

international press correspondence

INPRECOR

MITTERRAND:

JE MESURE LA
DIFFICULTÉ DE POR-
TER LES ESPOIRS
DE TOUT UN
PEUPLE!

the french elections



Mitterrand: "It's not easy to embody the hopes of an entire people."

in this issue...

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editorial

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

INPRECOR will contain analytical articles, documents (resolutions, declarations, and articles) of sections of the international and its leading organs, as well as of other revolutionary organizations; news of the international workers movement; and bibliographic information that will facilitate the research work of militants. This first issue reflects our goal only imperfectly.

Because of its international mode of distribution, INPRECOR can survive only if a large enough number of subscriptions are taken -- and taken quickly. In order to leave sufficient time to collect subscriptions, then, the second issue of INPRECOR will appear in four weeks instead of two. We hope our readers will send in their subscriptions quickly. □

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the collapse of gaullism

The article below was written before the voting in the first round of the French presidential elections took place. A full analysis of the first-round returns cannot yet be made. But some general features are clear:

* The first characteristic of the May 5 voting is that it confirmed that a broad political realignment of the right wing is going on. This shake up is directly linked to the culmination of the crisis of the state apparatus set up by Gaullism in 1958. Chaban-Delmas, the candidate of the "state party," suffered a real rout, obtaining only 15.10 percent of the vote, despite the fact that he represented a party that has been in power for sixteen years as the majority of the governing coalition. The bourgeoisie lined up behind Minister of Finance Giscard d'Estaing, who got 32.60 percent of the vote.

* Mitterrand, the Socialist party leader and candidate of the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left) got 1 million more votes than the parties of the Union de la Gauche received in the March 1973 legislative elections. He took 43.24 percent of the vote, a much higher percentage than he got in the 1965 presidential elections and more than the left parties got in the 1973 legislative elections, thus registering the radicalization and general turn to the left of the French electorate. The rate of abstention was quite low (15.77 percent), a fact that generally benefited the right. But Mitterrand fell short of the 45-46 percent that would have virtually assured him an easy victory on the second round.

* Part of the left electorate did not vote for Mitterrand on the first round. The total vote for the far left (between 3 and 4 percent) was large, probably reflecting the opposition of a section of the workers vanguard and of Communist militants to Mitterrand as a politician and to the right-wing campaign that was run by the Union de la Gauche. But analyzing the far-left vote is more complex. Arlette Laguiller, the candidate of Lutte Ouvrière (Workers Struggle), received 595,247 votes (2.33 percent). Alain Krivine, the candidate of the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Front), got 93,990 votes (0.36 percent). René Dumont, who ran with the support of the ecology movement, got 337,800 votes (1.32 percent). It is difficult to break down the political composition of Dumont's vote. But it is important to consider the scores of Laguiller and Krivine, the two candidates claiming allegiance to Trotskyism.

In addition, many people of the far left voted for Mitterrand on the first round, since they wanted to "make their vote count" and hoped that Mitterrand would make it on the first round.

The very large difference in the two scores cannot be ex-

plained by the degree of implantation of each group. The analysis of the vote on a city by city basis shows that it is scarcely related to the number of members or influence of the groups. Nor can it be explained by the two groups' abilities to mobilize people. The FCR consistently turns out more people for political meetings, demonstrations, etc. than LO. The difference results above all from the different political style and content of the two campaigns. After the possibility of a Piaget candidacy fell through (see the article below), the FCR opted for an electoral campaign of political education, pointing to the problems of the struggle in the coming months, especially in the event of a Mitterrand victory. This campaign was much more successful than previous campaigns run by the revolutionary Marxists. It was far more concrete. A big effort was made to "depersonalize" the campaign by giving the floor to many militants during campaign meetings and radio and television broadcasts.

Utilizing examples like the French popular front of 1936, the Chilean coup, and the recent workers struggles in France, the campaign was able to deal on radio and television with important problems such as the exploitation of women, the role of the army and the struggle against militarism (on this point, Galley, the minister of the army, was forced into a public polemic with Krivine), the formation of strike committees during workers struggles, the meaning of workers self-defense, and so on. The political response to this campaign was very broad, and the vote for Krivine was seen by everyone as a vote for socialist revolution.

Lutte Ouvrière opted for a different sort of campaign: personal testimony about capitalist exploitation and the oppression of women, elementary distrust of Mitterrand as a bourgeois politician. In order to run such a campaign, LO decided to avoid bringing up the essential problems of the coming struggles. LO thus succeeded in crystallizing around Arlette Laguiller (a woman worker active in the trade unions) a composite ensemble of minority electoral currents that saw their own images reflected in her candidacy: militant CPers who found Mitterrand hard to take; feminist voters voting for a woman candidate; populists voting for a worker. A recent poll commissioned by the Paris daily *Le Figaro* (which may not be quite accurate), indicated that as of the opening of the second-round campaign 42 percent of those who voted for Laguiller on the first round intended to vote for Giscard d'Estaing on the second round; only 46 percent intended to vote for Mitterrand! If this figure were confirmed, it would indicate a much greater heterogeneity of the Laguiller vote than could have been expected.

Despite the important political differences between the FCR and LO, both groups have entered the battle of the second round by calling for the defeat of Giscard and a vote to Mitterrand. The revolutionary militants must make the second-round campaign a real class campaign. We will return to the problems raised by the French presidential election in the next issue of INPRECOR.

PIERRE ROUSSET - May 9

French presidential elections were not supposed to take place until 1976. The May 5 and 19 elections were brought on by a chance occurrence: the death of Georges Pompidou. But that does not make them any less important. Pompidou's sudden disappearance from the scene opened a new stage in the crisis of the system of bourgeois rule established in 1958: the Gaullist regime, the Fifth Republic. A new stage because the crisis did not break out only recently. Actually, it goes back to the general strike of May-June 1968. Since then,

the fruits of May '68 have been ripening with the years, leaving their mark on both political life and social struggles. Fundamentally, the current presidential elections are the result of that process.

THE BACKGROUND OF CLASS STRUGGLE

People began talking about possible elections as long ago as

last autumn, for the government had proven incapable of blocking the development of struggles among the workers and the student youth. A lot of ground had already been covered in the six years since May '68. Some of the sectors that entered the struggle in a massive way (civil service employees, gas and electric workers, metalworkers) had not demonstrated for years.

Demands were raised indicating that the level of consciousness and the possibility of unifying the various struggles had increased: equal and across the board wage increases for all, minimum monthly wage of 1,500 francs (about US\$300), sliding scale of wages, etc. Qualitative steps forward had also been taken in regard to the forms of struggle and the organization of the workers during the struggles: There were many more factory occupations, militant picket lines, even flying squads (as at Olivetti), establishment of strike funds, continuation of production for the benefit of the workers (as in the Lip watch factory), centralization of strike committees (as in the banking sector), etc. On two occasions since the legislative elections of March 1973, student youth had taken to the streets on a national scale in massive numbers.

The fact that some strikes were continued after Pompidou's death -- even if partially -- (in the banks, in the Atlantic shipyards, among the metalworkers) was a clear symptom of the new social climate. In France it is quite exceptional for such struggles to continue during an electoral period. The Communist party and the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail -- General Confederation of Labor, the CP-dominated trade-union federation), while they tried to organize a "return to order" and block any generalization of the struggles, were forced to refrain from openly calling for a "social truce."

In spite of the relative defeat of the May 1968 general strike, the class struggle since then has maintained a level incompatible with the "normal" bourgeois direction of society. Or better still, the continual deepening of the class struggle has dominated political considerations and accounts for the attitudes of the various parties.

The "Common Program" and the governmental agreement between the CP and the Socialist party were born of the absolute need of the reformist workers parties to present a credible political perspective able to canalize the social pressure building up and contain it within the framework of the system -- a necessity that became clear to the leaders of these parties after their miserable defeat in the June 1968 elections as a result of their betrayal of the general strike. This same necessity is equally operative today. One of the most important characteristics of the struggles of these past years has been the emergence of a workers vanguard little by little assuming a mass character and achieving through struggle significant breaks with the framework worked out in advance by the reformist leaders of the trade unions and the workers parties. In this present context -- and especially with the addition of a new layer of young workers -- the apparatus that had allowed the CP to choke off struggles of which it did not approve has lost a good deal of its effectiveness.

The struggle at the Lip watch factory is only the best known example of this. The possibility of the reformists being overtaken by the workers struggles is ever present. All the more so in that the revolutionary organizations are little by little getting into the factories to the point that their influence

there is immeasurably greater than it was six years ago.

The bourgeoisie has found it difficult to get out of its present impasse. The exacerbation of international competition, inevitable inflation, and the likely prospect of a recession deprive it of the means to resort to a "social" policy capable of forestalling workers struggles. On the other hand, it has to make the workers foot the bill for the maintenance and strengthening of the position of French capitalism before the crisis gets worse. But the current relationship of forces prevents the bourgeoisie from moving to a direct, frontal assault in order to break the workers combativity except at grave risk. How best to prepare for a seemingly inevitable general class confrontation? That is the question dividing the bourgeois parties today.

Finding an answer is not so easy. The "moral decay" of the French right-wing and center is considerable. And bourgeois institutions have been plunged into a deep crisis.

THE END OF GAULLISM

Pompidou's death signalled the final demise of the regime created in 1958. Prime Minister Pierre Auguste Messmer, President of the National Assembly Edgar Faure, and Christian Fouchet, a former minister and Gaullist luminary all declared themselves candidates -- and then withdrew. Among the former majority, the field was left to Jacques Chaban-Delmas, Pompidou's former prime minister who had been fired in 1972, as the candidate of the UDR (Union des Démocrates pour la République -- Union of Democrats for the Republic, the main Gaullist political formation); Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, the minister of finances and head of the "Independent Republicans"; and Jean Royer, former minister of commerce and trade, later minister of posts and telegraphs, a politician à la Poujade (a demagog appealing to the traditional petty-bourgeoisie). These candidates have differing political platforms. But they illustrate above all the demise of the Gaullist monolith.

Since 1958 French political life has been marked by the existence of a "strong state" erected on the ruins of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. This strong state was born of the desire of monopoly capital to free itself from the constant pressure of interest groups based among the petty and middle bourgeoisie and to deal both with the competition created by the Common Market and with the workers movement in order to create conditions favorable to making the French economy more profitable. But the strong state had to be imposed through a show of force by the army, which seized the opportunity created by the Algerian crisis. The strong state took on the forms of a Bonapartist regime. In order to put an end to the attempt to maintain a colonial empire and to smash the parliamentary regime, the traditional bourgeois parties had to be pushed aside and the workers movement had to be isolated and weakened. For that the bourgeoisie needed a "Bonaparte," a man who could appear as the savior of a France threatened with chaos. That man was Charles de Gaulle.

May 1968 opened a general crisis of the Gaullist regime, which rested on a twofold balance of forces: within the bourgeoisie on the one hand (in order to assure the most advanced sectors of capital the greatest freedom of action) and between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat on the other hand (in order to maintain relative "social peace"). This balance of forces was overturned by the new rise of workers struggles. The Bonaparte, who had lost his charismatic power

and whose regime had worn down, became a liability instead of an asset. In fact, the weakening of parliament and the bourgeois parties, the lack of a real presidential regime, and the end of the parliamentary shell-game played by the reformist workers parties all combined to tend to transform every significant struggle for social demands into a direct conflict with the state.

Thanks to the "great fear" and the demoralization born of the betrayal of the May general strike by the workers leaderships, the elections of June 1968 resulted in a reactionary majority numerically stronger than ever. But that concealed the erosion of the governmental edifice only in a very temporary and provisional way. From that time on, the bourgeoisie was looking for some alternative solution. It seized the opportunity offered by the 1969 referendum on decentralization to thank de Gaulle for his services and send him on his way by making a big enough push to defeat the referendum. Then it moved to elect Pompidou. But Pompidou lacked the prestige that de Gaulle commanded in 1958. The Bonapartist regime couldn't make it without a Bonaparte. Successive governments proved unable to correct the situation. The March 1973 legislative elections dealt the regime yet another blow. The UDR, de Gaulle's party, lost its absolute majority in parliament. And no matter which candidate is elected president in 1974, these elections will mark the end of the uncontested political hegemony of the party created by the 1958 coup d'etat.

The competition between Chaban-Delmas and Giscard d'Estaing (the two main candidates of the old majority) illustrated the bourgeoisie's difficulty in working out the conditions for a new political equilibrium.

THE STANDARD-BEARERS OF THE OLD MAJORITY

GISCARD D'ESTAING believes it is time to leap into post-Gaullism: to reconstitute real bourgeois parties around axes outside the UDR (which he considers incapable of transformation because of its origins as a hodgepodge of state careerists and parasites grouped around de Gaulle); to broaden the majority toward the center; to create a real presidential regime; to institute a more "reasonable" foreign policy. Unfortunately for Giscard, all this is easier said than done. The UDR cannot be tossed out of the government without being thrown into a great crisis. This is a party unable to exist without being integrated into the state apparatus. And the minister of finance is regarded as "the monopolies' man" by the traditional petty-bourgeoisie. But his "new majority" can be forged only through an electoral alliance with the petty bourgeoisie. A known right-winger, he has to promise an anti-Marcellin policy of "liberalization" in order to win over a section of the reform bloc; but he knows that he will have to push for an antiworker policy.

CHABAN-DELMAS wanted to try to avoid this crisis by assuring the continuity of Gaullism. To be sure, since 1969 the majority had already moved far away from the original Gaullist themes. "Pompidouism" took a quiet turn toward Washington in foreign policy, and the program of "participation" during 1971-72 granted a big role to the trade unions instead of working around them. But Chaban again took up the themes of "contracts for progress" (proposing a "contract for each French citizen"), of "national independence," and of the "new society" (during his campaign, he denounced "anarchic capitalism" along with "totalitarian socialism"). In short, he tried to present himself almost as a leftist. But Chaban's program just wasn't credible. He promised a "social"

policy while everyone knew that the bourgeoisie was preparing "austerity" for the workers. He claimed he was a "progressive" while coming forward as the man of the UDR, the most reactionary political formation around, the party of the "godillots." (A term of derision used to refer to the mindless robots elected to parliament in the June 1968 election -- INPRECOR.)

What Chaban and Giscard were actually fighting about was what would be the least undesirable form of political rule for the bourgeoisie. But each of them was saddled with crying contradictions on one point or another. At bottom, neither seemed able to clamp a lid on the new rise of workers struggles.

FROM THE COMMON PROGRAM TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CHARTER

The traditional left thinks it has a chance to win these elections. And, in its own way, it has drawn the lessons of Chile. It is looking for an "opening" to the right! The Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left) today is essentially a coalition between the two major reformist workers parties, the Communist party and the Socialist party. The left radicals -- a few individual bourgeois politicians who survived the collapse of the old Radical party -- have little weight in the coalition. But their presence is symbolic of a potential broadening. And today we can see a double evolution:

* On the one hand, Mitterrand (the general secretary of the Socialist party and the candidate supported by the Union de la Gauche parties) has been seeking to present himself as the "president of all the French people" and to gain maximum independence from the Union de la Gauche. The most "radical" themes in the Common Program (like nationalizations) and the program of trade-union demands (minimum monthly wage of 1,500 francs, later reduced to 1,200 francs) have had a tendency to disappear from the presidential campaign. The Common Program has been supplanted by a minimalist "Presidential Charter" that is now the only thing Mitterrand is answerable to. The CP and SP are making all kinds of advances toward managers, owners of "small and middle-sized factories," and small merchants. The tone gets more "responsible" every day. The CP and SP are presenting themselves as the ones best able to manage the French economy and are promising not to break with the Atlantic Alliance.

* Concurrently, and in spite of the above development, a real class polarization is taking place. Mitterrand is supported by the Union de la Gauche, that is, essentially by the CP and SP. The CGT, the CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail -- French Democratic Confederation of Labor, the country's second-largest trade-union federation), and the PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié -- United Socialist party, a centrist formation) are supporting him. He thus has the support of all the significant reformist and centrist, political and trade-union forces of the working class. This is true to such an extent that in spite of the right-wing campaign Mitterrand ran on the first round, even among the far left many people voted for him. In order to pick up votes from forces to the left of the CP as well as those to its right, Mitterrand went so far as to define himself (verbally) as the candidate of the current that is formed around the Common Program and of the "self-management" current (that is, the SP left wing, the PSU, and the CFDT). On the other hand, no significant bourgeois formation called for the candidate of the left. Only Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber was stricken with an attack of conscience and hesitated between Mitterrand and Giscard d'Estaing.

On a deeper level, the plan of Mitterrand, the CP, and the SP to extend a hand to the right is running up against two major obstacles: the danger of the rank and file overtaking the leadership and the fact that the bourgeoisie itself has also drawn the lessons of Chile. It knows that if Mitterrand were elected it could wring much more out of the left by opposing it than by offering it negotiations aimed at setting up a "great coalition." At least if Mitterrand and the SP do not break with the CP. But that would create the conditions for the ranks outflanking the leadership; the SP would probably be wrecked and Mitterrand as an individual would lose a good deal of his potential usefulness for the bourgeoisie: his ability to act as a last resort against the rise of social struggles.

THE CAMPAIGN OF THE REVOLUTIONARIES

In such a context it is important for the voices of revolutionaries to be heard: To popularize the goals of struggle that the working class can and must take up; to show how to use the struggles of today to prepare for the socialism of tomorrow; to counterpose a revolutionary strategy to the reformist road of the Union de la Gauche; to begin right now preparing for the struggles that will break out after the elections; to organize the challenge to the Union de la Gauche. These are themes that have already been developed in the Action Program published by the Trotskyist newspaper Rouge.

During the two weeks that followed the death of Pompidou, Trotskyist militants fought for a unitary candidate of the far left. They proposed to run Charles Piaget, the best known of the organizers of the Lip strike. His candidacy could have grouped together the broad workers vanguard, promoted the creation of unitary rank-and-file committees going way beyond the close sympathizers of the revolutionary groups, and prepared in the best possible way to go beyond the outlook of the Union de la Gauche in the event of Mitterrand's election.

