

IMPRESSO

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portugal AFTER MARCH 11

LIBERDADE!

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indochina: toward
liberation



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indochina:

toward liberation



The exact hour of the liberation of Phnom Penh has not yet been fixed. But the fall of the Lon Nol regime is inevitable given the present course of the struggles in Cambodia. New military defeats for the puppet army are in the offing. More important, the certainty that the Cambodian people will soon be victorious in their struggle against U.S. imperialism has now spread beyond revolutionary circles. That certainty is now felt throughout all world public opinion. The latest debates in the American Senate and House of Representatives on "aid" to Indochina have reaffirmed this conviction: Washington is incapable of preventing the debacle.

Consequently, even before the actual liberation of Phnom Penh, the situation in Cambodia is weighing heavily on the relationship of forces throughout Indochina. It is underlining once again the deep interdependence of the components of the Indochinese revolution. Yesterday Hanoi was warning the Thai, Saigon, and American regimes against the establishment of aerial bridges linking the Utapao U.S. base in Thailand to Saigon and the Cambodian capital. Today the Provisional Revolutionary Government and the National Liberation Front are inflicting a genuine rout on Thieu's forces in the Central Highlands and in the northern provinces of South Vietnam.

The importance of the latest events in South Vietnam should not be underestimated. Saigon is speaking of a "redeployment of effective forces." But that

decision demonstrates its defensive position. In reality, what we are witnessing is the initial-brusk collapse of a decisive element in the system of American imperialist domination of South Vietnam. To be convinced of this it is sufficient merely to consider the implications of Saigon's so-called tactical retreat.

Militarily, it is one of the most decisive regions — perhaps even the most important of all — that is coming under the total control of the liberation forces, for the Central Highlands dominate both the Saigon region and the narrow coastal plain in the center of South Vietnam. At the same time, hard fighting is going on east and northwest of Saigon, and the "decay" of the puppet positions in the Mekong Delta is being aggravated.

Politically, the implications of the present situation are even more serious for the Thieu regime. This is true for three reasons. First of all because of the weak forces that have actually been committed to these battles by the NLF. In fact, it was a force of only 1,000 men that invaded Ban Me Thuot, the first city liberated in the Central Highlands. In a significant irony of history, these 1,000 men were Montagnards of a movement called Furlo, which had been created by the Americans to engage the ethnic minorities in the anticommunist struggle. It was for revealing that fact that Paul Leandri, the French journalist of Agence France-Presse, was murdered by the offices of the Saigon security services.



the victory of the indochinese toilers will be our victory as well

The NLF and PRG have waged their offensive essentially with regional forces and not with regular divisions.

Second, because the cities that Thieu has abandoned are among the most important in the country: Ban Me Thuot, Pleiku, Kontum, probably Dalat and Quang Tri, and perhaps even Hue. Six new provincial capitals, some of them symbolic and prestigious: Quang Tri, temporarily liberated in 1972 and retaken by U.S. troops after heavy losses; Hue, the second city of South Vietnam, former imperial capital, in which U.S. marines had also engaged in hard battles when they retook the city after the Tet offensive in 1968.

Finally, because we are seeing a sudden and vast extension of the liberated zones. The gain is not only geographical; it is also military, economic, political, and human — in spite of the attempts of the puppet army to empty the abandoned regions of their population.

Cambodia and Vietnam. The current force of the Indochinese revolution is asserting itself with brilliance. The gradual shift in the situation in favor of the revolutionary forces that has been going on since the signing of the Paris accords two years ago is now leading to an outright overturn in the relationship of forces.

The fears of a Ford or a Kissinger are understandable. The imperialist impasse in Indochina today is finding an echo in Thailand, where communist guerrillas

are scoring successes and where the presence of the U.S. bases is for the first time becoming a real political problem in Bangkok. Above all, it is the first time that U.S. imperialism, the most powerful imperialism in the world, has been defeated by a people in arms, even though it had engaged in a total war against that people; this is what is happening today, at least in Cambodia. In spite of the B-52s, the expeditionary force, the terrorist groups and the Phoenix Project, the pacification and the Vietnamization, the psychological warfare and the policy of socially and economically corrupting the population.

It is a part of the world where every day brings closer the final victory of a revolutionary battle against imperialism. It is Indochina. This final victory is not yet won, and we must expect new American maneuvers, especially in Saigon, aimed at maintaining the neocolonial presence, at least in Vietnam. The international revolutionary movement must remain prepared to respond to these maneuvers with all means at its command.

But for thirty years the struggle of the Indochinese peoples has highlighted an essential battle for us; it is a road for the struggles of the workers of the world that is an alternative to the reformist sidetrack. It is the alternative of revolutionary combat.

The victory of the Indochinese toilers will be our victory as well.

March 20, 1975

PORTUGAL

after the March 11 attempted coup:



AN UPSURGE OF MASS ACTION

by A.UDRY

"A Foolish Coup," read the headline of the reactionary British weekly *The Economist*. "These were people working against their own interests," the magazine said. That is, in fact, the conclusion that emerges from the aborted coup of March 11. Coming in the middle of a broad and growing workers upsurge, the attempted coup stimulated the mobilization of the toiling masses, intensified the radicalization of the rank-and-file soldiers, and gave rise to a combination of the further development of struggles in the factories and neighborhoods and the emergence of the mass movement onto the political scene. The relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and the working class was shifted in favor of the workers. March 11 marks a new turn toward the rapid development of the Portuguese revolution.

The attack

Why was such a coup attempted? For the time being it is impossible to detail exactly all the mechanisms of the operation. Nevertheless, the meaning of the

coup attempt can be illuminated by placing it in the framework within which it developed.

The generalization of struggles since mid-December, the multiplication of factory occupations, and the emergence of demands for nationalizations (see *INPRECOR*, No. 21, March 13) were disturbing the bourgeoisie intensely. Such a situation must have been alarming to the putschist sectors of the army. Further, the pressure of the Spinoist elements had made itself felt during the latest elections (March 1) within the Armed Forces Movement. Otello Saraiva de Carvalho, deputy commander of COPCON (Continental Operations Command), had suffered a heavy defeat. On the other hand, General Damiao, the former chief of the National Republican Guard (GNR, one of the main instruments of the Salazarist regime), was elected, as were known Spinoists like Orlando Costa and Salvagueiro Maia. Damiao and Maia were to play important roles in the events of March 11. The former tried to take over the Carmo barracks, the center of the GNR.

PORTUGAL

The success of the Spinoist current came after the publication of the Program of Economic and Social Policy, which had been adopted by the Council of Ministers on February 7. This program was characterized by "moderation." The inclinations of Melo Antunes, a leader of the center of the AFM, were predominant in it. On the central questions — banks, insurance companies, agriculture — the views of the Socialist party and the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD — People's Democratic party) held sway.

These factors increased the uneasiness among the circles favorable to a putschist solution and at the same time suggested that the relationship of forces in the army would enable such an operation to be carried out successfully. Moreover, factors such as the lack of political sensitivity, the inability to grasp opportunities, and the inability to comprehend social forces, all of which had been generated within the bourgeoisie and the military hierarchy by forty years of fascism, were not the least of those that accounted for the March 11 operation. Finally, it must be stressed that such an attempted coup was an echo of the plans for coup d'état being hatched among those sectors of society most affected by the fall of the corporatist regime. (See INPRECOR, No. 20, February 27.)

It is probable that the "legalist" wing of the AFM knew about the preparations for such a coup. Likewise, given the control they have over the soldiers, it is not excluded that the Carvalhos and Gonçalves allowed the coup attempt to go ahead in order once again to strengthen their positions in the framework of responding to the putschists.

At first glance, the military forces committed to action by the leaders of the coup appear ridiculous (two airplanes, a few helicopters, and some paratroops from the Tanco base in the Tomar region north of Lisbon). But it would be false to reduce the military aspect of the March 11 operation solely to these forces. In many units the officers were hesitating, waiting for the relationship of forces to become clearer, to see whether the initiative taken by Colonel Durao's paratroops would succeed or not. In the Leira barracks, for example, the soldiers put the officers up against the wall and forced them to state their positions. At that point the hesitation disappeared.

In the initial phase, the objectives of the putschists were these: To concentrate the attack (after seizing the Lisbon airport) on the Sacavem barracks, where Light Artillery Regiment No. 1 (RAL 1) was stationed; to seize the Portuguese Radio Club and take control of the GNR forces in the Carmo barracks in the center of Lisbon. The soldiers of RAL 1 had demonstrated along with the workers of the workers

commissions during the mobilization of February 7. For the Spinoists, taking control of the RAL 1 barracks was thus intended to immediately lend political significance to their operation: regaining a grip on the ranks of the army so as to counteract the tendency toward collaboration between soldiers and workers. They hoped that this would enable them to win over many officers. They were badly mistaken. The Tanco paratroops did not view the soldiers of RAL 1 as an enemy to be slaughtered. The cleavage within the army did not run along the lines anticipated by the organizers of the coup.

When the collaboration between the population and the soldiers of the Sacavem barracks showed the paratroops that their attempt had become isolated, they packed up and left rather quickly.

The reaction of the soldiers of the Sacavem barracks is indicative of the radicalization that the coup generated among the army ranks. For example, a leaflet distributed by the soldiers and "approved by all the soldiers, sergeants, and officers," asserted: "We demand that all fascists and conspirators be shot immediately, whether they are in the army or not, whether they are generals or not. The criminal attack that was launched against the soldiers and officers of RAL 1 this morning shows that neither purges nor transfers to the reserves prevent the left-over fascist and reactionary officers of the capitalists and imperialists from preparing the counterrevolution in order to drown the revolutionary popular movement in blood." The soldiers were not content simply to hand out leaflets; arms were given to civilians, who participated in defending the barracks.

Collaboration between the troops and the population developed in many regions. In most of the meetings being held today soldiers of RAL 1 are taking the floor. This continuous bath in the sea of the people is not without effect on the soldiers, even though relations between the army and the workers are often marked by a certain paternalism. These experiences of soldiers and workers collaborating against reaction are precious for the future. They can provide the material for enabling workers and revolutionary militants to precisely explain the forms of self-organization and linkage between workers and soldiers within the perspective of beating down any new reactionary attempts.

Response of the workers

March 11 was different from September 28 in that this time it was a movement within the army that provided the point of departure for the attempted coup. Hence, the accent will be placed on the link between the mobilization of the toiling masses and the ranks of the soldiers, and not on the soldiers'

rallying to initiatives taken by the Trade Union Federation and, partially, by the far left, as was the case on September 28.

Nevertheless, the mobilizations of March 11 did contain elements that emerged from the September 28 experience — the people's barricades among other things.

The Portuguese Communist party and the Trade Union Federation played a decisive role in the organization of the mass movement; this was true both in the factories and in the demonstrations and organization of pickets to oversee the movement of traffic. In Porto the Trade Union Federation immediately called for a general strike. In a leaflet that was widely distributed the Federation said: "Concentrate on the radio stations, the post offices, and the railroad stations in order to crush the counterrevolution. All united with the AFM, which once again is defending April 25!"

In Lisbon the Trade Union Federation organized strike pickets, people's barricades, and so on. The workers commissions (see INPRECOR, No. 21, March 27) were slower to react and were not able to offer an overall response. The Trade Union Federation was not about to let itself be outflanked by these organizations, and it took precautions. The political weakness of the coordinating body of the workers commissions, broadly influenced by the Maoists of the UDP (União Democrática Popular — People's Democratic Union), appears clearly in the light of this simple fact: The coordinating body was unable to meet until the night of March 11, when the events were already over! A precious opportunity to develop a centralized initiative outside the factories stimulated by the workers commissions and moving in the direction of the establishment of organs of self-defense was thus lost.

Several factors account for the role played by the CP on March 11. Taking the lead in the mobilization strengthened its position and its base prior to the holding of the elections. The CP now appears as the decisive element in the struggle against reaction, side by side with the institutionalized AFM that it supports unconditionally. This role, along with its organizational consolidation, should become the CP's major trump card in its relations with the other parties of the government coalition; the CP will use it to establish a relationship of forces that may not be reflected electorally. Further, for a party that has emerged from forty years of underground struggle against fascism, the "lesson of Chile," while it is not the same as the one drawn by revolutionaries, nevertheless exists: The leaders of the CP do not wish to be eliminated without lifting a finger in their own defense!

