     |
|----------------------|-----|
| Fourth quarter 1974: | 135 |
| First quarter 1975:  | 119 |
| Second quarter 1975: | 115 |
| Third quarter 1975:  | 122 |

In Japan, production increased 6% from March to September but remained far below its 1974 level.

The pump-priming policies of various governments have had incontestable effects. These policies have erected a backstop to the classical cumulative development of the crisis of overproduction. They have permitted a certain upturn in domestic consumption. This has especially been the case in the United States, Japan, West Germany, and France, less so in the other imperialist countries. This priming of consumer expenditures has permitted some upturn in the automobile industry, one of the two key branches racked by the recession. In the United States auto sales of 8.5 million are forecast for 1975. In West Germany auto sales on the domestic market are expected to exceed 2 million units, close to the record year of 1973. Auto production in West Germany in September 1975 was 25% higher than in September 1974; for the first nine months of 1975, however, it was still 4.6% below the figure for the first nine months of 1974. Production also increased in Japan in 1975 (by 14%), but a 10% decline is anticipated for the first half of 1976 because of strong price increases.

The automobile industry is in more uncertain condition in France and Italy. In Britain it is in crisis. Imports are gaining a growing share of the domestic market, but exports are progressing at nearly equivalent proportions. During the first nine months of the year, imports increased 50%; exports grew 41% (in large part, however, due to sales of trucks and spare parts). As far as private cars are concerned, production has fallen back to 1962-63 levels!

On the other hand, the second branch that acted to detonate the recession, the construction industry, continues to founder in pronounced stagnation. For the moment, this branch is being hit by both sides of the coin of *slumpflation*, the coincidence of recession and inflation. The recession is giving rise to caution among the middle classes and the best-paid layers of the proletariat, and this is reducing orders for housing construction. (Treasury difficulties and the fall in company profits are having similar effects in the realm of construction of industrial facilities and office buildings.) Moreover, inflation is maintaining long-term interest rates at high levels, which weighs down on mortgage credits.

Thus, in October 1975 the number of housing units on which construction had begun (1.46 million) was 15% higher than the October 1974 level (but was still far below the record level of August 1973, which was 2 million units). Nevertheless, the number of construction permits had fallen from a monthly average of 1.26 million during the third quarter of 1975 to only 1 million in October 1975. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 2, 1975.) The October 20 issue of *Business Week* commented: "Except for a very modest upturn in single-family houses—from a horrendously low base—the real estate market is still deeply depressed. Apartment starts this year will be at their lowest level in fifteen years. Unsold condominiums amount to 150,000 to 200,000 units and, by one estimate, are still being completed faster than they can be sold. Millions of square feet of prime office space are going begging in cities like New York, Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles. Half-finished or half-empty shopping centers, hotels and housing developments dot the country. . . . Condominiums and apartments represent the most serious problem area. Demand exists for rental apartments, but high interest rates push required rentals far beyond what the market will support."

It is only in Japan that a serious upturn is taking place in the construction of private housing.

The same disparate image emerges from a branch-by-branch examination of the major industrial sectors. Petrochemicals (and especially synthetic fibers) have been experiencing a certain upturn for several months now; but this branch had suffered a particularly serious fall in production during the first half of 1975. The textile and clothing industries also seem to be benefiting from the upturn in consumer spending. On the other hand, the electrical appliance industry continues to suffer the effects of the stagnation in construction and of the tendency for consumers to

hold off on nonessential spending out of fear of future income declines. The machine-tool industry is suffering the effects of the sharp decline in productive investment. The persistent recession in these branches causes a serious crisis in the steel industry and in most of the nonferrous metals sectors as well. Thus, the conclusion here confirms the results drawn from a country-by-country examination of the situation: Although there may be signs of upturn, it cannot yet be said that the recession has been overcome.

In general, government predictions have sinned by blind faith in the *automatic character* of the pump-priming effects produced by classical neo-Keynesian techniques. The growth in the volume of demand was supposed to be more or less immediately proportional to the increase in the money supply, and was then supposed to rebound favorably on overall economic activity by acting as a multiplying factor. But as we have often stressed,<sup>1</sup> there are quite a few channels out of this complex of interconnecting pipelines; consequently, a more or less considerable portion of the expected growth in national income through the simple inflation of the money supply can escape without producing significant effects on the level of economic activity.

In the first place, a portion of the supplementary monetary incomes placed at the disposal of consumers may not be consumed immediately, but instead saved up for postponed consumption staggered over time. This has actually happened in nearly all the imperialist countries, where the savings of lower-income layers have increased rather than diminished since the recession began. (Should the recession continue and provoke a pronounced fall in the mass of real wages, this effect will obviously disappear.)

Second, upturns in domestic consumption may not be accompanied by proportional increases in economic activity if they are accompanied by declines in exports. In a period of recession and of decline in the volume of world trade, the imperialist countries cannot all increase their exports simultaneously. It has been this factor in particular that seems to have prevented a real upturn in West Germany during the second half of 1975.

Third, priming of domestic consumption leads to an upturn in productive investment by capitalist enterprises only if it is accompanied by the prospect of an expanding market and a rise in the rate of profit. Now, in this area the existence of high excess production capacity constitutes an obstacle that is less easily overcome than the bourgeois and reformist economists generally imagine.

Finally, even when productive investments are primed under the impetus of state aid, this priming may not contribute to a cumulative move toward upturn if what are involved are rationalization investments that eliminate more jobs than they create in the sectors of machine construction and production of raw materials. In that event, the persistence of high unemployment levels can lead to a rapid ceiling on the growth of the domestic consumption that was supposed to be generated by the expansion of productive investment.

It is significant that all these truths (rather commonplace on the whole), which had long since been developed by the Marxist critique of Keynesian and neo-Keynesian conceptions, have suddenly been discovered by bourgeois economists in the midst of a generalized recession. These economists have confessed their theoretical impotence in handling the problems of *slumpflation*. The bankruptcy of bourgeois economic theory seems to be even deeper than the crisis of the capitalist economy itself.<sup>2</sup>

1. See especially Chapter 14 of our book *Late Capitalism* (pp. 446-7 of the English edition, New Left Books).

2. On this subject, see especially: Victor Barrett and Richard Black, "The Deflation of the Economists," in *Euromoney*, April 1975.

## Achilles Heel of the Upturn: Excess Capacity & Productive Investment

It clearly appears that the existence of exceptionally high excess capacity in most industrial branches in all the imperialist countries now constitutes the major obstacle to an upswing in capitalist productive investment, postponing the upturn in consumer spending that occurs under the impetus of the antirecession policies of governments.

Thus, in the United States, investigators for McGraw-Hill expect that expenditures on private investment in 1976 will grow by only 9% compared with 1975, which represents a stagnant *volume* of investment if the expected rate of inflation for capital goods is taken into account. An inquiry undertaken by the Lionel D. Edie Co. even predicts a declining volume of investment, since expenditures will grow by only 5%, according to this study. (See *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, December 2, 1975.) In West Germany, private investment rose by 2% for the second quarter of 1975 after having fallen 1.5% during the fourth quarter of 1974 and 5.5% during the first quarter of 1975. But the volume of private investment still stands 6% lower than the quarterly average in 1970!

In Japan, the volume of private investment dropped 1.8% between April and September 1975. The government expects an upturn of 5.4% for the period October 1975-March 1976. But the Structural Industry Council, which conducted an inquiry of 1,886 leading firms, forecasts a 3.8% decline in total private investment for the period April 1975-March 1976. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, November 28, 1975.)

As for Britain, the situation there is even more desolate. During the third quarter of 1975 capital spending fell 6% in manufacturing industry; this came on top of successive declines of 8% and 7% respectively during the first and second quarters of 1975. Other estimates speak of a decline of 11.5% for 1975 as a whole compared with 1974. (*Financial Times*, November 28, 1975.) Under these conditions, the machine-tool industry is experiencing a dangerous recession. One of the directors of British Leyland expressed himself with brutal frankness: "Unless the present downward trend of the British machine tool industry is arrested, there could be a very real danger that British machine tools will no longer be available." (*The Times*, December 2, 1975.)

The scope of the excess capacity, which causes a decline in investment, is considerable; in fact, it often goes beyond anything ever seen in the past. In the United States excess capacity for the whole of manufacturing industry reached 35% in the middle of 1975; it was still 28% in October. Fiat in Italy claims that it is running at only 60% of capacity. (*Business Week*, November 10.) *Time* magazine (November 17) affirms that Italian industry as a whole is working at less than 70% capacity. The November 28 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* cites the same percentage for Japan. Exxon (formerly Standard Oil of New Jersey), the world's largest oil refiner, is working at 77.6% capacity (and only 60% in facilities outside the United States), according to the July 14, 1975, *Business Week*. The two major Japanese steel companies, Nippon Steel and Nippon Kokan, have respectively reduced their production to 30-40% and 28% beneath maximum capacity. (*Newsweek*, November 17.) According to the November 8 issue of *The Economist*, "not one of Britain's six yards that construct oil platforms has a follow-on order to replace the platforms already being built." The September 1, 1975, *Business Week* refers to a similar tendency on a world scale. Capitalist shipyards now have a total of 167 million tons of ships under construction, compared with 227 million tons in October 1974; but new orders are so low that for the first three quarters of 1975 in Britain they cover only 4.7%(!) of the tonnage under construction during the first nine months of the preceding year. (*The Economist*, October 25, 1975.) And even in the United States, where, according to the August 25, 1975, *Business Week*, half of

all tonnage under construction depends on orders from the U.S. Navy, net profits have fallen from 5% to 2% of annual turnover. In the chemical industry excess capacity rates of 40-50% are mentioned for Höchst (*The Economist*, September 13, 1975) and of 30% for Dupont de Nemours in the United States (*Business Week*, July 7, 1975).

Under these conditions, there is something of the unreal in the discussions of "capital shortage" opened by sensationalist studies by two teams of American economists—Bosworth-Duesenberry-Carron for the Brookings Institution and Brinner-Sinai for Data Resources, Inc.<sup>3</sup>—and later taken up by both U.S. Treasury Secretary William E. Simon and certain commentators claiming to be Marxists.

Of course, there is never "absolute" overproduction of capital under the capitalist system. Overproduction of capital always relates to the immediate possibilities of valorizing this capital. Overproduction—and overcapacity is simply a manifestation of overproduction—always means that there is too much capital to rake in the anticipated average profit.

But that said, excess capacity rates of the scope mentioned above obviously reflect an enormous excess and not some kind of "shortage" of productive capital available for investment. The ideologues confuse shortage of capital with shortage of surplus-value, that is, shortage of profits. There will be a serious upturn in capital accumulation, that is, a new "boom," only if the conditions for valorizing capital (that is, the total mass of surplus-value relative to the total mass of capital) improve dramatically. And there can be no question of this in the short or medium term. Cautiously, *The Economist*, which had predicted a new boom for 1976, has already pushed its prediction back to 1977. Since the rise in productive investment has yet to occur, even this 1977 boom becomes increasingly open to question.

## Priming & Unemployment

A capitalist crisis of overproduction has a twofold objective function in improving the conditions for the valorization of capital. It is supposed to permit a new rise of the rate of profit, first by massively devaluating total accumulated capital, second by causing a net increase in the rate of surplus-value (that is, of the rate of exploitation of the productive workers).<sup>4</sup>

Let us first examine this second condition. It is incontestable that from the standpoint of the class struggle, any serious overproduction crisis appears as a massive aggression by capital against wage labor. Massive layoffs, lack of jobs for youth leaving school, and the fear of unemployment that takes root among the working class are supposed to permit a freeze on, if not reduction of, real wages, greater "labor discipline" in the factories, and an intensification of the labor process. But above all, during the recession the exacerbation of competition impels companies to step up their efforts in the realm of *rationalization investments*. In fact, each capitalist firm tends to aim investment at reducing the labor force rather than at creating new jobs.

Right from the moment that all the imperialist governments (including those administered by the Social Democratic leadership) proclaim that the number one long-term goal remains "the struggle against inflation" and not the struggle against recession, we see the *tacit abandoning of the myth of the priority of full employment*, which had dominated economic and social policy in the imperialist countries since the end of the Second World War.<sup>5</sup>

3. A very good summary of this new exercise in extrapolation, which will experience the same fate as similar exercises in the recent past, can be found in *Business Week*, September 22, 1975.

4. See especially Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume III, Chapter 15.

5. This turn in all the imperialist countries is being accompanied by a "counteroffensive" by liberal-conservative economists of the von Hayek

The priming measures (which feed inflation) remain limited to a level at which the elimination of unemployment is not even aimed at any more, let alone achieved. The turn in imperialist economic policy has been universal on this score.

Good liberal souls are upset by this. In an article in the October 15 *Le Monde* analyzing the Giscard d'Estaing pump-priming plan, Edgard Faure, speaker of the National Assembly, cried, "Employment (has been) attacked!" And this is true everywhere. Although the recession is no longer worsening and the first signs of upturn are appearing, unemployment is nonetheless getting worse in all the imperialist countries. Here are the estimates for winter 1975-76, compared with the situation during winter 1974-75:

### Number of Total Unemployed (in millions)

|                             | Winter 1974-75 | Winter 1975-76 |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| United States               | 7.5            | 8.2            |
| Britain                     | 0.8            | 1.5            |
| Japan                       | 1.0            | 1.5            |
| Italy                       | 1.5            | 1.5            |
| France                      | 0.8            | 1.3            |
| West Germany                | 1.0            | 1.2            |
| Canada                      |                | 0.7            |
| Spain                       |                | 0.6            |
| Small imperialist countries | 2.0*           | 1.2            |
| All imperialist countries   | ±15.0          | ±17.5          |

(\*This figure includes Canada and Spain.)

If the figure for part-time unemployment is added in (despite the lack of rigor in this addition), the threshold of 20 million unemployed in the imperialist countries would be rapidly attained if not surpassed. *It is certain that the delay in reabsorption of unemployment will powerfully retard the industrial upturn and that this retardation will in turn slow down a return to a boom.*

And here we hit upon the real dilemma of the capitalist governments, which reflects a real contradiction of the capitalist mode of production. "To turn the cycle up again, the rate of profit must be improved," some say. And they are not wrong. From this they conclude, a bit too hastily, that austerity must take hold in the hearts (and the stomachs) of the working class. That is the ideological function of the "great fear of capital shortage." "No," respond the reformists of the workers movement and the bourgeois reformers of all stripes, "to reabsorb excess productive capacity, consumption by the 'final consumers' must be jacked up and not held down." And they are not wrong either. The trouble is that both sides are half right, which means that they are both wrong. A genuine capitalist boom requires *both* a serious upturn in the rate of profit *and* a serious expansion of sales to "final consumers." It is not easy to bring about a coincidence of these two conditions, especially when capital markets are weighed down by enormous excess capacity and by a combative working class that is not demoralized.

It must also be added that nothing guarantees the success of the worldwide offensive of capital against the living and working conditions of the industrial proletariat. There is no automatic link

between employment levels on the one hand and wage levels and workers combativity on the other hand, not in the short term at least. The interaction between these two factors is mediated by other specific factors, such as: the degree of organization of the working class; the workers' average level of consciousness; their degree of confidence in their own strength, resulting notably from the *past* duration of unemployment and from the outcomes of previous workers struggles; the scope and weight of the broad vanguard; the weight the revolutionary Marxist organization has already acquired within the working class and the organized workers movement, etc.

Taking all these factors into account, we predicted, from the very beginning of the recession, that this recession would not be accompanied by a general ebb in workers combativity.<sup>6</sup> Up to now, events have proven us right.

The working class of the imperialist countries has not rested with folded arms, neither in the defense of real wages nor in the struggle against unemployment. The reactions have been much more massive and effective and have reflected a much higher level of consciousness than those of the 1929-32 period.

Granted, there has been a temporary ebb in workers combativity in West Germany, and, after a period laced with struggles, disarray and temporary retreat have marked Britain for six months now. But signs of a new rise in combativity are beginning to be seen in both countries (notably in the powerful demonstrations against unemployment: more than 50,000 in Dortmund in early November and more than 20,000 in London in late November). And although the upturn in struggles and in trade-union radicalization remains modest in the United States, its existence is nonetheless undeniable. In conjunction with the explosive rise of struggles in Spain, Portugal, and Italy, with the new rise of the strike movement in France, Japan, and Australia, and with the growing resistance of the Belgian, Dutch, Swedish, and Finnish trade unions to any form of freeze on or reduction of wages, these phenomena give an overall picture of the major difficulties the international bourgeoisie faces in carrying out its plans through the present recession.

The rising cycle of workers struggles is still in its initial phase. Its culminating points lie ahead of us, not behind us, even if this or that country may be an exception to the general rule. And the signs of the transformation of this ascending march of workers struggle into an explosive social and political crisis are rapidly multiplying in several countries.

### Inflation and Devalorization of Capital

The second objective function of a crisis of overproduction is the devalorization of capital, which is supposed to permit an increase in the rate of profit, with the mass of surplus-value remaining more or less unchanged (the increase in the rate of surplus-value compensating for the reduction in employment). In practice, such devalorization of capital occurs through:

- a. The sharpening of competition, which eliminates the less profitable firms at an accelerated rate;
- b. The fall in the value of commodities and plant and equipment.

Incontestably, these two phenomena have occurred during the present generalized recession of the international capitalist economy. The number of bankruptcies has increased by more than 30% in the United States and by more than 60% in Britain. There were 7,500 bankruptcies in West Germany in 1974 and 8,600 in Japan in 1975, which represented a considerable increase. Raw materials price scales and the wholesale prices of a fair number of manufactured products have dropped. We have previously mentioned the crashes of some banks and finance companies, in

type. Here is a characteristic formula from Professor Harry Johnson: "The answer (to inflation) . . . in the long run . . . depends on the willingness of society to retreat from the welfare state. . . ." (*The Banker*, August 1975.)

6. See Inprecor, No. 16/17, January 16, 1975, p. 12.

## A Note on Terminology

Marx presented the process of capitalist commodity production as a unity of two distinct processes—the labor process through which labor-power produces use-values, and the *valorization* process through which labor-power produces additional value over and above its own value. This surplus-value, created during the process of production, must be realized through the sale of commodities before capital can appropriate it and therewith actually increase its own value. In the English translation of *Capital*, the term referring to this process (*Verwertung* in German) is usually rendered “self-expansion of capital.” This is misleading, because it abstracts both from the labor process that materially creates value and from the process of realization that is necessary if capital is actually to achieve its “expansion,” which is not at all self-created. The term “valorization” is thus used instead of the term “self-expansion.”

A similar problem arises in the English rendering of *Entwertung*, the process whereby capital loses a part of its value, which takes two main forms during a capitalist crisis. First, as a result of the decline in value (price of production) of commodities, the capital invested in these commodities loses value. Second, as a result of commercial bankruptcies and firms going out of business, much of the value of their capital is destroyed. This capital was part of total social capital, which thereby loses part of its aggregate value. The German expression *Entwertung* may be translated simply as “devaluation.” But since this term may easily be confused with the devaluation of currency (a different phenomenon), and since “devaluation” does not convey the sense of oppositeness to “valorization” (present in the German), the term *devalorization* is preferable.

The English edition of the book *Spätkapitalismus* (Late Capitalism, by Ernest Mandel, New Left Books [7 Carlisle Street, London W1, Britain], 1975, £9.50) contains an extremely useful glossary, from which the above notes have been adopted.—*Inprecor*

general caused by speculation.<sup>7</sup> To this must be added some no less spectacular failures of big trusts: W.T. Grant & Co. in the United States (the biggest U.S. bankruptcy since the collapse of the Penn Central railroad company—more than a thousand million dollars in debt); the Japanese textile trust Kohjin (\$500 million in debt), and its subsidiary, Sakamoto Spinning Co. (\$213 million in debt). Moreover, it is known that an even larger trust, the automobile corporation Chrysler, is in serious difficulty. We may also mention the difficulties of the Slater Walker financial group in London and Singapore and of Hutchinson International Limited in Hong Kong. Even the venerable and mysterious Crown Agents, who manage the London holdings of some ninety foreign governments, lost £129 million in imprudent loans.