A large number of organizations and currents within the far left got behind this proposal -- Rouge, Révolution (a group that split from the Ligue Communiste in 1971), the Alliance Marxiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Marxist Alliance, the group headed by Michel Pablo), the left wing of the PSU, Libération (the daily newspaper edited by Jean-Paul Sartre), Politique Hebdo (an independent far-left newspaper). The OCI (Organisation Communiste Internationaliste -- Internationalist Communist Organization, a sect claiming adherence to Trotskyism, led by Pierre Lambert) called for a first-round vote for Mitterrand. Lutte Ouvrière (an organization of Trotskyist origin now strongly "workerist") adopted an ultrasectarian attitude, rejecting any possibility of a common candidacy and presenting its own candidate immediately upon the death of Pompidou. She was Arlette Laguiller, a militant in the bank workers union who played a major role in the strike of the Banque National de Paris, which went on before and during the elections.

Above all, the PSU, of which Piaget is a member, manifested the ambiguity that so marks it by opting for the position worked out by one of its leaders, Michel Rocard, who called for people to "rally critically" to Mitterrand's candidacy. That represented a real capitulation to the reformist organizations on the part of the PSU. It will weigh heavily in the PSU's future. Some 35 percent of the votes in the PSU National Council were cast in favor of running Piaget. The "Gauche Ouvrière et Paysanne" (Worker and Peasant Left), a populist current that was already on its way out of the PSU, split after this vote. The representatives of the Paris federation resigned from the National Council. The embryonic crisis

that this group experienced in May '68 suddenly broke to the surface.

Because of the PSU decision, Piaget's candidacy could not materialize, despite the response it would have received in the factories. Under these conditions, the revolutionary Marxists made two decisions: to form a new organization, the Front Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist Front) and to run Alain Krivine as a candidate.

The banning of the Ligue Communiste, former French section of the Fourth International, in June 1973 following an anti-fascist demonstration, had left a vacuum. It was important to fill this vacuum at a time when everything possible had to be done in order to prepare for the postelection period, no matter which candidate is elected. The formation of the FCR at the call of thirty-one militants does not mean giving up the struggle to overturn the decree dissolving the Ligue Communiste. (The text of the thirty-one militants' appeal is published elsewhere in this issue -- INPRECOR.) But it was necessary for the revolutionary Marxists to be able to regroup their forces in order to better take up the tasks they will be confronted with in the near future. And in order to carry out the work of preparing the vanguard of workers and youth for the battles that are on the agenda, the revolutionary Marxists also decided to launch a daily newspaper for the period of the election campaign.

PREPARE FOR TOMORROW'S STRUGGLES

These tasks will in fact be large ones. In any case the bourgeoisie will not resolve its crisis of political leadership through the presidential elections. The rise of the class struggle will continue.

Because a class confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat lurks behind the "left-right" electoral confrontation; because the election of Mitterrand would consequently be seen by the French working class as a victory and an encouragement to struggle; because the experience of a reformist government today would be favorable to a political clarification within the working class; and because the elements that could lead to the Union de la Gauche being outflanked have built up constantly since May '68, the Trotskyist militants will probably decide to call for a vote for Mitterrand on the second round of the elections. Of course, after leading and while continuing to lead a campaign to counterpose revolutionary perspectives to those of the reformist workers parties. And by linking this vote to the popularization and development of transitional demands and the denunciation of any prospect of coalition with parties that represent the bourgeoisie. And on condition that such agreements on coalitions are not made between the first and second rounds, which would water down the meaning of a class vote.

The revolutionary campaign will not have the impact it would have had if Piaget had run. In this the PSU and the sectarian elements among the far left bear a heavy responsibility. Nevertheless, the campaign can be quite important. It can accelerate the polarization of the workers vanguard. It can facilitate national centralization of a current able to prepare for going beyond the narrow outlook of the Union de la Gauche if Mitterrand is elected and can assure the re-launching of struggle to avoid any deep demoralization among the workers if a bourgeois candidate is elected. And, it can strengthen the base of the revolutionary Marxists in all areas.

PIERRE ROUSSET □

long live the FRONT COMMUNISTE REVOLUTIONNAIRE



call

Deep upheavals are on the way in France. The growing rise of workers struggles, the challenging of the employers' rights in the factories, and the mobilizations of students and worker youth against military control, unemployment, and superexploitation represent a widening of the breach opened in May 1968.

These struggles of the working class and the youth demonstrate a combativity that neither repression nor cooptation has managed to break. They are developing in the framework of a deepening crisis of the strong state born of the 1958 coup d'etat, a crisis of institutions and a crisis of the instruments of bourgeois domination reflected in the courts, the army, and the police.

In this context the presidential elections take on a special significance. For millions of workers and youth, they can appear as a political result of the daily battles they are waging. This is all the more true in that the bourgeois political formations are racked by a crisis and division unprecedented since 1958.

But the responses to this crisis offered by the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left, the coalition of the Communist party, the Socialist party, and the small Left Radical grouping -- INPRECOR) are ridiculous. The same parties that failed to meet the tasks posed by May '68, instead denouncing that revolutionary crisis as a plot hatched by the bourgeoisie, are today proposing no alternative other than patching up the system, leaving the bourgeoisie a free hand to set its economic and military schemes into motion whenever it deems it useful to do so. Not only are they not calling on the workers to organize themselves immediately -- the only step that can confront bourgeois repression and assure the winning of the workers demands. They are also advocating social truce and national unity in order to demobilize the workers. The tasks of the revolutionaries are therefore immense. It is not only a matter of being present in all the struggles that challenge capitalist society, but also of projecting political answers to an ever more numerous workers vanguard that is breaking in practice with reformist politics. And, if the Union de la Gauche is victorious, it is also a matter of immediately preparing the preconditions for self-organization and self-defense of the workers against the trenchant resistance that the bourgeoisie will mount. Finally, it is a matter of lending anticapitalist struggles their internationalist dimension both by drawing the lessons of the Chilean experience and by counterposing the creation of the Socialist United States of Europe to the maintenance of the Europe of the trusts and monopolies, which is in no way challenged by the Common Program of the Union de la Gauche.

It is because they defend such ideas and try to integrate them into their activity that revolutionary Marxists have constantly faced repression, repression that has included imprisonment and the dissolution of organizations. Such was the case with the Ligue Communiste (former French section of the Fourth International, ordered dissolved by Pompidou on June 28, 1973 -- INPRECOR). We assure the former members of the Ligue of our support in the struggle to overturn the rotten

decree of June 28, which was used against them because of their opposition to the racist intrigues of fascist organizations tolerated by the regime. Further, in the workers movement itself, revolutionary Marxists run up against a bureaucratic repression that tries constantly -- although with greater and greater difficulties -- to expel them.

To take up these tasks, to take up the fight launched by the Bolshevik party in Russia and continued by Trotsky and the Fourth International, and to take an active part in the struggles of tens of thousands of revolutionary militants in Europe and throughout the world today, the undersigned have decided to set up an organization. In the tradition of proletarian internationalism, this organization will try to link the struggles of the French workers to the worldwide fight against capitalism. By recognizing the right of members to form tendencies while still maintaining the centralization needed to prepare for the destruction of the bourgeois state by the workers themselves, this organization will break the Stalinist caricature of democratic centralism. Finally, it will try everywhere to foster the development of self-organization of the working class in order to prepare within the struggles of today the socialist self-management of tomorrow, democratically centralized by the state of workers councils. That is why the undersigned revolutionary militants, having participated in the main battles of the working class since 1968, call for the formation of a new organization, for the building everywhere of its federations and sections with a view toward holding a first congress soon. Toward this end they designate a provisional leadership and call upon the workers and youth to join the new organization in massive numbers.

LONG LIVE THE FRONT COMMUNISTE
REVOLUTIONNAIRE!

LONG LIVE THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Signatures:

Elsa PETIT (teacher), Michel ROUSSEAU (post, telephone, and telegraph employee), J.P. RATAJ (hospital worker), André FICHAUT (electrical worker), Michel RECANATI (student), Pierre FRANK, Michel LEQUENNE (editor), Michel FIELD (high-schooler), Marcel Francis KAHN (physician), Jean-Marc POIRON (teacher), R. ADRASTE (bookkeeper), Alain KRIVINE (journalist), Jean Marie VINCENT (economist), S. ROUX (hospital worker), Jules FOURRIER (construction worker, former Communist deputy in the Popular Front), Pierre ROUSSET (journalist), Emilia SCIALOM (teacher), Wilfred PASQUET (docker), G. TOMASSIN (civil servant), Jacques HOUDET (insurance worker), J.L. DION (chemical worker), G. REY (metalworker), J.P. BILLARD (bank employee), Marcel DELTELL (special educator), Gérard PESSY (post, telephone, and telegraph employee), Suzette ROBICHON (white-collar worker), Claude BOVANA (railroad worker), Colette BLIESNIK (teacher), Gilles LEMET (watchman), Jean-Pierre PUJKIS (worker), André HOUDAYER (hospital worker), D. VAILLANT (chemical technician), Sophie PETERSON (white-collar worker), Paul ADAM (student).

the divorce referendum and the political crisis

On May 12 the Italian electorate will be asked for the first time since the adoption of the present constitution to participate in a referendum. The issue at stake is the divorce law, which has already been in force for several years and which reactionary groups are now demanding be repealed. The division among political forces on this issue is along the following lines: The Christian Democrats and the MSI (the neo-fascist Italian Socialist Movement) are for repeal; the PCI (Italian Communist party), the PSI (Italian Socialist party), the PSDI (right wing Italian Social Democratic party), the PRI (Italian Republican party), and the PLI (Italian Liberal party) are against repeal. Thus the present coalition government is divided on the issue. But the division also extends into the parties. Certain parties risk being challenged if not by their members then at least by some of the sections of the electorate that traditionally support them. The referendum has been delayed twice (because of the elections of spring 1972 and through subtle interpretations of the law). In practice the delay has been due to the fact that the governmental parties hesitated to enter into a test that divides them, the outcome of which is uncertain.

The Catholic Church itself, while struggling fiercely against divorce, appears irresolute: it has always maintained the pseudo-juridical fiction according to which more than 90% of Italians are Catholics and it fears the loss of prestige if the majority, or a very substantial minority, of these "Catholics" vote for divorce against the advice of St. Peter's. As for the Communist party, it has always openly proclaimed that it was scared of vacillations among its electoral supporters (and perhaps even among its members!), but also and above all because the confrontation of the referendum represents an obstacle for the CP's orientation toward collaboration with the Christian Democrats for the perspective of the "historic compromise" propounded by Berlinguer. This is why Berlinguer and his friends sought an agreement right up to the last minute (trying to get Parliament to adopt a new divorce law). It was not due to the CP that all these attempts were finally rejected.

A POLITICAL BATTLE THAT GOES BEYOND DIVORCE

The present electoral struggle -- it is necessary to say immediately -- goes far beyond the importance of the question

of divorce itself. It is naturally important not to underestimate the importance for Italy of an elementary democratic acquisition like divorce -- even in such a restricted and partial form as the one that was introduced in Italy. It is also important not to ignore the demoralizing repercussions that would occur if, after the great mass mobilizations of the last six years, such an acquisition could be quashed by a conservative and reactionary initiative. But the real stakes are still more important. May 12 will be a major clash between political forces and the verdict of the electors will not simply affect divorce but will determine in an important way the solution to the political crisis that the bourgeoisie has not succeeded in overcoming.

Here it is necessary to deal briefly with the context given to the referendum by the events of the last few years. Because of the opportunism of the traditional workers parties, and because of the absence of a revolutionary organization able to intervene as a real political alternative, the Italian bourgeoisie succeeded in surmounting the crucial period of 1969-70 when a prerevolutionary crisis unfolded in the country. Nevertheless it was incapable of imposing a "normalization" and a return to the relative stability of 1968. The situation remained extremely unstable and rent with conflicts; the working class did not retreat; the student movement, despite its cyclical oscillations, maintained its potential; and large layers of the petty-bourgeoisie remained involved in the wave of radicalization (in certain cases -- it is not a new phenomenon -- certain petty-bourgeois layers began to mobilize after the workers radicalization had reached its high point). Finally, the bourgeoisie did not succeed in resolving its crisis of leadership. It is this last aspect that is tied most closely to the present electoral struggle.

The upsurge of workers struggle in 1968-69 precipitated the crisis of the so-called "center-left" formula of government that had been adopted at the beginning of the 1960s. Nevertheless, this formula survived because no alternative appeared on the left and, on the other, because in the rela-

tion of forces created by the mobilization of the masses, a right wing alternative appeared extremely dangerous. All attempts to create a reactionary wave through the so-called "strategy of tension" failed lamentably, and certain initiatives of fascist origin -- for example the attack that led to a massacre in a Milan bank on December 12, 1969 -- had rebounded against the reactionaries and against those who had sought to exploit these events.

A PROLONGED CRISIS OF BOURGEOIS LEADERSHIP

Certain sections of the bourgeoisie -- who are not easy to characterize from a social and economic angle but who are politically identified with a certain wing of the Christian Democrats -- started to move toward a right wing shift in the spring 1971. This move corresponded in the first place to the need of the employers to "restore order in the house" (in other words to restore their damaged authority and to re-establish a satisfactory rate of profit). It also corresponded to a fear that a prolongation of the unstable situation would help, including on the electoral plane, the neofascists to make substantial progress. (Local elections had indicated that this was not necessarily an unfounded fear.) The mounting economic crisis, which placed the workers movement on the defensive and raised the spectre of layoffs and unemployment, also favored this turn, at least partially. The scheduled election of the president, who in Italy is elected by the two chambers of Parliament together, offered an opportunity to realize this project and to create new alliances.

The election of Leone to the presidency at the end of 1971 on the basis of a right wing bloc was the first concretization of this turn. Soon afterwards the center-left government was replaced by a government of the center-right directed by Andreotti. It was based on collaboration with the liberals, who in Italy are a right wing party, and which played the card of calling elections.

The elections allowed the Christian Democrats to consolidate their position but they did not stabilize the situation -- even on the Parliamentary plane. For this reason the second Andreotti government, formed after the elections, continually found itself in an unstable and difficult situation; the bourgeoisie's crisis of leadership was not really overcome. Nevertheless the bourgeoisie decided to support the center-right in the hope that Andreotti would succeed in recreating a certain cohesion and efficiency in the state apparatus and would succeed in making progress on the road to "normalization" in the factories and in the schools and colleges. The battle around the renewal of the wage agreements in the most important industrial sectors, in the first place the metal workers, became a major new confrontation in which the government and the employers -- helped by an economic situation that pressed heavily on the workers -- hoped to consolidate their new formula and to wear down the combativity of the masses.

This six-month battle was even longer than that of 1969. The demands of the unions were in general moderate and the stubborn resistance of the employers could only be explained by political motives. But the employers' operation -- exactly from the political angle -- suffered a defeat. The temporizing tactics of the employers not only did not break the combativity of the workers but, on the contrary, provoked mobilizations of enormous dimensions (e.g. the demonstration of 250,000 metalworkers in Rome in February 1973)

and, in the decisive weeks of the struggle, led to great explosions such as the occupation of Fiat-Mirafiori and other factories in Turin. Andreotti's operation reached its end at the congress of the Christian Democrats and was liquidated in favor of a new attempt at a center-left coalition (the formation in July 1973 of the Rumor government with the participation of the Christian Democrats, the Socialists, the Social Democrats, and the Republicans).

WHAT 'HISTORIC COMPROMISE'?

The new center-left coalition had two factors working in its favor: the re-expansion of the economy and the conciliatory attitude of the trade unions and the Communist party. The trade unions were ready to accept a truce and to negotiate with the government on its economic policy. The PCI, which considered the fall of Andreotti as a victory, declared that its opposition would be of a "different type"; in other words it did not want to create serious difficulties for the government. The theory of the "historic compromise," including Communists, Socialists and Catholics in a bloc, relaunched with fanfares after the coup d'etat in Chile, sketched out a perspective of a long-term "opposition of a different type."

However, the economic expansion was accompanied by an accelerated rate of inflation that rapidly eroded the workers' incomes and operated as an uncontrolled redistributor of income. The oil crisis exacerbated the difficulties and nullified all the government's measures. In this situation the unions, always under strong pressure from the rank and file, could no longer maintain the truce; they opened up a new stage of struggles, axised on factories or sectors of industry, which culminated in, among other things, the limited national strike of February 27 this year. The government was again torn by internal contradictions and was paralyzed. The government resigned and was replaced by another Rumor government in which the Republicans did not participate, although they supported it from outside, and which included representatives of the left of the PSI and the right of the Christian Democrats, including Andreotti, who had not participated in the previous government. The change was very small, although it was a slight shift to the right. In any case, it is necessary to stress again that the new Rumor government is a very provisional solution, which can be called into question at any moment and could be swept away by the result of the referendum of May 12.

This succession of crises, accompanied by a succession of scandals implicating politicians, famous industrialists and managers, judges, civil servants, university professors and notable doctors has produced, in the context of the socio-economic situation we have already outlined, a profound wearing down of the bourgeois-democratic regime installed after the second world war. Consciousness of the extreme gravity of the situation, and of the paralyzing crisis that the ruling class now finds itself in, has been general for some time: It is only necessary to read the best known daily newspapers -- notably *Corriere della Sera* of Milan and *Il Messaggero* of Rome -- to see this.

In principle the bourgeoisie has two ways out. Faced with the erosion of the parliamentary regime and with the necessity of reorganizing the economy, it can decide to bring the crisis to a head and install an authoritarian regime. On the other hand, faced with a mobilization of the masses that is still very strong, it can move towards a diametrically opposed solution and attempt to conclude an alliance with the

whole traditional workers movement, including the PCI, in the hope of bringing about rationalizing reforms. In other words it could, in essence, accept the "historic compromise" and renew the traditions of the bloc of parties of the working class and of the bourgeoisie that existed between 1944 and 1947.

The tragedy for the Italian bourgeoisie today lies precisely in the fact that it cannot bring off either of these operations.

It is true that, especially since the coup in Chile, rumors of a military coup have been circulating, strange movements have occurred in the barracks*, the neo-fascists have intensified their activity, and the police have engaged in provocations. But despite all this the arguments against a coup d'etat are enormous: The relation of forces and the mobilization of masses continually argues against the bourgeoisie undertaking an initiative that would carry such dangers. As for the project of the "historic compromise," it continues to run into objective, and even more subjective, difficulties that cannot be overcome in the short term. It is for this reason that the center-left has been able continually to rise from the ashes and stagger from one crisis to another without a coherent orientation and without the possibility of putting into practice even the modest programs that it periodically puts forward.