Finally, in face of the emergence of not unimportant far-left and centrist forces, the CP's giving proof of an ability simultaneously to mobilize and to limit and control a mass mobilization enables it not only to reduce the political room available to the far left, but also to "merit" the recognition of the AFM. The probable entry of the MDP-CDE (close to the CP) into the government tends to confirm the immediate success of this policy and the concurrent political defeat for the bourgeoisie.

The initiatives of the workers developed on several levels:

1. Checkpoint barricades were set up along the roads leading out of Lisbon and Porto as well as along the routes running through the regions bordering Spain. The workers, who were rather well-armed, conscientiously searched autos in order to prevent stocks of arms from being shifted about. These barricades also kept watch over major arteries. The workers of a metal factory in Alcântara, for example, set up a barricade to prevent the possible movement of police forces to the barracks of the Alcântara naval station. The workers carried out many actions like that. The workers of Lisnave (in Margueira near Lisbon) not only provided pickets for searching vehicles, but also organized protection for children leaving school.

2. Nerve centers like the post offices and radio stations were defended by the workers. For example, a large picket squad protected the national Portuguese radio and television station. Such an experience can lay the groundwork for the development of concrete propaganda about the function that control of such nerve centers can play in centralizing an offensive of the toiling masses during the organization of a general strike. The example of the re-starting of Radio Renaissance, which had been on strike for twenty days, can be similarly used.

3. There were many clashes with the police (the GNR and the PSP) during the demonstrations. The demand for the dissolution of these repressive bodies was taken up in Porto and Lisbon. The dialogue that took place upon the release of General Pinto Ferreira, the new chief of the GNR, who had been detained by the putschist mutineers in the Carmo barracks, reflected both the will of the population to have done with the police and the ambiguity of the people's relation to the AFM. It went like this:

The general. I am free! The officers taken with me are also free!

The people. Victory! Justice!

The general. Everyone has heard the speech of Brigadier Otello (Carvalho). Demo-

the LCI response



A Reacção ATACA

O RAL-1 É BOMBARDEADO!!!

Contra ataquemos os industriais e banqueiros!!!

CAMARADAS:

Desde há cerca de uma hora e meia, o RAL-1 começou a ser metralhado pela aviação ao lado dos reaccionários, procurando generalizar o confronto, esmagar a resposta operária, e impôr um Governo Militar de direita.

Logo após os acontecimentos de Setúbal, em que a PSP metralhou centenas de manifestantes, logo após o ataque generalizado dos capitalistas procurando a todo o custo impôr pela vitória eleitoral o fim dos direitos económicos, políticos e sindicais da classe operária, lançam agora a sua ofensiva militar!

TRABALHADOR, MOBILIZEMOS ACTIVAMENTE:

- Nas empresas, realizando imediatamente assembleias, criando piquetes de trabalhadores armados, centralizando as iniciativas nas Comissões de Trabalhadores eleitas;

- Nos bairros, levantando barricadas a qualquer avanço dos reaccionários;
- Garantindo o apoio de todos os soldados, marinheiros e oficiais revolucionários;
- Dissolvendo a PSP e a GNR, todas as organizações fascistas (CDS e PDC).
- Prendendo e julgando publicamente todos os fascistas.

TODOS CONCENTRADOS NO ROSSIO E A PORTA DOS QUARTEIS!

Todos unidos para vencermos de uma vez por todas os EXPLORADORES!

UMA SÓ SOLUÇÃO: ESMAGAR A REACÇÃO

POR UM GOVERNO REVOLUCIONÁRIO
DOS TRABALHADORES

O Comité Regional de Lisboa da
LIGA COMUNISTA INTERNACIONALISTA

Our comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League), the Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, intervened in a massive way during the March 11 events. Three times they distributed leaflets in 30,000 copies. (We are reproducing the second of these leaflets.) They called for support to the demonstrations initiated by the CP in Porto and Lisbon, while the Maoists isolated themselves through sectarianism and organized their own separate marches. In Porto Comrade Sardo spoke side by side with militants of the CP and the Trade Union Federation, among others; his speech was broadcast over the radio.

In Amarante the comrades of the LCI stood at the head of initiatives aimed at developing a general strike in this large village.

cratic justice will be handed out to those responsible.

The people. People's justice!

The general. The situation is under control and there is no problem. All those who rose up are under control and have been taken prisoner. Justice will be done. The people must have confidence in the armed forces.

The people. AFM! AFM!

The general. From today on let me work in peace in order to find out what is the situation with the men of the GNR throughout the country. It's my problem.

The people. It's our problem!

The general. It is up to me to assume my responsibilities and take up my command again.

The people. Dissolve the GNR!

The general. We thank you for your attitude, which was a great help to the movement. It is a great help to see that the people are with the AFM.

The people. The people are with the AFM! Death to the PIDE! Death to the GNR! People's justice! People's government!

(From *Diario de Lisboa*, March 12, 1975.)

4. In many cities demonstrators visited the headquarters of the CDS (Centro Democrático Social — Democratic and Social Center), the PDC (Partido Democrático Cristão — Christian Democratic party) and even the PPD. These actions reflected the understanding that is developing among broad sectors of the population about the relations among the factions and political formations of the bourgeoisie, especially the CDS and the PDC.

5. In responding to the counterrevolution, the employees of the banks and insurance companies initiated actions that culminated in the decision to nationalize the banks. For an initial period, the statements of the union of bank employees were aimed at preventing reaction from being able to use the banks to strengthen its offensive or from massively withdrawing funds in case of defeat. For example, the Porto section of the union of bank employees gave these instructions in a leaflet: "Close the banks immediately. Don't make any payments. Set up pickets at the doors to check entrances and exits. Watch the telex and the telephones."

Finally, the workers commissions of various newspapers immediately published communiqués in "their"

newspapers. The workers commission of the daily *O Seculo* asserted: "The revolutionary forces, enemies of the monopolists and latifundistas, must answer reactionary violence with revolutionary violence."

Richer than those of September 28, all these actions throw into relief the possibilities of linkup between the workers and soldiers and provide very fertile ground for the propagation of forms of self-organization, for the emergence of organs of dual power in the context of a general strike.

A political defeat

March 11 was a major political defeat for the bourgeoisie. This emerges especially clearly when the events are viewed in the twofold perspective of the successive loss of important trump cards by the bourgeoisie and the dynamic of the struggles of the workers.

Confronted by a working class whose combativity was low and whose consciousness was very weak, if not nil, the bourgeoisie initially hoped to be able to carry out a "presidentialist" operation that would give it sufficient time to develop its own instruments of political rule. That was the intent of the "legal" coup of July 1974, Palma Carlos's attempt to postpone the elections and instead hold a plebescite on Spínola. This maneuver was supposed to be combined with the dissolution of the AFM, or at least with its withdrawal from the political scene. But reality worked out differently from the expectations of the bourgeoisie: The AFM entered the government. The CP and the SP had demonstrated their opposition to the Palma Carlos operation and had made their weight felt. Then, in September 1974 there was the "civilian coup d'état," the September 28 demonstration that was supposed to somehow ratify the seizure of power by President Spínola.

That operation ended with an immense mobilization of the workers and with the strengthening of the Bonapartist role of the AFM. The Portuguese CP and the Trade Union Federation also emerged from that test as winners.

Since then, the bourgeoisie had been playing two games. On the one hand, it was consolidating its political parties, especially the PPD, in order to play a real role in the framework of a parliamentary system. On the other hand, because of the extremely unstable character of the relationship of forces between capital and labor, it was compelled to charge the AFM with the task of defending what was essential: capitalist relations of production. In the latest period, since the beginning of January, the role of the AFM as a relatively independent power structure

has been intensified, with the traditional instruments of bourgeois democracy (parties, the parliament, and so on) increasingly being shunted aside. Concurrently, putschist plans were being worked out among those layers very much attached to the old regime; and there were relations between these sectors and the CDS-PDC (Christian Democrats).

After March 11, the AFM appears more and more as the bourgeoisie's ultimate instrument of defense in a situation marked by growing instability in the relations between the two basic classes. The debate on the institutionalization of the AFM was quickly settled: Essentially, the AFM has concentrated power in its own hands. The Council of the Revolution set up after March 11 combines the functions of the Junta of National Salvation, the Coordinating Commission of the AFM, the Council of State, and the government. It thus commands the legislative and executive prerogatives of these various bodies. There is no doubt that the AFM will try to set up a structure permitting the representation of a civilian regime, but that will eliminate none of the predominance of the AFM itself. To respond to the radicalization in the army the AFM intends to create a General Assembly elected by the soldiers, which will replace the Council of 200. As against this concentration of power, a so-called counterpower will be set up, the aims of which are to prevent a cleavage from opening up in the army and to maintain the united framework that is so essential, given the fragility of the situation.

For an initial period, the attempted coup has produced a realignment of forces to the benefit of the so-called left wing of the AFM. But it would be wrong to consider this shift definitive. A new shake-up is not excluded, especially since pressures are being exerted by various currents internationally (the Social Democracy, the Christian Democracy, etc.). The AFM has to provide itself with guarantees. The slowness of the discussion on the composition of the new government and the hesitations about suspending the CDS during the election campaign (and the ultimate refusal to do so) are indications of this possibility. In the final analysis, many things will depend on the scope and duration of the mobilizations that developed after March 11.

For the moment, the AFM has also banned two Maoist organizations, thus applying the method of amalgam used by Minister Jesuino during his March 12 press conference. (The banned groups are the MRPP (Movement for the Reconstruction of the Proletarian party) and the AOC (Workers and Peasants Alliance), the latter a split from the Portuguese Communist party-Marxist-Leninist. For good measure, the Christian Democratic party (PDC), led by ex-general Osorio, a man linked to Spínola, was also suspended.

The AFM's control of the election campaign will now be strengthened. According to the new press law, organizations that attack the AFM can be banned. The measures taken against the MRPP and the AOC may presage further sanctions against the far left. There were good reasons why the AFM selected these two organizations to ban. They had isolated themselves by their attacks on the Portuguese SP as "social fascist" and by the AOC's confrontation with the SP in the chemical workers union. The workers response to the bans was thus limited. It is important for revolutionaries to find adequate ways to respond to these challenges to the democratic rights of the workers and to explain to the workers what the dangers of this type of repression are — in spite of the sectarianism of the two groups involved.

In the immediate period ahead, the bourgeoisie once again has to bolster the credibility of its parties. For the PPD, this will be a matter of avoiding being confused with the rebel factions, so as not to lose ground electorally. Concurrently, the far right could change its tactics and commit itself to a policy of harassment, provocations, militant attacks, etc.

Prolonged instability

The abortive coup gave a strong impetus to workers struggles. The most important workers victory so far has been the nationalization of the banks and insurance companies. On March 12 the union of bank employees exposed the complicity of the big financial groups with reaction and demanded the nationalization of the banks. The banks had been under the control of the workers who, after checking through the books, produced proof in black and white of the aid given by the banks to the parties of the right and the far right.

The following banks were nationalized: Espirito Santo, Pinto & Sotto Mayor (tied to the Champalimaud group), Portugues do Atlantico, Borges & Irmao, Nacional Ultramarino, Fonecas & Burnay, and Totta & Açores (tied to the CUF). All these banks have important links in the productive sector, in services, real estate, etc. Imperialist holdings remain unaffected. It is not known whether there will be compensation. The nationalizations had been demanded by the CP in its draft economic plan; but they had not been called for in the Economic Emergency Program.

From the objective point of view, the nationalizations do not represent a "revolutionary" measure. On the one hand, they are supposed to allow for centralizing financial resources for projects aimed at equipping the infrastructure and at industrial re-

structuring; on the other hand, they will support the export industry (with credits), which is the key part of the Economic Plan. The editorialist of the newspaper of the large private banks in Geneva understood this. He wrote: "In statizing the banks, they certainly took a 'socialist-like measure' . . . but this measure is not yet decisive: It does not forcibly enlist private capital. It simply aims at orienting essential financial resources toward activities considered most productive and most necessary." And in conclusion: "The latter (that is, capital), whether Portuguese or foreign, will at least demand (before investing) some guarantees of stability that only the AFM can provide." (Journal de Genève, March 19.) But what is important here is less this objective aspect than the understanding by the workers of the fact that these flash nationalizations were the fruit of their mobilization. This has had a stimulating effect on tens of thousands of workers.