Nevertheless, what is striking in examining the overall effects of this recession is precisely the relatively small dimensions of this process of devalorization of capital in light of the considerable scope of the fall of production and profits. It is not difficult to discover the explanation for this apparent paradox. Inflation, which is continuing full force during the height of the recession, contributes to attenuating the effects of increased competition on the less solid trusts. The banking system continues to extend credit. “If we weren’t living in a country that so totally respects secrecy when it comes to business, the press would long since have been writing that Rhône-Poulenc would have trouble meeting its obligations were it not for the banking cooperation

that continues to be extended,” asserted Paul Fabre in the November 6, 1975, *Le Monde*. The state and the central banks are continuing to bail out companies in danger of going under. The case of Kohjin is especially illustrative. This corporation is still doing business as though nothing had happened. Enormous credits were granted a company that had in fact failed. As far as the European automobile trusts are concerned, some of which were in a very bad way, let us note a no less forthright statement by Christian Gobert of the French Ministry of Industry to *Business Week* (September 1): “Indeed, the guarantee of the state is already implicit now for all large European car manufacturers. The governments cannot abandon them.”

The consequence of this is twofold. First, there is more and more pronounced indebtedness among the great trusts, which obviously slows down the rise of the rate of profit. For nonfinancial companies in the United States, the proportion of sources of internal financing to sources of external financing was 2 to 1 in 1968; in 1975 the proportion fell to 2 to 3. This means that for each dollar of nondistributed profits, there are now three times as many external resources for financing current investments as there were seven years ago. (See *Business Week*, September 22, 1975.)

Ten years ago, the stock-exchange value of these companies was more than four times the size of their debts. Today, the volume of these debts, the total of which now stands at \$1.3 billion (200% higher than in 1965), has already risen to more than 50% of the stock-exchange value of nonfinancial companies, and the proportion is rising rapidly. In 1959 service charges on debts represented only 9% of gross receipts of companies; today they represent 33%. (*Bulletin du Credit Suisse*, April-May 1975.) In West Germany, the proportion of the debts of firms to their capital passed from 1.5 to 1 in 1968 to 2 to 1 in 1975. Nevertheless, German companies—virtually alone in all imperialist countries—were able to increase their rate of self-financing (although at a low level of investment), from 72% in 1970 to 94% in 1975. In the year 1974 alone, the 700 largest Italian companies had to borrow a sum equivalent to 57% of all they had borrowed during the entire period 1968-73.

Second there is ever greater pressure on the banking system each time a big client can no longer pay its debts. The bankruptcy of W.T. Grant cost the system dearly, for this trust had borrowed \$640 million from the banks. The firm’s debts to three of the major banks in New York, Chase Manhattan, First National City, and Morgan Guarantee Trust, amounted to nearly \$100 million to each bank.

It is thus understandable why after the near panic provoked last year by the collapse of the Herstatt banking house in Cologne, there was even greater near panic this autumn when the threat of bankruptcy of the city of New York loomed on the horizon. The twelve major New York banks hold more than \$4,000 million in “bad debts.” (\$2,000 million in obligations of the city of New York; \$1,000 million in loans to airlines; \$400 million in loans to W.T. Grant; more than \$500 million in loans to other municipalities threatened by bankruptcy.) To this are added nonguaranteed real estate loans on the order of \$7,600 million and loans of \$4,000 million to real estate investment trusts in difficulty.

If it is kept in mind that available reserves for losses through unpaid debts are only \$1,800 million and the resources of the banks themselves are only \$9,500 million, it can be seen that the risks of a collapse of the credit system are real. That is why Ford had to come to the rescue and promise that the federal government would bail New York out. In the case of some banks, the total amount of operating capital plus reserves available to cover lost loans is less than the obligations held from the city of New York and the real estate investment trusts. (Chemical

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.



Bank and Bankers Trust are two examples.) Midland Marine has already suffered an absolute loss for the fourth quarter of 1975. Other "bad loans" held by the big New York banks include loans to airline companies (several of which may go bankrupt) and loans granted to finance the construction of giant oil tankers. The Federal Reserve Board has promised to aid all big banks and is closely watching nearly 546 banks, most of them small ones, that hold portfolios of New York municipal bonds in amounts exceeding 20% of their operating capital. The losses of the banks arising from the real estate investment trusts alone could run as high as \$600 million-1,800 million.

The situation of the British banking system is scarcely any better. According to *The Economist* of August 9, 1975: "The collapse in the property market posed a bigger threat to Britain's financial system than the withdrawal of deposits from the secondary banks. On realistic property valuations, a number of banks are insolvent in all but name. . . . By the end of 1974, bank lending to the property and construction industries had reached £5 billion. That's more than half (!) the banks' commitment to all of British manufacturing, although the ratio had been a little more than one-fifth early in 1970. . . . How much property is overhanging the market? Over £1 billion at 1973 values, including the portfolios of the private Stern and Lyon groups, and the quoted Guardian Properties (Holdings), which collapsed last year, is probably in the hands of receivers and liquidators."

This time, the banks managed to squeak by. As we had estimated in our analysis at the end of the first half of 1975, the reserves of the capitalist system in the richest imperialist countries have not yet been exhausted by inflation. They still enable the merry-go-round of "indebtedness-inflation-greater indebtedness" to make a few more turns.<sup>8</sup> But by the same token, the recession cannot play the objective role it is supposed to play. The devalorization of capital remains marginal. The increase in the rate of profit will be mediocre. The conclusion is clear: This recession will not lead to a powerful boom, but instead to a limited upturn leading rather rapidly to a new recession.

#### Priming, Inflation, and the International Monetary System

The priming of internal consumption and the bailing out of firms in difficulty through budget subsidies (and deficits) means priming through inflation. Bourgeois opinion, which rejoiced at a certain slowdown of inflation during 1975, seems not to be aware of the fact that the continuation of the increase in the cost of living in the midst of a recession, coinciding with a reduction in material production on the order of 5-10% in most imperialist countries, in itself constitutes an extremely serious phenomenon that suggests that there will be a new inflationary explosion as soon as the cycle is seriously turned around.

**Table I**

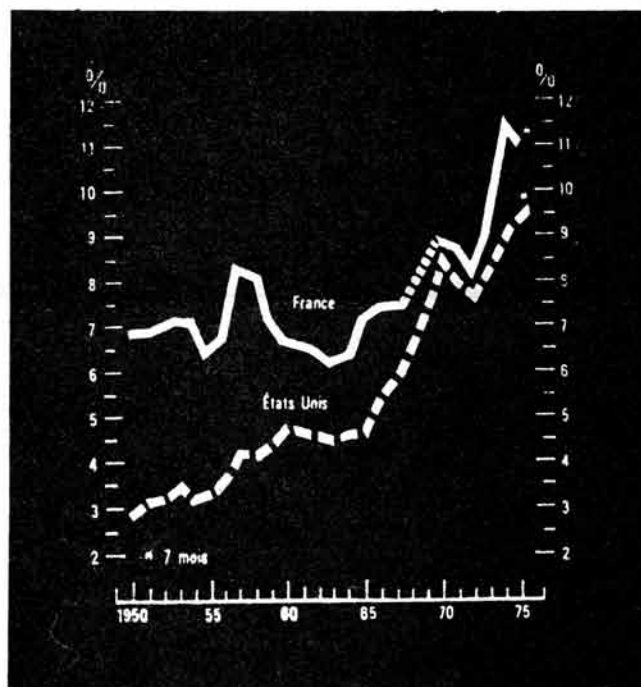
#### Retail Price Increases (in %)

|               | From 2nd quarter 1974<br>to 2nd quarter 1975 | From September 1974<br>to September 1975 |
|---------------|--|--|
| United States | 9.7  | 7.8                                      |
| Canada        | 10.2   | 10.6                                     |
| Japan         | 13.2   | 10.3                                     |
| France        | 12.7   | 10.7                                     |
| West Germany  | 6.3  | 6.1                                      |
| Italy         | 19.8   | 13.0                                     |
| Britain       | 24.8   | 26.6                                     |
| Belgium       | 13.5   | 10.8                                     |
| Netherlands   |  | 10.4                                     |
| Sweden        |  | 12.0                                     |
| Switzerland   |  | 5.4                                      |

February 9, 1976

But priming through the vehicle of increasing public expenditures has another effect on the conjuncture. Enormous budget deficits have appeared: some \$70,000 million in the United States; \$35,000 million in West Germany; \$20,000 million in Britain; \$10,000 million in Japan; \$9,000 million in France; the total for all imperialist countries probably comes to something like \$160,000 million! Covering these deficits necessitates a growing volume of borrowing on capital markets. In Japan alone, nearly \$18,000 million in public loans are expected. Hence, at the very moment when the growing indebtedness of capitalist firms obliges these firms to increasingly resort to financial markets in order to finance their investments, this market is under pressure from demands for capital on the part of governments. This provokes an increase in long-term interest rates before the industrial upturn has really taken hold.

Moreover, this increase in long-term interest rates corresponds with the inflation, that is, the nominal interest rate represents in reality the real interest rate plus the rate of inflation. Thus, *Conjuncture*, the monthly economic bulletin of the Banque de Paris et des Pays-Bas, published the following graph in its October 1975 issue showing the evolution of the long-term interest rate for credit in the private sector:



Long-term interest rate (private sector) in average annual rate of return according to market prices. Etats-Unis = United States.

Furthermore, the attack on real wages is being accompanied by enormous pressure from the bourgeoisie for a "pruning down" of public spending, which is reflected primarily in a reduction of

8. An additional threat of the collapse of the international credit system arises from the uncontrollable expansion of the Euro-exchange market. In this regard, here is the view of a well known international banker, Mr. Rennie: ". . . the overall strength of the world's monetary system depends too much on the reasonable soundness of each part for any such major collapse (in the Euro-markets) to be allowed to occur, without every effort being made, on an international scale, to avoid it. . . . If, despite maximum international cooperation, a major default were to occur, it could, in my opinion, erode the viability of the Euro-markets and remove them from their position of importance in today's world financial scene." (*The Banker*, August 1975.)

social spending, which means yet another attack on the standard of living of the toiling masses.

The strongly discordant inflation rates among the major imperialist powers has influenced the reciprocal relationships among the major currencies, which continue to be governed by the system of floating exchange rates. The dollar has been strengthened relative to other imperialist currencies; this is also true of the French franc and the Italian lira, although to a lesser extent. On the other hand, the Japanese yen and the Belgian franc have declined somewhat, and the pound sterling is in free fall. The pump-priming policy of the Japanese government, after first being subordinated to the imperative of stabilizing the balance of payments and the yen, is now turning toward boosting exports. In this context, a certain decline in the yen in comparison with the dollar is obviously not displeasing to the Japanese ruling class.

### Rates of Major Currencies as of July 17, 1975 (in %)

|                   | Compared with monetary<br>accord of December 1971 | Compared with<br>February 15, 1973 |
|-------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| U.S. dollar       | -14.85  | +1.6                               |
| German mark       | +13.83  | +11.53                             |
| Japanese yen      | +0.24   | -12.23                             |
| French franc      | +6.37   | +2.91                              |
| £ sterling        | -32.48  | -18.59                             |
| Italian lira      | -29.18  | -23.89                             |
| Dutch florin      | +8.03   | +5.96                              |
| Belgian franc     | +2.52   | +0.56                              |
| Swiss franc       | -26.11  | +18.77                             |
| Canadian dollar   | -4.26   | +1.60                              |
| Australian dollar | +5.99   | -3.45                              |
| Swedish crown     | +3.70   | +2.49                              |

(Source: *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, August 19, 1975.)

But the imperialist powers remain deeply divided over the future of the international monetary system and over the effects that the monetary disorder resulting from the collapse of the Bretton Woods system has on the capitalist economic situation as a whole. The American and British imperialists generally remain advocates of the system of floating exchange rates. This system above all permits the dollar to be maintained as an exchange reserve in central banks outside the United States while simultaneously avoiding a return to the dollar's convertibility for gold. Many European imperialist powers, beginning with France and Switzerland, oppose the system of floating exchange rates for that very reason. They believe that this system introduces more and more disorder and speculation into international trade and that it progressively puts the brakes on the expansion of trade. In addition, they see this system as a permanent source of inflation, since it permits the United States to maintain a balance of payments deficit ad infinitum. The flow of depreciated dollars to the rest of the world, which results from this, feeds and swells inflationary pressures everywhere.

The system of floating exchange rates has not at all prevented violent fluctuations in currency exchange rates. (The dollar fell by nearly 25% in 1973 relative to the German mark and the Swiss franc; this was followed by a complete reestablishment of the rate six months later.) This has stimulated both speculation and the elimination of "bad speculators." But as was noted in a February 1975 bulletin of the journal *Banque*: "The damage wreaked by this

aspect of the generalization of floating exchange rates is measured not only in the figures of losses registered . . . or in the disappearance of some banks, but above all in the *deterioration of the general atmosphere of confidence between bankers and their depositors.*"

The discussions that preceded and took place during the "imperialist summit" at Rambouillet in large part revolved around this debate. The results were mediocre. The November 19 *Le Monde* observed that the Western leaders were "counting on a more stable dollar." In practice, this would mean that France pretty much gave in to the United States. Nevertheless, the imperialist governments also decided to reduce the amplitude of the fluctuations in exchange rates, that is, to adopt an intermediary solution between the systems of fixed and floating exchange rates. It seems too risky to rely exclusively on the stability of the dollar in view of the financial situation of American capitalism as we have outlined it above and as it is certainly viewed by the international bourgeoisie.

In truth, the difficulty in bringing "order" to the international monetary system derives above all from the fact that there is still no alternative to the dollar. The "ECU," the European-wide currency that was supposed to be born of a more advanced monetary and financial integration of the Common Market countries, is still but a dream. Under these conditions, regardless of all the pressure of the American government, the plans to "demonetize" gold have scarcely any chance of being applied in practice, even though a good number of governments support such plans, or at least give lip service to them. In the absence of a means of exchange and payment universally accepted by the private owners of commodities and creditors and in the absence of a "world bourgeois government," which is unrealistic under conditions of interimperialist competition, which is still going on full steam, gold continues to play its role as a last-resort means of payment and refuge value (the major means for hoarding). The violent fluctuations in the price of gold—including, at times, downward fluctuations (the price of gold fell from \$200 an ounce at the end of 1974 to \$126 at the end of September 1975, after the decision of the International Monetary Fund to sell 25 million ounces of gold; it rose back to \$146 an ounce at the beginning of November)—far from demonstrating the elimination of this metal from the international monetary system, demonstrate the opposite. The government of the United States will have to give in on this point, having already admitted that the central banks that desire to do so (especially those of capitalist Europe) have the right to mutually exchange gold at market prices and not at an artificially low price.

Further, we are now witnessing a significant reversal of the trend toward the hoarding of gold. The London precious metals brokerage firm of Samuel Montagu and Company, Ltd. estimates that 55% (that is, 800 metric tons) of the total quantity of metal placed on sales markets last year was absorbed by European speculators and that unloading is now going on in India and other Asian countries, traditional hoarders of gold. This fact further strengthens the trend toward the return to gold as a last-resort objective base for the international monetary system.

### The Contraction of World Trade

According to a report of the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), the volume of world trade declined 10% during the first half of 1975 compared with the volume during the corresponding period of 1974. We do not yet have figures on trade volume for the third quarter of 1975, but everything indicates that it continues to stand at a lower level than during the third quarter of 1974, even though the differential may well be smaller. In any case, the exports of the major imperialist powers have not yet returned to their precession levels, as is shown by the following figures:

**Table II****Exports (in thousands of millions of \$)**

|                  | U.S.A. | W. Germany | Japan |
|------------------|--------|------------|-------|
| 3rd quarter 1974 | 23.4   | 22.0       | 15.0  |
| 4th quarter 1974 | 27.1   | 24.2       | 16.5  |
| 1st quarter 1975 | 27.2   | 22.5       | 13.3  |
| 2nd quarter 1975 | 26.7   | 23.6       | 13.6  |
| 3rd quarter 1975 | 27.0   | 22.2       | 13.4  |

Taking account of the fact that the prices of the manufactured products mainly exported by these countries have continued to rise, the fall in the volume of exports is even greater than the decline by value.

Nevertheless, the various sectors of the world market have evolved unevenly during the last half of 1975:

- *The U.S. market is expanding under the effects of the beginning of upturn.* Imports are increasing slightly and certain branches are clearly profiting from this. For more than six months, European and Japanese automobile manufacturers (especially Volkswagen, Toyota, and Datsun) have been able to sensationally increase their share of the American market, which has risen from 15% to 20%. It is true that toward the end of 1975 this share dropped back to about 15%. But it is not certain that this was due to the greater competitiveness of American "subcompacts." It is possible that inventories and transport were simply unable to keep up with demand. (Moreover, Volkswagen is once again considering its project of manufacturing automobiles in the United States for sale on the U.S. market.)

- *The markets of the major imperialist countries of Europe and of Japan are continuing to stagnate,* although small signs of expansion began to appear toward the end of the year. In most of these countries, the share of imports relative to gross domestic product tends to stagnate or even decline. This was especially the case for Japan. The exception is Britain, where foreign competi-

tion (especially from Europe and Japan) is more effective because of the explosion in the sales prices of British products. The contraction of the Japanese market has been a disaster for the capitalist countries of Asia, for whom the Japanese market constitutes the buyer for one-third of their exports. Thus, Japanese imports (other than oil) had diminished by nearly 30% during the first quarter of 1975. In August-September Japan still imported 20% less iron ore and 33% less wood than during the same months of the preceding year. (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, October 31, 1975.)

- *The market in the semicolonial countries that are not oil-exporters is contracting seriously* because of the fall in the prices of raw materials that took place throughout the second half of 1975 through the month of November (see table 3).

Obviously, it is the prices in dollars that are significant; the prices in pounds sterling reflect the devaluation of this currency, which exceeds the amplitude of the fall in the prices of raw materials.

The fall in the prices of the major raw materials, combined with the contraction of the volumes exported as a result of the fall in demand resulting from the recession, has severely reduced the buying power of the countries that export raw materials on the world market, with the exception of the oil-exporting countries. These countries have been compelled either to seriously increase their debts in order to pay for imports or to reduce the volume of their imports. Some big orders from the imperialist countries that had been anticipated have thus disappeared temporarily. The total trade deficit of these countries, which had already risen to the impressive figure of \$40,000 million in 1974, threatens to rise still higher in 1975.

- *The markets of the oil-exporting countries have expanded more rapidly than expected,* since these countries have spent a greater portion of their oil revenue than originally expected on imports in various forms (arms, infrastructure development projects, industry and agriculture, luxury consumption, etc.). In fact, the combined balance of payments surplus of all the oil-exporting countries was no more than \$17,000 million for the first half of 1975 (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, September 19, 1975),

**Table III****Prices of Major Raw Materials (in %)**

|                    | Sept. 23, 1975, compared<br>with Sept. 23, 1974 | Sept. 9, 1975, compared<br>with Aug. 23, 1975 | Nov. 25, 1975, compared<br>with Oct. 25, 1975 |
|--------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Index in \$</b> |   |   |   |
| All products       | -9.4  | -2.8  | zero  |
| Food products      | -11.7   | -2.0  | +0.1  |
| Industrial fibers  | -9.7  | -2.4  | -0.2  |
| Metals             | -20.5   | -7.7  | -1.1  |
| <b>Index in £</b>  |   |   |   |
| All products       | +2.6  | +0.2  | +1.4  |
| Food products      | zero  | +1.1  | +1.5  |
| Industrial fibers  | +2.3  | +0.6  | +1.2  |
| Metals             | -10.0   | -4.8  | +0.3  |

(Source: *The Economist*, September 27 and November 29, 1975.)

compared with a surplus of more than \$33,700 million for the second half of 1974. Estimates of the U.S. Treasury Department evaluate the value of these imports as rising from \$20,000 million in 1973 to \$37,000 million in 1974 to \$55,000 million in 1975. (*The Economist*, September 20, 1975.) The rise of these imports has been such that certain oil-exporting countries are even in debt once again; the balance of payments surpluses have been practically exhausted. Other countries have had to reexamine some of the projects that had already been initiated, which has inflicted some setbacks (perhaps temporary) on the exporting imperialist countries.<sup>9</sup> We should also mention that oil production itself diminished 14% during the first half of 1975 compared with the first half of 1974; the decline even reached 27% in Kuwait and 41% in Libya, according to the September 1975 *Middle East Economic Review*.

• *The market in the bureaucratized workers states is continuing to expand* from the standpoint of foreign trade with capitalist countries. But the expansion has been more modest than anticipated, notably because the recession has reduced the absorption potentials of the capitalist markets for products coming from the countries of the East and because these countries are beginning to experience serious shortages of western currency. Several of the workers states have had to resort to the capital markets of West Europe to finance import projects; they have generally been successful in these endeavors.<sup>10</sup> We should also mention the tendency toward long-term barter agreements, which are designed to guard against too strong fluctuations in world market prices. The barter of American wheat for Soviet oil and the barter of Japanese steel for Chinese oil are examples.