There has been much talk in recent weeks of a Bonapartist project led by Fanfani, the present secretary of the Christian Democrats. One of his speeches, in particular, has provoked alarmist comments in the press, from *Lotta Continua* (an extreme left newspaper) to *Corriere della Sera* (the main bourgeois newspaper). But we do not believe that such an operation -- whose precise contours are difficult to fix at present -- could really be worked out and put through successfully. Among other things bonapartism needs a Bonaparte, and Fanfani does not meet the requirements of such a role. In the final analysis, by his function as secretary of the majority party and by having been the head of the government Fanfani is too much associated with the regime for him to become simultaneously its gravedigger and the inheritor of its destruction.

RECONSTRUCTING A RIGHT-WING ALTERNATIVE

Nevertheless while a real Bonapartist operation is still a thing of the future, this does not prevent certain important sections of the ruling class and of various political tendencies with some real weight seeking to prepare in the short term a more profound and less improvised right turn than that of the two Andreotti governments. They have decided to exploit the referendum on May 12 toward this end.

In effect the struggle for the abrogation of divorce is aimed at constructing a bloc of conservative and reactionary forces with a very large mass base and thus to demonstrate that beyond the present distribution of seats in Parliament a right-wing alternative exists. The victory of the anti-divorce front would severely damage the Socialists, the other parties in the coalition favorable to divorce, the left wing of the Christian Democrats, and the PCI and the workers movement in general (the liberals could console themselves about the abrogation of the divorce law by the fact that they would rapidly enter into the bosom of the government). Simultaneously the room for maneuver by the fascists, who are to some extent the cutting edge of the anti-divorce coalition, would be greatly increased.

Certainly the conservatives' task is not easy: the bourgeoisie remains divided, certain Catholic organizations hesitate, the church itself is far from unanimous. This is why the battle is simultaneously a struggle within the ruling class and an attack on the workers movement and its allies.

The PCI, for its part, is deeply engaged in the struggle. Its leaders have understood what is at stake and know that their basic strategy is being subjected to a severe test. In face of the new Rumor government and in the face of the rejection of all compromise on the question of divorce by Fanfani and the leadership of the Christian Democrats, the PCI has made a turn: "opposition of a different type" has been replaced by "intransigent opposition." This helps them to solidify their ranks and causes difficulties for the far left. As we have said, vacillations are possible on the question of divorce among the militants of the party: This has left the PCI leaders with no choice but to politicize the struggle and present it as a test of strength between "democratic progress" and reaction. The radicalization of their opposition to the government also flows from this need.

Nevertheless, the thorough opportunism of the bureaucracy continues to show itself even in the orientation of the electoral campaign. The perspective of the "historic compromise" has not been abandoned and the campaign for the defense of divorce is carried out with timid and fundamentally conservative arguments: Divorce is presented as a solution for pathological cases and therefore as an instrument for the defense of happy families. All the rotten products of Stalinism are trotted out again.

The revolutionary Marxists base their campaign on the political significance of the present confrontation, while at the same time seizing the opportunity to explain their views on the family, bourgeois ideology, sexual repression, the liberation of women, etc. They conceive their struggle as completely independent of that of the other currents that support divorce. Here they differentiate themselves from the other organizations of the revolutionary left -- from *Lotta Continua* to *Avanguardia Operaia* -- which have not hesitated to participate in common demonstrations with bourgeois parties that support divorce, the liberals included.

"Turn the battle on the referendum into a general political confrontation" -- this was the conclusion of the pamphlet distributed by the Italian section of the Fourth International. "NO to the reactionary attempt of the Christian Democrats to coalesce the dissatisfied petty-bourgeoisie, the bigots, and the fascists into an anti-working-class front. If the abrogation of the divorce law is approved, the bourgeoisie will go forward in its attack to impose 'austerity,' 'order,' 'discipline.' We say clearly: VOTE NO!"

"NO to all those who defend the bourgeois concept of the family, an instrument for the transmission of the ideology of the ruling class! For an anti-capitalist outcome to the struggle of the workers and students; no concessions to the historic compromise; no renunciation of the struggle for the defense of wages and employment. To help prepare the workers counteroffensive vote NO!"

— LIVIO MAITAN —

* It is necessary to be on guard against the exaggerations that sometimes appear in the press on this question (e.g. there never was a night during which "Rome was occupied by the army"). □

BEHIND THE OFFICERS' COUP

On February 28 a book was published in Lisbon. Tens of thousands of copies were sold in just a few days; a large number were said to have been bought by the DGS (the political police, successor of the notorious PIDE), which, significantly, is responsible to both the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Overseas Affairs. The book was called "The Future of Portugal." The author was none other than General Spínola, former military commander in chief in Guinea-Bissau.

"The war," which for years had stood in the background of all the debates within ruling circles, suddenly entered the public domain. All the bourgeoisie's various options for economic and political perspectives for Portugal had been crystallized around this question. The central theme of the book -- which would have been difficult to publish if some faction in governmental circles had not given the go-ahead -- can be summed up in this declaration by Spínola himself:

"If we do not achieve this solution (a federal structure in which the overseas territories would have an autonomy granting them the same status as the metropolis -- INPRECOR), we will inevitably drift toward disintegration, losing our African territories one after the other."

But the "furor" touched off by the publication of the work of this so-called thinker was important only inasmuch as it served as the pretext for an open crisis within the government and the army. From March 6 to March 16 events moved quickly. The movement of opposition among lower-ranking officers spread. On March 12 they demanded the resignation of Andrade e Silva, the "hardline" minister of the army. And in a manifesto cited by the March 24-25 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, they demanded "a political solution that guarantees national honor, dignity, and the legitimate interests of the Portuguese living in Africa, but that also takes account of the undeniable and irreversible deep-rooted aspiration of the African peoples to govern themselves."

The response of the "hardliners" was not long in coming. On March 13, acting under the aegis of chief of state Americo Tomas, the hardliners relieved Generals Spínola and Costa Gomez of their posts and repressed the mobilizations of soldiers, NCOs, and officers. In some cases, these mobilizations had gone so far as mutiny: for example, the infantry company of Caldas Da Rainha (some fifty-five miles from Lisbon), decided to march on the capital. The crisis of leadership in the bourgeoisie was open for all to see and revealed the centrifugal forces at work within the Portuguese ruling class. The hardliners' counteroffensive, while it is now scoring some points, in no way guarantees a real stabilization.

But this crisis can be understood only by looking at the partially contradictory tasks confronting the Portuguese bourgeoisie: preserving the "colonial pact," while simultaneously seeking modernization, and, at the same time, integrating the country into Europe and stimulating the economy.

THE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

After the second world war, the Portuguese bourgeoisie took the first steps in a timid industrialization program, making use of the reserves it had accumulated during the war. Portugal's neutral status during the war had allowed it to play the role of a commercial intermediary; it was a big exporter of agricultural products and raw materials (particularly a metal, wolfram). This created an opportunity for an accumulation of significant financial resources. In addition, a large amount of capital sought refuge in Portugal during the war. A few big industrial and banking groups, which enjoyed the legal status of monopolies and functioned under state protection, began to feebly develop an industrial infrastructure (cement, steel, transportation, etc.).

But the domestic market was quite limited and its vulnerability required numerous protectionist measures. So the embryonic industrialization remained extremely fragile. Repression and suppression of democratic and trade-union rights was a constant aspect of Salazar's policy. The big turn came at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s. A number of features marked this new period: a change in the political climate (presidential elections were held in 1958 with the participation of an opposition candidate, Humberto Delgado); the beginning of the colonial wars (Angola in 1961, Guinea-Bissau in 1963, Mozambique in 1964); the first rise of the student movement (in Lisbon, Coimbra, and Porto), of peasant struggles (the strike for the eight-hour day in Alentejo), and of workers struggles (in the Lisbon area).

During this same period there was a significant economic decline. Investments were strongly reduced; the internal market was much too limited even for the very weak productive capacity of the industrial sector. Finally, unemployment and underemployment began to spread.

A new stage in the development of Portuguese capitalism was taking shape. The outbreak of the colonial wars required on the one hand loans from the international financial market (about \$32 million in 1961 and \$38 million in 1962) and purchases of military equipment; on the other hand, the wars stimulated some production of military hardware in Portugal itself. (1) Concurrently, the "migratory stampede" began -- Portuguese workers started moving in massive numbers into France, Germany, and Switzerland -- and the call went out to foreign capital.

Xavier Pintado, the former secretary of state for commerce, offered a good summary of the advantages foreign capital could obtain by investing in Portugal: "(a) a large, easily adaptable work force; (b) low taxes; (c) a sufficiently developed infrastructure; (d) currency backed up by large reserves. . . ." (October 5, 1963, issue of the French magazine *Entreprises*.)

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Foreign investment grew rapidly. In 1960 it accounted for 1.5 percent of investment in the private sector; by 1966 the figure had risen to 27 percent. Ford, General Motors, Standard Electric, Firestone, Siemens, Krupp, and Nestlé sent investments to Portugal.(2)

Finally, the process of integrating the country into capitalist Europe, concretized by foreign investment, industrialization, and emigration, was formalized by Portugal's entry into the AELE (Association Economique de Libre Echange -- Economic Association of Free Trade) in 1960. This perspective of integration was rapidly to become one of the important aspects of the policy of the most dynamic industrial sectors and of a section of financial capital. Thus, in the prospectus for the development plan of 1965-67, we read: "Motivated by its unshakeable desire to succeed, with or against the course of history, Portugal is today moving toward Europe in order to assure the economic acceleration that is required if it is to rise definitively into the ranks of the developed countries."(3)

The launching of this process of industrialization -- also bolstered by the influx of currency deriving from the emigration (1,552 million escudos in 1958; 2,679 million in 1964; and 22,388 million in 1972) and by income from tourism -- was to engender a profound change in the productive structure of the country, in the scale of its exports, and in its structure of employment. The share of agricultural production in the gross national product fell from 29 percent in 1958 to 15 percent in 1971. On the other hand, industry's share rose from 30 percent in 1958 to 41 percent in 1971; the growth of industry between 1958 and 1971 amounted to 200 percent. The increase in the gross national product as a whole during those years was 123 percent.(4) Concurrently, a tendency toward concentration of capital and mergers in the industrial sphere was developing, encouraged by a series of fiscal and financial measures. Traditional industries (textiles, cork) were relatively stagnant, while basic industries were developing in the areas around Lisbon, Porto Braga, and Aveiro-Coimbra; metallurgy, automobile assembly, steel, shipbuilding, and so on.

Exports were diversifying; cork, wine, and canned fish were no longer the only products being exported. New agro-industrial products were added (tomato purée, paper paste) as well as manufactured products (machinery, machine parts, etc.). One figure is significant; between 1960 and 1971, the volume of exports of clothing rose from 0.085 million "contos" (a conto being 1,000 escudos) to 1.8 million contos. These are the figures for the same period for machines and machine parts (often only detached pieces): from 0.2 million contos to 2.5 million contos.(5) Nevertheless, it must be stressed that a good part of the exports were products of foreign companies with branches in Portugal. Four of the main exporting firms were wholly or partly controlled by foreign capital: Standard-ITT, Gründig, Calbi-Cullulose, and Diamang.

But this expansion and diversification of exports indicates the importance of the European market for a whole section of the Portuguese bourgeoisie. Capitalist Europe is Portugal's main customer and supplier. Exports to capitalist Europe represent 65 percent of total exports, and exports to the Common Market exceed those to the AELE. When the AELE was dismantled, Portugal entered a free-trade agreement with the Common Market, which further intensified the bourgeoisie's need to integrate the country into the EEC.

It must be stressed that this process of industrial development was based on a decrease in unemployment and underemploy-

ment. That decrease was in turn based on the growth of the industrial sector under the impact of foreign investment, the extraordinary emigration (in 1972 the number of emigrants totaled 1.5 million), and military service in the colonies. (In 1972 Portugal, with a total population of 8.2 million, had 200,000 soldiers serving in Africa.) It is mainly the emigration, however, that accounts for the facts that on the one hand the annual increase in the gross national product during 1968-73 (an average of 7.3 percent) and the annual increase in per capita labor productivity (an average of 6.6 percent) were among the highest in Europe, while the growth in employment was only 0.5 percent annually, and, on the other hand, that unemployment and underemployment did not increase sharply. In the Lisbon area the low rate of unemployment and underemployment during the 1960s stimulated a rise in industrial wages of more than 70 percent during 1958-65. Thus, the internal market was developing, allowing for a process of cumulative industrialization.

The totality of this industrialization process provoked a dramatic decline in the agricultural population. The countryside around Minho, Beira, and Alentejo was depopulated; the agricultural population, which represented 50 percent of the active population in 1950, represented only 25 percent by 1970. At the same time, the working class was growing in numbers; by 1970 it represented more than a third of the active population. And its composition was changing. Workers coming directly from the countryside, most of them young (the average age was less than thirty) were being added to the older generation of workers.

THE AFRICAN MALADY

This evolution in the productive apparatus has involved on the one side a certain redefinition of political structures and on the other an attempt to find solutions combining two needs that are contradictory in view of the military *cul-de-sac* Portuguese imperialism has been driven into by the victorious resistance of the national liberation movements in Africa: strengthening Portugal's integration into Europe and modernizing the "colonial pact."

The nomination of Marcello Caetano as Salazar's successor appeared to allow for the acceleration of the development of tendencies that were already visible under the old dictator. The addition of "technocratic" modernists to the governing circles -- men like Joao Salgueiro, undersecretary of planning, Rugeiro Martins, minister of economics, and Xavier Pintado, minister of finances -- was an expression of the desire to set up a political team able to carry out the whole program, from expanding the internal market, to European integration, to establishing the "Portuguese common territory." As for the "liberal openings," they petered out. The fragility of Portuguese capitalism, its difficulty in finding means to keep a tight reign on the working class, the new rise of worker combativity, and the tensions arising from the colonial wars quickly brought an end to the timid "liberal" experiments.

The ability of the national liberation movements to stalemate the military plans of the Portuguese government was one of the major contradictions that disrupted all the projects developed by a section of Caetano's governing team and that is provoking the current overt crisis in the army and among ruling circles. In 1969 the Lisbon government used 42 percent of the state budget for military expenditures. Officially, that represents 7.5 percent of the national income (Le Monde,

March 30, 1972). In 1970 and 1971, some 58 percent of extraordinary (that is, nonbudgeted) expenses were devoted to military expenditures. According to the "Memorandum of the Portuguese Government to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (June 1971)," military expenditures alone totaled 8 percent of the GNP. In the official national accounting figures, 8 percent of the GNP is listed as devoted to "administration and defense." From 1958 to 1971 the official increase in this category was 233 percent! Whatever the accuracy of these figures, which are generally underestimated in official government publications, it is easy to see how expensive the colonial war is that Spínola now publicly admits is impossible to win on a military level.

This cost is no trivial matter. Especially not at the very moment when a series of investments are necessary to strengthen industrial development and make the productive apparatus better able to deal with the process of European integration. Thus, Rui Patrício, the minister of foreign affairs, declared in 1972: "We must adapt our structures to the development of the expanded Common Market. The problem is that the present context is not favorable for us." And, around the same time, a "high personality" in the regime admitted to a correspondent from *Le Monde* (March 1, 1972) that "the credits spent on the war would obviously be more useful elsewhere. . . . With the exception of the big petrochemical project in Sines . . . development plans are manifestly suffering from lack of credits. And the discrepancies in allocation remain great."

In addition, despite the fact that international imperialism (through the medium of NATO) has until now been a trenchant supporter of the Portuguese military operation in Africa, the risks of political and diplomatic isolation, with all the consequences this could have for the Portuguese bourgeoisie on the economic level, are increasing. Pressures are mounting for either an independentist solution or for the establishment of a new status for the colonies. And finally, there is the international economic situation, which is hardly favorable to Portuguese capitalism, which since 1965 has also been hit by aggravated inflation induced in part by the military expenditures.

In this context, divisions are deepening within the bourgeoisie on the available politicoeconomic and social options. Sectors of the industrial and financial bourgeoisie interested mainly in the opening toward capitalist Europe are less and less prepared to accept a policy that is becoming an obstacle to that project. The well-known "colloquium on industrial policy" held in 1969 clearly indicated the goals of the policy these sectors are pressing for. The main axes of this policy as they were then defined can be summed up as follows: The top priority is European integration; industrial sectors that can be fit into this framework should be developed; infrastructures must be developed; the process of concentration and rationalization of companies and various sectors of production must be accelerated. It is obvious that this sort of policy is not easily reconciled with the policy proposed by the hardliners in the government, who want to put off such schemes politically and economically.

To be sure, in the beginning of the 1970s the government started to define the elements of an alternative policy aimed at overcoming the obstacle to development that the colonial wars and the old relationships with the colonies had become. A response to the problems posed by the colonial wars, the victories of the national liberation movement, the integration into Europe, and the foreign investments was worked

out along the line of developing and rationalizing metropolitan industry as opposed to the colonial wars. There were two sides to this plan. First, aid and stimulate certain investments in the colonies, urge investors to reinvest there by limiting the amount of capital allowed to be repatriated to the metropolis and force an implantation of some consumer industries for the urban market of the colonies. Second, increase the specialization of exports to Europe and accelerate the process of modernization of the productive apparatus. In this way a sort of international division of labor was set up. This economic strategy was supposed to allow for a strengthening of Portugal's position in order to permit it, if the best conditions be met, to move to a neocolonialist solution under which military-political control of the colonies would be replaced by monetary, financial, and industrial control.

Obviously, the realization of such a plan necessitates political instruments that the Portuguese bourgeoisie is far from commanding, all the less so in that the strength of the national liberation movement is being brought to bear on the military level to a rather strong degree. In addition, it is highly problematical, not to say impossible, for Portuguese capitalism to compete with international monopolies for these markets. The example of the Dutch decolonization is quite instructive in this regard.