The demands for nationalizations are being strengthened. They are being combined with occupations of factories, production under workers occupation, and many experiences of workers control, spurred on by the struggle against economic sabotage and by the necessity to carry the antifascist purges through to the end. Many employers are no longer allowed to enter their factories, and managers have been prohibited from taking any documents out of factories or insurance companies.

These occupations and demands for nationalization contain a twofold dynamic. Sometimes the workers simply demand that the AFM take over the factory. But increasingly, some actions are going beyond this tendency toward delegating power. The transport workers union, after underlining the central role of transport in the Portuguese economy and the danger of economic sabotage in that area, demanded that the transportation system be nationalized by the end of March. In its declaration, the union added that if this nationalization was not carried out, the workers would have to drive their trucks to the headquarters of the union, which would then set up a new system of transport. That is an example of the sort of proletarian insolence that the Portuguese workers have assimilated.

Similar experiences are developing in other areas. The inhabitants of the neighborhoods and the members of the workers commissions of various factories, acting under the impetus of the FSP (Popular Socialist Front), occupied the Muxito Hotel in order to transform it, along with its sumptuous swimming pool, into a vacation colony for the children of the workers of the Setúbal district near Lisbon. On Sunday, March 9, a meeting was organized in the hotel and this decision was ratified by hundreds of men and women workers and their children. About fifty doctors got together to launch the Hospital of the People group, which has been set up in the

Clínica da Associação de Coceros Mutuos Amadeu Duarte. Health care is given freely there and contact has been made with the workers of the pharmaceutical industry. In Cascais a big bourgeois club was occupied and transformed into a day-care center for children. These examples of social control could be multiplied by a hundred.

The dominant feature is thus the growing activity of the masses. In face of this pressure from the masses, the CP has to stick closely to the AFM in order to straddle and channel the movement. On the question of institutionalization of the AFM, the CP asserts that "the progressive vanguard of the army has just endowed itself with the means of effective action." The CP's margin for maneuver is very narrow. It is especially narrow in that the CP's control of the movement is not really as tight as it appeared to be during the mobilization against the attempted coup. For the moment, the CP is centering its efforts on the peasantry, calling for more advanced measures in the area of agrarian reform.

Once risen to first position, the AFM will have difficulty maintaining its unity in face of this rise of the mass movement. Every time a choice is posed in the economic and social realm, the threat of the crystallization of differences is present. Further, the concessions that have been made in order to channel the movement may also boomerang. While another attempted coup is not excluded, it nevertheless seems unlikely that it could come from the army in the short run. The present crisis of this institution and the lack of control over the rank and file (because of the weakness of the officers control, the leaves, and the fact that many soldiers are billeted at home) make it difficult to use the army as an instrument for a coup. The social and economic crisis will thus deepen. If the period of instability is prolonged, it is possible that decisive advances in class consciousness in the political sense will be made as a result of all the experiences we have just described. As this condition is fulfilled, the variant of a political defeat of the working class (see INPRECOR, No. 21, March 13) becomes less probable.

The duration of this period of instability will be quite decisive in enabling the workers to maximally assimilate their experiences and in developing a revolutionary party capable both of generalizing these examples of struggle, self-organization, and workers control and of making this the basis for setting the example of a revolutionary strategy. Finally, continuance of the instability may lead to a linkup between the fall of the Francoist dictatorship and the rise of workers struggles in Portugal. That would create a more than explosive mixture for the bourgeoisie of the Iberian peninsula and for the European bourgeoisie in general.

March 21, 1975

DENMARK



THE END OF SOCIAL PEACE

by BENNY ÅSMAN

During the past ten months the Danish working class has been faced with two different and difficult political situations. First they had to confront a reactionary bourgeois government headed by Paul Hartling. During the spring of 1974 Hartling carried out, or rather, tried to carry out, an openly anti-working-class policy. The attempt did not succeed; it was met by an increasing mobilization of the working class, which finally led to the fall of the Hartling government in January 1975.

Since then, the workers have been faced with a Social Democratic minority government that in reality is trying to use its traditional influence over the workers to impose a solution to the economic crisis that is almost identical to the one the Hartling government had proposed and had unsuccessfully attempted to implement.

The struggle against Hartling

During the period of the Hartling government, the Danish working class engaged in a class struggle that definitively broke the long period of social peace so well known in the Scandinavian countries. Under pressure from the extremely grave recession in the economy — with an enormous deficit in the balance of payments, a drastic aggravation of the problems of the export industries, and an increase in unemployment from 3 percent last spring to 12 percent by January — the working class was forced to act to defend its jobs and living standards. There were continual fights in industry after industry, with thousands of workers going on strike in response to layoffs and attacks on their wages. More important,

the class was able to organize three major responses to specific provocations by Hartling:

*In May 1974 more than 200,000 workers went on strike and held several big demonstrations against a reactionary tax reform pushed through parliament by the Hartling government. (See INPRECOR, No. 4, July 18, 1974.)

*In October 1974 more than 35,000 workers went on strike in solidarity with 400 workers who had been fined by the labor court for having participated in "illegal strikes" during the May demonstrations. This response from the workers forced the government to drop its original intention to fine a total of more than 37,000 workers for the "crime" of striking in May.

*Finally, more than 120,000 workers took to the streets on November 26 in response to a call from the trade-union and political working-class organizations to protest against the policy of the government and to demand its resignation.

In spite of these very clear signs of the fighting spirit and mobilization of the workers, the Hartling government decided to maintain its hard line on wage policies. In reality, the government did not have much choice. The extremely difficult economic situation does not leave the capitalists or their regime much room to make concessions to the workers. This became very clear in the period immediately following the November 26 demonstration. It was then that the national wage negotiations between the LO (Landsorganisationen, the trade-union leadership) and the DA (Dansk Arbejdsbevægelse —

Danish Employers Organization) came to the forefront as the central issue throughout the country. The Hartling government flatly stated that it was not going to accept any agreement between the LO and DA except a "zero solution," which means no increases in wages and the elimination of the existing threshold (cost-of-living) agreements. If the LO and DA did not reach a "zero solution" agreement, Hartling said, then parliament would have to pass a law imposing such an agreement.

The working-class parties opposed this position — on various bases. The Social Democrats said they would oppose Hartling's plans because his incomes policy was "socially unjust." The Communist party and the SF (Socialistisk Folkparti — Socialist People's party) expressed a more general opposition to the incomes policy being proposed and to the idea of an incomes policy in general. By the middle of December it had become clear that the government would not be able to win a majority in parliament for its position. At the same time, opinion polls indicated that Hartling's party (the Venstre, or Left party) had the possibility of increasing its electoral strength. The government decided to dissolve parliament and call for new elections on January 9 rather than go down to certain defeat in a parliamentary vote on the question of the wage policy. Hartling's goal was very clear: to rally sufficient bourgeois and petty-bourgeois votes behind the position of his party so as to obtain a bourgeois majority in parliament that would support a "zero solution" intervention into the wage negotiations. Hartling failed to achieve this goal, and that was the reason for the fall of his government.

The government crisis

The Venstre party did indeed increase the number of its seats in parliament (from 22 to 42); but it gained purely at the expense of the other bourgeois parties. In all, the bourgeois parties lost 10 seats (declining from 112 to 102). The workers parties increased their representation from 63 to 73 seats (Social Democracy from 46 to 53, the SF from 9 to 11, the CP from 6 to 7). One remarkable result in the election was the showing made by the VS (Venstre-socialisterna — Left Socialists), a left centrist party not previously represented in parliament, which obtained 2.1 percent of the vote and thereby won 4 seats in parliament.

The results of the new elections deepened the governmental crisis. On the one hand, it became clear during the postelection maneuvering that Hartling was unable to amass a large enough bloc of bourgeois forces to have a majority behind his plan for a government intervention in the wage negotiations

aimed at forcing a total block on wage increases. On the other hand, the Social Democrats rejected the idea of forming a majority coalition with the Venstre party, because of their differences over the incomes policy. A coalition between the Social Democrats and the other workers parties was out of the question both because of the Social Democracy's traditional rejection of coalitions with the CP and because of the rejection of the Social Democratic incomes policy by the CP, the SF, and the VS. After more than one month of government crisis, the Social Democrats agreed to form a minority government based on 53 seats out of 175, obviously hoping to be able to play on shifting majorities patched together with other workers parties and some of the bourgeois parties.

The electoral results reflected the shift that has occurred in the relationship of forces within the Danish workers movement during the past period. Because of its rotten right-wing policy (which it has attempted to impose at a time when broader and broader sections of the working class are being drawn into mobilization and struggle), the Social Democracy has begun to lose its traditional hegemony over the workers movement. This is now apparent even on the electoral field. There has arisen an opposition that rallies more than 11 percent of the vote nationally and more than 20 percent in the big cities. Even though this opposition has a reformist and electoralist policy, it is seen by a big part of the working class as an alternative leadership in the struggle against the capitalists. This phenomenon is even more pronounced in the trade unions and has become a dangerous development for the Social Democrats. It seems unlikely that they will let it go on without making a fight to regain the ground that has been lost, although as yet there are no signs of such a fight.

Social Democratic incomes policy

Throughout the development of the present economic recession and the period of wage negotiations, the Social Democrats have been urging the workers to bow to the "interests of the country" and restrain their demands for increased wages. They have advocated government intervention if the workers try to obtain "too much." Before the fall of Hartling, the Social Democrats were able to dress up their incomes policy and their opposition to Hartling's proposals with the demand for a "socially just incomes policy." For the majority of the working class, it was not clear what that meant. Only a small vanguard understood that it actually amounted to an attack on the living standards of the workers.

Immediately after the formation of the Social Democratic minority government, a big show was put on. The LO and the DA began to shout about an impend-

ing catastrophe on the labor market. The wage negotiations broke down, and LO began to warn of a strike by its more than 300,000 workers; the DA countered with the threat of locking out the 300,000 workers. Both the LO and the DA rejected the proposal of the arbitrator in the negotiations. The bourgeois and Social Democratic newspapers, along with the radio and television networks, began speaking of economic catastrophe and the specter of 300,000 people out of work.

It was in this climate that the Social Democracy took the step it had been preparing. The government adopted the proposal of the arbitrator and placed it before parliament as a proposed law. Obviously, this is what the capitalists had hoped to obtain from the start. The DA's tactic was to reject a proposal that was in reality very favorable to the employers and cause the negotiations to break down, thus causing the same proposal to be adopted by parliament and given the status of a law proposed by the Social Democracy. That the wage agreement is actually in the interests of the capitalists is quite clear. All members of LO working in the private sector have to accept a two-year virtual wage freeze, with only very small changes. The same wage restrictions will be placed on the workers in the public sector. The size of the wage increases to be granted when the cost-of-living index passes the threshold was increased by a small amount; but in reality that prospective increase in wages has already been manipulated out of existence, for the price index was set at 100 for January 1, which wiped out a 2 percent price increase that had occurred previously. Finally, for the sake of "social justice," the dividend payments will have to be kept at the level it stood at on March 6, a ridiculous measure that every capitalist will find ways of getting around.

On March 10 the wage law was adopted in parliament by a large majority consisting of the Social Democrats and the bourgeois parties. The other workers parties voted against.

Response of the workers

The workers response to the Social Democratic law appears paradoxical on the surface, especially when it is compared with the workers responses to Hartling's various provocations during 1974. In fact, the reaction was very limited, coming in the form of some strikes and demonstrations. About 30,000 workers went on strike for short periods, and not more than 5,000 workers turned out for a demonstration outside parliament to protest against the government intervention. This protest was called by the Førmandsinitiativet (Chairmen's Initiative, an organization of local trade-union chairmen) and was supported by the CP, SF, and VS, the same forces that had

assembled more than 120,000 workers to protest against Hartling only four months previously.