Generally speaking, the atmosphere of recession and sharpened interimperialist competition has stimulated a rise of nationalism and economic protectionism in all the imperialist countries. In the United States unfair competition suits have been initiated against importers of automobiles and of European and Japanese steel products, while watch manufacturers are attacking importers of digital and electronic watches. In the Common Market countries, accusations of dumping have been made against importers of Soviet trucks and Japanese steel. In Japan the "liberalization" of automobile import rules was held up by so many bureaucratic obstacles that the Common Market ordered Japan to open its borders or the EEC would begin to place restrictions on the import of Japanese autos. Australia set import quotas on automobiles, which resulted in the reduction of these imports by 55% during the period July-October 1975. Britain accused Spain of dumping its steel products. Sweden placed restrictions on shoe imports, and the Common Market retaliated by enacting restrictions on the import of Swedish paper. France imposed restrictions on the import of Italian wines, contrary to the spirit of the Treaty of Rome. And so on.

The most typical case can be seen in the steel industry. This industry has been especially hard hit by the recession, as is indicated in the following figures:

**Decline in Steel Production  
During the First Eight Months of 1975 (in %)**

|                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| Belgium                    | -29.0 |
| West Germany               | -21.0 |
| United States              | -18.4 |
| France                     | -18.0 |
| Japan                      | -11.6 |
| Britain                    | -10.1 |
| Other capitalist countries | -12.8 |

9. This is especially the case for Algeria, which, because of the aggravation of its trade deficit, has placed a question mark over several industrial projects involving large orders from France. (*Le Monde*, October 15, 1975.)

More generally, Britain is preparing to introduce controls (and thereby limitations) on imports. And as was written in a recent supplement to the review *Eurépargne*, published in Luxembourg: "Manifestly, in the present situation it is improbable that the principle of Free Exchange such as it is practiced by the western countries alone will be able to be preserved without corrections." (September 1975.)

**More Long-Term Prospects**

The more long-term development trends of the international capitalist economy—unless all the present factors are overturned by the breakthrough of the socialist revolution in West Europe—may now be sketched out.

It appears certain that because of the decline in the average rate of profit, the economies of the imperialist countries will no longer experience the average growth rates they did during the 1950s and 1960s. Some major monopolies are already acting on the basis of such a prospect, which tends to make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, according to the October 21 *Le Monde*: "In steel, as elsewhere, something has changed in the past year. The ambitious extrapolations based on a planned growth of 5% and more have been abandoned without a real consensus being reached . . . on a progression figure." And the Japanese Ministry for International Trade and Industry predicts a 2.1% per year increase in domestic demand for private cars and trucks for the period 1972-1985, compared with a 15% annual increase for the period 1965-1972. (*Far Eastern Economic Review*, November 28, 1975.)

Those branches especially affected by the *turnabout in long-term trends* will experience a "pruning down" through the elimination of a series of less adept competitors. In spite of the intervention of governments, this "pruning down" is now inevitable, notably in the automobile industry. The reaction of the most "dynamic" monopolies (especially in Europe) will be to move in the direction of diversification. Classic automobile trusts like Fiat and Renault are counting on carrying out slightly less than 50% of their total turnover in the auto industry itself. U.S. Steel already draws 43% of its profits from sources other than steel.

The branches that have experienced exceptional growth rates during the "long wave of the tendency toward expansion" of 1940(1948)-1967 will now experience less rapid expansion. They will lose the exceptional rates of superprofits they have enjoyed up to now. The most important case will undoubtedly occur in the computer industry. Competition has been particularly lively in this field ever since the recession began.<sup>11</sup> The market for large-scale calculating machines is increasingly saturated. The giants, IBM above all, which have up to now left the market for mini- and microcomputers to weaker competitors so that these competitors could take the field against one another and destroy themselves in a price war, will begin to penetrate this field in force. Expansion will no longer be able to be sustained through mass production and sales, that is, through small-sized models.

But the growth rate will fall rapidly in this domain as well. According to the March 5, 1975, *Financial Times*, the following expansion of world production is anticipated: from 23 million

10. According to the November 25, 1975, *Financial Times*, the USSR Foreign Trade Bank has borrowed some \$750 million in the West since the beginning of the year. To this must be added the loans of Poland, Hungary, and Cuba, for a total of \$590 million, the loans of the Comecon Investment Bank for a total of \$430 million, and the loans of the German Democratic Republic of \$35 million.

11. Rank-Xerox has had to leave the branch. Rockwell is in trouble. Texas Industries has so far failed in its entry into the field of minicomputers. Siemens is clinging to the sector, despite the dissolution of Unidata, its merger with Philips; it now seems to be allying itself with the Japanese trust Fujitsu. In fact, it is expected that there will be a reduction of 12% in the value of the computers sold in the United States this year.

units in 1973 to 34 million in 1974 (+50%) to 50 million in 1975 (+47%) to 67 million in 1976 (+34%) to 86 million in 1977 (+27%) to 92 million units in 1978 (+8%).

Efforts to bring off spectacular "innovations" at costs of hundreds or even thousands of millions of dollars in preparations will be redoubled with the amplification of the capital surpluses that result from the long-term slowdown in growth. Many of these projects will be financial failures, as was the case with the Concorde supersonic aircraft, and as was the case with the attempt of the Gulf Oil and Royal Dutch Shell trusts to join forces and go into the nuclear industry. Some projects seem to promise a medium-term "breakthrough": the electric car, for which Britain is well placed; the "video disk," the major "innovation" of the electrical appliance industry in which, unlike the case with television, the Americans will no longer be alone in starting. From the initiation of mass production, Philips (Netherlands), and perhaps Decca-Telefunken, will accompany RCA.

The Japanese antipollution mechanisms industry seems headed for brilliant expansion; according to the November 28 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "anti-pollution equipment has now become the second biggest and most profitable item for Japan's machinery makers. . . . Investment in preventing or curbing pollution in key industries . . . has more than doubled, from US\$1,615 million in fiscal 1973 to \$3,380 million in fiscal 1974, according to a . . . MITI (Ministry of International Trade and Industry) survey. . . . The report predicts further steep growth in outlays for pollution control to \$4,820 million for fiscal 1975."

The prospects for the nuclear industry are less clear and seem less expansive than had been thought several years ago. Spectacular accidents, the increased costs of supplementary security measures, the downward revision of the "energy deficit" forecast on the basis of imprudent extrapolations of increases in production and population—all these factors are now giving rise to greater caution as to the number of atomic power plants that will be operating ten years from now.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, this branch,

as well as the electro-nuclear installation branch, will remain an important expanding sector.

From the geographic standpoint, the oil-exporting countries will continue to experience better than average economic growth rates for several years, thanks to the financial resources they have already accumulated. The export of capital goods to these countries will thus also increase more than proportionally with respect to world trade as a whole. But once the first series of factories is constructed, they will threaten to eliminate jobs in the countries that export machine tools if the slowdown in economic growth and the perturbations of world trade continue as predicted. Britain hopes for a turnaround in its balance of payments as a result of North Sea oil. Japan and West Germany are continuing to expand their direct capital exports abroad. The penetration of the countries of the Pacific and of Latin America by Japanese capital is especially spectacular. Between April 1973 and March 1975 Japanese investments were authorized in the following amounts: \$685 million in Brazil, \$360 million in Peru, \$272 million in Bermuda, \$218 million in Australia, \$174 million in the Middle East, and \$165 million in Canada. This is in addition to the nearly \$2,000 million of investments in the traditional markets of East Asia and the \$1,300 million in investments in the United States. (*Financial Times*, November 12, 1975.)

On the whole, all the characteristics of a "long wave of reduced growth," and even of predominant stagnation, are progressively taking shape. Because of the strength of the working class, this implies a determined struggle for the modification of the rate of surplus-value, the only means capital commands to definitively reverse the long-term tendency of the rate of profit to decline, given the irreversible character of semiautomation and automation (that is, given the considerable rise of the organic composition of capital). Thus, all proportions guarded, the "economic atmosphere" is coming close to the atmosphere that prevailed at the beginning of the 1920s. The end of this long cycle of intense class struggle will be either the victory of the socialist revolution or real catastrophes for the human race, as was the case a half century ago: bloody dictatorships and murderous wars.

12. See the study published in the November 17, 1975, *Business Week*.

December 10, 1975

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# AROUND THE WORLD



## Rightist Criminals Freed in Portugal

The ruling Council of the Revolution ordered the release of two prominent figures in the old Salazarist dictatorship January 21. Gen. Kaulza Oliveira de Arriaga, former chief of the Portuguese air force and military commander of Mozambique, and César Moreira Baptista, former minister of the interior and minister of information, were both set free.

Since the November 25 coup attempt the regime has released 227 agents of the old secret police. High-ranking Salazarists released in the same period include Adm. Henrique Dos Santos Tenreiro, the head of the old paramilitary Portuguese Legion, a fascist-style militia formed by Salazar; Luis Manuel Cordovil, another leader of the legion; Joaquim Silva Cunha, former minister of defense; two former interior ministers, Gen. Arnaldo Schultz and Alfredo Dos Santos Junior; and Capt. Maltés Soares, a police commander.

## Businesses Bemoan Sagging Image

Big business in the United States is trying to give itself a face-lift, according to

a study released January 18 by the Conference Board, a private group devoted to preparing such reports for American corporations.

The board's study of 368 companies concluded that "declining public confidence in business" is "the major external problem facing corporate management." Evidently most Americans just do not understand that bribery, oil spills, layoffs, and speedup are all part and parcel of defending "their" free enterprise system.

In fact, survival of the free enterprise system is another of the grave problems cited by many corporation heads, according to the Conference Board survey. Some others? "Government overregulation" and "the growing demands of special interest groups." Translated from corporate boardroom talk, that must mean environmental protection legislation, consumer protection laws, affirmative-action hiring programs, and other such "restrictions" on "economic freedom."

To combat this growing unpopularity, the study says, many companies are putting together departments to polish up their images.

## Tito Cracks Down on Dissenters

The Tito regime in Yugoslavia has carried its attack on dissenters one step further by opening a criminal case against Srdja Popovic, a lawyer well known for taking political cases. Popovic was defense counsel for eight Marxist professors at Belgrade University who were fired for their political views in January 1975. He also defended the dissident magazine *Praxis*, which was forced to stop publication last year.

The charges against Popovic stem from his 1974 defense of Dragoljub Ignjatovic, a Yugoslav writer and poet. Ignjatovic was accused of spreading hostile propaganda in a speech he gave at a meeting of the Serbian Association of Philosophers. He was found guilty and sentenced to three and a half years imprisonment, but was released after twenty days following protests from the International PEN Club, a writers and editors association.

In summing up at the trial, Popovic said that "some of the facts given by Mr. Ignjatovic in his speech are well known and true." For this he has been accused of

"spreading false information" and faces possible disbarment and a one-year jail term.

The Yugoslav magazine *Komunist* has clearly stated the ruling Stalinist party's contempt for "anarcho-liberal prattle about the so-called benefits of bourgeois freedoms." But the regime is in a vulnerable position because it is hosting the International Congress of Attorneys-at-Law in Zagreb in 1977. If Popovic's case gets enough publicity, the regime could be forced to backtrack, as it did in Ignjatovic's case.

## Palestinian Protest on West Bank

To prevent a repetition of the Palestinian demonstrations that swept the occupied West Bank when Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yassir Arafat addressed the United Nations in November 1974, Israeli military patrols in most major West Bank towns were bolstered during the recent UN Security Council debate on Palestine.

"Although they stayed off the streets, West Bank residents were outspoken in their support of the Palestine Liberation Organization and clearly pleased by its participation in the debate," *New York Times* correspondent Terence Smith reported in a January 13 dispatch from Jerusalem.

At Bir Zeit College, near Ramallah, Arab students went on strike in support of the PLO. The college faculty backed the students and issued a statement demanding the release of West Bank Arabs imprisoned without being charged or tried. They cited the example of Taiseer Arouri, a physics instructor at Bir Zeit who was arrested in April 1974.

"Although no charges have been filed against him," Smith reported, "Mr. Arouri has spent more than 20 months in the Ramallah prison."

## Torture in Israel

Additional verification of the frequent use of torture by Israeli authorities has appeared in a report by Eric Silver in the January 11 issue of the *London Observer*. Silver cited the case of Muhammad Suleiman Atwan, an East Jerusalem tailor in his



Ed Fisher/New York Times

mid-sixties who spent ten days in the hospital shortly after a month's detention in May 1974.

"I have seen a medical report signed by a resident Arab doctor," Silver said, "which indicates that Atwan was suffering from abdominal pains, severe headaches and visual problems, vomiting and oozing of blood from the scrotum. In an interview, Atwan alleged that he had been punched, kicked and given electric shocks."

In the end, no charges were brought against Atwan and he was released.

Silver also interviewed Shawki Khatib in Ramallah prison on the occupied West Bank. Khatib, a thirty-three-year-old Palestinian, is serving an eight-year sentence for his alleged membership in a spy and sabotage ring. The only evidence brought against him in his trial in early 1973 was a confession that Khatib insists was extracted through beatings and electric-shock torture.

Khatib repeated his charges to Silver, and said that in December 1975 he was taken to the Jalameh interrogation center for a week. "Khatib told me that the Shin Beth [Israeli secret police] tried to persuade him to retract his torture allegations, which had been published in London. Khatib refused, though he was threatened with a longer sentence and enticed with the prospect of a remission."

### 'Politics of Starvation'

Washington, along with other governments and international agencies, helped cover up the death by starvation and disease of at least 100,000 Ethiopians.

This was the conclusion of a study on the Ethiopian drought of 1973-74 prepared for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. That the late Emperor Haile Selassie consciously concealed the true extent of the drought has been generally accepted for quite a while. But the Carnegie study, entitled "The Politics of Starvation," documented for the first time the degree of foreign involvement in this cover-up.

"The international community remained silent," the report charges. "All kept quiet as the Selassie Government requested. One authoritative voice might have saved thousands, their silence condemned tens of thousands."

Implicated in this face-saving effort on behalf of the late emperor are the U.S. State Department, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), officials of several African states, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the World Health Organization (WHO). According to the study, WHO agreed not to report a cholera epidemic in the famine areas because Selassie feared that such publicity would endanger revenues from tourism and

might lead to a quarantine of Ethiopian exports.

A U.S. State Department report released January 13 said that the Selassie regime squandered millions of dollars of famine relief aid that it did receive. In spite of the mass starvation, the report said, large quantities of relief supplies were resold on the world market to swell Selassie's foreign-exchange reserves.

### Slump Puts Surgery Under the Knife

The American Hospital Association announced January 14 that hospital admissions in the United States fell by 0.4 percent in the first nine months of 1975—the first drop in fifteen years.

The hospital association said the decline was probably linked to current jobless levels, leading many persons who have neither an income nor health insurance to postpone elective surgery.

### Morgentaler Wins Retrial

Québec physician Dr. Henry Morgentaler was released from prison without bail January 26, pending a retrial on charges of performing an abortion. Morgentaler, an opponent of Canada's restrictive abortion laws, admits that he has performed 5,000 abortions.

The Montréal physician had previously been acquitted in jury trials on two separate abortion charges. But last year the Canadian Supreme Court upheld by a 6-to-3 ruling a reversal by the Québec Court of Appeal of the first acquittal. As a result of this unprecedented overturn of a jury verdict, Morgentaler was sentenced to eighteen months in prison, of which he has now served ten.

On January 20 the Québec Court of Appeal upheld Morgentaler's acquittal in the second abortion trial, spurring Canadian Justice Minister Ronald Basford two days later to order a retrial on the original charge.

### U.S. 'Buys' Florida

After 140 years, the U.S. government has agreed to pay for land taken from the Seminole tribe of Florida. Covering nearly the entire state, the land totals thirty-two million acres. The Florida Seminole tribe has accepted a government offer of \$16 million, amounting to fifty cents an acre.

"We actually think it's too little, but we don't want to fight for another 25 years to get a little more," one tribal representative explained.

The Florida Seminoles were never defeated by the U.S. Army in its long and bitter struggle against them. They retreated into the swamps, and finally signed a peace treaty in 1934.



James Stevenson/New York Times

"Frankly, we're looking for a well-run police state with good food, lots of sun, a nice beach and plenty of Americans."

### Students Protest in Sri Lanka

The entire undergraduate student body at Sri Lanka's (Ceylon's) Peradeniya campus—1,000 in all—boycotted their final examinations January 12. They were protesting the suspension of twelve students and the arrest of three others.

"Already riot squads have been posted in the campus to maintain law and order," reported the January 29 issue of *Ceylon News*, a Colombo weekly.

The arrests and suspensions followed a January 8 incident in which nearly 100 students confronted the college president and demanded that university marshals stop entering the women's residence hall and harassing the students.

### New Zealand Prime Minister Slashes Immigration Quotas

New Zealand's National party government, elected last November in a victory over the Labour party, has announced new and harsh steps to close the island's doors to immigrants. In mid-December Prime Minister Robert Muldoon cut off immigration entirely for two weeks, later announcing his aim to trim entries to 5,000 a year.

Especially hard hit will be unskilled and semiskilled workers, whom Muldoon is most eager to bar. Special negotiations will be held with surrounding Pacific island governments to restrict the influx of nonwhite immigrants. Another target of Muldoon's chauvinist campaign are unskilled British workers. Until recently, British immigrants have settled in New Zealand at a rate of about 800 a month.

# BOOKS

## Writings of Leon Trotsky (1930)

Reviewed by Tim Wohlforth



The year 1930 was particularly rich in Trotsky's development of theory and in his efforts to prepare his supporters for the battles ahead. It was Trotsky's second year in exile in Prinkipo, Turkey.

Trotsky's isolation from the main political centers of the world was only physical. Through his contacts with the International Left Opposition, strengthened during the preceding year, he began to grapple with the problems of the revolutionary movement the world over. This volume is filled with articles on Italy, Germany, China, France, and of course his continuing in-depth assessments of developments within the USSR.

In 1929 Trotsky was preoccupied with defining the principled positions of the Left Opposition, developed in the preceding five-year struggle within the USSR against Stalin, defending these positions against ultraleft and opportunist circles in and around the Left Opposition. He spent time, too, in taking the first important steps in developing Opposition organizations in various countries.

In 1930 this work continued, but Trotsky was able to devote more of his writings to the development of perspectives, to strategy and tactics, and to preparation of the vanguard of the working class for the revolutionary tasks he knew lay ahead. Trotsky's understanding was rooted in the experiences of the early Bolshevik movement, the great lessons of the Russian revolution, and the development of these lessons during the first five years of the Communist International. We find in this volume the beginnings of an approach that would flower into the strategy of the united front which he defended so correctly against Stalin during the rise of fascism in Germany, and which he later developed into the Transitional Program of the Fourth International in 1938.

Three basic themes run through this volume: Trotsky's proposals to the Communist International on world unemployment, his approach to democratic demands in fascist Italy and in China under the Kuomintang military dictatorship, and his polemic against Stalin's ultraleftist "third period" course.

The Great Depression, which began with

the American stock-market crash in 1929, had by 1930 led to wide-scale unemployment throughout the world. For Trotsky this was not simply a matter for analysis and comment, or for isolated agitation designed to build one's own group. Beginning as he always did from the objective conditions the working class faced, Trotsky proceeded to develop a *policy* that would

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*Writings of Leon Trotsky (1930)*. Edited by George Breitman and Sarah Lovell. New York: Pathfinder Press, Inc., 1975. 444 pp. \$13, cloth; \$3.95, paperback.

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advance the working class as a whole and undercut the schemes of the capitalists, who sought to use unemployment to dampen the strike action of the unions and to pit workers of one nation against those of another.

At a time when he was fighting inside the Comintern, seeking to free it from the grip of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Trotsky made a proposal based on an understanding of the international character of the struggle of the working class and the incorrectness of trying to construct socialism isolated in a single country. The Soviet Union, more advanced in its social structure than the capitalist countries but far behind in its economic development because of the backwardness inherited from Russia's past, desperately needed trade with the West and the products of these more advanced industrial economies. At the same time, these capitalist countries were plagued by plant closings, excess capacity, and rising unemployment.

In view of this situation, Trotsky urged a campaign for increased trade with the USSR, linking up the interests of unemployed workers in the capitalist countries with the interests of the workers state. On such a basis he felt that the Communist parties could seek united fronts with the Social Democratic parties for a common battle against unemployment. This could only expose these parties in a concrete struggle and strengthen the influence of the Communists among the masses.

Trotsky's writings on Italy and China are

also important illustrations of his appreciation of the role played by democratic demands in the struggle of the working class for socialism.