So the crisis that has recently broken out in Portugal -- in the course of which we have seen the clash of the advocates of the federalist, autonomous solution, like Spínola and Costa Tomas, with the "hardliners," who, under the leadership of Kaulza de Arriaga, in no way envisage relaxing control over the colonies -- must not be interpreted solely in the terms in which it was posed by the debate among various sectors of the army. In reality the crisis indicates that after ten years of colonial war, the modernistic sectors of the bourgeoisie that are not directly tied to the colonies in the same way as the entire financial, industrial, and raw-material-oriented colonial bourgeoisie are ready to consider a radical modification in colonial policy, perhaps even to "renounce" or completely revamp the colonial structure in order to give priority to the perspective of integration into capitalist Europe. If the bourgeoisie opts for such a solution, or even if a less extreme policy toward the colonies is inaugurated, it will most certainly threaten to provoke secessionist currents among the white bourgeois layers in Angola and Mozambique, who would make a turn toward Rhodesia. But in any case, the crisis that has just opened up will doubtlessly clarify the various positions and allow for certain realignments within the Portuguese bourgeoisie.

THE RISE OF STRUGGLES

Inflation in Portugal is rampant. In 1973 it reached the rate of 21 percent. The purchasing power of the workers is under serious attack. In addition, a massive return of emigrant workers who find themselves faced by the prospect of recession in various countries of capitalist Europe threatens to exacerbate the already-existing tendency toward unemployment.

The workers' response to this attack on their employment and buying power could take on much greater breadth.

Since the July 1968 strike in the Lisbon transportation system, workers struggles have been developing with ups and downs. In 1973 strikes took place in the metal and automobile industries at Ford, General Motors (where there was an

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attempt to occupy the plant), the shipyards of LISNAVE, etc. In July 1973 there was a strike in air transport in the local branches of ITT. In January 1974 there were various mobilizations ranging from three-hour work stoppages to three-day strikes at the American watchmaking company Timex, in the LISNAVE shipyards, in the SOREFRAME factory in Amadora, and in the Entroncamento railway plants.

The mobilizations are still limited and fragmented, which expresses the organizational weakness and lack of tradition of the working class. Nevertheless, the mergers of companies, the emergence of industrial concentrations, and the fusion of a layer of young workers who have not experienced any demoralization with sectors of workers who do possess a certain tradition can reinforce the workers' capacity for mobilization.

In 1968-69 the bourgeoisie experimented with a "loosening up" in an attempt to reorganize a framework for controlling the working class. Thus, when a new trade-union law was passed, the "Corporative Chamber" clearly indicated the necessity of developing instruments able to hold back the upsurge of the working class -- but also the difficulty because of the regime's destruction of the reformist workers organizations:

"... We still find ourselves in the same situation, namely: a very small number of effective trade-unions, a scattering of the workers into a multitude of small organizations that are able to develop neither adequate leaders nor competent services, and which do not command the prestige that they need among the workers, for they are unable to solve the problems of the people they represent. In addition, they do

not appear to the employers organizations as valuable interlocutors, for it is well known that even though dialogue might be interesting, real decision-making power does not lie with the unions. The workers' lack of confidence in their unions causes their interests and aspirations to be expressed in an indisciplined manner outflanking the unions and asserting itself in the form of groups unified by common needs. Such groups can easily be led toward action demands that are simply unacceptable (!)"

But the "liberal" schema does not have -- and will not have -- any credibility except insofar as the bourgeoisie has an economic margin for maneuver large enough to allow for the establishment of "reformist" organizations capable of blunting the workers' combativity by granting concessions of a certain magnitude. In this sense, the timid experiments of 1968-69 will not be able to be put into practice. And neither will those proposed for the future by the modernist sectors of the bourgeoisie if they are able to impose their will on the government. Repression against the workers movement will certainly not remain the exclusive province of the "hard-liners."

The new "debate" on colonial policy should give the student movement opportunities to take initiatives in support of the national liberation movements much more than in the past. (Solidarity demonstrations have been strictly limited up to now.) Both the rising workers struggles and the student movement can thus inject themselves into the crisis that opened up in March. "The future of Portugal" may be much different than Spínola ever imagined.

A. UDRY - April 11, 1974

post script: SPINOLA TAKES OVER

On March 14 Spínola lost the second round against Americo Tomas. But the fight was not over. The initiative the Caldas Da Rainha infantry company had taken on March 13 marked a portent rather than a setback for the "movement of captains." On April 26 Spínola was "handed" power.

As early as March, Spínola, supported by a significant section of Portuguese finance capital, had sought to "take power" in the hope of inaugurating a new policy to replace that of Caetano and, more especially, of the Americo Tomas clique. His ouster on March 14 boosted his credibility among opposition sectors within the army. It is not impossible that Spínola, understanding the depth of the crisis developing within the army, put himself forward (through the publication of the book attributed to him) in order to canalize a movement that could have gone beyond the limits set down in the March 22 manifesto. Viera de Almeida, the junta's nominee to head the Ministry of Finance, comes out of the sectors of Portuguese capital that support the options articulated by Spínola. Among these sectors are the Companhia Uniao Fabril (CUF), which controls one-tenth of Portuguese industrial capital, a good part of the banking sector, and the "Europeans" of the SEDES (Society for Industrial and Social Development). As we explained above, the principle goals of this sector of the Portuguese bourgeoisie are turning toward Europe and modernizing the "colonial pact." Spínola's declarations have been clear on one point: "modernization of the pact" does not mean "self-determination" or "independence."



Cunhal : wants alliance between people and army.
Soares : Full confidence in junta.

In Caetano's message conveyed to Spínola by Feytor Pinto, the role of the ex-fighter with Franco's troops and butcher of Guinea-Bissau was described very precisely: "to prevent power from falling into the hands of the mob." (*Journal de Genève*, April 27-28, 1974.)

Spínola now finds himself confronted with a series of factors: possible reaction from the "hardliners" or secessionist moves by the colons of Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau (who in the past have even clashed with the Portuguese army), a deep economic crisis, and a mass mobilization of considerable dimensions. He has to develop some sort of social base -- and a rather large one -- in order to tackle these various problems and obtain enough maneuvering room to seek a solution to the colonial war. For it must be stressed that the factor that has played the decisive role in the crisis of the Salazarist regime (both on the internal level and on the level of international diplomacy) has been the liberation movements, whose military and political strength and implantation among the masses has considerably increased in the recent period. The reactions of the MPLA, FRELIMO, and the PAIGC indicate that they are not prepared to accept "solutions" of a "federalist" variety.

In this situation it is unlikely that the junta will be able to repress the mass movement rapidly and decisively. While it is true that workers struggles have gone through an undeniable rise during the past few years, they have remained fragmented and atomized. The organizational strength of the workers movement is still relatively meager. This could leave the junta a certain "freedom of action." All the more so in that the reformists and Stalinists are once again capitulating before the bourgeoisie. The London Financial Times of May 3

reported this assertion by Soares, the Social Democratic leader: "I have complete confidence in the junta." As for Cunha, the leader of the Communist party, he declared, "The alliance between the people and the military is the essential condition for safeguarding democratic rights." (*L'Humanité*, the newspaper of the French Communist party, May 2.)

In this context the role of the revolutionary Marxists of the Internationalist Communist League (Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International) will be decisive, both in relation to the workers movement, which is developing new instruments of struggle, and in relation to antimilitarist and anticolonialist activity.

Finally, should Mitterand be victorious in the French presidential elections, it is certain that the fall of Salazarism will open the way to an accelerated crisis in Spain and to a new stage in the socialist revolution on the Iberian peninsula. We will return in greater detail to the situation in Portugal and the prospects for socialist revolution on the Iberian peninsula in the next issue of INPRECOR.

—AU -- May 3

- (1) Since the end of the 1960s, construction of military trucks, amphibious vehicles, and short-range tanks, as well as assembly of certain types of aircraft for the African wars, has been carried out mostly in Portugal.
- (2) Saigado Matos, "Os investimentos estrangeiros em Portugal," Lisbon, 1973.
- (3) Rudel, "Le Portugal de Salazar."
- (4) See "Republica," March, 1973.
- (5) "Polemica," No. 4, 1973.

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POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CRISIS OF THE SAIGON REGIME

One year after the Paris accords, it is clear that we have succeeded in maintaining stability on the military and political levels. That is no small achievement. But this has not been the case on the economic level; there we are confronted with a very serious danger. The current economic crisis undoubtedly represents a grave threat of social instability that would not be long in making itself felt on the political level. We have to act, and fast."

-- General Tran Van Don, Thieu's vice-prime minister, in an interview published in the Paris daily *Le Figaro*, April 1, 1974.

Official Saigon declarations have come a long way from the optimism that characterized them just after the signing of the Paris accords on January 27, 1973. But despite the rosy military and political future General Tran Van Don predicts for the regime he represents, he cannot hide his anxiety. Thieu knows that repressive measures alone will not keep him in power indefinitely. The industrial development of the

South Vietnamese cities under his control and the "green revolution" in the countryside were supposed to have allowed for a deeper consolidation of his regime. But that kind of capitalist development could only come about through an impetus from outside, a sort of Marshall Plan for Indochina combining financial aid from big banks and state powers with a mass of Western investment. And Saigon today is running up against the realistic pessimism of the business circles to which it has gone begging for aid.

A SEVERE VERDICT

The verdict is in fact severe. For example, the fortnightly *Pacific Basin Reports*, an employers' magazine published in San Francisco, drily writes that "the economy of the areas controlled by Thieu is weak and getting weaker; the PRG is strong and getting stronger. Most potential investors, hitherto suspicious, are now in the process of abandoning one after the other any idea of investing in South Vietnam."

For the British journal *The Economist* (March 9, 1974) "even under the most optimistic eventuality, South Vietnam's eco-

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omic perspectives are bleak." The Economist is merely repeating the findings of a report published by the World Bank, which makes no secret of its sympathy for the puppet regime and openly counts on the January 27, 1973 accords not being applied. Beginning from the most favorable projections worked out by South Vietnamese economists -- which are hardly serious anyway -- the report concludes that the foreign aid Saigon will need in 1980 will exceed by \$100 million the aid that it will probably receive in 1974; and that in 1990 Saigon will still require an annual aid on the order of \$300 to \$450 million. Even without taking account of the PRG's capacity for future actions, the World Bank concludes that a fantastic, long-term international effort will be necessary if Saigon is to avoid a potentially fatal crisis.

The Thieu regime's anxiety is understandable. In fact, the World Bank observes that since the signing of the Paris accords "aid has scarcely increased and has even declined in real value, because the costs of most of the imported products have gone up." Nevertheless, the American government has spared no effort to drum up "multinational" aid for Thieu's South Vietnam. U.S. imperialism neither wants nor is able to foot the bill for defending the "free world" in Indochina by itself. To understand the lack of success of this policy we must go back to the depth of the transformation of the South Vietnamese economy that the U.S. program would require and the weakness of the puppet regime's strategic position.

Vietnamese society was profoundly transformed by the American intervention. At the beginning of the Indochina war, 90 percent of the Vietnamese population lived in the countryside; today, about half is concentrated in and around cities. This is the result of a systematic policy of "urbanization," of round-ups and deportations of the population, and of terror-bombing of the liberated zones. U.S. strategists have undoubtedly achieved some partial success with this policy in bringing a significant section of the population under their control and in transforming masses of peasants into dependent refugees subject to an intensive process of economic and ideological corruption. Nguyen Khac Vien, the editor of the series "Vietnamese Studies" published in Hanoi, estimated that in February 1973 this population "bound hand and foot to American aid" numbered 5 or 6 million people out of a total of 27 million inhabitants. And he stressed that this would be "one of the biggest difficulties" for the PRG. (Interview in Jeune Afrique, February 10, 1973.)

But in doing this, Washington has not succeeded in developing a real urban society. The national bourgeoisie never developed as a coherent class in Vietnam. French imperialism blocked its development. Worse, industrialization always remained very weak, whether it was tied to Vietnamese or to foreign capital, the former being a very small part of the total. In spite of the huge size of the American presence, U.S. companies (with the exception of the petroleum sector) never sought to implant themselves massively. What has arisen in the cities of South Vietnam is a thoroughly parasitic economy with a "lumpenbourgeoisie" recruited essentially from top officers and functionaries (as well as traffickers and smugglers) standing at its summit and a pauperized and uprooted population living mainly on handouts standing at its base.

With the retreat of the U.S. expeditionary force this economy plunged into a deep crisis. The 500,000 GIs had been spending about \$400 million a year in South Vietnam and the American armed forces directly employed some 250,000

persons. The dollars are still flowing in, but they are not directly affecting the lower-ranking people; they are absorbed by the commanders of the administration and the army and by the network of Chinese smugglers. Employees of U.S. bases, launderers, prostitutes, women "unofficially" serving GIs, restaurateurs, and barmaids were all suddenly thrown out of work.

The American development plan aims at transforming a parasitic, largely artificial economy totally dependent on outside aid into a neocolonialist capitalist formation at the very time that a sharp internal crisis is opening up and the military-political situation of the Thieu regime promises to be bad in the medium term.

The puppet army has not succeeded in seriously cutting into the liberated zones. The location of the liberated zones cuts into the puppet zones in decisive strategic areas (the Central Highlands) and agricultural areas (a large portion of the Mekong Delta). Saigon seems to have generally lost the battle for rice. A new network of roads supplementing the Ho Chi Minh trail now crosses the liberated zones from north to south; a third road seems to be under construction linking the Central Highlands to the central coastal provinces (which would explain the intensity of the fighting in the Kontum area). The evolution of the situation in Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand is unfavorable to Thieu.

Specialized press organs frankly indicate the deeper reasons for the failure of the American international aid plan. Contrary to what general Tran Van Don claims, the political and military stability of the puppet regime is far from assured. "Because of the war, the lack of guarantees, and the usual problems of bureaucracy and corruption, foreign investors are continuing to stand on the sidelines," wrote the December 12, 1973 Wall Street Journal. For the World Bank, "as far as Vietnam is concerned, there is a permanent problem of security because of which the World Bank has been unable to draw clear conclusions." Even the French employers' magazine *Entreprises*, which has been waging a campaign in Thieu's favor ("Investments and business can do well in this part of the world," wrote P. Drouin in *Entreprises*), has had to recognize that "in South Vietnam the political and economic situation is delicate. . . . Peace can be blown away at any moment." (In the December 14, 1973 issue.)

When it is taken into account that even under the most favorable conditions (for capitalism, that is) South Vietnam could offer a solvent and profitable consumer market only after dozens of years -- again taking the "optimistic" forecasts as to Thieu's future -- it is easy to see why industrialists, and even states, might think twice before committing their capital today.

THE ECONOMIC CRISIS

The conditions the Saigon regime offers industrialists are nevertheless unusually favorable. Officially, French companies are allowed to send 90 percent of their profits back to France. The fiscal advantages are immense. But investors have demanded financial guarantees from their governments. And the governments have refused.

The major part of foreign investment in South Vietnam is composed of French capital. But most of these companies

are functioning under a backward, pre-1954 technology. The Ha Tien cement factories have been considerably expanded; Citroën has built an assembly plant, and Isostat is in the process of setting up an electricity plant. But it looks like that will be all. As for the Japanese capitalists, they seem to have basically abandoned their projects, their confidence having evaporated.

The "green revolution" in the countryside was supposed to win a section of the peasantry over to the regime by creating a layer of capitalist peasants and by aiding industrial development. It failed. First of all because the Saigon government did not manage to bring sufficient areas of the countryside under its control and because the investments needed to transform the agricultural system were insecure. Also because the landlords blocked the agrarian reform in a whole series of regions. And, finally, because the "green revolution" implied a modernization of agriculture that ran up against a double obstacle (taking account of the pressure of the NLF and the PRG): indebtedness and unemployment among the peasants. Industrial prices, especially the price of fertilizer, rose at dizzying speed. And wherever capitalist measures aimed at making agriculture a profit-making operation did develop, masses of peasants were driven from the land, adding to the glut of refugees crowding into the cities. Thus, the "green revolution," which was supposed to expand the regime's social base, is threatening to erode it still further.

Financial aid has also been insufficient. The French, Japanese, and West German governments have given loans and donations. Combined with the American aid, these contributions have amounted to enough emergency first aid to enable the Thieu regime to hold on. But Le Quang Vien, governor of the Bank of Vietnam, has recognized that "for the time being, American aid is allowing us to survive, but not to reconstruct" (*Le Monde Diplomatique*, January, 1974). "Defense" swallows up more than 50 percent of the total budget. Corruption is a generalized phenomenon. Worldwide price increases and the devaluation of the dollar are directly hitting at the value of this aid. The only measure that theoretically could permit the Saigon government to rebalance its financial resources would be a demobilization of a large part of the puppet army. But that would open the floodgates. Here the PRG's military pressure is decisive. Nor could the puppet regime tolerate the sudden increase in unemployment that would result.

THE SOCIAL CRISIS

As a result of the economic crisis, industrial production in the parts of South Vietnam under puppet control fell by 20 percent in 1973. The piaster was devalued twelve times. The inflation rate has reached 5 percent a month. The cost of living has risen 70 percent since January 1973. The salaries of soldiers and government employees have risen only 20 percent in the same period. Unemployment is spreading rapidly. The Paris daily *Le Figaro*, which favors the puppet regime, admits the existence of 200,000 permanent unemployed (100,000 of them in Saigon), not counting the underemployment of at least 500,000 persons. (April 1, 1974 issue.)

The World Bank itself admitted that "the standard of living has fallen during the past two years." For the *Wall Street Journal*, "in nearly all areas the economy is not going as

well today as it was two years ago. And nothing was going very well then. Real incomes and the standard of living are falling. Unemployment is growing. . . ."

Journalists have confirmed the views of the experts. In *Le Figaro* Francois Nivolon described the social situation in Saigon: "Hunger is a new phenomenon. . . . In the center of the city, most of the trees have recently been stripped of their bark for as high as a man can reach. The bark is used by the poorest people to make the cooking fires they need in order to eat: lamp oil, the usual fuel for cooking fires, costs seven times as much as it did in January 1973. . . . There is no famine in Saigon, but the number who go hungry is rather large, and the number who are underfed is larger still." The average salary for an employee today is just enough to buy rice for his family.

The crisis struck first at the refugees, the employees of the American "services," and the itinerant small merchants. Now it's hitting the soldiers and civil servants.

All the predictions are now converging: "There is no hope of serious improvement for at least a year. The little (sic) Vietnamese people have been hardened and are resigned by atavism. Just the same, it's a long year. It is not certain that it will pass without the outbreak of the social crisis on which the 'other side' has visibly been counting." (Francois Nivolon in the April 1, 1974 *Le Figaro*.)