But the paradox is only apparent. What it reflects in reality is the limits of the development of class consciousness and political experience among the workers. A big part of the class has engaged in trade-union struggles. Against the openly reactionary Hartling government a big part of the working class could show its militancy. The fact that a much smaller section of the working class saw any reason to demonstrate its militancy against the Social Democratic law can be explained only partially by the constant increase in unemployment (with the consequent fear of loss of jobs) and by the vacillating and unprincipled politics of the other workers parties. The fundamental explanation lies in the altered political framework of the government intervention: This time it is a Social Democratic government that is intervening. Among the great majority of workers, trust in the Social Democracy still runs high.

While the response of the masses of workers illustrated the limits of their political development (their inability to see through a Social Democratic parliamentary maneuver), the strikes and demonstrations that did take place illustrated the rather impressive breadth of the vanguard sections of the working class. The shipyard workers stood in the forefront of the strikes. Nearly all the shipyards (including about 30,000 workers) were on strike. Some of the brewery workers in Copenhagen and many of the workers in the construction industry also went on strike. The opinion of these vanguard workers was summarized by Johnny Laugesen, a shop steward at the B&W Motor Company who participated in the demonstration outside parliament: "I call this (the Social Democratic intervention) a treason against the working class. It deserves a response. There is no point in the trade-union movement continuing to give millions of crowns to the Social Democracy while the Social Democratic government makes a law of the arbitrator's proposal. The right to free wage negotiations is now a big illusion. The intervention is carried out with warnings about the grave economic situation. Anker Jørgensen (the Social Democratic prime minister) is thus using the same arguments as Hartling used throughout 1974."

What next?

In the short term — that is, the coming five or six months — it seems unlikely that there will be big responses by the workers to the attack on their living standards. The political level among the masses of workers is not yet sufficiently high for them to launch a decisive blow against the incomes policy adopted by a Social Democratic government. But over a longer period — the two years during which the vir-

tual wage freeze is to remain in effect — the situation must be evaluated differently. It is unrealistic to assume that the law that has been adopted will be respected. It is enough to imagine what will happen when the present international recession gives way to a new upturn. With a new rapid increase in inflation, perhaps as soon as the end of this year, the law will be torn to shreds.

The coming period will be a difficult one for the Social Democrats. They will be increasingly torn between their present right-wing policy and the leftward development of the working class. Obviously, their traditional hegemony within the class is at stake, and if they do not make an adjustment to the radicalization of the workers they will definitely lose that hegemonic role. On the other hand, they will soon be forced to confront a demand by the bourgeois parties in parliament that further steps be taken toward easing the economic crisis by drastic cutbacks in social expenditures in the state budget. This may provide the issue around which the Social Democrats try to confront the challenge they face on the left. It is not excluded that they will decide to make a left turn on the question of social expenditures, dissolve the parliament, and call for new elections with a campaign based exclusively around this question. This would, however, open up new possibilities for the mass struggle.

In the meantime, some very important struggles have been going on in local areas. For the past two months, sixty-six printing workers have been on strike against threats of layoffs and the selling of the Uniprint printshop. The workers first responded to the threats by occupying the shop and refusing to accept any agreement that did not guarantee their jobs. Because of the form taken by the struggle (the first really militant answer at the factory level to the extremely high rate of unemployment), it was possible to initiate a national movement of solidarity with the printing workers. The first step in this was taken by the workers themselves with the support of the revolutionary left, in particular the RSF (Revolutionäre Socialister Forbund — Revolutionary Socialist League), Danish section of the Fourth International, and the VS. On February 18 the police intervened and threw the workers out of the shop. The solidarity movement responded by expanding its activities. More than forty solidarity committees throughout Denmark (and some in Sweden) were set up. The workers printed two issues of a strike newspaper, the second in 200,000 copies. The leadership of the printers union was forced to support the struggle (after having hesitated at the beginning) and declared a blockade against the Whinter company (owner of the shop) in order to prevent the company from taking out the machines and doing the work somewhere else. This blockade was endorsed by the international printers union and

affected Scandinavia, Germany, Benelux, and Britain. At the same time, the workers themselves set up picket lines outside the factory day and night in order to prevent the owners from removing the machines.

The militant action of the sixty-six Uniprint workers has begun to stimulate other workers to act against layoffs. The most important case so far has been that of the foundry workers of Sabroe-Ost, who went on strike against the layoff of three of their comrades.

On March 14 the struggle at Uniprint took a new turn. The owner of the shop had announced that only twenty-four of the workers could be rehired. At the same time, a financial committee revealed that Uniprint would not have been in financial difficulties if the other sections of the Whinter company had paid full prices to Uniprint. The immediate response of the workers was a new occupation of the plant. On the morning of March 14 the workers re-entered the shop and began production again. That evening the police intervened once again. When some of the workers refused to leave the factory, they were arrested and taken to the police station. (They were released the following day.) This police intervention marked the end of the strike. The relationship of forces was simply too unfavorable for the workers; the company was too large and the response from the rest of the labor movement was too limited. In addition, it was discovered that the blockade had not been effective; the company had been able to continue its production at another location, although it is not clear where. The workers were compelled to recognize that the struggle to save all the jobs had become impossible. But they refused to break ranks. All the workers refused to go back to work, and the demoralizing effects of the defeat were thus limited. The struggle at Sabroe-Ost, on the other hand, ended in victory; all the demands of the workers were granted.

In the present situation in Denmark, it is extremely important that struggles like the ones at Sabroe-Ost and Uniprint end in victory, for their examples could represent a turning point in the fight against layoffs. Up to now, actions against layoffs have been limited and generally defeated. This made the struggle of the workers at Uniprint and Sabroe-Ost especially important. The revolutionary Marxists of the RSF therefore set solidarity work with these struggles as their central task, helping to build the broadest possible solidarity movement and to spread the examples and lessons of the struggles of these workers as wide as possible. ■

poland

the bureaucracy vs. the workers

The following two articles relating to the situation in Poland deal with structural aspects of Polish society. In future issues of INPRECOR we will return to the conjunctural problems now faced by the Polish workers, particularly the aggravation of the crisis of food supply to the cities, the long lines that are once again appearing in front of stores, the scuffling and other incidents that have been touched off by this situation, as well as the attitude the regime has taken.



L. GIEREK FACES WORKERS SELF- MANAGEMENT

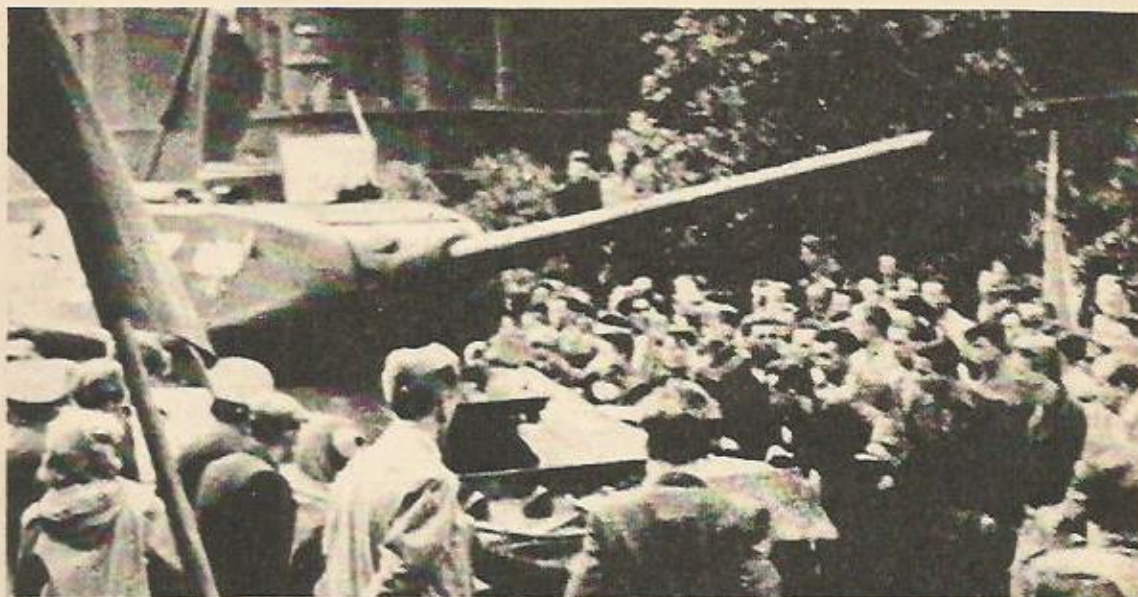
by JULIAN NAT

"In conformity with the will of the workers, which has been expressed in all the meetings, open to all workers, that have been held in the departments, we demand immediate and legal elections to the trade-union bodies and to the workers councils." That was one of the demands presented by the workers of the Szczecin shipyards to their "hosts" on January 24, 1970. The first secretary of the Polish United Workers party (the Polish CP) did not hesitate to respond: "As for me, I am absolutely in favor of this. Because you want it. And remember that." And it is remembered; people would like to understand through what miracle the Polish bureaucracy could have ceded a bit of its power to workers democracy. In fact, this was not the first time since 1945 that the Polish bureaucracy had made fine promises.

After the war

Between August 1944 and March 1945 the trade unions were organizing on all levels, especially in those factories that had had rich traditions of economic struggle before the war. For a period of several weeks before the official regime in the country had been fully established, factory committees and rank-and-file union organizations assured the administration and functioning of the factories. The 1945 decree on the formation of factory committees simply sanctioned an already existing state of affairs.

As the bureaucratic regime became stronger, the trade unions progressively lost their importance and



POZNAN 1956

became mere adjuncts of the state administration. Similarly, in 1947 and 1948 there was a turn in trade-union activity that led to an exaggerated definition of the role of the trade unions as "co-producers" and instruments for mobilizing the masses to increase production and the productivity of labor, to the detriment of their role as spokesman for the immediate interests of the workers. The bureaucracy then asserted that the trade unions "should understand that the councils (that is, the factory committees) represent not simply the interests of the workers, but also the interests of the national economy."

October 1956

The workers revolt in Poznan in 1956 provided striking evidence of the profound malaise of the bureaucratic regime. The workers of Poznan had elected representatives outside the official trade-union bodies to present their point of view to the authorities in Warsaw, thus confirming the official unions' loss of prestige. The unions, entirely subordinated to the party and to the imperatives of production, had "long since ceased to represent and defend the interests of the workers," affirmed the resolution of the plenary session of the trade unions (held November 16-18, 1956).

Another phenomenon also came to the surface during the events of 1956: The workers councils, created by the workers themselves, were rapidly spreading as a counter to the dilution and degeneration of the so-called socialist system prevailing in the "people's democracy." These councils should have

provided the means for reestablishing the dictatorship of the proletariat in the real sense. Given the atmosphere of struggle against the bureaucracy in political, economic, and social life, the constitution of the workers councils could have created the framework for workers democracy. The workers councils experienced a period of "ebb" between 1956 and June 1957. Then they were "stabilized" and their place in the economic life of the country was narrowed and made more and more formal.

The existence of the workers councils was legalized in November 1956, another case of sanctioning an already accomplished fact, as in 1945 with the factory committees. But it quickly became clear that the bureaucrats did not intend to recognize the real participation of the councils in economic decision making, a participation that was nevertheless inherent in the dynamic of the movement. In 1958, the regime sought to channel the development of the councils through the creation of the Conferences of Workers Autonomy, which were set up in the factories and were composed of one-third representatives elected by the workers (the workers council properly so called), one-third representatives of the party executive committee in the factory, and the rest representatives of the factory trade-union council, the youth organization, and the organization of engineers and technicians. Logically, it would seem that the workers representation should have been greater in the workers councils, at least in view of the name of these bodies. But here are the official figures: About 90,000 employees participated in the workers councils, of which about 40,000 were blue-collar workers (the percentage

ranging from 49% to 64%, depending on the council); in the presidium of the workers councils the workers representation was about 20-40 percent.