Trotsky's writings on Italy are particularly interesting. Here he deals with the role democratic demands would play during a mass upsurge following the collapse of the Italian fascist regime, a situation with obvious parallels to the recent events in Portugal. Writing to leading elements in the Italian Communist party who were shortly to break with Stalinism and support Trotsky, he stated:

"But does this mean that we communists reject in advance all democratic slogans, all transitional or preparatory slogans, limiting ourselves strictly to the *proletarian dictatorship*? That would be a display of sterile, doctrinaire sectarianism. We do not believe for one moment that a single revolutionary leap suffices to cross what separates the fascist regime from the proletarian dictatorship. In no way do we deny a transitional period with its transitional demands, including democratic demands. . . . If the revolutionary crisis were to break out, for example, in the course of the next months . . . the masses of toilers, workers as well as peasants, would certainly follow up their economic demands with democratic slogans (such as freedom of assembly, of press, of trade-union organization, democratic representation in parliament and in the municipalities). Does this mean that the Communist Party should reject these demands? On the contrary. It will have to invest them with the most audacious and resolute character possible. For the proletarian dictatorship cannot be *imposed* upon the popular masses. It can be realized only by carrying on a battle—a battle in full—for all the transitional demands, requirements, and needs of the masses, and at the head of the masses.

"It should be recalled here that Bolshevism by no means came to power under the abstract slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat. We fought for the Constituent Assembly much more boldly than all the other parties." (Pages 224-25.)

Trotsky's writings in this volume to his new followers in China amplify the same point. Here he fought for an understanding



of the critical importance of the struggle for a constituent assembly, even pointing out that if such an assembly had been held in Russia earlier, before the workers insurrection in October, the Bolsheviks would have fully participated in it. Such an experience, in Trotsky's opinion, would have hastened the workers revolution as it educated workers in "the school of revolutionary parliamentarism." Even if it did not hasten the second revolution, it would, he felt, have made the tasks after it easier. (See "The Slogan of a National Assembly in China," pages 164-67.)

Trotsky's principled approach to the problems of revolutionary development came into sharpest collision with the course of Stalin. From 1923 until 1928 Stalin pursued a policy of almost no industrialization, little collectivization of agriculture, and conciliation with the wealthy peasants at home, combined with conciliation with capitalism abroad. The result was almost the complete collapse of the USSR's economy while the proletariat suffered crushing defeats internationally. Then suddenly Stalin veered in the opposite direction. Still clinging to his false theory of building socialism in one country, Stalin went over to a feverish, unrealistic pace of industrialization and collectivization within the USSR combined with a sectarian and ultraleftist course internationally. Stalin's policy abroad was designed as a cover for his domestic policies and helped isolate the Communist parties as he tightened his bureaucratic control over these parties.

Stalin's ideological cover for this course was his theory of the "third period." This "third period," which he saw as beginning with the defeat of the revolution in China, was to be the final period of the onslaught on capitalism worldwide. He sought to pass off a defeat, for which he was responsible, as the opening of the final battle. Abstract demagoguery about immediate revolution, imminent war, general strikes, soviets, replaced the policies of Bolshevism aimed at winning over the mass of workers from their reformist leaders and preparing them for revolutionary struggle.

On the level of theory, Stalin's concept of the "third period" does not warrant serious attention. Without regard to the conjunctural situation, Stalin substituted the *general revolutionary character of our whole epoch* for a concrete stage in the development of the workers struggle, disregarding its special problems and tasks or reading them utterly wrong.

Trotsky assessed Stalin's international policy in a pamphlet entitled "The 'Third Period' of the Comintern's Errors" (page 27), which should become must reading for all young revolutionists today. Several key points of Trotsky's argumentation are worth summarizing:

The Comintern claimed that the masses

were becoming radicalized. Each strike statistic was featured as proof that the masses were now more radicalized than they had ever been. The radicalization was seen as a simple quantitative matter, something growing ever greater, and—as the crisis developed—ever deeper. "The radicalization of the masses is described as a continuous process: today the masses are more revolutionary than they were yesterday, and tomorrow will be more revolutionary than today. Such a mechanical idea does not correspond to the real process of development of the proletariat or of capitalist society as a whole." (Page 27.)

Trotsky explained that cyclical ups and downs are part of the very nature of the capitalist organism. A *general* period of decline and decay no more signifies the cessation of these cyclical ups and downs than does growing old signify the cessation of a person's heartbeat. These pulsations of the capitalist system affect the consciousness and activity of the masses. In fact, the general nature of the period is expressed concretely through these pulsations and their effect on the lives of workers. As we know, in our general period these cyclical fluctuations are distinguished from those in an earlier period by a growing irregularity in the fluctuations, the tendency toward deeper downturns and weaker rises.

However, we are still only at the threshold of understanding the process by which the masses become radicalized and how we can develop tactics aimed at achieving revolutionary leadership of the masses. Revolution is not directly and mechanically linked to conjunctural ups and downs any more than it is touched off by the general character of the epoch. As Trotsky writes: "The inevitability of revolution flows just as little from the periodicity of crisis as the inevitability of death from a rhythmic pulse." (Page 36.) And further on: "At the same time it must not be forgotten that wars and revolutions in our epoch result not from conjunctural crises but from the contradictions between the development of the productive forces on the one hand and the national boundaries of the bourgeois state on the other, carried to their ultimate conclusion." (Pages 40-41.)

We can say that, in general, conjunctural downturns tend to discourage strike activity and that strike activity that does take place assumes a defensive character. Revolutionists fighting in the unions under such conditions must recognize this and develop tactics in line with the defensive position of the class. Conjunctural upturns, on the other hand, encourage strike activity, which takes on a more offensive character. At the same time, such class offensives are not necessarily revolutionary, because the same economic forces that make possible small economic gains encourage illusions in purely trade-union nonpolitical activity.

What radicalizes the masses the most and creates conditions for the development of revolutionary political consciousness is precisely the *fluctuations* in the conjunctural situation under general conditions of capitalist decline. This happens *only* if the revolutionary party is capable of developing its *strategy concretely* in the form of *tactics* suited to each stage of economic political and social development.

We can make this critical point clearer if we bring in a specific example—the rise of the CIO in the 1930s. The CIO did not arise out of the conjunctural downturn. The great organizing drive and sit-down movement took place in relation to a mild conjunctural upturn, but an upturn during which firings, layoffs, and insecurity continued to plague the working class.

Trotsky sums up his approach this way: "If our strategic line is determined in the *final analysis* by the inevitability of the growth of contradictions and the revolutionary radicalization of the masses, then our tactics, which serve this strategy, proceed from the realistic evaluation of each period, each stage, each moment, which may be characterized by a temporary softening of contradictions, a rightward turn of the masses, a change in the relation of forces in favor of the bourgeoisie, etc. If the masses were to turn leftward uninterruptedly, any fool could lead them." (Page 55.)

This alone should make it clear why the working class needs a conscious Marxist leadership. Marxism has nothing in common with sloganeering, dogmas, schemas, ultimatums, and the like. It requires a concrete study of political economy, of historical development, of all, all, the wealth of empirical data that can be gathered, and, especially and above all, continuous contact with the masses to learn what they think, how they change. This is why Marxism is *materialist*, beginning always from the material world, and *dialectical*, seeing everything in its development, in its continuous, contradictory, and often rapid changes.

Ultraleftism remains, of course, very much with us. However, it is important to distinguish between the ultraleftism of Stalin's "third period" course and the development today of what appears on the surface to be similar trends among youth in particular. Stalin's ultraleftism corresponded with the passing political needs of a privileged bureaucracy that had developed a stranglehold on the workers state. Because it was only intended to meet particular political problems facing the bureaucratic ruling caste at the time, it was later discarded as abruptly as it had been adopted. Since 1933 the Stalinists have never fully reverted to such a position. Instead, they have become more brazen in their collaboration with the world bourgeoisie.

But they can, in face of certain tactical needs, dredge up the old ultraleftist garbage. We have seen this in Portugal, where the Communist party has pursued a consistent policy of collaboration with the bourgeois MFA or a section of it. At times it has even resorted to the old formulas of "social fascism" against the Socialist party when this was useful to cover and defend its obeisance to the Armed Forces Movement.

Today, precisely because we are entering a new period of class struggle with revolutionary opportunities ahead in a number of countries, the problem of ultraleftism arises primarily in association with the radicalization of the youth. This ultraleftism is now akin to the trends Lenin and Trotsky had to fight within the ranks of the early Comintern. One of the difficulties is that many fail to arm themselves with the experiences of the past so that they can grasp the method of Lenin and Trotsky, how they approached strategic and tactical questions. Some young revolutionists tend to substitute their own feelings and energies for those of the majority of the working class, which develops at a different pace, shaped by its whole history and experience.

This is one of the reasons why this series of books assembling a large quantity of Trotsky's writings is of such timeliness. Trotsky, like Lenin, always began from an analysis and understanding of the objective economic conditions affecting the class struggle. He then worked out a strategy to relate the socialist goal to the current struggles of the working class. This strategy was expressed through concrete tactics that permitted active participation in the day-to-day struggles of the masses, always from the viewpoint of the development of the working class as a whole, and the construction of a revolutionary mass party.

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## An Eyewitness Account

### The Massacre in Beirut's Quarantina Ghetto

Two reporters from the London *Sunday Times*, Martin Meredith and Donald McCullin, were eyewitnesses to the massacre carried out by right-wing Phalangists in Beirut's Quarantina slum area January 19 and 20. The area was described by Meredith in the January 25 *Sunday Times* as "a Muslim ghetto of tin hovels, crumbling apartment blocks and narrow dirt alleyways crammed between factories and warehouses. . . ."

"To the Christian community in the Beirut suburbs, Quarantina was a fertile ground for radical politics and for crime. What made it more objectionable for them was that the land belonged to the Maronite Church, the largest, most conservative Christian order in Lebanon."

Situated beside the Beirut River, Quarantina was within range of the two bridges linking the Christian suburbs of the capital with the main Christian territory to the north. "To the 5,000 people who lived there—a mixture of Armenians, Kurds, Syrians, Palestinians but mainly Muslim Shi'ites, already refugees from Israeli raids in southern Lebanon—Quarantina was the only home they had. But there was bitterness and despair about their fate and, not surprisingly, Quarantina was a stronghold of left-wing movements."

The Phalangists moved to eliminate Quarantina. Donald McCullin described what he saw on January 19: "The first killing I saw I took for a random event. I was running through the alleys with the Phalange forward line. Two men came out of a house with their women and children.

"The women and kids were driven away. I ran after them to photograph, and as I came back I saw the two men falling. They had been shot at point-blank range. One man shot them, with an M-16 rifle. He told me that if I took pictures, he would kill me too, and he pulled a mask over his face."

McCullin witnessed the shooting of another man, "middle-aged, obviously a civilian." Again, the executioner threatened anyone taking pictures with death. "As he spoke, I saw a woman lying face-down in the street beside a dead, middle-aged man. I took them to be husband and wife—they were close together, and had a few possessions scattered around them. Someone had set the woman's clothes on fire. I began to assume that this was part of a pattern."

Meredith said that "there was a mass surrender of women, children and some men who had been sheltering near the municipal garage. In groups of about 50, the refugees—wailing, screaming, waving

white rags tied to sticks—were herded out of a muddy alleyway. In all there were about 500. The men, numbering about 30, were slapped, kicked and lined up against a wall to be searched for weapons."

Meredith said that they saw some of the same women a few days later, but the men were not so lucky. The next day, the two reporters saw evidence that the earlier killings had been only the beginning.

"As soon as we got into the area," McCullin said, "we saw bodies everywhere. Not only men had been massacred, but women as well—though no children so far as I saw. There were bodies hanging half-out of windows, or in the middle of the street. There was a man lying beside his dog, who had been shot with him. . . ."

"As we went on . . . we got into some alleyways where it was difficult to avoid dead bodies. The serious killing must have started on Monday night, after the press left the ghetto area."

The two reporters went on to the area of the municipal garage where they had seen the mass surrender the day before. According to Meredith, "near the municipal garage, dozens more bodies lay in the alleyways."

They saw some more prisoners taken and murdered that day. Later, "On the other side of Beirut, the women and children released by the Phalangists streamed into the headquarters of a Nasserite group, wailing and moaning. Most were taken to schools, but some went to abandoned beach houses.

"At a local Phalangist headquarters in eastern Beirut, a senior official explained the future of Quarantina; 'You see,' he said, 'the land is our land. It belongs to us. We shall have to rebuild it. It would be nice to use it for sporting facilities.'"

### Israelis Steal More Arab Land

Under the guise of setting up a work camp in a former Jordanian army post, the Israeli government has allowed about 100 right-wing Jews to establish a new settlement on the occupied West Bank.

When *Los Angeles Times* correspondent William J. Drummond visited the site of the settlement, about ten miles north of Ramallah, he was told, "This land is mine," by settlement leader Era Rapaport, a native of Brooklyn, New York. (*Los Angeles Times*, January 25.)

## The Split in the Liga Socialista

By Joseph Hansen

A deepgoing split has occurred in the Liga Socialista, one of the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International in Mexico,<sup>1</sup> the ramifications of which go beyond that country.

The split came in the aftermath of the Second Congress of the Liga Socialista, which was held December 19-22, 1975. The immediate cause was a series of measures taken by the Militant Tendency (Tendencia Militante), which won a formal majority against the Bolshevik Leninist Faction (Fracción Bolchevique Leninista). The FBL included most of the founding leaders of the Liga Socialista.

The leaders of both the Militant Tendency and the Bolshevik Leninist Faction belonged to the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, an international current holding minority positions within the Fourth International on various issues. The split in the Liga Socialista thus reflected a split in the LTF, the extent of which remains unclear as of the moment.

The leadership of the LTF has not yet taken a stand on the split but is expected to do so shortly.

The division within the Liga Socialista began in a sharp way at the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee of the organization, which took place September 14-15, 1975. At the time there was apparently unanimous agreement on all major political issues both domestically and international-ly.

A dispute flared over the way the majority of the Political Committee had handled what might have been a police provocation; that is, material planted to suggest that one of the leaders of the Liga Socialista, Comrade Ricardo, had associations with the police. Instead of at once alerting the Political Committee or the Control Commission as a whole concerning the matter, the two leaders who had run across the material made the mistake of first consulting with individual members of the Political Committee and Control Commission as how best to handle the case. One of the persons with whom they consulted spread the rumor that Ricardo was being deliberately slandered.

At the plenum, Ricardo made much of the error. In fact, together with several backers

and the support of a representative of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers party), he succeeded in creating such an emotional atmosphere as to preclude rational consideration of the problem. On this basis, Ricardo won a majority of votes.

The Ricardo group, which later became the Militant Tendency, also raised some complaints concerning a shift the Liga Socialista had made earlier in the year to a branch structure.

The majority of the former leadership, Comrades Cristina, Jaime, Efraim, and Horacio, agreed that an error had been made in the way the possible police provocation had been handled. As for the organizational structure of the party, admittedly errors had been made that needed to be corrected. Steps had already been taken in this direction.

Nevertheless, the Ricardo group exercised the majority it had received to initiate a course aimed at consolidating its grip at the expense of the minority. For instance, it did not seek to rectify the error made by the comrades in handling the possible police provocation—a quiet, thorough investigation was called for to ascertain the facts—but utilized the error to pillory the former leadership. Thus the Ricardo group made this one of their main themes in the period leading up to the December congress.

At the plenum, the Central Committee convoked the Second Congress, which had been one of the points unanimously placed on the agenda.

In addition, the Ricardo group changed the organizational structure of the party at once, redistributing the members in "fronts," resembling cells. The group changed the composition of the incoming Political Committee to assure itself a majority. And it ousted the former organization secretary, Comrade Horacio, giving the post to Ricardo.

These measures, it must be emphasized, were taken in the absence of any clear political differences and even the absence of any document putting forth the organizational views of the Ricardo group.

In the three months from September to December, the new majority in the Political Committee took further organizational steps. For example, the ranks were denied their right to elect local leaderships. The

Political Committee assumed the prerogative of changing local leaderships as it saw fit.

Another example is similarly instructive. Because of illness, Cristina Rivas was not able to keep up with her duties as editor of *El Socialista* for six weeks. She was dismissed from her post on the grounds that she had not *officially* advised the majority of the Political Committee that she was ill.

In opposition to these and various other innovations, the comrades in the minority formed the Bolshevik Leninist Tendency on November 15. They presented as the principled basis for forming the tendency two documents, "For Internal Democracy in the Liga Socialista" and "Tasks and Perspectives." In addition they stood on the general line presented by *El Socialista* on the Portuguese revolution up to that point. That line, representing the unanimous opinion of the leadership of the Liga Socialista, had been challenged orally at an October 23 meeting of the Political Committee by Comrade Greco of the Argentine PST.

One of the first actions of the Bolshevik Leninist Tendency was to request postponement of the congress long enough to make possible the preparation, circulation, and discussion of documents on the differences that had arisen. This was rejected by the majority of the Political Committee.

The election of delegates to the congress thus occurred in great confusion and, except in Mexico City, in the absence of the necessary documents.

### Congress Astonishes Observers

The congress itself was held in such disarray as to astonish observers from other countries as well as representatives of other tendencies in Mexico who had been invited to attend.

In place of a discussion of political issues, they were treated to heated diatribes about deliberate circulation of slanderous rumors of "association with the police." They were regaled with organizational accusations, the validity of which no one could determine unless they were privy to the internal situation in the Liga Socialista. They witnessed the passage of measures so bureaucratic in nature as to repel anyone with an understanding of the principles of Trotskyism.

The one political resolution before the congress, which had been drawn up by the outgoing Political Committee for consideration by the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee and which had been adopted unanimously by that body, was accompanied by a report by Comrade Nava of the Militant Tendency that went counter to the line of the resolution.

A decision was made to suspend all the members of the party for a month. Each former member was to go through a period

1. The other sympathizing organization is the Grupo Comunista Internacionalista (GCI—International Communist Group).

of testing to determine who could be readmitted.<sup>2</sup>

A resolution was adopted denying local bodies the right to elect their own leaderships. The Political Committee was empowered to decide on exceptions to this rule.

A resolution was adopted to permit members of the party to dissent from directives sent down from the top but denying them the right to discuss them unless, in the opinion of the top leaders, the directives involved a turn in the strategy of the party.

The Bolshevik Leninist Tendency was characterized as "petty-bourgeois" and requiring "reeducation" inside the factories.

The statutes were changed so as to give almost total power to the Political Committee and Central Committee. Clauses granting minority rights in the party were stricken out.

The four central leaders of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction were denied places on the Central Committee for "lack of revolutionary morality" (a reference to their error in handling the Ricardo case). In addition, they and two members of the outgoing Control Commission who belonged to the Bolshevik Leninist Faction were denied any posts of responsibility in the organization for "moral reasons."

Relations with the Socialist Workers party in the United States were broken off.<sup>3</sup>

A discussion on the Portuguese revolution, scheduled for the congress by the Sixth Plenum of the Central Committee, was removed from the agenda by the majority of the Political Committee on the eve of the congress. In place of it, five oral reports were scheduled, one by the majority of the Political Committee, one by the Bolshevik Leninist Faction, one by the Internationalist Communist Group (GCI), one by a representative of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, and one by a representative of the PST of Argentina. No discussion was held, no summaries were made, and above all no vote was taken.

2. The Bolshevik Leninist Tendency announced at the congress that in view of this purge of the membership it was changing its structure to that of a faction.

3. In a public report giving their version of the congress, the Ricardo group said the following on this:

"... it is an affair that we will not ventilate publicly, since it is an internal problem that can only be discussed within the Fourth International."

"During a recent visit to Mexico, I was told that the Ricardo group had alleged that "a member" of the Socialist Workers party was involved in "weaving" the suspicion concerning police penetration of the Liga Socialista. Up to the present, the Political Committee of the SWP has not received any communication whatsoever on this question or the group's reasons for breaking off relations.

At the congress, as well as during the period leading up to it, two representatives of the leadership of the PST, Comrades Greco and Eduardo, played a strong role in advising and backing the Ricardo group.

At the Central Committee meeting following the congress, the Bolshevik Leninist Faction was denied the right to choose its own representatives on the new Political Committee that was elected.

At the first meeting of the new Political Committee, which was attended by some of the members of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction, the majority proposed that the taking of minutes be discontinued, since they were not necessary, but conceded to the protests and agreed to continue taking them, with one copy for Mexico City and a carbon copy for each "front" in the provinces.

The apparatus was reduced to an editor of the paper and an organization secretary, Ricardo, who was empowered to decide on the formation of new "fronts," any new posts, the naming and dropping of members of a possible secretariat, the distribution of members in the "fronts," and so on.