The possible discovery of off-shore oil deposits cannot resolve the present crisis. Even on this point, uncertainty about the regime's future is bearing down. All the more so in that the regions concerned are also claimed by China, which demonstrated its determination to assert its rights during the conflict over the Paracelle islands. And in any case, these investments would seem to be profitable only in the medium term. The most recent "tour" to the United States and France made by "Vice Prime Minister" General Tran Van Don seems to have borne little fruit. The American House of Representatives has just rejected by a vote of 177 to 154 a proposal to increase 1974 U.S. military aid to Saigon by 274 million.

THE WORKERS STRUGGLES

Life in the liberated zones is undoubtedly very austere. But at least people eat when they are hungry. That fact alone is becoming a disintegrating factor for the base of the puppet regime. But the key question remains that of developing an urban opposition. The zones under Saigon's control have experienced a not inconsiderable succession of struggles -- especially workers struggles.

During the months just after the signing of the Paris accords, many workers teach-ins were held to denounce the violation of the accords. This movement has been followed by the outbreak of a large number of struggles that, according to issue No. 235 of the NLF organ *South Vietnam in Struggle*, have involved thousands of workers in nearly all sectors (railroads, water and electrical works, gas and oil, port facilities, road and automotive transport, weaving, and the rubber industry). The most important of these struggles was probably that of the Saigon railwaymen in the Trung Bo center. In some cases, the workers have won their demands, as in private companies like Shell and Sicovina.

It was in July 1973 that the most important mobilization

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against the new sales tax broke out. It began in the factories and spread to the neighborhoods and marketplaces. On July 13 a demonstration of more than 4,000 workers and commercial employees marched on the Saigon Chamber of Commerce, "surrounding" Director General of Taxes Nguyen Hai Binh. Thieu's sales tax operation was a total failure.

There were also struggles around trade-union rights. The Saigon federation of unions grouped together fifteen unions and fought against a scab organization created by Tran Quoc Buu which organized -- without great success -- a "counter-congress" of Vietnamese unions. Obviously, repression comes down on trade-union militants as well as others. On several occasions workers struggles won the reversal of illegal sentences and freed the arrested unionists.

But while struggles are going on, sometimes successfully, there seems to be great difficulty in developing the centralization required to move to a higher stage of struggle. Of the struggles around economic demands, only the one against the sales tax achieved a very significant breadth and coordination. For a time after the signing of the Paris accords, the student movement acted as the political focal point for the urban opposition. Now, however, it does not seem to be playing this role.

Not that the student struggles have stopped. On February 21, for example, some 2,000 students at Hoa Hoa university (An Giang) launched a hunger strike and stopped going to classes in order to demand reform of the university administration and the accounting of the rector's use of certain funds. But the extremely tough repression that hit the General Association of Students, combined with the regime's policy of decentralizing the universities in order to break up large concentrations of students, has prevented the student movement from continuing on the same level as before. The Buddhist movement, which could have taken up the slack, also seems to be rather divided today.

THE POLITICAL CRISIS

It will probably be up to the political opposition to centralize struggles in the future. This opposition has had trouble in getting organized. A study recently published by the Vietnamese Community, a Catholic organization, counted 201,200 prisoners in Thieu's jails. In 1973, according to the PRG, 41,000 new arrests took place. Each block of houses is under the jurisdiction of police who must report the arrival of any unknown person. But the political crisis of the regime is manifesting itself nevertheless:

By a series of shakeups in the government and the military high command that have resulted in the firing of a number of generals; by the outbreak of scandals involving smuggling or corruption implicating military and official circles; and by the appearance of opposition political movements. Two of these, both claiming allegiance to the "third force," were founded recently.

On January 19 Thieu signed a constitutional amendment allowing him to run for president for a third time. In response, forty opposition members of parliament marched in the streets of Saigon. The "bloc of deputies struggling for peace and democratic rights" was then formed by fifty-five members of parliament. It works in collaboration with General Duong Van Minh, who was part of the troika that overthrew Diem in October 1963 and who directs one of the rare nonlandes-

fine opposition press organs. This "bloc of deputies" is thus composed of elements who have been an integral part of the regime.

The second opposition movement is composed of opposition personalities for the most part outside the regime. It is called the "movement for the implementation of the Paris accords." Among its leaders are the lawyer Nguyen Long (recently freed from a PRG zone despite his desire to remain in Saigon), the lawyer Tran Ngoc Lieng, the deputy Ho Ngoc Nhuam, the bonzes of the antigovernment faction of the An Quang Pagoda, and Madam Ngo Ba Thanh, president of the "movement of women for the right to life," who was freed in Saigon after an intense solidarity campaign.

The opposition within the third force is in a process of regroupment and remains up for grabs in a battle for leadership between the revolutionary forces and the pro-West opposition to the Thieu regime. The NLF has expressed its suspicion about the parliamentary opposition. In an interview granted to *Le Monde* during the Algiers Conference (and published in the September 21, 1973 issue), Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the NLF Executive Council, insisted on the necessity for defining the representatives of the third force as nondemocratic. On the other hand, the PRG has given clear support to the Movement for Implementation of the Paris Accords. Madam Ngo Ba Thanh especially has been presented as "one of the leaders of the third force in Saigon." She has been holding many "unauthorized" meetings in Saigon.

But the current action of all these opposition movements is converging on the struggle to free the political prisoners. Hunger strikes are breaking out regularly, such as the one by 340 Buddhists in Chi Hoa prison, whose action has been going on for five weeks. General Minh has published declarations demanding the release of the prisoners. The Movement for the Implementation of the Paris Accords, along with R.P. Chantin's Committee for the Reform of the Prison System, has taken a number of steps aimed at getting in contact with the prisoners. Several demonstrations have taken place in Saigon, notably to demand the release of the student leader Huynh Tan Mam.

It is most likely these questions of the political prisoners and democratic rights that will allow for the centralization of all the partial social movements into an active mass political opposition.

Thieu's inability to wipe out all open opposition in spite of the measures he has resorted to (aimed at cleaning up his economic and social situation) make his regime one whose days are numbered. But for all that, the extreme difficulties that the Vietnamese revolution still finds itself confronted with must not be underestimated. U.S. military intervention remains considerable. In 1973 South Vietnam spent three-fourths as much on ammunition as it did in 1972, the year of the big PRG offensive. Six F5Es, one of the world's most modern planes, have just been sent to the Saigon army. Moreover, the decadence, social deconstruction of the refugee population, and the poison spread around by "cultural" propaganda do not make the urban milieu easy to organize.

But the analysis of the economic and social crisis of the Saigon regime sheds some light on one of the bases of the present strategy of the PRG and indicates the future road of the Vietnamese revolution.

PIERRE ROUSSET □

SOLZHENITSYN'S ASSAULT ON STALINISM

... AND THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

The Gulag Archipelago testifies to a threefold tragedy. First, the tragedy of the Stalinist purges that struck at millions of Soviet citizens, among them the majority of the old cadres of the Bolshevik party, who were innocent of the crimes they were charged with. Second, the tragedy of a present-day generation of rebel intellectuals in the Soviet Union whose experience with Stalinism has led them to reject Leninism and Marxism and who are thus incapable of understanding the causes of Stalinist repression, the present reality of the Soviet Union, or the solutions required by the crisis of Soviet society. And third, the personal tragedy of a writer of exceptional talent who, because of his inability to understand the origins and character of the evil he is confronted with, has come to reactionary conclusions that to some extent even adopt the theories with which Stalin and his executioners justified their crimes in the past -- the same theories that are used to justify the repression that is once again striking political oppositionists in the USSR.

STALIN'S WORLD OF CONCENTRATION CAMPS

The first subject of the Gulag Archipelago is the world of forced labor camps created by Stalin and the GPU. During Stalin's reign the inmates of these camps numbered in the millions, the overwhelming majority of them deported, if not executed, in obvious violation of Soviet legality. They were railroaded to the camps by a whole range of monstrous arbitrary procedures: torture, total suppression of all the rights guaranteed by the Soviet constitution, use of secret decrees that themselves violated the constitution and the penal code.

Solzhenitsyn has assembled a mass of testimony about the conditions under which the great Stalinist purges took place. He especially denounces the direct responsibility for these crimes borne by the team around Stalin. Not just the Berias, Jechovs, but also the Kaganoviches and the Molotovs, the men whose complicity accounts for the reticence of so many bureaucratic dignitaries to press ahead after the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist party with the plan of bringing all Stalin's crimes to light.

Solzhenitsyn recounts in detail the condemnations and deportations of whole categories of citizens: all the personnel of the East China railway, all the Korean communist refugees in the USSR, most of the old fighters of the Austrian Schutzbund, most of the former members of the Lettish Red Guard, who had played such an important role in the victory of the October Revolution and the creation of the Red Army.

To be sure, those (in the West!) who have been able to read Leon Trotsky's books *The Revolution Betrayed* and *The Crimes*

of Stalin or the book on the Soviet labor camps by the Mensheviks Dallin and Nikolayevsky will not learn anything basically new from *The Gulag Archipelago*. But they will appreciate the series of vignettes through which the great novelist Solzhenitsyn sketches the personalities he met in prison and in the camps: the old revolutionary worker Anatoly Ilyich Fastenko; chief technician S-vs, prototype of the careerist bureaucrat; M. P. Yakobovich, the old Menshevik, later a Bolshevik and victim of the first witch-hunt trial (the dry run for the future Moscow trials); M. D. Rioumin, the vice-minister of state security who in the realm of depravity surpassed even the sinister Abakumov, Stalin's right-hand man, and who seems to have been the organizer of the "doctor's plot," which was intended to set off a massive new purge that was just barely averted by the death of the tyrant. These unforgettable sketches, which join those of *The First Circle* and *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, are no doubt the most valuable part of *The Gulag Archipelago*.

The book also contains details on the tortures used by the GPU to extract confessions from the accused. Here Solzhenitsyn generally confirms Trotsky's conclusion that lack of a political outlook independent of Stalinism (that is, the political capitulation of Stalin's unfortunate victims before the bureaucratic dictatorship) was the real basis of the confessions.

One of the rare sensational revelations of *The Gulag Archipelago* is that there were some trials that turned out badly for the bureaucracy, trials in which the accused retracted their confessions and turned the accusations not only against the torturers themselves, but also against Stalin's policies, which were often responsible for the "crimes" the prisoners were accused of. Such was the case in the trial of the Communist leaders in the small village of Kadyj in the district of Ivanov.

The general impression that comes out of this important part of *The Gulag Archipelago* is a thorough condemnation of institutionalized repression as a system of government, for that was the objective character of the Stalinist purges. A regime based neither on the political support of the laboring masses nor on the satisfaction of their material needs must resort to terror which becomes the main state institution. That is the most striking aspect of the Stalinist world of concentration camps, and not the supposed "economic" contribution that prison labor is said to have made to the industrialization of the USSR.

Those who blindly denied the reality of that terror or who still deny it today do not contribute one iota to "defending the cause of communism." On the contrary, they cover up

foul crimes against communism and against the Soviet working class, crimes that are all the more pernicious in that they have discredited and continue to discredit the cause of communism in the eyes of a not inconsiderable section of the world proletariat.

DID STALIN ONLY CONTINUE WHAT LENIN AND TROTSKY HAD STARTED?

If there were nothing in *The Gulag Archipelago* except denunciation of Stalin's crimes sprinkled with a few observations on the old theme that "Leninism is at bottom responsible for the crimes of Stalin," it would be enough merely to defend Solzhenitsyn against the bureaucracy's repression while regretting his ideological confusion.

But the reality is otherwise. In *The Gulag Archipelago* Solzhenitsyn systematically attempts to demonstrate with facts and figures that institutionalized terror began at the time of the October Revolution. That is the second central theme of the book, and it is scarcely less developed than the first one. Presented with a mass of evidence and in the impassioned language of an author whose literary talent need not be demonstrated, an author who presents himself to millions of readers adorned with the halo of a victim of contemptible persecution, this theme will have a deep influence on the people of the capitalist countries as well as those of the bureaucratized workers states.

The dialectical interplay between Solzhenitsyn and the Soviet bureaucracy on this point immediately asserts itself as fundamentally counterrevolutionary. Incapable of answering Solzhenitsyn's arguments, the Kremlin bolsters the credibility of the novelist's thesis by heaping slanders and lies upon him and by expelling him from his country, thus facilitating his efforts to drag Bolshevism, Marxism, and the workers movement through the mud. And the circle is closed when the Kremlin uses Solzhenitsyn's reactionary ideology to "prove" that the opposition in the USSR is counterrevolutionary and that, after all, freedom of expression has to be "controlled" in order to avoid the appearance of "two, three, many Solzhenitsyns" -- with or without talent.

It would take a long book to refute in detail Solzhenitsyn's slanders of the October Revolution. We hope that a revolutionary Marxist militant will write such a book. That would confirm once again who are the real heirs and continuators of Bolshevism. Here we can deal only with the most essential points.

First, let's look at the facts. Here the moralist Solzhenitsyn begins with an enormous fraud. In dozens of pages he lays out a detailed description of the red terror. But not a word about the white terror that came first and that led to the Bolsheviks' response!

Not a word about the generosity of the revolutionists in October, November, and December, 1917, when they freed most, if not all, of their prisoners; like General Kaledin, for example, who quickly responded by unleashing a wave of terror and assassinations against the proletariat in power! Not a word about the thousands of communists, commissars, and soldiers traitorously murdered throughout a country put to the torch and drowned in blood with the aim of reestablishing the rule of the landlords and capitalists. Not a word

about the armed attacks on Bolshevik leaders -- not imaginary attacks, like the ones the victims of the Moscow trials were accused of, but real ones, like the assassination of Volodarsky and the attempted assassination of Lenin! Not a word about the intervention of foreign armies, about the invasion of Soviet territory on seven different fronts! Solzhenitsyn the "moralist" and "nationalist" is singularly reduced in stature by presenting such a one-sided analysis.

And further on the level of facts: Solzhenitsyn tries to prove too much, and he winds up proving nothing. In trying to draw a parallel between the "absence of law and legality" during the early years of the revolution and a similar absence under Stalin, Solzhenitsyn cites a series of court speeches by the Bolshevik Commissar of Justice Krilenko. But what does this "evidence" prove? That under Lenin and Trotsky, there were no confessions extracted under torture, that the accused were able to defend themselves freely -- and not without a chance of success -- that these trials were hardly witch-hunt trials, but rather revolutionary ones, doubtlessly sometimes based on circumstantial and insufficient evidence, as is always the case in a revolutionary period, but a thousand miles removed from the caricatures of justice staged by Stalin.

Two trials cited by Solzhenitsyn himself perfectly illustrate the basic difference between the Bolshevik revolution and the Stalinist counterrevolution.

V. V. Oldenberger, an old apolitical engineer who was chief technician of the Moscow waterworks, was persecuted by a communist cell that wanted to remove him because he was so apolitical. He was driven to suicide. Solzhenitsyn waxes indignant about the corrupt, ignoble, communist plotters in this factory. It's not until you read to the end of Solzhenitsyn's account that you find out that the trial he is talking about was organized by the Soviet state to defend Oldenberger, a trial organized against the communist cell that had persecuted him, a trial that ended by sentencing his persecutors, a trial that proved that the workers in the plant had been able to freely elect Oldenberger to the Soviet against the unanimous pressure of the communist cell.

The second trial involved a Tolstoyan, a determined opponent of bearing arms who was condemned to death at the height of the civil war for conscientious objection. That trial ended in an even more dramatic fashion. The soldiers assigned to guard the condemned man justifiably considered the verdict monstrous. So they organized a general assembly in the barracks and sent a motion to the city soviet demanding that the verdict be overturned. And they won!

So we have workers who can elect an apolitical technician to the soviet despite the opposition of a communist cell composed of members who were at best ultrasectarians and at worst totally corrupted careerists. We have soldiers who revolt against the verdict of a court, organize a general assembly, interfere in the "great affairs of state," and save the life of their prisoner. Solzhenitsyn -- without realizing it -- is describing the real difference between an era of revolution and an era of counterrevolution. Let him cite similar examples from the Stalin era to prove that basically it was all the same under Lenin and under Stalin!

No Leninist worthy of the name would be so obstinate as to deny today that the Soviet regime made mistakes both in



A. Solzhenitsyn

matters of repression and in political decisions. And how could it be otherwise with leaders who had the formidable honor of being the first in history to construct a state in the service of the workers and all the exploited on the scale of a vast country in face of bloody and ferocious attacks from powerful enemies, and who had to do it without being able to rely on precedents, instead developing their theories as they went along? Today we know that it was a mistake to step up the repression when the civil war was over, that it was a mistake to suppress all the other Soviet parties in 1921 and thereby institutionalize one-party rule, and that it was a mistake to ban factions within this party. All these measures were conceived at the time as temporary and taken in response to immediate difficulties. They were characterized by an overestimation of the immediate danger posed by the counterrevolution, which actually had been beaten and dispersed, and by an underestimation of the demoralizing consequences they would have for the consciousness and activity of the proletariat in a political climate characterized more and more by administrative repression and less and less by the conscious participation of the masses. These measures facilitated the political expropriation of the proletariat, the strangulation of internal democracy in the Bolshevik party, and the establishment of the bureaucracy's dictatorship. But all this could not have been known with certainty at the time. We know it today. And the Fourth International has drawn all the necessary programmatic conclusions.

But those who denounce the Bolsheviks today have to look at what real alternatives existed at the time. They have to take account of the terrible responsibility of the German Social Democracy (that is, Menshevism), which, by drowning the German revolution in blood paved the way first for Stalin and then for Hitler. They have to consider the fate that awaited the workers and peasants in Germany, where the revolution was not defended mercifully and effectively. The thousands of victims of Horthy's white terror in Hungary -- to cite just one example -- would have been nothing compared to the hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants who would have been massacred in Russia had the white terror been victorious. That rather seems to speak in favor of the justice of the Bolsheviks.

THE SCAPEGOAT OF IDEOLOGY

Solzhenitsyn is on even weaker ground when he moves from the realm of facts to the realm of ideology. In seeking an explanation for the Stalinist terror all he manages to come up with is an attack on ideology, or rather contemporary ideological fanaticism. Under twentieth century conditions, he claims, inquisitionists, conquistadors, colonizers, fascists, jacobins, and -- obviously -- Marxists would all be transformed into the murderers of millions of their contemporaries.