The role of the Conferences of Workers Autonomy, which had limited responsibilities and were subordinated to the degenerated trade-unions and the party, was restricted to inspecting the administration of the factories and the working conditions. While the opportunities for the workers' taking initiatives on questions of management disappeared little by little, the trade-union councils concentrated more and more on controlling production; they ignored the defense of the interests of the wage earners (wages, working conditions, etc.). Composed in large part of "professional activists," some workers councils were limited to ratifying projects and decisions of the management. The representation of the workers was only symbolic.

December 1970

In 1970 and 1971 during the repeated strikes along the Baltic coast and in other places throughout Poland, the workers struggled for unions that would be representative and independent of the regime and for real workers councils holding power. Let us quote an example from a declaration made after December 1970: "Behind the 'workers' facade we often find a narrow group of specialists and official representatives of social organizations. It is the same thing in the Commission on Problems of the Workers Councils. Workers participation is minimal. For example, in one factory that was looked into of the twenty-five members of the commission only one is a worker. This business could be turned into a joke — How many of you are there? One! — if it were not such a serious thing and no laughing matter. It is this small group of specialists that, acting under the aegis of the workers council, carries out the leading functions in the administration of the factory and settles all problems that come up. That is the truth of the matter. There are some paradoxical situations; for example, a division head who as a member of the commission of the workers council has to check on the very activity for which he is responsible in his capacity of functionary in the factory management. If to this it is added that the materials presented to the workers councils are in general provided by the members of the management or by the division heads, the image becomes clear. Often, workers autonomy is no more than a phrase."

In another article written during this period, a journalist quoted some statements made by the workers of the Gdansk and Gdynia shipyards after their meeting with Gierek:

* "What did the supervisory personnel have to say?"

They only listened to us when we took action."

* "You ask me about our workers councils? I know nothing about its members. I couldn't even name one of them. They exist only on paper."

* "It's the same with the trade union. Sure . . . there's recreation, loans, and so on. But on the most important questions it's never around."

* "When it all started, they all disappeared. We wanted to speak, but there was no one to listen. We stood in front of the headquarters and called for someone to come out and see us. Everyone hid, the factory committee, the workers council, and our trade-union leaders."

In 1970, as during the spontaneous movement for the creation of the workers councils in 1956, the workers armed themselves with democratic organizations intended to make up for the deficiencies of the official organizations. This capacity for self-organization, as well as the other characteristics of the movement of December 1970 and January 1971, illustrated what some people have called the contradiction "between the growing maturity of the working class and the underdevelopment of socialist democracy."

An inquiry conducted in 1971 by the Polish weekly *Polityka* revealed that 90 percent of the workers questioned were conscious of the total ineffectiveness of their representatives and stated that these representatives had no influence whatever over the management of the factory. The basic thrust of the demands raised by the strike committee in the Szczecin shipyards was toward the democratization of the structures of power and of the economy, in addition to improvements in living standards and working conditions. The committee demanded real independence for the workers organizations, notably through the resignation of the discredited leaders of the Central Trade Union Council and the construction of trade-unions independent of the regime and controlled by the unionized workers themselves.

Response of the Gierek team

In the wake of the events of December 1970 a debate took place once again over the problem of forms of representation and participation of the workers in the management of the economy. This debate drew a new balance-sheet on the functioning of the existing bodies: the unions, the workers councils, and the Conferences of Workers Autonomy. Some proposals were made in 1971 and 1972 that stressed a new division of responsibilities, with an increase in the powers granted the workers council on the questions of employment and division of wages — powers distinct from those of the unions, whose role

would be to represent the workers before the management.

In reality, the response of the Gierek team, in violation of Gierek's own statement to the striking workers in Szczecin and in violation of the proposals made during the 1971-72 debate, was to increase the dependence of the unions and the workers councils on the bureaucracy. As regards the forms of workers organization that were created spontaneously during the strikes of December 1970-January 1971, the Gierek group's response was unambiguous: The bureaucracy moved to the total and merciless liquidation of these forms of organization.

Within the unions Gierek took advantage of the demands for the removal of the most discredited leaders to appoint his own devoted collaborators to leading posts. As for the tasks of the trade unions, the September 1971 meeting of the Central Committee of the CP was clear: "The fundamental task of the trade unions must be to carry out consistent action to improve working conditions. . . . At the same time, the unions must cooperate in increasing the productivity of labor and in strengthening social discipline."

The new labor code worked out in 1973 points in the same direction. It devotes hardly any attention

to the unions' role in pressing for the demands of the workers and stresses their tasks in areas like inspection of labor, security, hygiene, housing assignments, etc. On the other hand, various points in the code insist on the "social discipline" and "labor discipline" that are required in order to increase productivity.

The bureaucracy's repressive arsenal against the workers was enriched by the June 23, 1973, law on "the principles of the formation and division of factory funds." This law provides for reductions of bonuses (up to and including their total elimination) in cases of infractions of the work rules or of any "unjustified absences." In addition, Article 7 of this same law classifies participation in an arbitrary work stoppage as an infraction equivalent to theft or drunkenness. When it is remembered who it is that decides whether or not a work stoppage is "arbitrary," it becomes apparent that this law is nothing but an unequivocal antistrike law.

These measures fit squarely into the "new" economic and social strategy proclaimed by the Polish leaders after 1970. The aim is to increase the productivity of labor and to impose labor discipline in order to effect economic growth, which itself has been made a condition for the improvement of the living standards of the workers. ■

2. «SOCIALIST MANAGERS»

"In industry the chiefs, like the subordinates, are in agreement with the system, which implies that orders are to be carried out, and they find it perfectly natural that a head director has an office with leather-lined doors and a luxurious armchair, while a department head has a simple office with an ordinary armchair, a foreman has only a chair behind a partition, and a worker has a simple stool."
— A.K. Wroblewski, "The Inclined Plane," *Polityka*, January 5, 1974.

What are the «workers councils» for?

A rigid hierarchy in industry and the rule of "personal management," which means that all important decisions are made by the head director and on his personal responsibility alone, is nothing new in the countries of the East in general or in Poland in particular.

The law, it is true, also allows for the possibility

of an intervention by the "workers councils of the enterprise" in the management of the workplaces. The "workers councils" were born after the 1956 events and were conceived at the time as bodies of workers self-management. But the emergence of slogans of the type "all power to the workers councils" (raised particularly in circles close to *Po Prostu*, the weekly of the left intellectuals) was one of the major reasons for which the bureaucracy moved in 1957 to put the brakes on the thaw and radicalization that had begun in 1956.

Given the logic of Gomulka's post-1957 policy, the role of the workers councils has become purely formal. As far back as 1958 they were integrated into the "conferences of workers autonomy," which locked the council of each enterprise into a structure dominated by the trade-union committee and the local party unit.

One of the demands of the workers revolts in the Baltic port cities in late 1970 and 1971 was that democratic elections to the workers councils be

held and that the power granted the councils by law be recognized. The response of the bureaucrats (this time, the Gierk team) was clear: Once the strike was over, many of the militant workers were thrown out of the shipyards and dispersed throughout Poland, in order to avert any rebuilding, even embryonic, of the structures of workers self-management. (On this point, see "Gierk vs. the Workers," INPRECOR, No. 10, October 17, 1974.)

The debate on the role of the workers councils opened by the weekly *Polityka* in 1973 revealed that the councils were generally limited to rubber-stamping decisions made by the management. The very great majority of the members of the council are administrators and supervisory personnel. This situation is "justified" by the role of the council (purely formal, obviously) in the acceptance of the economic plan by the enterprise. In the very

rare cases in which the councils came out against the views of the management, there was frequently repression, direct or indirect, against the "rebels."

In order to correct the transformation of the "workers councils" into simple committees of specialists, J. Maziarski, the author of an inquiry on the role of the councils (*Polityka*, September 29, 1973) proposed to eliminate the councils' formal control over the economic plan. On the other hand, he proposed that the councils be devoted to the defense of the workers. (This is theoretically the task of the trade unions in Poland, but they have never fulfilled this task since the overthrow of the old regime.)

An inquiry made among the workers and supervisory personnel clearly revealed the different perceptions of the tasks of the councils among the two groups:

QUESTION	ANSWER	
	<u>workers</u>	<u>supervisors</u>
The workers councils are necessary because:		
1. They have an influence on the social problems of the workers.	24.6%	9.2%
2. They defend the workers.	50.0%	16.1%
3. They are concerned with production.	13.6%	27.6%
4. They help the management.	2.7%	12.6%
(From <i>Polityka</i> , September 29, 1973.)		

The task of controlling the management of the enterprises was not even mentioned, despite the fact that, according to the law, that should be the principal role of the councils.

It is interesting to note especially that the majority of supervisors who answered the questions (contrary to the majority of workers) saw aiding the management in various forms as the main task of the workers councils.

Some articles (for example, W. Piotr, *Życie Gospodarcze*, October 7, 1971; T. Kurczyński, U. Wojciechowa, *Życie Gospodarcze*, November 14, 1973) pushed this idea even further and proposed that the workers councils look after labor discipline and even organize the layoff of "harmful" workers, all in close collaboration with the management. (An article in a coming issue of INPRECOR will deal with "workers democracy" in Poland.)

Under these conditions, the management, and especially the head director, has virtually absolute power within "his" enterprise. Very frequently the

workers organizations (the unions, the workers councils) play a role in increasing the pressure on the workers. (It must not be forgotten that these organizations, like the managements, are administered by bureaucrats of the party.) In the very rare cases of conflict between the management and the organizations that are supposed to represent the workers, the effectiveness of the councils or the unions does not go beyond the limits of defending the individual worker, at best.

Thus freed from useless constraints, "one-person management" can fully flower in Poland.

Strength of a «socialist» manager

The caste of managers is asserting itself more and more as a real force in Poland. It must be stressed that we are not dealing here with "technocrats," that is, with the totality of engineers and middle cadres of the enterprises, but exclusively with a very narrow layer of top managers who are, moreover, closely linked and even partly assimilated

to the upper layers of the political bureaucracy. The low-level engineer, even if he may sometimes entertain illusions about his role and opportunities, is in fact more and more being pushed into the position of a foreman.

The strength and the autonomy of the layer of managers are on the rise. Already in 1968, when *Trybuna Ludu*, the official organ of the Polish United Workers party (the CP), published an article criticizing the "technocratic" tendencies represented by the popular weekly *Polityka* (which did, in fact, frequently present the positions of the technocrats), a delegation of managers went to complain before the Central Committee of the party. The very existence of this delegation was significant. Obviously, there is in Poland no official organization of managers, and the managers have no right whatsoever to send delegations.

The Polish managers not only proved that they were capable of organizing themselves rapidly to defend their group interest, they also made a very effective intervention. The author of the article in question, *Mystek*, was obliged to make a public self-criticism. That was the first manifestation of the strength of the managers; they proved themselves the only pressure group that was to be allowed to confront the regime in 1968.

Gierek's coming to power in 1970 further strengthened the position of these "captains of socialist industry." Gierek himself came to his position as first secretary of the CP with the reputation of being the man who had been able to "live with the technocrats" in Silesia, the most industrialized region of Poland, where Gierek had been regional party secretary before 1970. He has an engineer's diploma, and his son is a member of the Polish Academy of Sciences and a professor in the Academy of Mines.

The "reforms," or more exactly the changes in management, introduced by Gierek consisted mainly of bolstering the power of the managers (apart from a few concessions on wages, which were in any case made only to the workers of the big industrial enterprises, of whom the government was afraid).

The administrative changes in the management of enterprises, the regroupment of enterprises by branches into great industrial combines endowed with a greater degree of autonomy (known as WOGs) — all these changes granted more freedom of decision to the managers of the enterprises.

According to the new "rules of the game," the managers themselves can determine how to invest part of the profits of "their" factory. They can more easily decide what sort of products will be manufactured. A decision taken in 1973 introduced "price

elasticity" — a system that permits some market pressure on prices (until then, prices had been fixed centrally by price commissions). Under the new system, the managers can lower the price of a new product below the price fixed by the central price commission in order to stimulate sales of the new products. (It must not be forgotten that the aim of the introduction of new products is to "replace" old products "of inferior quality" but of lower cost. Even the "diminished" price of the new product is significantly higher than the price of the old product, which disappears from the market. This system permits prices to be raised without violating the official price freeze.)