Members of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction were barred from participating in the functioning of the apparatus because of their "petty-bourgeois" character and the necessity to undergo "reeducation."

As to the right of the minority to state their positions if they differed from those of the majority of the Political Committee, this was held over for decision at a coming meeting of the Political Committee.

### **FBL Becomes Public Faction**

Upon assessing the bureaucratic actions taken by the Militant Tendency, the leaders of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction decided that they had no recourse, if they were to succeed in upholding the program and traditions of the Liga Socialista and the Fourth International, but to take their case to the Mexican workers. They therefore decided to become a public faction of the Liga Socialista.

Under the editorship of Cristina Rivas, they put out two issues of *El Socialista* (January 1 and January 16), continuing the previous line of the paper and including their account of the course of the Militant Tendency and why they could not accept the organizational decisions of the congress.

The Militant Tendency responded by publishing their own version of *El Socialista* (January 16-31) under the editorship of Augusto León. This issue is quite interesting because of what it shows about the political line behind the organizational methods of the Militant Tendency.

Before taking this up, a couple of smaller items should be noted.

The first one is an appeal to the "Comrades of the FBL," signed by "Alfonso Ríos (GCI, Organización simpatizante de la IV Internacional en México), Eduardo (PST, Organización simpatizante de la IV Internacional en Argentina), Sergio (ROJO, Periódico de Acción Comunista), and Julieta Gómez (Delegada Fraternal del GIM, Sección Alemana de la IV Internacional, al Congreso de la Liga Socialista)."<sup>4</sup>

The appeal accuses the members of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of having "precipitated a grave crisis in one of the two sympathizing organizations of the Fourth International" by taking their case to the public.

The argument is made that because of their attendance at the congress the Bolshevik Leninist Faction accepted its outcome. The proceedings were "fully democratic" and the FBL did not announce that it was splitting but agreed to remain in the organization as a faction.

Thus, contend the signers, the FBL represents a minority that has split. Therefore, "according to the decisions of the Tenth World Congress," it has "left the ranks" of the Fourth International.

"In addition, we exhort the leadership of the International and of its sections not to recognize you in any way because of the unprincipled course you followed in splitting after the Congress had accepted your decision to convert yourselves into a faction and after it had nominated the number of members you were entitled to in the Central Leadership."

The signers said that they had asked the Political Committee "to discuss with you the terms for your reentry and to be the most flexible possible under current conditions so as to quickly eliminate this rupture."

They closed by expressing the "firmest hope" that the unfortunate split could be healed in the shortest time possible by the FBL "returning" to the ranks of the Liga Socialista; "otherwise, you will be outside the ranks of the Fourth International."

Two observations ought to be made:

1. The Bolshevik Leninist Faction has not left the Liga Socialista or the Fourth International. Its purpose in becoming a public faction of the Liga Socialista was to better defend the program and tradition of the Liga Socialista and the Fourth International.

2. Even though no clear political differences emerged at the congress, and the majority was obtained strictly on organiza-

4. "Alfonso Ríos (GCI, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Mexico), Eduardo (PST, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Argentina), Sergio (Rojo, newspaper of Communist Action), Julieta Gómez (fraternal delegate of the GIM, German section of the Fourth International, to the congress of the Liga Socialista)."

tional issues that were greatly inflated, the signers of the appeal make clear their approval of the methods of the Militant Tendency, even referring to them as "fully democratic." But these methods represent a tradition utterly alien to the tradition of Trotskyism. They smack of the practices of the trade-union bureaucrats in Argentina or Mexico, if not worse.

In advising the Bolshevik Leninist Faction to go along with the new rules adopted by the Militant Tendency, the signers of the appeal stand in the position of the well-meaning priest who assures the victim that it will go much easier if he just relaxes and tries to cooperate as the executioner tightens the garrote.

The other item to be noted in the same issue of the version of *El Socialista* put out by the Militant Tendency is an article by Ricardo Ramos entitled "The Politics of Robbery" (*La Política del Atraco*). Ricardo accuses the Bolshevik Leninist Faction of having "appropriated our name (*Liga Socialista*) and our newspaper (*El Socialista*)."

Ricardo is correct in pointing to the confusion resulting from two newspapers having the same name (and the same format and typeface). It is to be hoped that this source of confusion can be eliminated as soon as possible by appropriate identification of the two periodicals.

As to the reasoning behind the decision of the leaders of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction, it is clear that they were not guilty of converting the organization into something quite different from the organization they helped found and build. They clearly represent the continuity of the original program of the *Liga Socialista* and the line followed by *El Socialista*.

As for the Militant Tendency, shouldn't its leaders feel proud about their role in creating a new organization based on changes representing a qualitative break with the "petty-bourgeois" past of the *Liga Socialista* and *El Socialista*? If not, what was the reason for their dramatic struggle for a majority and for a purge of the leadership and the membership? Why are they interested in hanging on to old names associated with the former leadership?

Ricardo also complains about the fact that in going public, the Bolshevik Leninist Faction took items from the headquarters, mainly several typewriters owned by members of the FBL. Perhaps they took more than they should have, such as newspaper clippings they had compiled, and copies of correspondence signed by the leaders purged by the Militant Tendency.

The fact is that Ricardo does not seem too much concerned about this, for his objection is to the way it was done—unilaterally and by surprise.

"It is clear," he says in his article, "that when a limit is reached and it is no longer

possible to act together and a split cannot be postponed, then it must be announced either at a Congress of the organization or at one of the leadership bodies.

"Then you proceed to distribute the property of the organization proportionately. In this way you can establish fraternal relations between the two organizations that have split and establish the possibility of a unification in the future."

Of course, to achieve an amicable split of the kind Ricardo talks about, the leadership must inspire a certain amount of confidence and goodwill. That was hardly the situation over which he presided.

In a large organization, the question is quite different; for party property is clearly recognizable and of such proportions as to reduce to insignificance the question of small items owned by individuals. In a tiny organization where elementary equipment is often loaned by individuals, splits can cut ragged lines when the property question raises its ugly head. It is best to try to avoid disputes over such issues.

#### Political Issues Begin to Emerge

The most important item in the January 16-31 issue of *El Socialista*—the one put out by the Militant Tendency—is a joint electoral platform signed on January 12 by the Central Committee of the Mexican Communist party, the Political Committee of the *Liga Socialista*, and the Secretariat of the National Committee of the Movement for Socialist Organization (MOS—*Movimiento de Organización Socialista*).

The joint platform represents the first leap of the Militant Tendency into the wheeling and dealing of Mexican petty-bourgeois electoral politics. The venture explains, in part, why the Militant Tendency went to such lengths to try to stifle the voice of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction and why it became so angry over the decision of the Bolshevik Leninist Faction to speak out publicly.

The ostensible purpose of the platform is to back Valentín Campa, the head of the Mexican Communist party, for the presidency in the elections set for next July 4. The catch is that under the antidemocratic election laws in Mexico, Campa is barred from running as a legal candidate, since it is virtually impossible for a small party to get on the ballot. His name can be written in, but the votes cast for an illegal candidate are not counted.

Thus the common electoral platform amounts to a publicity gimmick.

But there is much worse. It is impermissible for revolutionists to merge their banners with representatives of an alien class. It is particularly incumbent in an election staged by the bourgeoisie that revolutionists clearly distinguish themselves from all other tendencies. They participate in such elections only to advance their own cause,

the cause of revolutionary socialism. However, the PCM-MOS-LS electoral platform is a complete mishmash.

Still worse, the Mexican Stalinists and the petty-bourgeois MOS are presented as being just as revolutionary as the *Liga Socialista*. "The organizations that have united together to act in this electoral process," declares the platform, "do not hide their socialist objectives, nor their revolutionary method to achieve them. They consider it their duty to labor stubbornly to achieve them."

From that paragraph alone, one can surmise why the Mexican Stalinists favored adding the name of the Trotskyist *Liga Socialista* to the electoral platform. The worst problem facing the Mexican Stalinists is the contempt with which they are regarded by the workers for their decades of class collaborationism, sellouts, and betrayals. A left cover offered by the Trotskyists with their reputation for integrity is a windfall the Stalinists hardly expected.

And the Stalinists had to pay so little! They even managed to persuade the leaders of the Militant Tendency to include a phrase in the platform about the importance of supporting "the general positions relative to peaceful coexistence. . ." But "peaceful coexistence" is the Stalinist code word for class collaborationism.

The platform is a long one. It is filled with phrases dear to the politicians of the "Third World." It makes obeisance to Mexican nationalism. It dares to criticize the Echeverría government. It contains excellent democratic slogans such as the need to democratize education. It includes sentences that seem to have been borrowed from the Transitional Program, such as a demand for a sliding scale of wages.

From a political point of view it can be characterized as a blueprint for a "broad front" like the one worked up by the Stalinists in Uruguay behind the candidacy of General Seregni. It is an "incipient" or "embryonic" popular front that the Stalinist hope to spread on a national scale in anticipation of the appearance of a Mexican Seregni, Allende, or Perón, whom Campa, of course, would be the first to hail.

The Militant Tendency does not report what went on in its secret parleys with the Stalinists. It does not tell what the Stalinists may have conceded or what Ricardo felt he had to give away under their pressure in the sessions where the joint electoral platform was drawn up. It is to be hoped that these secrets will be made the property of the Mexican working class, or at least the membership of the *Liga Socialista* and the Fourth International.

As things now stand, the document was presented without a word about the process leading up to it, as if its mere coming into being spoke for itself.

It does speak for itself in a way. It marks the unveiling, or christening with champagne, of the political line that drove the Militant Tendency on its extraordinary organizational course to split the Liga Socialista. From that point of view the

publication of the platform is to be welcomed.

The political issues at the bottom of the split in the Liga Socialista are now beginning to emerge into the open where they can be objectively discussed and judged. □

## An Appeal by Pyotr and Zinaida Grigorenko

### The Case of Mustafa Dzhemilev

[Dissident Soviet communist Pyotr Grigorenko was confined for almost five years in a psychiatric prison-hospital for his activities in defense of the right of the Crimean Tatar people to return to their homeland, from which they were unjustly deported by Stalin. Grigorenko nearly died during his imprisonment, but the Kremlin's efforts to silence and if possible destroy him were countered by an international defense campaign. This effort was successful in winning his release in June 1974.

[The document printed below, written by Grigorenko and his wife, Zinaida, in defense of the imprisoned Crimean Tatar activist Mustafa Dzhemilev, shows that Grigorenko continues to defy the Stalinist repression and is attempting to mobilize against it, both within the USSR and abroad.

[The document was presented at a December 3, 1975, news conference in Moscow, organized by Grigorenko and Andrei Sakharov and attended by Dzhemilev's sister. Translation from the Russian is by Hilary Jaeger.]

\* \* \*

In the torture chambers of Omsk prison Mustafa Dzhemilev, a courageous fighter for the rights of the Crimean Tatar people, has been on a hunger strike for six months. He was forced to take this step because under Soviet conditions a hunger strike is the sole means for protesting against punishment for one's convictions and the fabrication of a deliberately false charge.

Such a long hunger strike is dangerous to the life of any person. For Mustafa the danger is aggravated by the fact that his body has been weakened by many years of prison and strict-regime camps. He has grown thin as a skeleton, his heartbeat is irregular, and he often loses consciousness.

His parents and our family requested that the prosecutor of the Russian SSR release Mustafa Dzhemilev on probation before trial. The answer, for all intents and purposes, was no . . . There was a formal reply about our request being kicked over to

the Omsk prosecutor's office, and its refusal.

This forces us to ask the world community to raise the voice of protest against the authorities' persistent endeavor to destroy an honorable and courageous man.

#### *Just who is Mustafa Dzhemilev?*

He is a person with an unusually tragic fate. When Mustafa was one-year old (March 18, 1944), he and his family and all of the Crimean Tatar people were accused of "betraying the homeland." They were pulled out of bed at night, thrown into a truck, and deported from the Crimea to Central Asia. His childhood and youth were spent on the reservations—in hunger and humiliation.

At nineteen, Mustafa succeeded, because of outstanding abilities, in enrolling in an institute, but not for long. For participation in the national movement of his people, he was expelled in his third year. And soon after this, in 1966, came arrest and a sentence—"for draft evasion"—a year and a half of camp.

Not even three years had passed after his release before he was arrested on the standard charge—"for slanderous fabrications, discrediting the Soviet social and state system"—and sentenced to three years of strict-regime camp. He served this term too.

Not a full year of freedom—and again arrest. This time "for evasion of appearance at military training sessions," i.e., in essence for the same charge as in 1966. Sentence—one year of strict-regime camp. Two days before his release, the standard charge was again raised—"slanderous fabrications." And again prison, investigation, starvation.

The authorities have declared Mustafa a dangerous man who, in the words of an Uzbek KGB [Soviet secret police] agent, "must always be held in prison, camp, or a special psychiatric hospital."

#### *But Dzhemilev is not a criminal!*

He is a true son of the long-suffering Crimean Tatar people and a fighter for the restoration of their trampled rights. We, his

relative and friends, know Mustafa as a gentle and sensitive person, sympathetic to the pain and suffering of others, a noble man with a broad range of interests, a talented historian and a social activist.

His learned study, *History of the Crimean Tatar People*, written in the short intervals between camp terms, is an outstanding work of scholarly and social significance. The Uzbek KGB conducted an all-out search to track down and confiscate all copies of this work and we do not know if even one copy remains in circulation.

Fortunately, the book *Six Days*, about the trial of Ilya Gabai and Mustafa Dzhemilev in 1970, is circulating in *Samizdat*. Mustafa defended himself without a lawyer. In his speech for the defense and in his final statement, based on a summary of the contents of the *History*, he gave a brilliant analysis of the historical past of his people and exposed the policy of genocide and judicial tyranny used against them.

#### *How was the case fabricated?*

Five months before the end of Dzhemilev's term of confinement (in February 1974), a representative of the Uzbek KGB came to the camp where he was being held. It is to this very man that we owe the dictum cited above: "Mustafa must not be freed." This was the basis on which the fabrication of the "case of M. Dzhemilev" began.

First came the search for false witnesses. One of them, V.A. Dvoryansky, told Mustafa about his first talk with the camp administration and a representative of the KGB. They offered Dvoryansky a number of privileges—transfer to a camp with a more pleasant climate, a shortening of his term—if he would give compromising material on M. Dzhemilev.

On the advice of Mustafa, Dvoryansky made handwritten notes of this conversation, signed them, and smuggled them out of the camp. At a previous press conference these notes were presented to correspondents.

Now, the charge in the indictment is based on the [later] testimony of Dvoryansky about the allegedly slanderous statements of Dzhemilev. We do not know what methods of "persuasion" the investigators used on him, but it is clear that a person who testifies to one thing in February and to the opposite a year and a half later is dishonest. And it is on the testimony of this dishonest man that the charge is constructed.

The official investigation alone lasted three months. It is hard for us to say how much time before this was spent fabricating the false charges. We know only the end result. Even in the criminal world they did not find anyone, except Dvoryansky, who was willing to earn personal privileges by slandering a fellow campmate.

The court was not able to accept the case and returned it for further examination. In Soviet courts, such things happen only when it is far too obvious that the case "is very thin." Usually this is a diplomatic proposal to the investigators that the case be dropped. But here, it is obvious, a very strong hand lies heavily on the investigators, who, holding the case for a month, return it to the court, essentially in the very same condition. This signifies that, in reality, proof of Mustafa's guilt was not presented to the court. It was clear to us even before this that he had committed no actual crimes. But they were not even able to collect any sort of persuasive falsified materials.

*For what then will he in fact be tried?*

Two decisive circumstances are bringing pressures to bear on the authorities that compel the court to deliver an unjust sentence.

A. *The new revival of the Crimean Tatar national movement.*

After the cruel blows carried out against this movement in 1968-69, its activity sharply declined. But recently a revival has begun. On the eve of the Twenty-fifth Congress of the CPSU, vain hopes were awakened that "Lenin's party will give back the national homeland." Again humble and reverent requests were written and signatures were collected.

However, now these letters do not arouse the same hopes they did before 1969. A new spontaneous protest against these letters has appeared, a rejection of humble pleas to those who remain silent but sanction the repression by the Central Committee of the CPSU. The ordinary masses, especially after the Sakharov hearings, are demanding from their leaders more resolute organizational activity and closer ties with the international community. Under these conditions the authorities are trying to intensify the repression, of which Mustafa is a victim.

B. *Many influential individuals harbor a personal hostility toward Mustafa.*

Mustafa has never compromised with organs of violence. Keeping within the bounds of legality, he has not tolerated lawlessness from the authorities either. And the authorities do not like this. They prefer unquestioning obedience.

Mustafa is a member of the Initiative Group<sup>1</sup> and a fighter for civil rights. But the authorities of Uzbekistan are the most spiteful to him of all because of his

behavior at the trial in 1970, where he together with Ilya Gabai<sup>2</sup> literally "drove the court to an impasse."

We do not know of another such legal proceeding where the charges collapsed so disgracefully. The failure of the authorities in this trial was so obvious and so embar-



PYOTR GRIGORENKO

rassing that anyone who was even slightly stung by this disgrace thirsted for vengeance. Gabai is no more. He is no longer alive. So the authorities pounce even more fiercely on Mustafa, who is still living.

*What can be expected from the trial?*

Can it be hoped that the trial will again reject the case or that it will be forced to deliver a verdict of "not guilty"? No! Neither will happen. Lenin wrote: "The court is an organ of the government . . . It is a sin for a Marxist to forget this." And we do not forget. On the contrary, we are sure that the present court, no matter what its composition might be, will obey the command of the authorities and convict Mustafa even if the court has no incriminating evidence. In order to save Dzhemilev, it is necessary to strive to make the authorities change their attitude toward this case, which is completely possible.

It is a fact that the investigation, with more zeal than sense, included in the indictments documents that could in no way be criminal. Among them was a document from Mustafa's personal papers, which is called "Declaration of the Principles of the Crimean Tatar National Movement" [CTNM]. Even from a purely legal

point of view the investigation had no right to include this document in a charge under Article 190 [of the criminal code], because this is not a document for action, but notations for himself, his opinions on a specific phenomenon that exists in reality.

But the main point is something else: The investigation will be bringing to trial the constitutional rights of a whole people. This becomes clear from the very first articles of the "Declaration." Article I says that the purpose of the CTNM is the struggle for a return to their national homeland—to the Crimea.

In the second article, it is shown that the CTNM acts in strict accordance with the laws of its country. If it is possible for a struggle by legal means against the tyranny of the authorities on the national question to be tried in criminal court, then our constitution, proclaiming the national equality of all peoples in the USSR and the right to self-determination, is a simple fiction. The authorities should either end the proceedings, which violate the legal constitutional rights of a national grouping, or acknowledge their own hypocrisy. And here false witnesses will not help.

*What is to be done?*

When defending Mustafa, one must not forget that a deliberately false charge is being fabricated not only against him as an individual, but also against the whole Crimean Tatar national movement. If they try Mustafa because he wrote the draft "Declaration of the Principles of the CTNM," then this will signify that this movement itself is on trial. It will be, in the expression of Lenin, "juridical murder on the sly" of a whole national movement.

Such has not yet happened. And God forbid it should happen. For this will be a blow not only to the Crimean Tatars. It will be a precedent for the open repression of any national movement. But when what is involved is not only an individual, but also the social movement that individual represents, the court, representing the authorities who oppose that movement, cannot be impartial.

Lenin claimed that in such a case a committee of inquiry must be appointed, with the participation of representatives of the movement, which stands for the accused. ". . . The responsibility of the investigators" of such a commission ". . . would be to arrange an open public examination of witnesses on these questions with speedy publication of the minutes of the examination" (Lenin Vol. 25, fourth edition, p. 192).

So we will demand the establishment of such a commission on Mustafa's case and we hope that the world community will support us. This does not mean, of course, that we will not strive for justice in the courtroom. On the contrary, we will orient

1. The Initiative Group for the Defense of Human Rights in the USSR. The formation of this group in May 1969 was spurred by Grigorenko's arrest. It addressed an appeal to the United Nations that month, but most of its members were soon arrested.

2. Ilya Gabai, a Crimean Tatar born in 1936, was a young rebel poet who became active in the dissident movement. He committed suicide October 20, 1973.

ourselves toward honest people who will not be afraid to take advantage of their constitutional rights, and they will demand an example in practice of a "court independent and subject only to the law."

But the court can only make a decision in the present case. It cannot clarify how and why Mustafa's whole life has been mutilated, why it has been put between the millstones of reservations, camps, and prisons, and cruel discrimination. The court will not be able to decide why an entire people is subjected to discrimination and genocide. Only a commission of investigation that includes representatives of the concerned nation can come to an understanding of this and at the same time

explain other extremely strange contradictions in our life.