The first thing that is striking about this little list is that it is, to say the least, incomplete. Why has Solzhenitsyn forgotten religious fanaticism? Religious wars have "caused" the death of millions of people throughout history. And what about nationalism and the ideology of "defense of the fatherland" in the imperialist countries, which in the first world war alone "caused" more deaths than the entire Stalinist terror? Is Solzhenitsyn's forgetfulness perhaps a result of the fact that he is an advocate of these two ideologies, religion and nationalism?

What is also striking is the extremely superficial character of Solzhenitsyn's explanation. Why has the same "ideology" produced murderous fanaticism in some epochs and liberal and peaceful tolerance in others? Is it really for "ideological" reasons? Or is it rather because definite and tangible material interests were at work?

Solzhenitsyn likes to "count up" the victims of the Stalinist purges and compare the total to the tally rung up by tsarist and fascist repression. But these "quantitative" comparisons can be extended. What "ideology" was it that "fanaticized" the semi-illiterate book-burners in Chile, who in the space of a few days killed 20,000 people and imprisoned 40,000 others? These are figures that on the scale of the USSR would amount to 600,000 murdered and 1.2 million deported! In the space of a few days! Stalin would be green with envy. Were the book-burners motivated by "ideological fanaticism" or by the desire to defend private property and the eternal values of "free enterprise" and capitalist exploitation?

And what about the famous "crusade" that Franco organized in 1936 to "reconquer" the country that had "fallen into the hands of the reds" -- a crusade that resulted in the murder of more than a million Spaniards by "nationalist troops"? On the scale of the USSR that would be the equivalent of 9 million dead, if we were to play Solzhenitsyn's numbers game. Was it really some sort of "ideology" that could have provoked such a frightful massacre? Wasn't it rather an attempt -- at any price, even the price of rivers of blood -- to prevent the establishment of a workers and poor peasants regime on the Iberian peninsula?

It is only Marxism that can explain and account for the succession of periods of barbarism and civilization throughout human history. When a class is firmly in power, sure of itself and its future, when its strength is increasing and social contradictions are temporarily easing, then it can afford the luxury of ruling through relatively peaceful and civilized means. (Except for moments when its power is suddenly challenged; then we have the massacres of the Communards by the Versailles, even in the nineteenth century, so "civilized" and peaceful in comparison to our own "barbaric" epoch.) But when a ruling class is in decline, when its power is crumbling, when its regime is torn by deeper and deeper contradictions, then barbarism comes to the surface again and the reality of class domination appears in its bloodiest form.

Our epoch is the epoch of the death agony of the capitalist system. The longer this death agony is prolonged, the more features of barbarism, bloody repression, and contempt for human life will proliferate. In this historic sense, Stalin is a product of capitalism, just as much as Hitler, Auschwitz, Hiroshima, and the bombing and defoliation of Vietnam. He is not the product of Soviet society or the October Revolution.

In a narrower and more immediate sense, Stalinist terror is the product of the victory of political counterrevolution in the Soviet Union. The fact that Stalin had to exterminate a whole generation of revolutionists who had led the October Revolution and erected the Soviet state is in itself sufficient to refute the identity Solzhenitsyn arbitrarily establishes between the executioner and his victims. This political counterrevolution in turn represents definite material and social interests: those of a privileged bureaucratic layer that while basing itself on the new property relations created by the socialist revolution, defends its own monopoly of economic and political control as well as the immense advantages that it draws from the prevailing conditions of prolonged scarcity.

By rejecting Marxism, Solzhenitsyn and those who think like him render themselves incapable of explaining the events that have so deeply affected them. Trotsky was fond of quoting Spinoza: "do not laugh, do not cry, but understand." Solzhenitsyn laughs bitterly and cries a great deal. But he doesn't understand very much.

MORALISTIC POLITICS CAUGHT IN ITS OWN TRAP

The contradictions in Solzhenitsyn's thought -- consequences of his rejection of Marxism -- come through in the most striking fashion when the moralist is forced to abandon even the most elementary moral considerations when dealing with the Marxists of our epoch, especially Trotsky and the Trotskyists. In order to justify his claim that Stalin was the continuator and not the gravedigger of Bolshevism, Solzhenitsyn tries to demonstrate that all the Bolsheviks aided Stalin, capitulated before him, collaborated in his crimes, and were accomplices in his frame-up trials.

Beginning from the correct observation that those who politically capitulated before Stalin were logically led to act in this way (because, as Solzhenitsyn puts it, "politics without moral foundation leads inevitably to covering up any crime"), Solzhenitsyn concludes that all communists were politically defenseless against Stalin and collaborated in the terror of the 1930s and 1940s. He even goes so far as to say that Trotsky himself would have confessed to anything the GPU required had he fallen into Stalin's hands. This because Trotsky also lacked an "independent outlook" and an ideology really independent of Stalinism! Besides, he supposedly had no experience with physical and mental tortures, which would have made him able to resist the GPU.

There is not the slightest evidence to support such allegations. They represent only a dredged up version, scarcely even amended or edited, of Stalinist slanders of Trotskyism.

To claim that no communist tendency had an ideological basis independent of Stalinist terror and that all communists therefore were fated to capitulate before the terror is to sweep away the fifteen years of determined battle waged against the Soviet bureaucracy first by the Left Opposition

and later by the movement for the Fourth International, a battle that was waged on a coherent theoretical and political basis that has been brilliantly confirmed by history. It is to insult the memory of thousands of militants -- Trotskyists and others -- who refused to capitulate, refused to become accomplices in the parodies of justice, and who paid with their lives for their loyalty to their principles, demonstrating courage and strength of character unparalleled in history.

To say that Leon Trotsky did not prove his capacity to stand up to personal trials is to forget that he continued his struggle against Stalinism in spite of the GPU's assassination of his children, his secretaries, and his closest coworkers, to forget that he continued this opposition without faltering after a first assassination attempt by the GPU, knowing that at any moment he was likely to be assassinated by Stalin's agents.

To claim, as Solzhenitsyn does, that Trotskyists in the labor camps behaved in a sectarian manner and were incapable of waging hunger strikes for prolonged periods in order to win a series of demands is to insult the memory of the heroes, who numbered more than a thousand, who launched an eighteen-week-long hunger strike around a five-point program defending the rights of all political prisoners just at the height of the Stalinist terror.

It is easy to understand why Solzhenitsyn, a determined opponent of revolutionary Marxism, would follow in Stalin's footsteps in wanting to erase from history the decisive contribution Trotskyism made to the struggle against the dictatorship of the Soviet bureaucracy. That is only an attempt to break down any continuity between the October Revolution and the present political tasks posed in the Soviet Union. But the immoral methods that Solzhenitsyn has to use to try to prove his point once again illustrate the dead-end of any political outlook that claims to be based on absolute moral precepts, a deadend that leads the advocates of such outlooks to trample on their own principles.

HISTORICAL JUSTIFICATION OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION

Solzhenitsyn tries to reduce all Soviet reality to the Stalinist and post-Stalinist terror. This reality is supposed to have resulted from a revolution that should never have taken place: "Russia was not ripe for revolution," he writes.

But what was it ripe for? For tsarist barbarism? For eternal famine, poverty, and illiteracy? By challenging the legitimacy of the October Revolution -- and the legitimacy of revolution in all relatively underdeveloped countries as well -- Solzhenitsyn reveals yet another contradiction in moralistic politics. Should we weep only for the dead assassinated by terror? What about the deaths caused by inhuman socioeconomic regimes, the tens of millions who died of hunger during the great famines in India and prerevolutionary China? Is this any less deplorable? Are those deaths merely products of blind fate before which we must powerlessly bow?

The results of the October Revolution cannot be reduced to the misdeeds of the bureaucracy and its terrorist repression. There are other results of the October Revolution too: the transformation in just a few decades of a vast backward country into the world's second industrial power, a country in which illiteracy has been eradicated, in which the num-

ber of doctors and the number of new books published (including translations!) is among the highest in the world, in which the infant mortality rate is lower than it is in Britain. Those who fight against arbitrary police repression in the USSR by claiming that it is the inevitable result of the October socialist revolution cannot help but overlook this other aspect of Soviet reality, which has exactly created the material basis for a flowering of real Soviet democracy if the power of the bureaucracy is overthrown.

Neither Marx, Lenin, nor Trotsky ever believed it would be possible to build a real socialist, classless society in one country alone, still less an economically underdeveloped country. The imperialist epoch is especially characterized by a twofold phenomenon: On the one hand the international domination of capital restricts and distorts the development of the backward countries and on the other hand revolutionary movements themselves tend more and more to become international. Solzhenitsyn regrets this and calls upon the Soviet leaders (!) to abandon "communist messianism," something from which they have hardly suffered. But the slightest bit of moral feeling for the misery in the world today and the catastrophes that threaten humanity leads instead to the conclusion that it is necessary to redouble efforts to bring about the victory of the world socialist revolution, which would incidentally also contribute to the elimination of arbitrary police repression in the bureaucratized workers states, that is, to the victory of the political revolution in these countries.

THE DILEMMA OF THE INTELLECTUAL OPPOSITION IN THE USSR

Like the work of any great novelist, *The Gulag Archipelago* reflects not only a social situation as a whole, but also the thought of a particular social layer. Solzhenitsyn represents the wing of the opposition intelligentsia in the Soviet Union that has reacted to the crimes of Stalin by breaking with Lenin and Marx. The importance and breadth of this layer, even among Soviet youth, must not be underestimated. Its very existence constitutes yet another condemnation of the political regime that rules in the USSR.

Here is a society that calls itself socialist, that claims to have eradicated "antagonistic social contradictions," that represents itself as the "most united society in the world," in which generations of intellectuals born after the revolution are developing in a manner ever more hostile to Marxism! This development can only be encouraged by an "ideological struggle" waged against it by the falsifiers of Marxism whose "arguments" in the end come down to suppression of writings, deportations, banishment, or internment of oppositionists in insane asylums!

But — an irony of history! — trenchant enemies of Stalinism like Solzhenitsyn and his friends, people who reject Leninism on the grounds that it was responsible for Stalinism, remain to a large extent prisoners of Stalinist ideology. In large measure they move in the universe of myths with which Stalin excused and justified his crimes.

These myths are reflected not only in the anti-Trotskyist slanders taken directly from the recipe book of the General Secretary. They are also reflected in the way this wing of the intellectual opposition approaches the problems of present-day Soviet society and their solution.

For there is yet a third theme in *The Gulag Archipelago*, one that is less obvious and explicit than the two we have been discussing, but is no less integral to Solzhenitsyn's thought. That theme is the inability of the working class to manage the state and the economy. It must be stated clearly: This theme reflects an intellectual arrogance common to technocrats and bureaucrats.

It is in a passage devoted to the 1930 trial of the members of the so-called industrial party that this notion of Solzhenitsyn's comes through most clearly. In this passage we read that it was logical for the technicians to try to impose discipline in the workplace! That it is logical that those who "are capable of rationally organizing their activity" should stand at the head of society! That it is logical that politics should be partially determined by the exigencies of technology!

This whole technocratic credo, as well as the rejection of direct workers power and of soviet power that it implies, has been and remains one of the ideological bases of Stalinism. It is no accident that the same notion is found among Solzhenitsyn and his friends. What unites them with the bureaucracy is that both share a refusal to accept the possibility of workers exercising power; they share the same basic isolation from the life style, thought, aspirations, and ideals of the working class.

In this sense, after all is said and done, Solzhenitsyn remains an ideological prisoner of the bureaucracy, an advocate, at bottom, of an authoritarian political regime — but one without excessive repression. His is the voice of an enlightened authoritarianism that rejects soviet democracy as fundamentally evil and utopian. His political action is oriented not toward the masses but toward individual protest and "open letters" to the Kremlin.

Once one understands the social character of Solzhenitsyn's work, one cannot but agree with the position taken both by the new Leninists in the USSR and by the revolutionary Marxists in the capitalist countries: to support the movement for democratic rights in the USSR. One would have to completely misconstrue the sociopolitical relationship of forces in the Soviet Union to believe that currents like Solzhenitsyn's, cut off from the living forces of the proletariat that represents the absolute majority of the active population, could seriously threaten the economic foundations of society and initiate a movement for the restoration of capitalism.

What encourages the rebirth of antiworker, antifunctionalist, anti-Marxist, and Slavophile tendencies is the repressive and conformist lead weight that bears down on Soviet society and fosters political and ideological cynicism among the masses.

The best antidote to these reactionary ideologies — and in the long run, the only effective antidote — is the rebirth of critical political consciousness among the masses, which will win them to Marxism. All those who encourage such a rebirth are working toward defending and strengthening the socioeconomic foundations of the USSR. All those who perpetuate the absence of public political debate and differentiation can only encourage obscurantism and hostility to Marxism, which appears as a state religion.

In the Soviet intellectual opposition there are many wings and tendencies, united only by the common struggle against

Stalin's crimes and for the real reconquest of civil rights that are formally guaranteed; that is, for an application of the Soviet constitution. The left wing of this opposition, of which Major General Pyotr Grigorenko is the most stirring symbol, is composed of surviving old Bolsheviks, militant Leninists who by their exemplary courage are defending and rehabilitating Leninism in the eyes of Soviet youth. What a windfall it is for the Kremlin to be able to denounce the antisocialist ideology of Solzhenitsyn (while of course not daring to publish his books in the USSR)! And how much more thankless is the bureaucracy's job in suppressing oppo-

sitionists who claim allegiance to Marx and Lenin!

At a time when the international bourgeoisie wants to concentrate attention on The Gulag Archipelago in order to divert attention from its own crimes and to whip up hostility to communism, we must redouble our efforts to free Grigorenko, Yakhimovich, and their comrades from the torturers and to defend the rights not only of the Solzhenitsyns but also of the Marxist and Leninist oppositionists to freely speak, discuss, publish, and organize in the USSR!

— ERNEST MANDEL — □

Spain

the communist party and the kremlin

Today, more than in the past, the relationship between the world Communist parties and the Kremlin is affected by considerations relating to the specific situation in each country and the selection of leaderships in each party. Thus, it is quite clear that the leadership of the French Communist party, while it has under certain conditions taken some distance from the decisions of the Soviet regime, has done so in the most moderate terms possible and, above all, has shown over time that its criticism or disapproval was strictly relative. Its disapproval of the invasion of Czechoslovakia, for example, has been more than buried by its eulogies to "normalization." As for the Italian Communist party, when it takes its distance from Moscow, it does so rather more sharply than the French CP does. Nevertheless, the expulsion from the party of the group around Manifesto showed the Kremlin that the Berlinguer leadership was well aware of the limits that could not be exceeded without damaging relations too badly.

The situation in regard to the Spanish Communist party is much more complex. Very early on the leaders of this party took positions close to those of the Italian CP. But since the Spanish CP is incomparably weaker than the Italian, Moscow was less inclined to put up with its criticisms. Further, as a party that functions under conditions of illegality, the Spanish CP, despite its right-wing policies, is less hamstrung by parliamentary and electoralist considerations. And finally, the policy of the Kremlin and the other Eastern European governments toward the Spanish government has sometimes been intolerable for the Spanish CP. (An example is the shipping of Polish coal to Spain during the strike of the Spanish miners.) And in addition, the Carrillo leadership has been led to push its criticisms to what the Kremlin con-

siders an unacceptable point. So the Kremlin thought it could put some pressure on this party by instigating the formation of a faction led by Lister, a former military leader during the Spanish civil war.

This operation failed miserably. The Carrillo leadership won an overwhelming majority of the party membership in Spain and among the countries of Western Europe, where there is a big Spanish emigration. It expelled Lister and his faction, which was composed solely of CPers living in the Soviet Union and the Eastern European workers states. One of the members of the Lister faction is Mercader, the murderer of Leon Trotsky. The Lister faction, which publishes an organ with the same name as the CP's, *Mundo Obrero*, achieved so little success that even the Marchais leadership of the French CP, which is determined not to run afoul of Moscow, can support Lister only backhandedly and has to publicly solidarize with Carrillo when it issues anti-Franco statements, as it did during the Burgos trials. But the Marchais-Carrillo polemic goes on nonetheless. *Nuestra Bandera*, the theoretical organ of the Spanish CP, published an article by Manuel Azcarate, a member of the party leadership, criticizing the policy of the Soviet CP. The latter responded with an article in the review *Partinaia Jizn*, which was almost completely reproduced in *l'Humanité* (the French CP paper). *l'Humanité* did not bother to furnish its readers with the text of Azcarate's incriminating article, nor did it describe the situation that exists between the Spanish and Soviet CPs.

Here is what *l'Humanité* (February 23, 1974) reproduced of the article that appeared in *Partinaia Jizn*:

"... Mr. Azcarate grossly distorts the essence of the foreign policy of the USSR and the other socialist countries as well as the international activity of the Communist party of the Soviet Union. He advances a false thesis on the contradiction that allegedly exists between the interests of the socialist countries and the interests of the revolutionary movement.

"... Thus, whether he intends to or not, Mr. Azcarate in fact counterposes the state interests of the socialist countries to the interests of the revolutionary movement and to the interests of certain fraternal parties. It is understood that this manner of posing the question is totally contrary to the principles of socialism and to the existing practice of revolutionary struggle...."

"Distorting facts that are well-known public knowledge, Mr. Azcarate proclaims that in the wake of the policy of peaceful coexistence that is applied by the countries of the socialist community 'there has appeared the perspective of a sociopolitical status quo in the world.'

"The falseness and absurdity of these declarations are obvious to every conscious participant in the workers movement.

"The policy of peaceful coexistence has been approved many times in the documents of the international communist movement. . . .

"The international congress of Communist parties held in 1969 stressed that 'this policy means neither maintenance of the social and political status quo nor weakening of the ideological struggle. It aids the development of the class struggle against imperialism on the national and international scale.'

". . . The relations between the USSR and the United States have improved in recent times. . . . Is that contrary to the interests of the revolutionary movement? Is it in the interests of revolutionaries to aspire to create international tension laden with the threat of a new world war? At the 1969 conference the Communist and workers parties of the world declared that 'the main link for united action of the anti-imperialist forces remains today, as it was yesterday, the struggle for world peace against the threat of thermonuclear world war. . . .' The Spanish Communist party has many times proclaimed its agreement with this position. It is clear that all the measures taken by the Soviet Union in regard to its relations with the United States are aimed precisely at attaining this objective. . . .