According to the declaration of a high Polish functionary, the elasticity of prices is supposed to "permit the development of competition, encourage the development of modern marketing as adapted to our socialist system, and lend support to all the forces of marketing that are now being created in industry, commerce, and services." (Interview with E. Szymanski, director of the domestic commerce division before the Planning Commission, *Życie Warszawy*, July 11, 1974.)

In practice, the manager frequently has the right to lay off workers. Up to now, this right has not been legalized. But the new labor code, which was adopted recently after workers opposition had held up its implementation for two years, allows the manager to penalize workers for drunkenness on the job . . . and for unjustified work stoppages! This latter clause has been used as justification for the layoff of Edward Baługa, the leader of the workers revolts in the shipyards of Szczecin.

One of the not negligible advantages won by the managers after Gierek's reforms was a considerable increase in their bonuses, proportional to the increase in the profits of the enterprise. The special bonuses, distributed to the workers of the enterprise who have obtained good economic results, are calculated according to two criteria: "added production," which reflects the increase in the production of the factory, and direct profit. These bonuses are shared among the workers according to "their role in the creation of the surplus." Needless to say, the role of the manager in the creation of these profits is considered predominant. For example, in the *Warta* and *Przyjaźń* cement factories, where the new bonus system was introduced beginning in 1971, the surplus of profits was divided among the workers according to a system of points fixed on the basis of the alleged individual contribution of each person: The manager gets 40 points; a female janitor gets 1 point.

The new system of management was not introduced without problems and friction. Articles appeared

in the press (for example, "A Test for Managers," W. Grochala, *Polityka*, September 16, 1972) that complained about the lack of initiative of some managers in spite of the new opportunities open to them. Other managers complained about the "anachronism" of certain central bodies and about the too extensive intervention in their affairs from above, despite the new directives.

But apart from the small problems of this transitional period, most of the managers did not complain very much about the new increase in their power.

"How to be loved"

It is not an easy task to be a good "socialist" manager. To assist managers in distress, *Życie Gospodarcze* (the major Polish economics weekly) published a long series of articles in 1972 on "the art of being a manager." The material the articles were based on consisted of research studies on the art of management conducted in the West (notably in the United States) and on parallel studies conducted in the USSR and Poland. Based on his study of the Western documents, the author of the articles, W. Kozuch, proposed a series of "classical" recipes: the introduction of an efficient management secretariat; qualified managerial aides; strict filtering of visitors and telephone calls to the manager, etc. He also added a few proposals adapted to the "socialist" countries: assignment of managers to fulfill the function of liaison with the party apparatus; maximum limitation of their social functions; limitations on meetings with organizations of personnel (councils, trade unions, etc.). In short, the articles propose that the (socialist) manager not be concerned with anything but being a good manager, as is the rule in all the advanced industrialized countries.

In reading this series of articles, as well as other similar ones, the clear impression comes across that it is believed in Poland that economic problems will be miraculously resolved if factory management of the American type can be achieved; and further, that with a little effort and a few administrative reforms this can in fact be achieved. The small differences between the economic systems prevailing in the two countries are scarcely mentioned.

In an article entitled "How to Be Loved" two managers explained the practice of the art of management (*Życie Ekonomiczne*, July 2, 1972.) The principle is quite simple: To be loved one must consult one's subordinates from time to time. It is useless to consult them too often, for "the workers will be very happy and will consider that they are participating in the management if the manager asks their

advice before each important decision relative to problems of labor organization and personnel." But there must be no mistake, the advice is purely consultative, aimed at improving the personnel's feelings about the manager, for "it is an absolute rule that the decision must be made by the director alone, and it is he alone who is responsible for this decision." The sacrosanct principle of "personal leadership" is not infringed upon. It's better to be loved, but you don't fool around with responsibilities within the factory.

The inclined plane

The economic changes made after 1970 contributed to doubling between 1970 and 1972 the number of salaries in excess of 5,000 zloty a month (the percentage of salaries reaching that level rising from 2.2% to 4.1% of the total during that period). But that is not an extremely high salary. The minimum wage at the time was in the neighborhood of 1,000 zloty, but the official statistics do not explain who is getting the salaries of "more than 5,000 zloty." Another index of inequality is the gap between the lowest and highest salaries: In 1972 this figure was on the order of 1:7 between the lowest 2% and the highest 2% of salaries. And for the highest 0.2%? It must not be forgotten that the official salary is only a fraction of the real income of high functionaries. To the base salary must be added the many bonuses and the various material advantages, like fully-serviced apartments, travel abroad, and so on.

Popular sentiment has it that the difference between the maximum and minimum salaries is greater. Some 85% of the participants in an inquiry on wages conducted by *Polityka* (May 29, 1971) believed that the gap between wages was higher. *Polityka* tried to explain this popular "error" as a lack of information on high salaries. According to them, people imagine that a factory director earns more than 100,000 zloty a month. In this inquiry 43% called for a maximum salary of 8,000 zloty; 10.8% believed that the maximum salary should not exceed 4,000 zloty (less than twice the average salary at the time), and only 7.8% (the great majority of whom had a higher education) agreed that the maximum salary should exceed 15,000 zloty.

The captains of "socialist" industry have no serious problem making ends meet. Their basic salaries, which are already not especially low, are boosted greatly (especially since the introduction of reforms) by bonuses and various material benefits. Moreover, since Gierek's introduction of the "new model of socialist consumption," they have succeeded in "legalizing" their right to material privileges.

The new model of consumption, which was intro-



Szczecin, 1970. Workers burn the Communist party headquarters.

duced by the central committee of the Polish United Workers party (in June 1974) in the educational program for party members, attempts to explain and justify privileges in durable consumer goods (especially private cars and houses) in a socialist society. A campaign was waged to explain that ownership of the consumer goods in question is not a sign of petty-bourgeois attitudes but, on the contrary, represents proof of the achievements of the happy villa-and-automobile proprietor in the building of socialism. According to the definition frequently repeated in this context, socialism means "to each according to his work"; the fact that someone is allowed to have a beautiful house only proves that he has worked very well.

The initial project of the Gierek government when it launched the "new model of consumption" was probably to mobilize a section of the workers and low-ranking supervisors with the prospect of acquiring durable consumer goods at the cost of long years of privation and saving and in this way to induce them to forget the daily problems that begin with the lack of meat and end with the analysis of the political situation. For the moment, this tactic has failed. Very serious problems in the construction industry have prevented the construction of a significant number of individual houses. The increase in the price of oil (the price of gas in Poland today is higher than anywhere else in Europe) has placed the use of automobiles out of the reach of workers. There remains the role of the "model of consumption" as a plausible explanation for the origin of individually owned automobiles and houses among those who already possess them, "those who have contributed the most to the development of socialism."

For the rest, it is not only a question of durable consumer goods. There are also the cash "bonuses" (not only for those who work for export), "bonuses" that today permit the purchase of almost everything, even goods that are practically unavailable on the domestic Polish market. There are, for example, annual vacations in the West, for as everyone knows, it is only in the West that you can really relax.

The theoreticians of management in Poland like to speak of the "streamlined structure of enterprises." The directors find this structure insufficiently streamlined. In the article "The Inclined Plane" (quoted at the beginning of this article), the author explains that "the factory is like the army; first of all you obey orders; afterwards, you can talk about it." A dream for managers.

The "socialist managers" in Poland today enjoy virtually absolute power in their own domain. Given the absence of any independent workers organization and the attempts at conciliating, buying off, and integrating the managers by the Gierek government, which is in search of objective allies against the working class, their position seems very stable. But unlike their Western colleagues, their power does not rest on solid economic bases. Their position, which derives from the political power of the bureaucrats, is intimately linked to the bureaucracy and suffers from all its weaknesses. The "egalitarian" tendencies of the masses have not disappeared, despite the propaganda campaigns of the regime criticizing these tendencies; in fact, they remain threatening. The plane in Poland is indeed inclined, but it lacks any solid support. It threatens to collapse at the first strong wind.

BRAZIL AFTER THE ELECTIONS

We are publishing below the editorial that appeared in the first issue of *Marxismo Revolucionário*, a new journal published by sympathizers of the Fourth International in Brazil. It deals with the elections that took place in that country last November and with the situation of the working class and the workers vanguard.

I.

1. For the popular masses, the elections that took place in Brazil last November 15 represented a breach in the panorama of reaction and anti-popular terror characteristic of the past several years. Despite the fact that the elections were nothing but a crude farce based on puppet bipartisanship, and despite the fact that the dictatorship tried to hold them within very narrow limits, the masses took advantage of the opportunity to express their discontent about the absence of democratic rights, the low wages, the high cost of living, inflation, unemployment, and the precarious character of public and social services. The behavior of the masses was not marked by the apathy of the previous years.

This change in the behavior of the workers and popular masses was symptomatic of the change that was beginning to occur in their state of mind. This was observable even before the elections, beginning with the radicalization that had become apparent among certain social sectors. In fact, the situation in the working class during 1974 was characterized by the rebirth of an atmosphere of struggle that reached rather significant proportions in some sectors. In the ABC region and in São Paulo (that is, the backbone of the Brazilian working class) there have been a number of strikes, and there have been wage negotiations in some of the major factories of the country (Volkswagen, Ford, Chrysler, Aços,

Villares, etc.). In some cases the workers have succeeded in winning wage increases, and in most cases they have fought their struggles independently of the official trade unions, through clandestine commissions organized in the factories. The importance of the emergence of such struggles, even if they are elementary ones, is absolutely incontestable given the present situation in Brazil.

The student milieu, for its part, is increasingly feeling the influence of an active vanguard that even in the blackest period of reaction and repression has not ceased to struggle for the reorganization of the academic centers, against capitalist rationalization of the universities, and against education for profit. The struggles against repression have resulted in the formation of Committees for the Defense of Political Prisoners.

In the countryside, the struggles of the rural laborers, semiproletarians, and small landowners, although they have gone unnoticed by observers in the urban centers, have not disappeared; in some cases, they have even resulted in violent and tough conflicts.

Atomized, fragmented, alienated, and brutalized by the situation of extreme poverty, exploitation, and oppression under which they live, the masses spontaneously viewed November 15 as an opportunity to deliver a resounding "No" to the military dictatorship. Inevitably, this action will have consequences for the future, and it deserves to be analyzed in more detail.

2. The protest of the masses against the military dictatorship resulted in a victory of unexpected proportions for the bourgeois party of "democratic opposition." The growth of the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB — Brazilian Democratic Movement) surprised even the party's own ranks, as well as its blindest and most optimistic collaborators. The MDB won the Senate posts in sixteen states. It won more than a third of the seats in the Federal Chamber (thus registering an increase of 100 percent), which now enables it to form commissions of inquiry, to summon ministers, to oversee commissions, and so on. It obtained majorities in the legislative assemblies in the states of São Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul, Rio de Janeiro, Paraná, Amazonas, and Acre, in addition to Guanabara. It increased its weight in the municipalities, where it won in places that had been traditional bastions of the ARENA (Aliança Renovadora Nacional — Alliance for National Renewal). The MDB won 70 percent of the votes of more than 32 million voters.

But in no way did the electoral results represent a victory for the masses. Paradoxically, while the masses condemned the dictatorship that oppresses them, they did so by strengthening a party of their own class enemy, the bourgeoisie.

In fact, the major end result of the change in the character of the MDB after the elections is that it has ceased to be a bourgeois party condemned to ostracism. It has now been transformed into a new element in the relationship of forces among the various sectors and factions of the ruling class. It now represents not solely the middle layers and petty-bourgeois sectors affected by the actions of the monopolies, but also appears as the mouthpiece of many industrial and agrarian sectors that have been hit by the failure of the whole sectoral policy of the regime. It is beginning to constitute an element of contradiction in the hegemonic bloc of the bourgeoisie, particularly in the wake of the decline of the absolute domination of North American capital and of the relative increase in investments originating from Japan and the Common Market countries.