For example, the following:

Not so long ago the Duke of Luxembourg, Prince Jean, visited our country—the head of a state with a population of 360,000. A very high-level government meeting was organized for him. He was taken around the country and shown honors as the head of a great state.

Further, in our newspapers, reports about the birth of new states are published as important events—for example, the Cape Verde Islands, with a population of 250,000; Surinam, with 420,000—and these are by no means the smallest.

And recently our papers conducted a rather noisy campaign against the eviction

of 1,000 persons from the island of Diego Garcia.

We do not want to belittle even one of the events we have enumerated. All this is completely natural and correct; but the question occurs to us: Why is it that 600,000 Crimean Tatars, who have been deprived of their national territory, not only do not have an independent state, but do not have autonomy or even the right to live in the land of their ancestors? Why is it that these people, for trying only to return to the Crimea, are losing such people as Mustafa Dzhemilev—who are the most valuable possession they have?

November 29, 1975  
Zinaida Grigorenko  
Pyotr Grigorenko

## Interview With an Iranian Oppositionist

### 'You Can Be Jailed for the Slightest Criticism'

[The following interview with an Iranian oppositionist visiting France was published in the January 17 issue of the Paris weekly *Lutte Ouvrière*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

*Question. What are your criticisms of the shah's regime?*

*Answer.* First of all, it is a country where no democratic rights exist. No opposition, even legal, is permitted. You can be sent to prison for the slightest criticism. A simple novel evoking a picture of life in the slums is put in a class with terrorism. Words as harmless as "red" or "black" can cost dearly.

The University of Tehran, among others, was closed for almost all of last year. A while ago, methodical searches of all houses were instituted to apprehend the "terrorists."

Many persons have disappeared without leaving a trace. In the best of cases they are forcibly enrolled in the army. But frequently they are taken to torture centers by SAVAK and then thrown into prison.

Furthermore, the majority of the population lives in extreme poverty, despite the riches of our soil and subsoil. All traditional agriculture has been wiped out, and now even basic food items—like onions—are imported and placed on the market at exorbitant prices. Unemployment is growing, with the influx of peasants toward the cities.

*Q. What is SAVAK?*

A. It is the Organization of State Security and Information, that is, the secret police. It was created from scratch by the CIA [Central Intelligence Agency] in Iran after the American-engineered coup that overthrew Mossadegh.

SAVAK's methods are the traditional fascist ones—surveillance of the entire population, corruption or moral pressure against those who do not choose to support the regime or join the single party, arrest and the most sadistic torture of all who are suspected of opposing the regime.

It even uses television, employing torture and all sorts of other pressures to force certain legal and popular oppositionists to

make public self-criticisms, and to compel arrested revolutionists to recite in detail before millions of persons crimes they have not committed.

The repression makes all forms of struggle in opposition to the regime extremely difficult, and the shah is seeking to deal a new blow with the ten death sentences.\* It is absolutely imperative that the wall of silence be broken, and that protests against this be raised everywhere.

\*On December 31, 1975, the Iranian government announced that it had sentenced to death ten "Marxist guerrillas," who allegedly confessed to the killing of three American military officers.—*IP*

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## Portugal: Lecciones del Intento Golpista

Por Barry Sheppard

[El siguiente artículo está basado en un informe sobre Portugal adoptado por el Comité Nacional del Socialist Workers Party (Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores) el 3 de enero de 1976. La traducción es de *Intercontinental Press*.]

\* \* \*

El intento de golpe del 25 de noviembre de 1975 marcó un cambio decisivo en la revolución portuguesa.

Las estrategias de las diversas tendencias que pretenden representar los intereses de la clase obrera y el socialismo fueron puestas a prueba por aquellos acontecimientos.

El resultado de la aventura fue el fortalecimiento del gobierno capitalista. Tras el aplastamiento del intento de golpe el régimen ha incrementado su ofensiva contra la clase obrera. Aunque procede cautelosamente por temor a provocar un nuevo ascenso, el gobierno piensa restringir y hacer retroceder las conquistas económicas y políticas obtenidas por las masas portuguesas desde el golpe de abril de 1974 que derribó a la dictadura salazarista.

### ¿Qué Sucedió Realmente?

No se conocen todavía todos los detalles del intento putschista, aunque se puede formar un esquema general juntando los diversos informes.

Los stalinistas norteamericanos negaron que se hubiese dado un intento de golpe. Tom Foley, en un artículo en el *Daily World* el 29 de noviembre, dice, "La derecha portuguesa y sus partidarios estadounidenses imperialistas intentan justificar sus acciones severas con una declaración de que las luchas durante esta semana fueron una especie de golpe militar por parte de la izquierda y los comunistas. Pero cualquier estudio del desarrollo de los acontecimientos demuestra que fue la derecha la que provocó la lucha, al insistir sobre el establecimiento del control militar en Lisboa a cualquier costo, incluso un baño de sangre."

Por otro lado, el número del 28 de noviembre de *Workers' Power*, el semanario de un grupo norteamericano llamado International Socialists [IS—Socialistas Internacionales], lleva el encabezado, "Portugal—¡Todo el Poder a los Trabajadores!"

El primer artículo empieza: "Los primeros tiros en la guerra civil portuguesa se han

dado. Las posiciones se han marcado claramente, y no hay forma de hacerse para atrás. Es sólo cuestión de tiempo.

"Sólo queda una pregunta—quién ganará, los trabajadores o sus explotadores."

Aunque los explotadores eran definitivamente la fuerza decisiva involucrada en los eventos del 25 de noviembre, los trabajadores brillaron por su ausencia. Como es el caso casi siempre en semejantes aventuras, los trabajadores eran espectadores; no fueron consultados, ni mucho menos estuvieron involucrados.

La siguiente semana, *Workers' Power* imprimió una "corrección." Parece que habían estado malinformados por una llamada telefónica desde Lisboa acerca de lo que realmente sucedía. No señalaron quien había llamado desde Portugal.

Los International Socialists en los Estados Unidos, así como su organización fraternal del mismo nombre en Gran Bretaña, se identifican políticamente con un grupo en Portugal llamado el Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado (PRP). El PRP y el MES (Movimento de Esquerda Socialista) eran los grupos dominantes en la coalición que se formó el año pasado en agosto llamada FUR (Frente de Unidade Revolucionária).

El 6 de diciembre, el IS británico imprimió un informe acerca de lo que ocurrió el 25 de noviembre, basado en información proporcionada por el PRP. "Pero, ¿cómo se perdió la batalla?" pregunta el IS.

"Ya se empieza a fomentar el mito de que la extrema izquierda trató de efectuar el golpe."

"La verdadera sucesión de eventos fue bastante diferente. Los grupos de la izquierda revolucionaria, el PRP y el MES, habían estado diciendo que era necesaria una insurrección para evitar el peligro de otro Chile.

"Pero la esperaban sólo después de varias semanas de conseguir apoyo en las fábricas.

"Sin embargo, en la noche del 24-25 de noviembre, algunos personajes militares derechistas tomaron unos pasos muy provocadores—colocaron comandos fuera de los cuarteles de la policía militar y destituyeron a Otelio de Carvalho de su puesto por ser demasiado tolerante con la izquierda.

"Los paracaidistas, quienes acababan de pasar a la izquierda, ocuparon bases de las fuerzas aéreas y la principal emisora, como

medida vengativa. Ahora, las autoridades afirman que algunos 'elementos del Partido Comunista y la extrema izquierda participaron en la rebelión.'

"Pero cuando se movieron los paracaidistas, los grupos revolucionarios estuvieron igualmente sorprendidos que los demás. El PC parece haber estado directamente involucrado. Hizo un llamado histérico para la 'vigilancia' y los organismos sobre los cuales tenía influencia llamaron gente a los cuarteles. Sólo después de haber hecho estos llamados, se unió la izquierda revolucionaria al movimiento.

"El martes [del 25 de noviembre] en la mañana, los oficiales de la Quinta División que simpatizaban con el Partido Comunista visitaron a los oficiales del PRP para persuadirlos que se uniesen a ellos.

"Sin embargo, en ese momento el PC dio un giro y abandonó a la furia de la derecha, a aquéllos que habían seguido su iniciativa—incluyendo algunas de sus propias personas claves en las fuerzas armadas.

"Los marinos, que habían apoyado inicialmente a los paracaidistas, se hicieron a un lado. Algunos oficiales influenciados por el PC en unidades militares claves empezaron a negociar una rendición, creando una desmoralización generalizada.

"El sindicato de metalúrgicos [controlado por el PC], que había llamado una huelga general el martes, no hizo nada por lograrla al día siguiente. La Intersindical, la federación sindical dirigida por el PC, no hizo nada. Un volante del PC hizo un llamado para la 'serenidad.'

"De repente, los soldados izquierdistas y los grupos revolucionarios se encontraron aislados.

"Las unidades izquierdistas del ejército estuvieron divididas y confusas. Aunque unos 1000 comandos estuvieron en contra de ellos, los oficiales influenciados por el PC les aconsejaron que se rindieran.

"Pero, ¿por qué dio [la dirección del PC] un vuelco que de hecho fue una traición a sus propios partidarios militares?"

"El rumor que se corre en Lisboa es que, en el punto álgido de la rebelión, Cunhal, el dirigente del PC, estableció contacto con el Presidente de la República.

"Acordaron que el PC sería permitido permanecer en el gobierno, con la condición de que se opusiera en el futuro a toda huelga y que trabajara con el gobierno para suprimir a la izquierda revolucionaria.

"Por supuesto, la tarde en que fue aplastada la revuelta, Melo Antunes, uno de los dirigentes 'moderados,' apareció en la televisión para decir que el PC debería de estar aún en el gobierno.

"Lo trágico fue que la izquierda revolucionaria no tuvo la claridad para ver el grado de la traición, ni la fuerza en las fábricas para ganar el apoyo para los soldados una vez que el PC había cambiado de bando."

Foley en el *Daily World* y el informe del PRP señalan una "provocación" por parte del sexto gobierno provisional que condujo a la aventura. Los acontecimientos que precedieron el 25 de noviembre indican que eso es precisamente lo que hizo el régimen.

A principios de noviembre, una manifestación de los obreros de la construcción rodeó el Palácio de São Bento, atrapando al Primer Ministro José Pinheiro de Azevedo adentro hasta que concediera el aumento de salarios que exigían. Esta manifestación masiva y militante fue la primera acción a ese grado que desafiara el programa de austeridad del gobierno.

El General Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho, jefe de las fuerzas de seguridad de las fuerzas armadas y comandante de la región militar de Lisboa, se negó a enviar tropas para dispersar a los trabajadores de la construcción. Es posible que sus razones personales por haberse negado tienen algo que ver con sus intentos de renovar su imagen "izquierdista." En realidad, ya se había aliado aparentemente con el Partido Comunista. Pero la verdad es que cualquier intento de enviar tropas radicalizadas contra la masiva manifestación de los obreros de la construcción podría haber fracasado y hubiera corrido el riesgo de impulsar una reacción entre capas más amplias de la clase obrera y entre los soldados. El gobierno tenía interés en provocar el tipo de acontecimiento que se dio el 25 de noviembre, no una confrontación con la clase obrera misma.

El gobierno fue obligado a ceder ante las demandas de los obreros de la construcción. Esto animó a otros trabajadores, ante la inflación y el desempleo escalonados, a comenzar a desafiar el programa de austeridad. Una manifestación convocada por las comisiones obreras bajo la dirección del PC en la región de Lisboa el 16 de noviembre atrajo a unas 100,000 o tal vez más personas.

Los dirigentes del Partido Socialista, que juega un papel muy importante en el sexto gobierno provisional, habían estado divulgando advertencias contra un intento de golpe "izquierdista." Fueron ayudados en este sentido por los llamados, durante el mes anterior, por el PRP y el MES para una "insurrección." El gobierno hizo planes para trasladar su centro de comunicaciones de Lisboa a otro lugar en el norte del país.

Azevedo y otros ministros claves en el gobierno, incluyendo los ministros del PS, afirmaron que no podían gobernar, y suspendieron la actividad oficial. Entonces el Consejo de la Revolución, el organismo militar que tiene el verdadero poder en Portugal, en una reunión en la noche del 24-25 de noviembre, destituyó a Carvalho de su puesto de comandante de la región militar de Lisboa. Como señalan Foley y el PRP, el gobierno sabía que esto sería interpretado como una provocación al PC y los grupos de

la supuesta "izquierda revolucionaria." La destitución del Carvalho significó otra reducción del poder de los oficiales "izquierdistas," o sea, aquéllos que intentaban conseguir el apoyo del PC e incluso de los grupos del FUR.

Los oficiales "izquierdistas" cayeron en la trampa. El PC hizo un llamado para una movilización contra un "giro derechista" durante la noche. Aunque su verdadera participación en la planificación del intento de golpe no está clara, el PC indudablemente no movilizó a las fuerzas que controla en un intento coordinado de tomar el poder.

Durante la noche, los paracaidistas, bajo órdenes de los primeros sargentos, varios de los cuales eran pro-PC, ocuparon cuatro bases de las fuerzas aéreas. El representante de los paracaidistas exigió que Carvalho fuera retenido, y que el Gen. José Morais e Silva fuera destituido de la comandancia de las fuerzas aéreas.

Los oficiales pro-PC de la Quinta División marcharon a las emisoras de la televisión. Junto con ellos se encontraba el ex jefe de la cadena nacional de televisiones bajo el régimen anterior dirigido por el Gen. Vasco Gonçalves. Anunció que el "Poder popular es el que manda ahora."

El PRP y demás grupos en el FUR fueron aparentemente sorprendidos. Según la información proporcionada por el PRP, fue sólo después de haber oído los llamados de los "organismos influenciados por el PC" que "la izquierda revolucionaria se unió al movimiento." Ha de haber sido a estas alturas que el IS norteamericano recibió la llamada telefónica desde Lisboa.

Los paracaidistas, hasta pocas semanas antes, habían sido conocidos como las unidades más conservadoras en las fuerzas armadas. Se encontraban entre las unidades de las cuales dependió el Gen. António de Spínola para su abortivo intento de golpe derechista el 11 de marzo de 1975.

Los paracaidistas habían sido usados por el gobierno el 7 de noviembre para volar los transmisores de Rádio Renascença, una estación ocupada por opositoristas que la habían usado para movilizar manifestaciones con demandas en contra del sexto gobierno. Los paracaidistas de base reaccionaron en contra de ser usados de esta manera, y afirmaron que el gobierno los había engañado. Empezaron a temer que iban a ser desmovilizados, lo que significa ser obligados a formar parte del ejército de los desempleados en el Portugal de hoy.

#### Informe de un Paracaidista de Base

Los paracaidistas en la base aérea de Tancos habían echado a sus oficiales dos semanas antes del 25 de noviembre. En una entrevista publicada en el número del 6 de diciembre de *Combate Socialista*, el semanario del Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores [trotskista] en Portugal, uno

de los paracaidistas de Tancos explicó como sucedió esto (una traducción de la entrevista se encuentra en el número del 26 de enero de *Intercontinental Press*):

"[Morais e Silva] vino [a la base] para explicar el caso de Rádio Renascença, para decir que esto era una orden y no se podía discutir. Fueron los reclutas quienes asistieron a la reunión con Morais e Silva. Fueron llevados por los oficiales. Casi todos los soldados rasos quienes estuvieron en la asamblea general, estuvieron presentes. Los asistentes empezaron a rechiflar, a decir que estaban hartos de Morais e Silva, que ya sabían lo que pensaba, que ya no querían saber nada, y que no iban a permitir que siguiera tratando de engañar a los paracaidistas.

"En seguida, dijo que los paracaidistas tenían tres alternativas—apoyar incondicionalmente al sexto gobierno, apoyar a una minoría izquierdista, u olvidarse de la política. Finalmente, cuando ya se iba, dijo, 'El cuerpo de paracaidistas será eliminado muy pronto.'

"Entonces, se fueron todos los oficiales; los echamos. Estábamos alertas. Esa misma noche recibimos información de que el cuartel iba ser arrasado, y nos quedamos a la expectativa. Esto sitúa todo lo que ocurrió después, la posición de los soldados rasos y primeros sargentos que querían echar a Morais e Silva y Pinho Freire [el segundo comandante de las fuerzas aéreas]."

La mayoría de estos paracaidistas recientemente radicalizados no sabían que estaban participando en un intento golpista cuando empezaron su acción. El mismo paracaidista informa:

"La ocupación fue llevada a cabo durante la noche [24-25 de noviembre]. Durante los días anteriores, no hubo asambleas generales. El personal corrió a las bases. 'Vamos a echar a Morais e Silva,' esa fue la idea. Pero era indudablemente parte de un intento putschista. Los primeros sargentos lo sabían. Ellos fueron los que dieron las órdenes. Y también fueron los primeros en abandonar a Tancos el martes [27 de noviembre] en la noche. Los primeros sargentos influenciados por el PC participaron.

"Fuimos sorprendidos por el golpe. 'Un golpe, pero lo que queríamos era deshacernos de Morais e Silva, y los hombres no sabían nada de esto.' Si hubiéramos estado seguros de tener el apoyo del pueblo, estábamos listos para irnos directamente a Lisboa para derribar al sexto gobierno, Mário Soares, Alvaro Cunhal y todos los demás en el gobierno que no sirven para nada. Si el pueblo hubiera estado listo para mover adelante, si lo hubiera apoyado—pero ésta era una lucha para las masas trabajadoras. No fuimos para llevar a cabo un golpe. En todo caso, sabíamos muy bien que el personal militar en las regiones norteñas y centrales estaba con el sexto

gobierno. Además, algunos paracaidistas también apoyaban al sexto gobierno. Hubiera sido una locura efectuar un golpe.

"Luego, cuando vimos que no teníamos ningún apoyo, pensamos: 'Estamos solos. Bueno, echémoslos.' Antes de esto nunca habíamos pensado en derrocar al gobierno."

Con la ventaja de la percepción a posteriori, el paracaidista continúa: "Sabíamos que no era un buen gobierno; estábamos en contra de él. Pero mil paracaidistas no pueden derrocar a un gobierno. Después de caer en un error—pienso que era aventurismo ocupar bases para deshacernos de Morais e Silva—nos inclinábamos por seguir adelante."

Pero el 28 de noviembre, "todo el mundo ya se iba. Hubo una desmovilización total que había sido iniciada por los sargentos. Los hombres estaban desmoralizados. ('Antes, ellos [los sargentos] los apoyaban; fueron ellos los que lo iniciaron. Y ahora huyen.') También habían paracaidistas que no querían luchar o derramar sangre, y empezaron a retirarse. Quedaban menos cada vez. Entonces convocamos una asamblea general: 'Hemos perdido, regresemos a casa. No existe ninguna posibilidad de continuar la lucha.'"

Una vez que había empezado la acción de los paracaidistas, las unidades bajo el control de los "izquierdistas" empezaron a actuar. La policía militar de Lisboa tomó el control de varios edificios. El Regimiento de Artillería Ligera de Lisboa en las afueras de la ciudad colocó vehículos blindados y rifles sin reculada para proteger la entrada del norte de la ciudad. El comando de seguridad militar de Carvalho tomó el control de la emisora nacional.

### Se Cierra la Trampa

El paso tomado por estos oficiales pro-PC y de la "extrema izquierda" era lo que el gobierno había anticipado y esperaba. El Consejo Militar de la Revolución, con el apoyo de la dirección del PS, se movió rápidamente para cerrar su trampa. Usando comandos que habían sido puestos a la prueba en varias situaciones para ver si se podía contar con ellos, el régimen aplastó rápidamente este desafío, aisló a los paracaidistas, y esperó su rendición. El "Poder Popular" no pudo dar muchas órdenes después de todo.

Básicamente, los obreros no tuvieron nada que ver con el asunto. Observaron desde afuera.

El PC, al ver como iban las cosas y sin haber nunca deseado una confrontación con la principal fuerza de las fuerzas militares, se puso en reversa, canceló la movilización de sus seguidores y los sindicatos que dirige e hizo llamados para la "serenidad."

El gobierno pudo presentar sus medidas de emergencia contra la libertad de prensa, asamblea y otros derechos democráticos como una defensa de la "democracia"

contra un putsch minoritario.

El régimen se movió rápidamente para dar otros golpes a favor del "orden público" capitalista. Se proclamó un estado de sitio durante seis días, y se les otorgó a los militares el poder para hacer arrestos arbitrarios. Se establecieron cortes militares para tratar con "crímenes contra el orden público." Se prohibieron las reuniones públicas y las manifestaciones, y se impuso la censura.