"As is shown by practice, which as Lenin said is the best test of the truth, the détente is creating a much more favorable situation for the struggle for democratic rights, for the reduction of military spending and the improvement of the material situation of the masses, and for democratic and social changes. New conditions more favorable to the intensification of the struggle for the unity of all antimonopoly forces are surging forward. It is no accident, for example, that the governmental Common Program between the Socialist and Communist parties in France came along just as Soviet-French state relations were developing and peaceful coexistence was being strengthened.

". . . Mr. Azcarate particularly criticizes economic relations between the socialist countries and the countries of capital. In his view when the socialist countries speak of long-term cooperation with this or that country with an opposing system, it supposedly excludes in advance the possibility of any social change in that country. . . .

"It's one of two things. Either we start from the fact that communists favor settling the differences between the two systems in the world arena without world war, or else we are advocates of the perspective of 'exporting the revolution,' including with arms. If we uphold the first thesis, then we must base ourselves on the perspective of developing many peaceful ties among countries, economic ties especially. . . .

"It is also impossible to pass over in silence Mr. Azcarate's attacks on the Soviet socialist regime. While Soviet democracy is expanding throughout the socialist society that has

developed in the USSR, and while the creative activity of the masses is developing in all spheres of social life, Mr. Azcarate, at the instigation of declared opponents of the Soviet socialist regime, falls into articulating all sorts of fabrications about the absence of democracy in the USSR.

"It is also impossible to avoid noting that Mr. Azcarate launches crude attacks on the Soviet Union. He asserts that the CPSU 'is taking no step' 'no attempt or initiative' to overcome the tension in the relations between the USSR and China. Instead of truthfully and objectively stating the position of the CPSU and the Soviet state on this question, Mr. Azcarate simply repeats Peking's lies about a supposed blockade and alleged military pressure by the USSR against China.

"But the whole world knows that the CPSU insistently and constantly aspires to normalize relations between the USSR and China and that it has advanced and is still advancing constructive proposals that the Chinese leadership has rejected one after the other. . . .

"One of Manuel Azcarate's main objections to the possibility of holding a new international conference (of Communist parties) is that the conference could supposedly lead 'to a return to the practice (which he has invented himself -- Partinaiia Jizn) of unconditional subordination to the CPSU' and to the creation of a sort of single organizational center of the Communist movement. He even declares that some people would aspire to create such a center. . . .

"The CPSU has many times stressed that there does not exist and there cannot exist any single center of the international communist movement and that within the international communist movement there are no parties that lead as opposed to parties that follow. The CPSU starts from the idea that all the parties are independent and have equal rights, and it bases its policy on this idea. . . .

"The CPSU and the Communist party of Spain have always been linked by close and friendly relations, by the relations of their common struggle for the interests of the workers and against war and fascism. They are linked by the blood of their sons shed on the battlefields of the civil war in Spain and of the great national war. Today, as in the past, the CPSU holds firmly to the policy of support to the struggle of the Communists and of all the workers of Spain against the antipopular regime, for democracy, social justice, and peace. . . .

"The CPSU has always held and will always hold to the development and strengthening of its relations with the CP of Spain on the basis of the principled positions of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism."

This article is typical of the present-day Moscow bureaucrat. The crudest slanders and most ignoble accusations that in the old days would have been used against even a much less stinging critique of the Kremlin's policy are no longer resorted to. But not the slightest political argument is used to support the bureaucrat's case. It all consists of more or less peremptory affirmations: The Spanish leader "distorts" the facts and the essence of the USSR's policy; his statements are false and absurd; he makes things up, and so on.

If one looks at the criticisms made by the Spanish journal one immediately sees one accusation that all the leaderships of the Communist parties are very sensitive about: that Mos-

cow would like to reestablish an international center, to become once again the "guiding party" -- an accusation denied by Moscow, which while it might want to reestablish the former state of affairs is no longer able to do so.

There are other criticisms that are much more interesting. First of all, the Spanish CP criticizes the Kremlin for its policy toward China, or more exactly, for its economic and military pressures. Whatever criticisms Peking deserves on other aspects of its policy, there is no doubt that on the question of economic and military pressure it is Moscow that bears the heaviest responsibility.

The Spanish CP also brings up the counterposition of the interests of Soviet diplomacy and the development of mass struggles. In reply Moscow marshals nothing but worn-out stereotyped clichés claiming that the only alternative to "peaceful coexistence" is nuclear war and that "peaceful coexistence" is not an obstacle to the development of mass movements but rather creates the best conditions for them. The reference to the Common Program in France -- where the Union of the Left is an attempt to canalize and put the breaks on the revolutionary upsurge -- lends no credibility to these clichés.

And finally, the internal regime in the Soviet Union is challenged. Only an incorrigible bureaucrat would dare to write: "while Soviet democracy is expanding throughout the socialist society that has developed in the USSR. . . ."

The criticisms that we have been discussing come from a Communist party that has a reformist line. It is trying to replace the Franco regime with a bourgeois-democratic one through an alliance with sections of the bourgeoisie and without revolutionary struggle. The source of the criticisms is the fact that the Kremlin's policy is creating an embarrassment for the bureaucrats of the Spanish CP. They indicate to some extent the lines of cleavage within the Communist parties. Objectively, these criticisms weaken the monolithic structure of the Communist parties. While they may be made in order to bolster a right-wing orientation, they open up greater possibilities for gaining a hearing within these parties for a fundamental revolutionary Marxist critique of these policies. That critique is getting strong support from the revolutionary rise of the masses, especially in Western Europe.

PIERRE FRANK □

bolivia

TOWARD AN INEVITABLE CONFRONTATION

The following article, dated January 31, 1974, is translated from *Combate*, journal of the POR (Partido Obrero Revolucionario -- Revolutionary Workers party), Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

The analyses we made in 1973 have been strictly confirmed. The Bolivian political situation is characterized by the constant deterioration of the military dictatorship, the bourgeoisie, and imperialism and by the new rise of a revitalized workers movement supported by sections of the peasantry and the middle classes that have also gone into motion. Once again the political process is leading toward confrontation. The various elements of this situation, which we have to follow in the most attentive fashion, are these: an insoluble economic crisis; the monetary stabilization decreed in October 1972 on the basis of a currency devaluation of about 70 percent has failed. Consequently, the purchasing power of currency has declined. The wage earners have therefore suffered a loss in buying power while prices have ceaselessly risen. The year 1973 can be characterized as the year of the great inflation. During this same period, there have been

three important increases in the prices of basic consumer goods. These increases have seriously struck at the wages of workers, the incomes of technical sectors and professionals, the savings of employees in commerce and banking, and so on.

THE YEAR OF THE GREAT INFLATION

But these measures have also hit the peasantry, which has rapidly found itself confronted by a contracted market due to the lowering of the income of the workers and the increases in the prices of commodities, a consequence of the increase in transport costs. Concurrently, a new phenomenon has appeared in Bolivia: shortages of basic products like rice, sugar, coffee, and meat. Previously, production of these items had been sufficient not only to satisfy national consumption but also to leave a surplus for export. The world situation, characterized by a crisis of food products and an increase in taxes on these products, has led producers to send the greater part of their production to the external market in search of stronger currencies and more favorable

tax rates. Hence, the internal needs of the country can no longer be satisfied and shortages have developed, accompanied by long lines in front of stores and by speculation.

The Banzer government, an instrument of private and imperialist companies, acts as the police protector of all these financial machinations. Its dependence and servility have led it to subordinate itself to English, North American, and Brazilian imperialists, who are buying Bolivian raw materials at prices inferior to those of the world market. That is why the current rise in raw materials prices on the world market cannot result in economic gains for Bolivia. Moreover, the dictatorship, pressed by the shortage of foodstuffs, has offered "its" solution to the problem with the economic measures of January 21, 1974, measures that protect the interests of the big producers and strike at the workers.

These measures set the Bolivian prices of these basic products at the same level as the world market prices. The Bolivian economy is going through a crisis that will not be solved under the present regime. The regime has promised development based on massive infusions of capital. But this requires not only economic facilities and advantages for investors, but above all and fundamentally social peace and political security, which, despite the criminal fascist repression, do not exist in Bolivia. Consequently, there has been no capital investment on a grand scale. What investment has come in has been weak, aimed at bolstering up a few companies in the eastern part of the country, or else has been purely political in nature, aimed at supporting the dictatorship. In fact, capital is flowing out of Bolivia and the country's natural resources are being plundered.

From an economic standpoint, 1973 was a negative year; 1974 was begun with a packet of measures decreed by the dictatorship in the context of political and social instability that had arisen in 1973 and was continuing. In this economic and social situation, made worse by official policy, the masses again began to enter into struggle for the first time since the defeat of August 21, 1971, when the dictatorship seized power. In fact, the economic decrees of October 27, 1972, had triggered a mobilization of the workers movement around the question of defense of the workers living standards. After the explosive popular reaction that broke out in the major cities -- especially in La Paz, where once again barricades went up -- a tenacious resistance movement was organized, beginning in the trade unions. None of the workers organizations accepted the government measures, and protest strikes broke out one after another. There were petitions demanding higher wage increases to make up for the loss in purchasing power caused by the currency devaluation.

The rank-and-file mobilizations swept away the weaknesses that initially appeared among the union leaderships. The backbone of the movement was the printing, banking, and commercial sectors, and the mine workers, who initiated the mobilization and developed the critiques of the policy of the fascist Banzer.

THE CLASHES IN COCHABAMBA

In Cochabamba, a densely populated peasant area and a historic center of agrarian reform, the Cliza Peasant Union, entering into conflict with the national bureaucracy of the peasant unions, rejected the currency devaluations. It was here that the first clashes with the army took place. Even-

tually, the civic, patriotic, and religious organizations joined in the workers protest movement. The military government soon found itself confronted by the forward march of the new movement. It was forced to open negotiations on the workers demands, to enter into agreements with the union leaderships, and to make a few concessions. For the government, it was a question of preventing the movement from unifying or becoming centralized around a united leadership. The government agreed to recognize the functioning of the regional and sectoral trade-union federations that accepted compromises; in this way the dictatorship was going to permit the raising of partial demands of an economic character in order to maintain the division of the workers movement into atomized units that could be negotiated with or fought separately. But the agreements the dictatorship worked out with the union leaders were quickly annulled by the inflationary spiral and the reaction of the rank and file, who demanded new concessions. Banzer had to invoke the state security law -- under the pretext of fighting speculation. But in reality, his aim was to contain the popular mobilizations taking shape.

By the end of 1973 the workers movement was ready for struggle. The November 19 miners conference, held openly at Potosí, represented a synthesis of the progress made in the recomposition of the workers movement. As in the past, the mine workers showed the way. Starting from the economic demands raised by the broad Bolivian masses, they moved on to a revolutionary political opposition to the dictatorship. They ratified the socialist theses of the miners union and condemned the whole policy of the regime.

The national federations of manufacturing and construction developed other active centers of opposition. And among white-collar workers, the bank employees continued their tradition of resistance. But in that sector something new happened: The Federation of Commercial Employees, which joined the mobilizations, was revitalized and went on strike after several decades of passivity.

December 1973 saw the development of trade-union mobilizations around political problems -- among others the question of amnesty for all political and trade-union militants imprisoned or exiled since Banzer's coup in August 1971 -- which were discussed on a national scale, and around the elections planned by the dictatorship for an unknown date. In the absence of revolutionary political parties, which, because of the underground conditions imposed on them, could express themselves only in a very limited way, it was the trade-union organizations that openly took positions on these problems.

At the beginning of the year tensions within the workers movement became exacerbated. That was why the explosion was immediate when the economic measures of January 21 were announced. The key sectors of the movement that are known for their dynamism responded instantaneously, calling a strike and taking to the streets in protest demonstrations. But the new elements that had appeared at the end of 1972 and developed throughout 1973 exploded onto the scene. In the cities, commercial employees participated in the strike actively and violently, thus manifesting a change in attitude among the petty bourgeoisie, which in the past had been neutralized and cut off from the workers movement. In the countryside the explosion was more violent, particularly in the Cochabamba Valley. The trade union at the Manaco shoe factory (which is owned by the Bata international trust) was just coming out of a conflict with the employers during which it had occupied the plant. When the union learned of

the decrees raising prices more than 100 percent, it called for a strike and occupied the factory again. It also took over the neighborhood, where it organized a blockade of the streets, thus cutting the road linking Cochabamba and La Paz. Banzer went to discuss the government measures with the peasants in the union of Quillocollo, the region where the factory is. The result was that the peasants of neighboring regions quickly joined the mobilizations and new barricades went up in the Vinto, Parotani region; two bridges were dynamited and the road was completely blocked. Then the mobilization spread to the Punata region, and soon all the roads to Cochabamba were blocked.

The peasantry integrated itself into the resistance, while the peasant leaders in La Paz were offering their support to Banzer -- and this just one month after the holding of the Paracaya Peasant Congress, organized by the government and chaired by Colonel Lopez.

Cochabamba was transformed into the most active center of the resistance. But the masses were mobilizing throughout the country. There were clashes in Oruro and La Paz. The peasants of the La Paz Peasant Federation also declared themselves against the government's economic measures and, in a document against these measures, called on the workers to form a Committee to Defend the Interests of the People.

The worker and peasant mobilizations in Cochabamba took on vast proportions. The dictatorship surrounded the city, declared it a military zone, and entrusted its command to General Perez Tapia. Faced with the tenacity of the workers mobilization and the danger it represented, the dictatorship panicked and hurried to mobilize its military apparatus. The air force was used to strafe peasant and worker concentrations; then tanks and armored units moved against the barricades and roadblocks. Finally, specially trained antiriot troops combed the region. A declaration of state of siege completed the repression, and dozens of revolutionary militants were arrested.

Bolivia was swept by these clashes and the dictatorship felt its apparatus eroding. In its turn the Catholic Church recognized the workers demands and also condemned the government's economic and repressive policies.

The Bolivian masses began once again to manifest their extraordinary combativity. The regime's political and socio-economic weakness became patently obvious. But the weakness of the worker-peasant movement and the middle classes was also revealed.

More than 100,000 people were on strike; but the strikes were partial protest actions lacking centralization and coordination. There was no general strike of 100,000 workers. Likewise, the economic demands were varied, even though they attacked all the government economic measures. There was no bloc of unified demands. The demands ranged from a monthly increase of 1,200 Bolivian dollars to 4,000 Bolivian dollars; and there were lesser demands, too. The mobilization lacked a unified and centralized leadership. The absence of the COB (Central Obrera Boliviana -- Bolivian Workers Federation) could not be compensated for. So the most urgent necessity is the setting up of a leadership that is up to the dynamism and combativity of the masses.

This lack of centralization among the masses allowed the government to extract itself from its bad situation. The

longer the masses fail to develop such leadership, the longer the regime's respite will last.

Among the masses, three forces try to unite through the strikes: the trade-union organizations of the middle class (commercial and bank employees, small commerce, etc.), which had been strengthened during last year; the workers movement in the cities and the mines; and the peasants, with their leaderships. Worker-peasant unity began with the roadblocks and barricades in the Cochabamba Valley, with the workers of the Manaco and Qjimbol factories and the industrial milk factory at Pil, and with the peasant unions of Quillocollo, Vinto, Parotani, Punta, and Clizo. This alliance in action went through a test of fire during the dictatorship's air and armor attacks. The workers and peasants who died in the battle will be the cement of the future great worker-peasant alliance.

INSOLUBLE POLITICAL CRISIS: THE POLITICAL RESPONSE OF THE MASSES

The insoluble economic crisis and the response of the mass movement to the dictatorship's economic policy triggered serious contradictions within the Banzer government, contradictions that were expressed by cabinet shakeups and by the deterioration of the strength of the regime, the army, the FSB (Falange Socialista Boliviana -- Bolivian Socialist Falange), and the MNR (Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario -- Revolutionary Nationalist Movement).

Inside the army, Banzer ordered his competitors out, eliminating them from the political scene. The commanders in chief of the armed forces, Remberito Iriarte and Tenteno Anaya, were kicked out, as were Colonel Andres Selich, the minister of the interior who was later assassinated in the house of his successor, and Adet Zamora. Lower-ranking officers were removed and sent to embassies as military attachés. The old leaders were thrust aside and the commanding heights of the army passed into the hands of second-ranking officers unconditionally bound to the orders of Banzer himself. The latest clashes and the peasant explosion of Cochabamba led to the break-up of the Military High Command. General Eladio Sanchez, commander of the armed forces, was accused of having links with subversives and was kicked out. New divisions within the army are inevitable given the regime's economic policy and the pressure of massive popular opposition.

A deep crisis broke out within the FSB because of the split carried out by Carlos Valverde, the FSB's ex-secretary general and former minister of health, who revolted against his superior, Mano Gutierrez. That struggle ended in favor of the latter, who had the support of Banzer; but at the end of 1973, during the most recent ministerial crisis, Gutierrez was replaced and sent to a post at the United Nations.

The most important crisis undoubtedly occurred within the MNR, which was divided into many factions. The cabinet reorganization of last November placed representatives of the armed forces and private companies in all the key ministries. It was for that reason that Paz Estensoro withdrew the MNR from the government. In his declaration of November 28 he explained that the reasons that had led the MNR to participate in the government in the first place had disappeared. That decision precipitated a grave crisis. Paz Estensoro and his leadership were repudiated; Franco

Guachalla, O. Bulacia, and Raul Lema, the MNR representatives named by Banzer to secondary ministries, refused to resign; then, the leaders Ruben Julio and Ciro Humboldt lined up against Paz Estensoro and his group; Paz Estensoro was arrested and sent into exile in Paraguay.

This whole process within the government and the political groups supporting it amounts to a recomposition of the official front. Opposition personalities, as well as those who could have created conflicts among the various sectors of the government, were eliminated. They tried to homogenize the governing group. The aim was nothing other than to present a solid front in face of the mass movement that was developing. The government and the bourgeoisie, along with the army that is its party, is preparing to confront the masses. The dictatorship sees that its maneuvering room is progressively narrowing. It has been unable to dominate the movement of the masses. The masses have reorganized and are escaping from the regime's control, despite the government's repressive measures. The dictatorship cannot stand by passively in face of the unfolding of the movement confronting it on a daily basis. But the very measures it is taking to homogenize itself are accelerating the decomposition of the Bolivian situation. The Banzer regime is doomed!