The number of MDB candidates of working-class origins was extremely small (although there were a few such candidates, they were firm supporters of the trade-union bureaucracy); the dominant component was the industrial and bureaucratic bourgeoisie. In the rural areas, which always vote for the government, the growth of the MDB was a result of the campaign to defend the interests of the latifundistas and the demands of the middle and big rural bourgeoisie. This campaign was absolutely not based on denouncing the poverty and superexploitation of the rural laborers or on the struggle for a radical agrarian reform. But what else could have been expected from a bourgeois party?

The links between the MDB and the bourgeoisie will not be weakened now; they will be strengthened more than ever, as could have been expected given the popular support garnered by its candidates. The new role assumed by the "opposition party" will be that of a "party of order" supporting the strengthening of the regime and thus opening new channels of communication between the ruling class and the military government in an economic and political situation whose prospects are rather uncertain.

3. Why did the workers and toilers support the MDB and its candidates in the elections? It is absolutely necessary to answer this question. In the first place, it was because of their own weaknesses and the great weakness of their vanguard. In the preceding elections (1970), the abstention rate was 46 percent, and of the ballots cast, 50 percent were void. This did not represent a high level of mass consciousness, however; rather, it was a reflection of total apathy, fear, and indifference. This year, the masses wanted to express their discontent with the dictatorship, but they did so in a spontaneous fashion, without following the lead of a party representing their class interests. At the same time as it expressed a protest against their oppressor, the vote also reflected their inability to see clearly politically and to find the best means of striking at and weakening the oppressor. The vote for the MDB was the expression of an enormous discontent that coexists with a low level of consciousness and organization among the broad masses.

The MDB appeared as the only visible opposition force; it made use of the mass communication media (mainly television) and posed questions that identified it with the interests of the masses. It thus succeeded in capitalizing on the popular discontent that has accumulated over the years. No one has any illusion: The vote of the toilers for the MDB and its candidates represented a condemnation of the military dictatorship much more than a statement of allegiance to the "democratic" bourgeois opposition.

In fact, the past record of the MDB as an opposition party does not provide much ground for enthusiasm. The MDB is the product of a bastard fusion of the old PSD and the remains of the PTB around a watchword invented by a decree of the military dictatorship; later it was "purged." It was the opposite of everything a "democratic" opposition should have been. It opted for collaboration with the military dictatorship and for moderation, becoming an accomplice in all the crimes committed by the bourgeois military government against the people. At a time when the Brazilian bourgeoisie was liquidating democratic rights in order to save its regime the

MDB did not have much interest in mobilizing the masses and simultaneously trying to hold them within the framework of the classical democratic game. It feared the masses as the devil fears holy water.

Nor is there any reason to have illusions about the future of the opposition party. Whenever it is necessary to contain the mass struggle, the MDB will appeal to the workers and to the masses in general with the aim of bolstering the rule of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship. The statements of the main leaders of the MDB are rather significant in this regard:

"Thanks to this victory, the MDB is being transformed into a party of national expression that has access to the private councils of the government and can thus collaborate in a policy of détente that ought to consist of pacifying Brazilian society." (Danton Jobim, MDB senator.)

"The victory of the opposition will provide President Geisel with a popular cover for altering the orientation of the economic and social policy followed by the last two governments." (Pedro Simon, parliamentary deputy and president of the MDB in Rio Grande do Sul.)

"Any attempt to overcome the division of the nation will be valuable." (Marcos Freire, MDB senator elected from Pernambuco.)

4. Now that the elections are over, there remains only a sad and disappointing reality for those who hoped (or hope) to see the MDB become a "party allied to the wage earners." The people voted for the bourgeois "opposition" in its death agony, thus lending it new strength and allowing it to become the major instrument for legitimizing the dictatorial regime.

The regime has to legitimize itself through the intermediary of a bourgeois opposition in order to channel popular discontent into passive integration. The very dynamic created by the electoral campaign demonstrated this urgent necessity to all the professional politicians of the bourgeoisie.

The workers and the masses, prepared to demand a settling of accounts, supported the MDB hoping that it would take immediate action. This created an atmosphere marked by relative pressure from the masses on the eve of November 15, and this made the MDB "foxes" rather uncomfortable. In the places where public demonstrations were organized (mainly Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco, and Guanabara) the masses did not remain within the limits defined by the MDB; they raised antidictatorship slogans that could not be co-opted, given the bourgeoisie's narrow room for maneuver. It was because of this

threat of political radicalization that the MDB of São Paulo, drawing the lessons of the demonstrations held earlier in other states, canceled its victory meetings and celebrations.

This is the only way to understand the role played by the group of *autênticos* — who received a very significant vote — and the formation of the "young wings" of the "democratic youth" of the MDB. These sectors acquired significant weight in the student movement, in the trade unions, among the leftist intellectuals, and even among the revolutionary left. This wing of the MDB, which achieved some success in the elections and has proven capable of making meaningful denunciations of the dictatorship (the names of those killed under torture were read out publicly in Guanabara), is nevertheless taking up the task of demobilizing the people after the elections and is proposing reconciliation within the MDB. Regardless of any "good intentions," the compromise made by this wing of the MDB with the bourgeois policy of the party will help the workers to gain confidence in their own strength and will make them shed their illusion that well-intentioned parliamentarians are worth more than "subversion."

5. "A victory for democracy!" exclaimed the unanimous chorus of the prognosticators prostituted to bourgeois democracy. The official government spokesmen washed their hands of the matter: The government, they said, "was not overthrown"; in fact it had won a victory for its "détente" policy. The ARENA suffered a defeat, but that was because of "external factors," like the international economic crisis, inflation, and so on.

The government had already said, through the medium of the head of the parliament, that "whoever wins will come into the government, and a strong opposition, active and politically rejuvenated, can only strengthen the government and the regime."

The fact is that the election results were paradoxical: Although it suffered defeat at the polls, the military dictatorship found itself relatively strengthened in the institutional sphere.

The political way out proposed by the Geisel government clearly represents an implicit admission of the social isolation of the dictatorship, which has never managed to obtain the support of the masses and the wage earners. Through the medium of a "high level of negotiation" the government is trying to reactivate the parliamentary political game to a certain extent. Maintenance of the ultrarightist and fascist "hard line" of Medici, Delfin Netto, General Humberto Souza Mello, and the security organs of the armed forces would only have widened the chasm between the dictatorship and the masses, which would have been undesirable for the regime in the

current period. Nevertheless, the "hard-liners" did not miss a chance to strike back on the sly. If their counterattack had succeeded it would have enabled them to postpone the elections, arrest oppositionists, and thus attempt to repeat what happened in 1970, when on the eve of elections the repression was stepped up heavily.

Contrary to what had been thought by the apologists of "possible democracy," the elections unleashed strong centrifugal tendencies and created divisions within the bloc in power. The institutional strengthening of the dictatorship will be a sort of political "interregnum" in a palace conspiracy; but the dictatorship will not be able to control the situation indefinitely. In view of the uncertain days of international economic recession, of the stagnation of the national economic "boom," and of the inability of the Brazilian bourgeoisie to meet the vital demands of the laboring masses, the military dictatorship will try to gain time. That is the purpose of the "strong opposition, active and politically rejuvenated."

6. But the elections also set the stage for the government institutions' being overtaken by the very dynamic of the mass movement in a transitional epoch, which places the socialist revolution on the agenda as the only possible solution, given the insoluble contradictions of capitalism.

Among the combative sections of the workers and students movements an accelerated process of organizational recomposition and political clarification is going on. The revolutionary vanguard and the far left are finding it possible to emerge from their deep political torpor. Free debate has begun again within the vanguard and is stimulating political rearming as a prelude to action.

As for the masses in the broader sense (especially the workers), the victory of the MDB will not result in their being lined up to support the double game being played by the bourgeois opposition. The vote received by the MDB will inevitably open up a situation favorable to breaking down the conservatism of the masses. This becomes clear when account is taken of the fact that the attempt to demobilize the people, in which both the autênticos and the "moderates" of the MDB are participating, is like cold water thrown on the hopes that had been raised. The malady that afflicts this party, its leadership as well as its more active rank and file, will enormously accentuate rather than ease the crisis of the bourgeois opposition. Nevertheless, it does not follow from this that the masses will immediately enter into revolutionary turmoil. The effects of the past defeats of the workers movement and the nonexistence of a revolutionary vanguard with a mass base, combined with the constant crisis of the "democratic" bourgeois opposition, will continue to act as power-

ful factors fostering conservatism and political vacuity. The masses do not exist apart from their organizations, politically at least. Outside these organizations "the masses" are atomized individuals, fragmented by the alienation of labor, united only psychologically.

Thus, instances in which the struggles go beyond the limits laid down for them, particularly in the workers movement, will occur in a profoundly uneven, atomized, and completely disorganized manner. This is a contradictory feature of the coming period and is itself an expression of the very deep contradiction between the subjective factor (the level of consciousness and organization of the masses), which is less developed, and the objective factor, the inability of capitalism in Brazil (or anywhere else) to resolve its own contradictions. The resolution of the contradiction between the objective and subjective factors is, as it has always been and will be, a challenge to the revolutionary vanguard.

7. Revolutionary Marxists must now pose a number of questions to themselves and the revolutionary vanguard, principally the most conscious and combative workers: Is "redemocratization" fostered by the military bureaucracy the best solution for the bourgeoisie? Will the aggravation of the economic, political, and social contradictions that the Brazilian bourgeoisie will have to confront in coming years enable it to carry out a "redemocratization from above"? Can the very social forces that tried to perpetuate an "indigenous fascism" through terror suddenly change their spots and give rise to "flowering democracy"?

The bourgeois republic was always the best form of rule for the bourgeoisie. Boxing in the masses with reformist parliamentary contests, with the periodic election of candidates who are indentured to the bourgeoisie but carry out their policies "in the name of the people," conceals the class dictatorship against the exploited and has always enabled the bourgeoisie to ideologically mask the real nature of its state power. The more deeply the bourgeoisie moves into its period of decay — and this is as valid for Brazil as it is for the rest of the world — the less it resembles the bourgeoisie of the ascending period of capitalism. For this historically moribund class, the crucial question does not lie so much in its subjective desires as in its objective capacity to reproduce and maintain the capitalist system.

The military dictatorship in Brazil represented a political solution founded on the defeat of the masses and the complete destruction of the organized workers movement; these were the preconditions for capitalist accumulation. The fact that this solution was adopted illustrated the hegemony of the bourgeois sectors tied to imperialism. In 1968 Institutional

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Act No. 5, the "coup within a coup," gave relatively complete form to the dynamic that had started in 1964 (when the Goulart regime was overthrown). During the course of the past ten years, the armed forces rose to the position of the "sole party" of the bourgeoisie, substituting themselves for the old, worn-out bourgeois politicians. "Violence without words replaced the violence of words."

8. The lessons of Chile and Argentina did not pass unnoticed by international big business, and still less by the Brazilian bourgeoisie and the military camarilla. The experiences in those countries showed that the traditional bourgeois parties and the reformist workers parties could not prevent a confrontation between the masses and the bourgeois regime, nor could they prevent the anticapitalist and anti-imperialist dynamic of the permanent revolution from unfolding. The reformism of the Unidã Popular was replaced by fascism. Peronist Bonapartism was replaced by the armed bands of the rightist parallel police. The misfortune of the Brazilian bourgeoisie is that in the short term it does not command sufficiently powerful reformist forces or Bonapartist bourgeois leaders. And it fears the masses. Moreover, was it not under the banner of the Bonapartism of Vargas that the masses on several occasions threatened to overthrow the institutions of the ruling class?

With Institutional Act No. 5 the de Medici government — the most fascist of all the rightist governments since 1964 — eliminated any "populism" from the bourgeois leadership. The repressive antipopular and antiworker wave unleashed by the de Medici government deprived the ruling class of the instruments and political organizations it needed to hold the masses in check. From the standpoint of the immediate needs of the time, this was necessary in order to consolidate the bourgeois regime and pump up the capitalist economy; but in the long term it left the ruling class with no support except its Pretorian Guard, except pure and simple repression.

The hands of the bourgeoisie and the gorillas are covered with too much blood for them to speak of "redemocratization," to tolerate the free organization of the people and the existence of workers parties having the power to negotiate with them. The bourgeoisie as a whole is much more afraid of the radicalization of the masses and the recomposition of the workers movement than it is of its own internal struggles. In order to maintain its rule it will not hesitate to suppress one or the other of the bourgeois sectors that do not hold hegemony.