El gobierno anunció un congelamiento de salarios que, entre otras cosas, anula la victoria de los obreros de la construcción en el plano económico.

Los partidos políticos fueron prohibidos en las fuerzas armadas como parte de una campaña para restaurar la disciplina jerárquica tradicional.

### Una Ofensiva Capitalista

De un solo golpe el gobierno pudo recobrar la iniciativa contra los trabajadores. El ascenso de la determinación de los obreros de luchar por sus necesidades básicas que se evidenció en la manifestación de los trabajadores de la construcción fue coartado bruscamente.

El 20 de diciembre, Azevedo hizo un llamado para "la aceptación voluntaria y conciente de sacrificios." En un discurso televisado tres días después advirtió que "demandas salariales irrealistas y una tasa de empleo exageradamente alta habían causado el cierre de muchos negocios."

Desde que subieron al poder en abril de 1974, bajo todos los anteriores gobiernos provisionales, los militares, con el apoyo de sus aliados del PC y PS, han estado tratando de obligar a las masas a pagar por la crisis económica capitalista. En dado momento este objetivo fue disfrazado por el llamado demagógico para ganar la "batalla de la producción." Ahora Azevedo define el mismo objetivo más abiertamente, hablando de "una tasa de empleo exageradamente alta" cuando el 13 por ciento de la fuerza de trabajo está desempleado.

El gobierno eliminó los subsidios sobre los bienes esenciales, obteniendo como consecuencia un aumento de los precios, mientras que restringía los salarios. El precio de los huevos subió el 33 por ciento, las papas el 21 por ciento y las zanahorias el 140 por ciento, según un artículo en el *New York Times* el 11 de enero. El precio del transporte público ha subido 100 por ciento y la gasolina a el 40 por ciento.

Otro aspecto de la ofensiva del gobierno se manifestó el 9 de enero cuando anunció que el programa de reforma agraria no sería aplicado de ninguna manera en las dos terceras partes del norte de Portugal, ni en algunas regiones del sur.

El régimen también lanzó nuevos ataques contra los derechos de asamblea y protesta. Para probar sus opciones represivas escogió

la ocasión de una manifestación el 1 de enero en Oporto, que se llevó a cabo para exigir la libertad de 140 personas detenidas después de la aventura del 25 de noviembre.

Los miembros de la Guardia Nacional Republicana abrieron fuego sobre un grupo de 3,000 personas, matando a tres e hiriendo a varios otros. Una manifestación parecida en Lisboa fue disuelta por los comandos, quienes dispersaron a la multitud con autos blindados y disparando sobre sus cabezas. El uso del régimen de la Guardia Nacional Republicana, la policía paramilitar conocida por su carácter derechista, no fue casual. Su informe proveniente de Oporto en el *Washington Post* el 3 de enero señaló que "Se está impulsando una campaña masiva de reclutamiento de 10,000 hombres extras por medio de anuncios en la televisión."

El último paso en el ataque del régimen contra la clase obrera se dio el 13 de enero cuando el dominante Consejo de la Revolución propuso un plan que aseguraría la continuación del gobierno militar en Portugal hasta 1980. En un despacho proveniente de Lisboa en el *Washington Post* el 18 de enero, Bernard Nossiter dijo que "el plan militar le permitiría al Consejo disolver la legislación electa y vetar gran parte de sus decretos sobre casi todo, desde las nacionalizaciones y los asuntos exteriores hasta la defensa.

"Por cierto, este plan no tiene la última palabra. Los partidos políticos civiles lo están examinando y se tiene que obtener su acuerdo antes de que sea efectivo. Es probable que insistirán en una reducción del papel de los militares y es posible que obtengan algunas concesiones. Pero en última instancia, parece que el poder permanecerá en manos de aquéllos que hicieron el golpe del 25 de abril de 1974."

Hasta el momento, la dirección del PC ha sido un fuerte partidario de la continuación del gobierno militar. El *New York Times* del 18 de enero citó al jefe del Partido Socialista Mário Soares, quien denunció el plan. "La nueva proposición es antidemocrática y consagra el control militar sobre nuestra vida política," dijo. Pero los dirigentes del PS han apoyado fuertemente la ofensiva capitalista que ha abierto el camino a este último ataque.

Las fuerzas derechistas han sido envalentonadas para organizarse más abiertamente. En enero, el régimen liberó de la prisión a los principales verdugos del régimen salazarista.

### Golpe Contra los Trabajadores

Han sido los trabajadores quienes han más sufrido después de la aventura de los oficiales pro-PC y de la "extrema izquierda" el 25 de noviembre. Varios sucesos que destacaron el 25 de noviembre apuntan hacia los dirigentes de los partidos Socialista y Comunista como los culpables en esta

aventura. Las fuerzas que se consideran la "izquierda revolucionaria" también comparan gran parte de la culpa.

Los oficiales "izquierdistas" que llevaron a cabo la aventura no exigían un gobierno obrero para remplazar al régimen capitalista. Sólo exigían la retención del mando de un oficial "izquierdista," Carvalho y el despidio de Morais e Silva. La lógica de su desafío, en caso de que fuera exitoso, hubiera sido la de recomponer el Consejo de la Revolución y el gobierno, colocando a diversos oficiales con vínculos con el PC, en posiciones claves. Esto equivaldría a regresar a una situación similar a aquella que existía durante el quinto gobierno provisional bajo Gonçalves el verano pasado, en la cual el PC jugó el papel de socio-menor preferido del Movimiento de las Fuerzas Armadas (MFA).

No fue un intento de establecer un gobierno que excluiría a las fuerzas políticas burguesas como el MFA y el Partido Popular Democrático (PPD), un gobierno que representaría los intereses de la clase obrera y los campesinos pobres.

La aventura del 25 de noviembre, por lo tanto, no fue un intento de ir más allá de la política colaboracionista de clase seguida por los stalinistas y los social demócratas. Ambos han buscado mantener a los trabajadores sobre los cuales tienen influencia subordinados a los militares, mientras que compiten para comprobar qué tan indispensables son para la clase capitalista portuguesa.

#### El Movimiento de las Fuerzas Armadas

Ante el ascenso de las masas portuguesas tras el derrocamiento de la dictadura salazarista en abril de 1974, la clase capitalista portuguesa se encontró en una posición política débil. Virtualmente la única fuerza que salió del viejo régimen con credibilidad entre las masas fue el Movimiento de las Fuerzas Armadas. El MFA era el brazo político de la casta rebelde de oficiales.

Desde el principio el objetivo del MFA no era el de derribar al sistema capitalista y comenzar a construir el socialismo. Todo lo contrario, como actualmente es aparente para todos.

El MFA cultivó la imagen de estar por encima de las clases, de una manera bonapartista. A medida que se profundizaba la radicalización entre la población civil y en las fuerzas armadas, se vio obligado a adoptar más y más una retórica "socialista" y "antimperialista" para poder mantener su apoyo. Combinó intentos de represión selectiva con concesiones y promesas diplomáticas a las masas.

Han habido agudas divisiones y conflictos dentro del MFA sobre cuánto usar la zanahoria o cuánto el palo en cada etapa. Algunos sectores del MFA llegaron a ser

identificados con el Partido Socialista o Comunista, o los partidos burgueses. Algunos oficiales como el Presidente, General Costa Gomes, lograron mantener la apariencia de estar "por encima de todo" al mismo tiempo que usaban todas estas fuerzas, trasladándose de uno a otro. De principio a fin, el MFA permaneció un instrumento político *capitalista*.

Atribuyéndose el papel de árbitro bonapartista de la lucha de clases, el MFA necesitaba más y más del arbitraje para resolver sus propias diferencias internas. Las luchas dentro del MFA siempre llevaban consigo una amenaza implícita de violencia por parte de las fracciones rivales. Hubo incluso dos intentos golpistas derechistas (septiembre de 1974 y marzo de 1975) y ahora un intento de golpe "izquierdista." El MFA le ha delegado más y más poder al más pequeño Consejo de la Revolución. Actualmente, todas las decisiones claves son tomadas por el consejo, sin consultar formalmente con los 200 o más oficiales de la asamblea general del MFA.

El verdadero poder en Portugal ha permanecido en manos de los militares. Los diversos gobiernos provisionales fueron erigidos principalmente para conseguir el apoyo de uno u otro o ambos de los partidos obreros más grandes, el PS y el PC. La política de los dirigentes de ambos partidos ha sido la de practicar el coalicionismo con este esquema burgués militar, impidiendo el impulso de los trabajadores hacia la formación de su propio gobierno.

Uno de los objetivos del régimen militar era el de dividir a la clase obrera para desmoralizar y desmovilizar progresivamente a los trabajadores y disipar la amenaza de la acción unida que podría conducir hacia una revolución socialista.

Con este fin, el MFA trabajó para crear enemistades entre el Partido Comunista y el Partido Socialista. La política de ambos partidos de competir por ser el socio-menor favorecido de los militares los hizo caer rotundamente en la trampa.

Al principio, los militares se apoyaban más en el PC. Los stalinistas tenían un aparato eficaz que habían colocado a la disposición del MFA. El PC llegó a ser el policía de los militares entre la clase obrera, representando la "batalla de la producción" a favor de los intereses de los trabajadores y el socialismo.

En cambio, el régimen apoyó la posición de los stalinistas en el movimiento obrero. Por ejemplo, la Ley de Unidad Sindical, pasada a principios de 1975, congeló el control del PC sobre la estructura sindical.

Antes de las elecciones a la Asamblea Constituyente el abril pasado, el PS y PC firmaron un "pacto" con los militares, que garantizaba la continuación del dominio militar. En el voto, el PS y el PC juntos obtuvieron una mayoría. El voto a favor de los partidos burgueses obtuvo una clara

minoría. El PS recibió el voto más alto de cualquier partido, el 38 por ciento. Los resultados de las elecciones reflejaron el deseo de las masas de tener una sociedad socialista.

En respuesta al retroceso sufrido por las fuerzas capitalistas en las elecciones, el MFA lanzó una campaña demagógica contra la Asamblea Constituyente, representándola como una mera institución "democrático-burguesa."

El MFA empezó a promulgar un programa para el "poder popular," que sería supuestamente una forma más alta de democracia que la Asamblea Constituyente. Este plan exigía la creación de "asambleas populares" bajo el control del MFA. El plan en sí no fue nunca implementado.

Al mismo tiempo, el MFA buscaba profundizar la división entre la clase obrera, denunciando al PS, acusándolo de ser el "principal peligro" para el socialismo. Los stalinistas llegaron a ser los partidarios y organizadores de esta campaña. Presentaron el voto tan bajo que recibieron como un ejemplo de los siniestros resultados que se pueden esperar de la "democracia burguesa" y atacaron a la Asamblea Constituyente a favor del falso plan del MFA del "poder popular." Incluso resucitaron la vieja acusación stalinista de principios de los treinta de que el PS es "social fascista."

#### Ataque Contra los Derechos Democráticos

El PC apoyó plenamente la toma del periódico *República* de sus redactores del Partido Socialista. Después intentó sin éxito, junto con el MFA y la "extrema izquierda," bloquear las movilizaciones de masas llamadas por el PS para protestar contra las restricciones gubernamentales de los derechos democráticos, incluso la toma de su periódico.

La popularidad de los stalinistas ya había disminuido, como lo demostró el voto [para ellos] a la Asamblea Constituyente, casi el 13 por ciento del total. En gran medida, esto se podría atribuir a su apoyo a la intensificación del ritmo del trabajo en las fábricas. Durante el transcurso del verano, a medida que incrementaba su campaña contra el PS y contra los derechos democráticos de la mayoría de los trabajadores partidarios del PS, su popularidad decayó aún más. A medida que sucedía esto, el PC empezó a depender más y más del MFA para defender sus posiciones en el movimiento obrero. Su posición era que la "revolución socialista" sería hecha por una minoría—por el PC en alianza con el MFA—contra la "mayoría moderada" de los trabajadores que apoyaban al PS.

La campaña del PC en torno a la "batalla de la producción" y contra los derechos democráticos ayudó a abrir el camino hacia la restauración de uno de los pilares del dominio capitalista—el temor de las masas

de que el socialismo constituye una amenaza a sus derechos y la subyugación a un aparato tiránico.

La campaña stalinista cayó en el juego de las fuerzas reaccionarias. Por primera vez desde el golpe de abril de 1974, los derechistas a fines de julio y en agosto pudieron movilizar a pandillas que atacaron y quemaron los locales del PC, especialmente en el norte.

La dirección del PS vio que se le entregaba una buena bandera. Los trabajadores radicalizados y la pequeña burguesía se voltearon más y más hacia el PS como resultado de la campaña stalinista. En julio, el PS renunció al gobierno. Lo hizo no por un deseo revolucionario de defender los derechos democráticos de las masas bajo ataque por el gobierno capitalista; tampoco tenía la intención de luchar por un rompimiento de clase con el MFA, por un frente único de los trabajadores en defensa de sus derechos e intereses contra los capitalistas.

El objetivo de la dirección del PS era el de adelantar su propia campaña para desplazar al PC como el partido obrero dominante en el gobierno de coalición.

Bajo el impacto de las movilizaciones de los trabajadores del PS y sus partidarios, el MFA decidió hacer un cambio. A fines de agosto, los oficiales identificados más estrechamente con el PC, como el Primer Ministro General Vasco Gonçalves, fueron echados del dominante Consejo de la Revolución, y los oficiales a favor de una alianza, por lo menos temporal, con el PS fueron elevados. Junto con este cambio en la composición del órgano supremo del MFA, un nuevo gobierno provisional de colaboración con el capital portugués—el sexto—fue instalado. El PC fue reducido a un papel simbólico y el papel principal de socio-menor de los militares fue llenado por el PS.

#### El Sexto Gobierno Provisional

El nuevo gobierno hizo nuevos esfuerzos por implementar el programa de austeridad de los militares. Como sus predecesores, proclamaba la necesidad del orden y la disciplina capitalistas en las fábricas y en los cuarteles.

Pero la continua dinámica revolucionaria interfirió con su plan. A principios de septiembre, se dieron manifestaciones por parte de los soldados de una organización llamada Soldados Unidos Vencerán (SUV). Fue organizada independientemente del control del MFA. El SUV, aunque abarcaba a sólo una pequeña minoría de los soldados, reflejaba la continua radicalización entre la base, que conducía hacia un mayor resquebrajamiento de la disciplina militar.

La manifestación militante de los obreros de la construcción en noviembre fue un indicio del creciente deseo de los trabajadores de luchar por sus intereses.

La dirección del PC brindó su apoyo a un grado u otro a las manifestaciones del SUV, la acción de los trabajadores de la construcción y la movilización de masas el 16 de noviembre que fue convocada por las comisiones obreras en Lisboa bajo la dirección del PC.

La posición opositora del PC, como la del PS durante el verano, proveyó aperturas para las masas. Su apoyo a los obreros de la construcción, por ejemplo, iba directamente en contra de su política, a través del quinto gobierno, de oposición a semejantes luchas en interés de la "batalla de la producción."

Pero su apoyo a las movilizaciones contra el sexto gobierno no señaló ningún rompimiento con su política de subordinación a los militares. Los stalinistas no hicieron un llamamiento durante estas acciones para una ruptura clasista con todas las fuerzas burguesas, incluyendo al MFA. Al contrario, pidieron el regreso de Vasco Gonçalves, en esencia un regreso al quinto gobierno.

Así, la aventura del 25 de noviembre ocurrió dentro del marco de la rivalidad entre los dirigentes del PS y PC en cuanto a cuál podía mejor entregar los trabajadores al régimen militar.

#### El FUR Tiene la Responsabilidad

Los grupos que se auto-denominan la "izquierda revolucionaria" comparten la responsabilidad con los stalinistas y social demócratas del grave retroceso que los acontecimientos del 25 de noviembre y sus consecuencias significaron para los trabajadores.

Los más grandes de estos grupos son el PRP y el MES. Pero, lejos de ser la "izquierda revolucionaria," son cuando mucho formaciones centristas. Sus posiciones políticas son colaboracionistas, presentadas con una fraseología revolucionaria. Su curso oscila entre, y combina, oportunismo puro y acciones aventureras.

Un elemento que permanece constante en su política es el desprecio sectario hacia la mayoría de los trabajadores que todavía siguen al PS o PC. Colocan sus propios intereses por encima de las necesidades de las grandes masas.

Fueron estos grupos que dominaron en el FUR que se formó el año pasado en agosto. Además de los centristas, el FUR incluía a una organización controlada por el PC, el Movimiento Democrático Portugués [MDP]. El FUR fue formado sobre la base oportunista de apoyo crítico al quinto gobierno provisional.

La Liga Comunista Internacionalista [LCI], una organización trotskista con tendencias ultraizquierdistas, también se unió al FUR. Aunque le daba apoyo crítico al gobierno capitalista, mantenía que esto era secundario a la importancia de la organización misma del FUR. El otro grupo trotskista en Portugal, el Partido Revolucionario

de los Trabajadores [PRT], se oponía al FUR debido a su colaboracionismo de clase.

Las razones por las cuales los "superizquierdistas" apoyaban al quinto gobierno provisional eran diferentes a aquéllas de los stalinistas, sin embargo. Su punto de vista era que un gobierno "izquierdista" del MFA de "unidad revolucionaria" debería ser erigido en lugar del sexto gobierno. Este gobierno le entregaría entonces el poder a "los trabajadores organizados en una estructura que culminaría en una Asamblea Popular Nacional," en las palabras del PRP en el número del 21 de noviembre de su periódico.

El MES declaró más o menos al mismo tiempo, "Debemos crear las condiciones para la formación de un gobierno de unidad revolucionaria que tenga el poder hasta la creación de la Asamblea Popular Nacional."

Este esquema equivale a tener fe en que un gobierno capitalista "izquierdista" le entregaría el poder a los obreros.

Para comprender esta utopía reaccionaria, tenemos que retroceder un poco y examinar las ideas de los centristas sobre la construcción de "soviets."

Estos grupos presentaron una idea falsa de la verdadera extensión de la formación de soviets, o consejos obreros en Portugal.

Las comisiones obreras que aparecieron durante el período después de la caída de la vieja dictadura fueron primordialmente una respuesta a la necesidad de organizaciones económicas que representaran a todos los trabajadores en una empresa, una necesidad que sentían agudamente los trabajadores debido a la fragmentación de las organizaciones tipo sindicales de los obreros bajo la dictadura. Estos organismos han permanecido por lo general dentro del marco de las organizaciones de la lucha económica, y no han funcionado como soviets. Por lo general no discuten ni actúan alrededor de los amplios problemas sociales y políticos que encaran la clase obrera y sus aliados.

Las comisiones obreras han sido limitadas más aún por la profunda división en la clase obrera. Tienden a ser dominadas por una u otra tendencia política, y utilizadas por ellas en su rivalidad. En muchos casos, su carácter de comités de frente único de los obreros ha sido virtualmente destruido.

Algunos de los grupos centristas han establecido sus propios "soviets," que son simples grupúsculos de sus propios partidarios. Las comisiones de barrio son aún más fragmentadas—a veces incluso de ahí surgen varias comisiones en el mismo barrio—cada una dominada por distintas tendencias.

Las formas democrático-revolucionarias más avanzadas de organización en Portugal fueron las asambleas y comités de soldados y marinos que surgieron en

determinados momentos en varias unidades. Sin embargo, no llegaron a ser comités permanentes a nivel nacional.

Por lo tanto, el poder dual—una situación donde órganos de tipo soviético o consejo surgen de comités de acción tipo frente único, abarcan a todos los trabajadores, y comienzan a funcionar como centros de autoridad y poder en relación a todos los problemas económicos y sociales, paralelo a y compitiendo con el gobierno—no ha existido en Portugal hasta el momento.

Los palabristas revolucionarios hicieron de la propaganda para “la construcción de soviets” el eje de su trabajo, sin importarles los grandísimos obstáculos políticos en la construcción de acciones obreras unidas que podrían conducir hacia la creación de verdaderas organizaciones de tipo consejo. Esto condujo el PRP a establecer sus propios “soviets” sectarios, y convirtió a los centristas en víctimas de la demagogia del MFA acerca del “poder popular.”

### ¿Instalará el Socialismo el Sistema Capitalista?

Cuando el MFA anunció su plan de “poder popular” durante el verano, los grupos centristas pensaron que había pasado a tomar sus posiciones sobre la construcción de “soviets.” El 16 de julio, la “extrema izquierda” entre los centristas, ultraizquierdistas y maoístas organizó una manifestación en apoyo al “poder popular” que marchó a la Asamblea Constituyente bajo las consignas, “MFA—Poder Popular” y “Disolución de la Asamblea Constituyente.”