The dictatorship's weakness in face of the forces that are rapidly maturing against it led the armed forces to postpone indefinitely the general elections that Banzer had promised for June of this year. The military chiefs are simply taking account of the fact that to open an electoral period, no matter how tightly controlled, would mean giving the opposition the opportunity to break out of clandestinity and giving the mass movement the opportunity to speed up its organization. Fear of the masses, insecurity in face of their mobilization, and consciousness of the paucity of its social base -- these are the real factors that led the government to reject elections and refuse a general amnesty.

THE NECESSITY FOR A REVOLUTIONARY FRONT

The Bolivian left has remained on the sidelines of this process. If from the standpoint of the masses the Bolivian political process has had the weaknesses that we have indicated, it is due fundamentally to the fact that the Bolivian left has been able neither to surmount its chronic weaknesses nor to put itself back together again after the blows it has suffered through repression. If the masses do not advance further and if the dictatorship, in spite of its weakness, is able to resolve its crisis and its internal conflicts, it will be because of this insufficiency of the parties that claim adherence to the workers and revolutionary movement, parties whose situation has been made much more precarious by the Chilean coup d'etat, which has worsened the isolation of militants and leaders in exile in Chile from those working inside the country.

Confronted with the violence of the repression and the difficulties of relaunching open political struggle in Bolivia, certain parties have changed their line and their perspective instead of forming and accumulating the forces needed to overcome these difficulties. In 1972 the left was united in the FRA (Frente Revolucionario Anti-Imperialista -- Revolutionary Anti-Imperialist Front) and was engaged in a struggle for the overthrow of the dictatorship and for socialism. But when it came time to apply and concretize the accords and resolutions of the FRA the front was divided and paralyzed. A sector of the movement, inspired by the rapid new rise

of the workers movement and by the semilegal functioning the dictatorship allowed the trade unions and fooled by the offer of an electoral opening, beat a retreat; it substituted a national-democratic perspective for the socialist perspective of the FRA and turned against the FRA, not in order to criticize the FRA's inactivity and to demonstrate the responsibility of the parties that were dividing and paralyzing it, but rather to criticize its clearly socialist character and the hegemony of the proletariat within it. These sectors, forgetting the reality of the Bolivian class struggle, set themselves the task of finding other allies in order to form a broad front.

There have been two attempts at formation of a broad front. The first was Lechin's, which scarcely succeeded in regrouping the two communist parties, the PRIN (Partido Revolucionario Intransigente Nacional -- Intransigent Revolutionary National party), and the MNR of Giles Tuazo; that is, three organizations of the old FRA plus some sectors of the MNR, a party allied to the regime.

The other attempt was that of General Torres, who sought to pull a Bolivian Peru. Like the other attempt, Torres's was not able to group together the political forces working independently of the government.

The meaning of these attempts is quite clear. They flow from a different conception of Bolivian reality and of the character of the revolution and, in real life, they call into question the proletarian hegemony and leadership of the revolutionary process. From the standpoint of gathering forces together, they have in practice remained inferior to the FRA, in which nine organizations participated. The organizations of the "Pact of Four" and of General Torres's front see the possibility of forming nationalist governments in Bolivia and proceed under the notion of revolution by stages and alliance with the bourgeoisie. Because of the fact that the bourgeoisie in Bolivia supports the dictatorship, they are left with remnants of the MNR and put their hopes in winning over a section of the army.

The Bolivian situation itself throws the error of this position into sharp relief. The democratic opening, the elections, the amnesty that would allow militants to reenter the country, and so on, are clearly feeble illusions. For, in fact, the Banzer government is hardening its policy, preparing its apparatus for confronting the masses, and strengthening the army against the masses. The bourgeois sectors frightened by the rise of the masses are continuing to line up with the regime. In its turn, Peronism quickly revealed its real rightist and reactionary character by reaching an accord with Banzer. The progressive bourgeoisie that would open up a democratic period in opposition to imperialism simply does not exist. The theses of democratic nationalism are clearly showing their limitations and their erroneous character and today lack defenders. The necessity of unifying the masses, of pressing forward the centralization of their movements and of developing a national leadership and the urgency of united action of the workers and peoples parties are what the situation demands.

Revolutionary Marxists are advocates of the united front on one condition: that the bourgeoisie does not participate and that its leadership be proletarian. This is exactly the sort of front that is now appearing in the actions of the workers and peasants who are taking on Banzer the gorilla. Revolutionary Marxists must engage themselves in ideologically crushing deviations that are involved in the two sorts of fronts that have been set up, whose conception tends to turn the masses

away from their historic class objective and constitutes a brake on the progress of the movement.

It is through this political activity of clarification and through strengthening themselves as a leadership that the revolutionary Marxists will open the road to the triumph of the revolution.

THE ARMING OF THE MASSES, BASIC OBJECTIVE FOR OVERTHROWING THE DICTATORSHIP AND INSTITUTING SOCIALISM

The immediate perspective that flows from the situation is clear. The government on the one hand and the masses on the other have entered a dynamic that is leading to confrontation. An Ovando-type solution or a democratic opening is unlikely.

To be sure, the dictatorship has been weakened by losing much of the social base from which it drew support to come to power. That is why it is tolerating a certain amount of functioning by the workers organizations. We must utilize all these legal or illegal possibilities, all the while remaining conscious of their limitations in order not to fall victim to repression. Our goal is the overthrow of the dictatorship and we must take advantage of the present conditions, both in regard to the rise of the mass movement and the weaknesses of the regime, to advance this process and to open the way for the workers and peasants government.

Our primary task is to prepare the masses and to prepare ourselves as a party. But preparation of the masses can on no account be propagandistic or literary in character. To prepare means to act, and to act means also to prepare. This means to abandon propagandism, verbalism, and general and abstract declarations.

The masses in motion are confronting the dictatorship, but they are doing it in a disunited way. Our task is to further integrate ourselves into these struggles in order to unify, generalize, and politicize the current mass struggles and to present a transitional program that leads the masses to the conquest of power.

We must press for the arming of the masses, which is tied to the formation and activity of armed detachments of the party. It is the party, with its armed actions and military teams, that prepares and pushes ahead the arming of the masses.

The course of events in Bolivia in the two months since the above document was written can only confirm our analysis. The explosion of the worker-peasant masses was held in check by the government mainly because of the weaknesses and deficiencies of the revolutionary leadership. But the revolu-

tionary movement, although held back by the repression, is continuing its internal development. The 100 peasants killed and the thousands wounded during the fight against the army in Cochabamba shook the whole Bolivian peasantry and stimulated its political maturation. Within the working class activity aimed at establishing a new revolutionary trade-union leadership is once again moving ahead. In the factories and mines differences have appeared within the present leadership, or within sections of them. The Manufacturing Federation and the Miners Federation have been censured in assemblies for not having waged an energetic struggle in defense of the interests of the working class. Further, the necessity for centralization and unification of all the struggles of the masses is becoming more and more clear. Discussions have begun among the rank and file aimed at determining what actions must be undertaken to make the COB rise to the present tasks.

If the January events shook the worker and peasant movement, stimulating its political development, they also struck at the administrative, political, and repressive apparatus of the military government. Differences have appeared within the army, differences that were aggravated by Banzer's visit to Brasilia and his opening of discussions with the Pinochet government. There have already been two cabinet crises since the peasant massacre; they exposed the crisis of the dictatorship. Banzer saw the bases of his power shake and felt the effects of his lack of social base. So he resorted to a new ploy in order to drum up some support -- or so he hoped. Bolivians have a deep-rooted desire to recover the seaports that Bolivia lost during the 1879 armed aggression of English imperialism and the Chilean oligarchy. The military dictatorship decided to play on that popular sentiment. Banzer appealed to the population to unite to settle this problem. In Cochabamba in early April he assembled 200 leaders of the bourgeois parties -- ex-presidents, ex-ministers, ex-parliamentarians, directors of the private sector, and trade-union leaders. At that meeting he declared that the present international conditions favored winning a "return to the sea." He asked those present to unite in a "holy alliance" to fight for this goal. He pledged a cabinet of national unity and asked for a social truce.

It was an obvious maneuver. He asks for a social truce from the worker and peasant masses after having driven down their living standard, while the bourgeoisie continues to rake in profits. The workers are supposed to renounce their struggles in favor of the "drive to the sea." This is the meaning of the social truce. The gorillas had failed in their attempt to crush the masses. So to gain time they resorted to a demagogic campaign. But even in this area their proposals were blocked by the political development of the workers movement. The miners union even refused to participate in the Cochabamba meeting, denounced the farce, and demanded the lifting of the state of siege and the granting of greater freedom for the functioning of the workers movement. □

DECLARATION OF THE POR, BOLIVIAN SECTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL, JANUARY 31, 1974

WE SALUTE THE RISE OF THE WORKER-PEASANT ALLIANCE AND ITS FIRST BATTLES AGAINST THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP!

By violently rejecting the January 21 economic measures, the workers and peasants and the commercial and banking

employees have shaken the foundations of the military government. In the midst of the whirlpool of mobilizations and protests, the military dictatorship appeared weak, lacking social and political forces to support it. Banzer the gorilla, supported against the mass mobilizations only by rifles, tanks, and war planes, felt his end draw near.

We salute the Bolivian masses for their courage, tenacity, and heroism. Massacred so many times, but never vanquished, they took on their oppressors, standing erect once again. Their actions in La Paz, Oruro, and especially Cochabamba, showed the enormous potential of worker and peasant combativity which the dictatorship has been unable to destroy. This is the historic force that will liberate Bolivia from imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation!

We salute the peasant mobilization of Cochabamba Valley, which broke the military bureaucracy's police-military control of the countryside. We salute the worker-peasant alliance that was concretized in the roadblocks and the barricades. At Cochabamba the factory workers and peasants initiated a new period of struggle against the dictatorship. The peasantry was incorporated into struggle at the side of the proletariat; the military's iron grip on the peasantry has begun to be broken even in the most tightly controlled regions; the working class came out of the factories to take control of the neighborhoods -- for occupation of factories is not enough -- and was joined by the peasantry, which is also hit by exploitation and the military dictatorship's policy of famine. It is for these reasons that Cochabamba is today the most important event in the whole Bolivian political situation.

We also salute the revolutionary militants, our comrades of the POR, who stood in the front ranks during the mobilization. We salute those who were taken prisoner in La Paz and Cochabamba. We pay homage to the memory of the dead, the workers and peasants, and the many who fell wounded during these struggles.

The military dictatorship has been shaken to its very bones. But while it is socially and politically weak, it still has the army to keep itself in power and it can count on the support of Yankee imperialism and Brazilian subimperialism. At this moment the general staff is looking for ways to make the masses back down, to prevent the peasant front from developing, and to prevent the more important revolutionary forces from moving to rally to the proletarian revolution. Furious attacks on the worker and peasant movement and a systematic repression of the revolutionary trade-union leaders and workers parties must now be expected. Already the time-honored accusation has been raised that social conflicts in Bolivia are being fomented by an international conspiracy. That is only a smokescreen to cover up the repression. And at the same time the effects of the economic measures are leading to a constant rise in prices and to

stronger attacks on the living standard of the masses.

The POR, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, calls for continuing the struggle, beginning from the level attained in January, in order to respond to the dictatorship in an ever more intense way. It is with this aim in mind that we make the following proposals to the masses, the trade-union leaders, and the vanguard:

1. Coordinate the struggles for workers and peasant demands that broke out during the last week in January in order to unify the program of demands and bring together the actions against the dictatorship. The response of the workers and a section of the peasantry to the price increases in foodstuffs was immediate, but the protest strikes and the demands they raised were varied. We must avoid fragmenting the forces of the masses.

2. The reason for the fragmentation lies in the absence of a centralized revolutionary leadership. So we must throw ourselves into the task of constructing such a leadership, beginning by reaching interunion agreements in the key sectors (miners, manufacturers, white-collar workers, revolutionary peasants, etc.) and moving toward reconstitution of the COB.

3. Raise the level of the mass movement by unifying, generalizing, and politicizing its actions through a program that takes up the problems and demands of each sector, unifies them, and fuses them with the revolutionary perspective of overthrowing the military dictatorship, the only way of opening up the possibility of fulfilling the demands of the masses. This program must be presented as an alternative against everything Banzer does.

4. Generalize and organize the arming of the masses, a task that was again posed in real life during the worker-peasant clashes in Cochabamba and the skirmishes in Oruro and La Paz. The trade-union militia that are constantly being reborn must be revitalized and united with the detachments of the vanguard organizations. The old, traditional militia, defensive and short-lived in character, must go beyond that form of organization and give rise to the Revolutionary Workers, Peasants, and People's Army.

5. For a policy of united front for concrete action capable of stimulating the struggles of the masses for their economic and political demands.

The latest events have once again thrown into relief the crisis of leadership in the Bolivian political process: the rise of the mass movement on the one hand and the atomization of the vanguard on the other. The reformists and Stalinists are working in the exact wrong direction. They are desperately seeking so-called progressive bourgeois sectors to unite with instead of seeking the revolutionary unity of the peasants, the workers, and the vanguard.

sri lanka

The following is the text of a political resolution approved by the Central Committee of the Lanka Sama Samaja party (Revolutionary), Sri Lanka section of the Fourth International.

THESES ON THE UNITED FRONT PROGRAMME

The basic theses of the Party in relation to the Common Programme of the United Front of the SLFP/LSSP/CP(M) have been set out in two documents, both of which were published before the United Front took over the Government of Ceylon

from the UNP at the end of May 1970. One is the Open Letter addressed to members of the LSSP in August 1969. The other is the Manifesto, titled "The Way Forward for the Masses," issued by the party in connection with the general election of 1970. These theses are as follows:

- (1) The Common Programme was not designed to lead to the establishment in Ceylon of a "Socialist Democracy," as it was made out to be, but to promote the interests of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie, within the framework of capitalist property relations, and subject, consequently, to the con-

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tinuing domination of Imperialism over the economy as a whole.

(2) The programme did not even threaten serious inroads upon existing capitalist property in the plantations or in industry. What was really envisaged was increased control by the capitalist state in certain sectors of the economy, in order to sustain and assist in the development of the dominant private sector, with an increased share for the Ceylonese bourgeoisie in the capitalist exploitation of Ceylon.

(3) With private ownership in the plantations and in industrial enterprises left intact, and with essential sections of the import/export trade also left in private hands, no radical change ever could be expected in Ceylon's existing relations with Imperialism.

(4) Talk of fighting bureaucracy, bribery and corruption, blackmarketing etc., within the framework of the capitalist administrative system would prove to be completely futile. Within that framework likewise, talk of associating workers in the management of state enterprises, or of associating trade unions and the people in general with the preparation and carrying out of economic plans, would prove to be empty.

(5) Existing inequalities of the racial minorities and various forms of discrimination against them would be preserved. The vast mass of the plantation workers would remain without even the fundamental democratic right of franchise.

(6) The Sinhala Buddhist masses, together with the national minorities, would remain subject to the repressive legislation that the UNP government and previous governments had used, more and more frequently, to restrict or to suppress the democratic rights and civil liberties of the people, in the matter of strikes, demonstrations and other forms of mass action.

(7) The subordination of the LSSP, together with the CP, to the leadership of the SLFP in the United Front under the Common Programme, had brought the LSSP into conformity with Stalinist policies of class collaboration with the so-called national bourgeoisie, in the maintenance of capitalist rule. In that context, the LSSP would be forced to play the role of watchdog of the Coalition against the working class, the landless rural masses, and the ever-mounting numbers of the unemployed, when they demanded adequate wages, land, jobs and the like, and resorted to any mass action in pursuance of their demands.

It was on the basis of these theses that the Party declared as follows, in its Manifesto of May 1970: "The bitter truth, which the LSSP(R) considers it necessary for the masses to understand, is that whatever parliamentary regime may be established following the general election of 27th May, capitalist rule and capitalist exploitation will continue, with increasing unemployment and hardships for the masses of the people, and with increasing likelihood of the suppression of the democratic rights of the masses, and their complete regimentation even, in the interests of the preservation of capitalist rule."

The correctness of these theses has been borne out by what has happened since the United Front Government took office in June 1970.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE EMERGENCY

The common desire of the parliamentary parties to preserve bourgeois rule in Ceylon under a parliamentary regime was manifested by their joint participation in the procedure whereby the members of Parliament, elected under the previous (Soulbury) Constitution at the general election of May 1970, sat as the Constituent Assembly, to discuss and adopt a new Constitution. The two main opposition parties, the UNP and the Federal Party, ultimately voted against the new Constitution, after having agreed on its most essential aspects for the preservation of bourgeois rule.

The new Constitution gives expression to the political separation of the bourgeois regime in Ceylon from that of Britain, by the severance of its vestigial link with the British Crown. Ceylon remains within the British Commonwealth, however.

The Constitution has established a unicameral legislature, with provisions that are designed to minimise delays in the enactment of new legislation and to free such legislation from juridical review after enactment, thus avoiding legal obstruction to the implementation of legislation that is intended to give effect to the Government's programme.

Existing inequalities in the use of the Sinhala and Tamil languages in the administration of the country have been perpetuated, with the Tamil language being denied the status of an official language, though its limited use in the administration and in the courts is given recognition.

The stateless condition of the plantation workers of Indian origin, amongst other disabilities, has also been perpetuated.

Fundamental rights and freedoms have been listed only for citizens, but subject to whatever restrictions may be prescribed by law, in the interests of the capitalist class. Furthermore, specific provision has been made for the declaration of a state of emergency at the discretion of the Prime Minister, as in the past, under the Public Security Ordinance. All democratic rights and civil liberties are thus capable of being suspended or restricted arbitrarily, whenever the Government of the day considers it expedient.

It is noteworthy that the new Constitution was adopted on May 22, 1972, under the state of emergency declared in March 1971, and that it is still being maintained, long after the suppression of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna in April 1971, though the threat that the JVP was said to have constituted to "public security" was made out to be the reason for the original declaration of the state of emergency.

The new Constitution and the continuance of the state of emergency under it thus brings out the incapacity of the Ceylonese bourgeoisie to maintain its rule on a democratic basis, either for the national minorities or for the masses.

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