Durante esta campaña de apoyo al MFA, los centristas jugaron el papel de instrumento “izquierdista” para los stalinistas. La mayoría de los trabajadores portugueses, para quienes las elecciones a la Asamblea Constituyente fueron las primeras y únicas elecciones nacionales en las cuales habían podido participar durante cinco décadas, tan sólo pudieron interpretar esta campaña como una que iba en contra de sus intereses y derechos.

Al contraponer el “Poder Popular del MFA” a la Asamblea Constituyente no sólo reforzaron las ilusiones de que el MFA dirigiría la lucha por el socialismo. Presentaron la idea de que la democracia obrera, la democracia socialista, contradice la defensa y la extensión de los derechos democráticos que los trabajadores les arrancan a los patronos bajo el capitalismo.

Los trabajadores del Partido Socialista tan sólo podrían interpretar la campaña por la abolición de la Asamblea Constituyente como una campaña dirigida contra ellos, porque su partido había ganado una fuerte pluralidad en las elecciones.

El “contingente revolucionario” de grupos centristas, maoístas y ultraizquierdistas apoyó una campaña stalinista que tuvo como consecuencia el fortalecimiento de las

fuerzas reaccionarias y burguesas en general, así como la dirección colaboracionista del PS.

Estos sectarios no lograron en general comprender la relación entre la democracia burguesa, la democracia proletaria y la revolución socialista. Para ellos, el precepto de Lenin de que la revolución proletaria “. . . significa una *extensión* gigantesca a nivel histórico-mundial de la democracia, su transformación de falsedad en verdad, la liberación de la humanidad de las cadenas del capital, que *distorsiona* y trunca a cualquiera, aún la más ‘democrática’ y republicana democracia *burguesa*” permanece un misterio. (*Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 371, énfasis en el original.)

Durante el verano se unieron a la campaña stalinista contra los derechos democráticos. Apoyaron un ataque contra los verdaderos derechos de un partido obrero bajo un régimen burgués en el caso *República*, afirmando que ese era el camino hacia el control obrero de la producción. Hicieron un llamamiento para que el régimen militar capitalista aboliera la Asamblea Constituyente, considerando que ese era el camino hacia la democracia soviética.

Y, depositaron confianza en la capacidad y deseo de por lo menos un ala del MFA de dirigir la lucha por el socialismo. Esto ignora el hecho de que la transición de un régimen burgués a una democracia proletaria se da por medio de una revolución que desarma el aparato de estado capitalista y lo reemplaza con el nuevo poder de un estado obrero—y que es fatal entretener ilusiones de que este paso será llevado a cabo por un sector del aparato de estado capitalista, no importa cuánto hablen sus representantes del “poder popular.”

Este fue el contexto en que se produjo el objetivo del PRP y MES durante el otoño: formar un “gobierno de unidad revolucionaria que tendrá el poder hasta que se crea una Asamblea Popular Nacional.”

### El Sectarismo

Los grupos que dominaban el FUR combinaron este oportunismo descarado con el sectarismo y aventurerismo extremos. Atacaron al Partido Socialista como una “fase en la transición hacia el fascismo,” y emitieron un llamado para una insurrección contra el sexto gobierno provisional.

A principios de noviembre, el MES escribió: “Por lo tanto, las fuerzas social demócratas sirven el avance de las fuerzas fascistas; por lo tanto, no podemos separar nuestra consigna ‘Muerte al ELP [Ejército de Libertação Portuguesa, un grupo terrorista derechista] y aquéllos que lo apoyan’ de la consigna ‘Abajo con la social democracia.’ Es por eso, camaradas, que el MES dice—y esto es cada vez más correcto y aparece cada vez más claramente—que la

social democracia es un fase en la transición hacia el fascismo.”

Esta campaña sectaria, arrogantemente desdeñosa de la clase obrera, también clarifica aún más exactamente qué quieren decir los pequeños grupos centristas con “soviets.” Su concepto no tiene nada que ver con verdaderos soviets, que surgen de comités de lucha tipo frente único.

Su campaña era para “centralizar” las comisiones y comités que se habían convertido apenas en grupos partidarios organizados de una u otra tendencia centrista stalinista.

Su campaña era parte de una ofensiva política que impidió el desarrollo de una lucha de frente único contra el gobierno capitalista y que coartó la formación de verdaderos consejos obreros para organizar y generalizar estas luchas.

Los Consejos obreros o soviets representan la forma más alta del frente único—buscan aglutinar a todos los trabajadores, de todas las tendencias, dirigirlos en acciones contra la clase enemiga, y proveer una arena donde todas las tendencias en el movimiento obrero puedan tratar de ganar una mayoría a sus planteamientos.

Pero los “revolucionarios” de la nueva izquierda del FUR habían renunciado al frente único en la práctica a través de su campaña sectaria contra la mayoría de los trabajadores que apoyan al Partido Socialista.

Sólo se pueden construir verdaderos soviets en base a la lucha por la unidad de la clase obrera alrededor de problemas y demandas concretos, no por medio de llamados para la “centralización” de las organizaciones en las cuales la mayoría de la clase obrera no tiene confianza.

### El Aventurerismo

Los dirigentes del FUR tienen una concepción utópico-sectaria de una *revolución minoritaria*. Habían consignado la mayoría de los trabajadores a la extrema derecha. Los partidarios británicos del PRP expresan este punto de vista abiertamente. En una reciente declaración a la prensa, el IS británico dijo, “Estamos completamente en desacuerdo con aquéllos, como Lutte Ouvrière [francés], que tienen esperanzas en la cooperación—a cualquier nivel—con el Partido Socialista portugués. Es Mário Soares quien trata de organizar pandillas de tropas de asalto . . . para ahogar a la revolución en sangre. Es el PS, *dirección y membrecía*, que aplaude el bombardeo de la transmisora de Rádio Renascença—símbolo del control obrero.” (Énfasis nuestro.)

Los revolucionarios pequeño burgueses del FUR *no creen* que la tarea fundamental en Portugal sigue siendo la de ganar a la mayoría de los trabajadores de la política de los dirigentes colaboracionistas del PS y PC y de sus ilusiones en el MFA.

Rechazan el concepto marxista de que esto se tiene que lograr antes de que se pueda poner el problema del poder en el orden del día. Creen que la acción resuelta de una "minoría militante" puede provocar a la mayoría a actuar, o impulsarla para dar apoyo tácito a su "insurrección."

Un concepto incorrecto del papel de los soldados se relaciona a esto. El PRP y el MES veían a la radicalización que se desarrollaba entre los soldados y que se profundizó durante el otoño, como una base suficiente para la revolución. Si los soldados revolucionarios tomaran un paso audaz, los trabajadores los apoyarían.

Esto era especialmente cierto, ya que, según el punto de vista impresionista de los dirigentes del FUR, el gobierno era impotente. El 10 de noviembre la dirigente del PRP Isabel do Carmo declaró en una conferencia de prensa: "Para nosotros en estos momentos, no existe otra solución que la insurrección armada. Como lo demuestra la historia, la burguesía desata una guerra civil cada vez que quiere defender sus intereses. Afortunadamente, las fuerzas derechistas no tienen ningún ejército en Portugal."

#### La Versión del PRP del 25 de Noviembre

La versión del PRP de la aventura señala estos elementos en la política de los centristas. En ningún lado critica el PRP los objetivos colaboracionistas de los oficiales rebeldes. Sus críticas son técnicas, no políticas.

Le declaración impresa por el IS británico citado anteriormente, señala que el PRP y el MES hubieran llevado a cabo el intento si fueran más fuertes, aún en contra del PC: "Lo trágico fue que la izquierda revolucionaria no tuvo la claridad para ver el grado de la traición, ni la fuerza en las fábricas para ganar el apoyo para los soldados una vez que el PC había cambiado de bando."

Vemos de nuevo la inversión de la verdadera relación entre los trabajadores y los soldados en una revolución genuina. En su *Historia de la Revolución Rusa*, Trotsky discutió con aquéllos que "presentaban el bolchevismo como una tendencia de simples soldados."

Trotsky contesta: "Era cerrar los ojos ante los hechos históricos fundamentales, a saber: Que el proletariado había sido el primero en pasar al bando de los bolcheviques; que los obreros de Petrogrado señalaron el camino a los obreros de todo el país; que la guarnición y el frente continuaron, durante mucho tiempo, sosteniendo a los conciliadores, que los socialistas revolucionarios y los mencheviques introdujeron en los soviets toda clase de privilegios para los soldados, en perjuicio de los obreros, lucharon contra el armamento de estos últimos, y excitaron a los soldados contra ellos; que sólo bajo la influencia de los obreros se produjo el cambio de espíritu en las tropas;

que en el momento decisivo, la dirección de los soldados se encontró en manos de los obreros. . . ."

#### Sus Críticas

Las quejas del PRP y el MES acerca del 25 de noviembre son que no fueron informados del intento y por lo tanto no estuvieron preparados, y que necesitaban "algunas semanas" más para conseguir apoyo en las fábricas para la "insurrección." Su autocrítica consiste en que hubieran tenido la suficiente claridad para saber que ¡los stalinistas son peligrosos!

Aparentemente el PC sí les dio la espalda a las fuerzas que habían impulsado la acción del 25 de noviembre, lo cual incrementa su papel criminal en el asunto. Pero los pobres tontos del FUR pensaron que el PC era capaz de seguir un curso revolucionario y ayudaron a alentar las ilusiones en los stalinistas.

A principios de noviembre, el MES escribió: "No es la 'izquierda revolucionaria' la que es arrastrada tras el Partido Comunista, sino el Partido Comunista que, desde que le dio su apoyo al documento del COPCON sistemáticamente en momentos decisivos de la lucha, ha sido arrastrado tras la izquierda revolucionaria."

El COPCON era la fuerza de seguridad militar dirigida por Carvalho, que fue desmantelada después del aplastamiento de la aventura del 25 de noviembre. El proyecto del documento del COPCON fue escrito en agosto como un planteamiento demagógico desde este sector de las fuerzas armadas como un plan para construir los comités de "poder popular" bajo el control del MFA. El apoyo a este documento fue un aspecto fundamental de la plataforma del FUR.

#### El Camino Hacia Adelante

Los militares están aprovechando el momento actual para imponer su autoridad y para usurpar lo más que puedan las conquistas de los trabajadores. Qué tan lejos llegue este proceso depende de la respuesta de las masas. Los trabajadores no han sido derrotados, ni han sido desmanteladas sus organizaciones. Tal como lo demostró la manifestación de los trabajadores de la construcción, hay una profunda oposición a la política del MFA de obligar a la clase obrera a aguantar y pagar por la inflación y el desempleo crecientes.

Los trabajadores, después del intento golpista, son cautelosos y están confusos. Todavía queda por verse cuándo y cómo recuperarán sus fuerzas para un nuevo ascenso de lucha capaz de voltear los planes del régimen para restablecer el orden y la disciplina capitalistas.

Las direcciones del PC y PS han renovado su promesa de lealtad a los militares tras el intento de golpe. Los esquemas sectarios y la palabrería revolucionaria del FUR han

sido demostrados vacíos y sólo capaces de conducir a aventuras y un camino sin salida desmoralizador para los trabajadores portugueses.

En la vanguardia de la estrategia revolucionaria en Portugal se tiene que encontrar una campaña para movilizar a los trabajadores y sus aliados en acciones unidas en defensa de sus intereses básicos, sus conquistas económicas y sus derechos democráticos. Este frente único es imprescindible para sobreponerse a las amargas divisiones sectarias en la clase obrera, para fortalecer la defensa de los trabajadores contra la creciente amenaza del régimen bonapartista y para preparar el terreno para una nueva ola de ascensos de las masas trabajadoras.

El proceso revolucionario no ha alcanzado todavía el punto donde hayan surgido formas de poder obrero. Lo que han aparecido son iniciativas esporádicas y dispersas de masas, comités de fábrica y elementos de control obrero. Estos acontecimientos señalan el camino hacia el surgimiento de comités de acción más amplios y eventualmente el poder dual. El avance sobre este camino gira sobre un curso político correcto. La tarea política fundamental es la de arrancar a los trabajadores del curso básico colaboracionista de los stalinistas y social demócratas de subordinación al Movimiento de las Fuerzas Armadas. En cambio, deberían afirmar su derecho a colocar en el poder a un gobierno que represente a y luche por sus intereses, un gobierno obrero y campesino.

La línea estratégica de la lucha revolucionaria de los trabajadores y sus aliados en Portugal en la etapa actual se puede resumir de la siguiente manera:

1. La defensa de las conquistas de los obreros y otras capas de las masas contra los intentos del gobierno capitalista de hacer que los trabajadores carguen el peso de la inflación y el desempleo. Esto incluye luchar por un programa gubernamental de urgencia de empleos, por una reducción de las horas de trabajo sin reducción de salarios para extender el trabajo disponible, y por estipulaciones de escala móvil en los contratos sindicales para proteger a los trabajadores de la inflación capitalista.

La lucha de los obreros de la construcción demuestra la necesidad de una lucha resuelta en este frente y el potencial para movilizar a los trabajadores en torno a estos problemas.

Incluidas entre estas demandas se encuentran aquéllas que favorecen una reforma agraria radical para llenar las necesidades de los pequeños campesinos, así como la promoción de cooperativas con ayuda estatal y granjas estatales en el área del cultivo extenso. Se han agudizado mucho las demandas por el apoyo estatal para los

pequeños campesinos individuales, a medida que la política del gobierno capitalista, con el apoyo de las direcciones del PS y PC, se ha identificado con el "socialismo," empujando a muchos de los pequeños campesinos hacia el ala derechista.

Además, se necesita darle atención especial a la defensa de los derechos y conquistas que han sido ganados por mujeres y por la juventud, y al apoyo a las luchas que lanzan.

2. La lucha por los derechos democráticos en las fuerzas armadas. El MFA trata de usar el intento de golpe aventurerista del 25 de noviembre para suprimir todos los derechos democráticos de los soldados y marineros. Rechazando la propaganda sectaria y putschista, los soldados de base necesitan organizar para defender sus derechos civiles. Las amplias masas tienen que ser educadas de que los ciudadanos en uniforme retienen todos los derechos básicos para organizarse y participar en la vida política del país.

3. La defensa de los derechos democráticos de los soldados-ciudadanos está estrechamente vinculada a la defensa de los derechos democráticos y la toma de decisiones democráticamente en cada área de la vida social. Los derechos políticos de la mayoría de las organizaciones obreras han sido atacados varias veces desde abril de 1974, incluso los derechos de ambos partidos reformistas de masas. Ahora el MFA está usando el intento de golpe aventurerista para golpear aún más los derechos democráticos. El principio de solidaridad del movimiento obrero en su conjunto contra semejantes ataques está todavía por establecerse.

4. Oposición a cualquier intento por parte del gobierno capitalista de intervenir en los asuntos de sus ex colonias.

5. La lucha por organizaciones obreras eficaces. Las comisiones obreras y los núcleos de los sindicatos industriales que se han desarrollado no son todavía adecuados a nivel nacional para defender eficazmente los intereses más elementales de los trabajadores. En esta situación, la propaganda y agitación por sindicatos industriales, una estructura sindical unida y democrática, libre de interferencia del gobierno, como la Ley de Unidad Sindical, y la transformación de las comisiones obreras en comités de acción tipo frente único que puedan movilizar y representar a los trabajadores y masas pobres en los centros industriales, se combinan estrechamente con otras tareas revolucionarias.

La lucha por el control obrero bajo las condiciones actuales también encaja con estas tareas. Los trabajadores ya han afirmado su control en varios casos para proteger sus intereses específicos ante los asaltos por parte del gobierno, el sabotaje por los patrones y el creciente desempleo e inflación. Se requiere el control obrero para obtener la información económica y la

organización para poder defender los empleos, para prevenir la fuga del capital, para luchar contra la inflación y para administrar una escala móvil de horas y salarios.

El control obrero no puede cumplir sus propósitos a menos que los trabajadores dejen claro que no aceptan ninguna responsabilidad por el funcionamiento de la economía hasta que tengan un verdadero poder político sobre ella. Esto significa luchar contra el "control obrero" promulgado por el gobierno militar y apoyado por las direcciones del PS y PC, que equivale a la autodisciplina de los trabajadores para aceptar el programa de austeridad de los capitalistas.

6. La lucha por un gobierno obrero y campesino. En el plano político, los trabajadores en su gran mayoría buscan su dirección en el Partido Socialista, el Partido Comunista y la Intersindical, la federación sindical. Actualmente ninguna alternativa para estas organizaciones de masas tiene credibilidad entre amplias capas de trabajadores. Tampoco se puede desarrollar ninguna alternativa excepto a medida que las masas aprendan en la práctica las limitaciones de las actuales direcciones colaboracionistas de aquellas organizaciones.

Concretamente, en la etapa actual la consigna por un gobierno obrero y campesino significa llamar a los partidos Socialista y Comunista, como los representantes de la abrumadora mayoría de los trabajadores portugueses y pueblo portugués, a romper con el Pacto-Programa que codificó su capitulación a la junta militar, y establecer un nuevo gobierno sin fuerzas burguesas, ejerciendo su mayoría en la Asamblea Constituyente y apelando a los obreros, campesinos y bases de las fuerzas armadas a movilizarse en apoyo a ella.

La Intersindical debería mantenerse independiente de cualquier gobierno, incluso un gobierno obrero y campesino, porque los sindicatos deben ser los defensores más directos de los intereses económicos de los trabajadores.

El único organismo nacional políticamente representativo electo por los trabajadores y masas portuguesas hasta el presente es la Asamblea Constituyente, en la cual los partidos obreros tienen una mayoría absoluta. La lucha por un gobierno obrero y campesino no se puede dar sin defender la soberanía popular y todas las conquistas democráticas, contra los esfuerzos por parte de la clase dominante de restringirlos. Concretamente, esto significa defender la Asamblea Constituyente contra los intentos de la junta militar y las direcciones del PS y PC de minar su autoridad y limitar o destrozar su soberanía.

Exigir esta demanda a los dos partidos reformistas de masas de la clase obrera, como parte fundamental de una campaña de lucha de frente único, es parte esencial del

proceso de avanzar una alternativa gubernamental de la clase obrera al régimen militar y revelar la incapacidad de estos partidos de proveer semejante alternativa.

Los órganos incipientes de poder obrero sólo pueden surgir de luchas unidas de las masas sobre líneas de clase. Los consejos obreros o formas soviéticas no pueden ser impuestos sobre los trabajadores.

Es necesario avanzar la organización independiente de la clase obrera para que el proletariado pueda cumplir las tareas de la lucha de clases en este período de crisis y ganar en una confrontación con la burguesía. Esto significa impulsar formas más y más amplias de organizaciones obreras, una estructura de sindicato industrial, comités de acción y comités de fábrica democráticos que puedan unir y movilizar a las amplias masas de trabajadores en las zonas industriales y atraer a otras capas explotadas. Este proceso culminaría en congresos regionales y nacionales de las organizaciones obreras que puedan adoptar una política general y conducir a las masas trabajadoras en la toma de iniciativas decisivas.

El armamento de las masas para la defensa de sus derechos democráticos contra los ataques por los reaccionarios tampoco puede ser alcanzado independientemente de la construcción de luchas de frente único sobre estas bases. Ninguna minoría, no importa qué tan heroica, puede sustituir a las masas en la batalla decisiva.

Esta línea estratégica comienza con las necesidades inmediatas y más elementales de la clase obrera, y conduce al establecimiento de un gobierno obrero y campesino y la organización de soviets como la base de un estado obrero.

La política traidora del PS y PC y los bandazos confusos de los centristas y maoístas han tenido consecuencias funestas. Un curso marxista basado en la organización independiente y la movilización de las masas trabajadoras asume una importancia cada vez mayor. La construcción de un partido revolucionario para proveer una dirección correcta asume una urgencia aún mayor. Semejante partido todavía no existe en Portugal. Tiene que ser creado al calor de la lucha misma.

Pero aún un pequeño núcleo de revolucionarios, armados con un programa y estrategia correctos, puede lograr rápidos avances. Al luchar en torno a los ejes básicos señalados, semejante núcleo puede jugar un papel decisivo en la construcción del partido revolucionario necesario para resolver la crisis de dirección en la revolución portuguesa.

Entonces la clase obrera portuguesa tendrá la dirección que merece. Los maldirigidos serán barridos y los trabajadores y sus aliados avanzarán impetuosamente hacia la victoria de la revolución socialista.