9. A despotic dictatorship can crumble under either of two conditions: if its internal contradictions drive it to a point of such degeneration and corruption that the regime collapses of its own decay or if the bourgeoisie finds that the only way it

can save its regime in face of a mass upsurge threatening its rule is to grant democratic concessions. In general, Greece and Portugal illustrate the first category; Argentina during the period of the Great National Accord illustrates the second.

In what direction are the present struggles among the factions in power in Brazil moving? They certainly do not suggest that the Brazilian dictatorship is on the point of collapsing from decay or that it is inevitably moving toward such an end. It is quite clear that a division presently exists between two bourgeois wings, both solidly linked to the monopolies, to the multinational trusts and their interests. On the one side there is the "hard wing," which calls for the Chilean-type methods, that is, a toughening of repression and the exclusion of traditional bourgeois leaders from decision-making centers. On the other side, there is the Geisel wing, which is trying to reactivate a controlled parliamentary game, to grant some autonomy to ARENA and to the MDB, and to strengthen the regime's facade — but without ending the fascist repression.

The "institutionalization" of the dictatorship appears to be the most sophisticated and effective sort of rule from the standpoint of one sector of the bourgeoisie. This sector is trying through institutionalization to maintain the armed forces as the fundamental pillar of the regime and at the same time to allow a more intense, though rigorously controlled, parliamentary game to unfold as a means of diminishing tensions within the bourgeoisie and extending bourgeois domination over broader sections of the masses. Concurrently, the level of fascist repression against the masses is being kept up. In other words, with one hand the military dictatorship is offering a dialogue to the big bourgeoisie; with the other hand it is continuing to violently repress any insubordination among the masses. That is the sort of "redemocratization" the Geisel faction is capable of offering.

It is probable that the clash between these more sophisticated conceptions of rule and the conceptions advocated by the truculent "hard wing," along with differences over the pace at which "institutionalization" should be introduced (differences pitting the most impatient sectors, of the "O Estado de São Paulo" type, against the "moderation" of Geisel), will produce an increase in tensions within the bourgeoisie during the coming period, thus opening up some breaches in the system of rule. While this is true, it is also certain that these conflicts and tensions, even if they continue to mount and spill out of the offices and antechambers of the ministers, will by themselves never lead the bourgeoisie to seek a solution of the redemocratization type unless there is pressure from the masses.

That is why waiting for "redemocratization" to be touched off spontaneously by struggles within the bourgeoisie without being concerned with organizing and mobilizing the industrial proletariat independently of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships amounts to condemning the revolutionary movement to suicide.

The only way democratic rights can be won by the masses in the current conditions of Brazil is for the workers in struggle, organized and mobilized massively, to force the bourgeoisie to beat a political retreat. And this revolutionary upsurge of the masses, when it comes, will not at all stop at democratic conquests. It will persist until there is a direct and decisive confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, until the complete destruction of the capitalist system. There are no more reforms to carry out; there are no more democratic "stages" to be traversed. The era of permanent revolution has long since begun and it will end only with the victory of socialism on a world scale.

10. What next? What is to be done after the elections? Would offering critical support to the MDB or to the "autêntico" wing of the MDB hasten the recomposition of the organized workers movement? Would it strengthen the workers vanguard? Or would it channel discontent so as to legitimize the dictatorship? Revolutionary Marxists, as well as other currents of the revolutionary left, called for casting a blank ballot during the elections and centered their campaign around the organization of the struggle against the dictatorship through independent and autonomous action.

While it is necessary to reject all ultraleftist conceptions that refuse participation in any elections under the pretext that elections are by definition bourgeois or are of no interest to the workers movement, it is also necessary not to make a fetish of elections. When communists can use them freely, parliamentary elections can serve as a tribune from which to issue political denunciations, to talk about workers and popular struggles, to carry out propaganda about the revolutionary program, and to popularize mobilizing slogans. Above all, they must be used to propagandize and agitate for a superior form of democracy, that of councils or soviets under the control of the masses. Nevertheless, a position of critical support to the MDB, or at least to its best candidates (the autênticos, the youth wing) became generalized throughout the left, and especially throughout the far left, during the elections. The MDB was seen as the "best means for strengthening democratic rights." It was explained that the autênticos of the MDB would denounce the dictatorship in Congress, that they would defend "a part of our program," that it would be "voluntarist right now to propose to reconstruct

the proletarian vanguard," that the "defeats of these past years show that the masses are more in crisis than is the vanguard," that "the left needs room to breathe, and for that the indicated solution is to work legally within the MDB," and so on.

Revolutionary Marxists had to denounce this false position, which amounted to counterrevolutionary immobility. The validity of the denunciations of the dictatorship issued by the autênticos during and after the elections was not challenged. But such denunciations would not have been produced by any support to the MDB, even critical support. In the concrete conditions of the moment, parliamentary elections are not simply a grotesque farce; they also fail to offer even minimal guarantees, even to the bourgeois parliamentarians. To lend such support now would be to play the bourgeoisie's game, to provide a cover for the institutionalization of the dictatorship, to contribute to bolstering the democratic facade of the dictatorship.

11. It is necessary to speak clearly: If the autênticos of the MDB are consistent about the denunciations they have issued, why do they remain in the MDB, channeling popular discontent so that it can be absorbed by the regime? Why don't they break with the bourgeois leadership of the party and with the MDB itself? Why don't they call on the workers to have confidence only in their own strength?

Precisely because the masses, when they voted for the MDB, were voting against the dictatorship rather than in favor of the bourgeois leadership of the MDB, it is more than ever urgent to deepen this attitude and not to limit or co-opt it. And if the vanguard is very weak and the masses are very backward today, that increases the importance of this task. The slightest gains that can be made in advancing the consciousness and independent organization of the masses will prove decisive in the coming period.

The opportunist and tail-endist policy toward the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships, which respects the betrayal of the workers movement by the reformists of the CP, has fallen into its own trap. This policy is unable to find a way out of the vicious circle into which it has placed itself: Critical support to the MDB, which, because of its own subordination to the bourgeois parties, will lead its defenders to uncritical support. This pragmatism has its price: the self-liquidation of a vanguard that claims to be revolutionary, for this pragmatism abandons the central task of the vanguard at the present time — the struggle to advance the consciousness and independent organization of the proletariat — in the name of "shortcuts" that lead nowhere except to total impotence and subordination to the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships. And the most lam-

entable thing is that this "new discovery" of "critical" support is not at all new in the history of the workers movement. Since the beginning of this century that sort of policy has resulted in many defeats and big retreats, the lessons of which can be drawn. In reality, critical support to the MDB drags Marxism back to its prehistoric stages. What is needed is a step forward, not two, three, and more steps backward.

It is exactly because of the MDB's character as a bourgeois party and because of the character of parliamentary elections that it is necessary to fight against these illusions, to demystify and clarify before the masses and the workers vanguard all the electoralist and reformist deviations that hope to resolve through a vote what cannot be resolved except through the direct action of the masses, through their self-organization from the bottom up. The choice is not MDB or ARENA; the point is not to choose the lesser evil. The important thing is to know what policy strengthens the working class and weakens the bourgeoisie and what policy does the opposite.

12. Revolutionary Marxism is the conscious expression of an unconscious social process. In each phase, at each moment of the struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, it always represents the overall interests of the whole workers movement. It is in this sense that revolutionary Marxists — whose interests are no different from those of the workers movement, for they represent the most clear-sighted wing of that movement — call for the independence of the workers vanguard from the bourgeois parties and the petty-bourgeois leaders.

The tactic of casting a blank ballot, a tactic centered on the organization and reconstruction of the vanguard, points in the direction of deepening the potential for going beyond bourgeois limits that exists among the masses, of strengthening the positions of the proletariat to the detriment of those of the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship.

From the immediate standpoint, the campaign for the blank ballot had as its objective beginning a process of regrouping the revolutionary vanguard, of clarifying politics in order to take action. At no time did we foster any illusion as to the possibility of immediately transforming the process of outflanking the bourgeois leaderships into revolutionary mass action. The campaign for the blank ballot was centered on the question of independent organization, thus clearly showing that participation in parliamentary elections makes sense only when the revolutionary vanguard and the workers parties can have a guarantee of a minimum freedom of opinion and speech. In the long term, our propaganda will

have strengthened the idea that democratic conquests are not granted by governments but are won by the masses in struggle.

The final balance-sheet after the elections indicated the failure of the vanguard, its isolation from the masses; in other words, the lack of a revolutionary leadership. Only such a leadership could strengthen the struggle against the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaderships, tearing the best elements of our proletariat from their influence in order to attract them to revolutionary Marxism.

13. But the balance-sheet of the elections also showed that new possibilities are open to the revolutionary left. The dictatorship is caught in an impasse: How can it strengthen its class domination without permitting an explosion of mass struggles in an extremely tense social situation? The masses have demonstrated their discontent and dissatisfaction with the dictatorship. Their vote was political, despite the years of apathy under the de Medici government. All this makes the dictatorship tremble and indicates that new breaches can be opened in the apparent monolith of the bourgeois regime before it can find a new equilibrium — if it ever does.

It is indispensable for the Marxist and revolutionary currents to solve as soon as possible the problem of the absence of leadership of the working class in order not to allow the bourgeoisie and the dictatorship to build up the political and social support that it now lacks. That is why it is necessary to call on all revolutionary groups to practice unity in action in order to reinforce the organized workers movement (by forming workers committees and commissions for common action, as in the case of trade-union elections in 1975, for example), to organize self-defense of struggles and of workers organizations during periods of repression and persecution of vanguard worker militants, and to organize political campaigns against the dictatorship. Unity in action is indispensable to the formation of committees to defend political prisoners and to denounce the conciliationism of the MDB and the opportunism of the so-called autênticos.

But this unity in action will not mean the absence of a profound political debate among the components of the revolutionary left. Political and programmatic clarification must be carried out through an ever deepening free debate around immediate tactical problems and the final objectives of our movement. What is needed is to find a policy that is adapted to the presently atomized condition of the revolutionary vanguard in the struggle against capitalism and the dictatorship and that in the long run will foster the formation of a revolutionary Marxist workers party. ■

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are in danger of death. We do not know exactly when the trial will be held, but it may begin at any moment. That is why we must begin now to prepare ourselves so that the masses, with the working class at their head, can respond energetically to this attempt at multiple murder. That is why we are making this appeal to the United Secretariat of the Fourth International. Because Eva Forest and her comrades need international solidarity if they are to escape death. Because we, Trotskyist militants of the entire world, are the most consistent defenders of the struggle against the oppression and repression engendered by international capitalism; and because, in the end, the overthrow of the Francoist dictatorship is part of the international struggle against capital.

Without international solidarity of the sort that was organized in defense of the working class and the revolutionaries of Chile, Vietnam, and Palestine, it will be very difficult to block the plans of Francoism, to make the dictatorship retreat once more, and to succeed in pressing forward the struggle for its overthrow. Today an international front against repression must be developed around the defense of Eva Forest and her comrades and against the Francoist dictatorship. That is why we are appealing to you, for it is through our organization, the Fourth International, that the working class and the popular masses of Europe and other places will take up this struggle in the manner most able to defend their own interests internationally.

We are sure that you will be able to rise to the challenge that Francoism has issued, as one of the additional internationalist tasks that the Trotskyists of the world must take up. That is why we must begin today to develop propaganda and agitation and to popularize these slogans:

STAY THE HAND OF MURDEROUS FRANCOISM!
 FREEDOM FOR EVA FOREST AND HER COMRADES!
 FREEDOM FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS IN
 THE SPANISH STATE!
 DOWN WITH REPRESSION!
 DOWN WITH THE DICTATORSHIP!

Knowing that we can count on your precious support, we send you our revolutionary greetings:
FOR THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

Trotskyist political prisoners of the Francoist prison of Segovia, members of the LCR/ETA-VI:

Armendariz Tainta, Javier. Arrested April 7, 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 12 years in prison.

Arregui Ecnave, Julian. Arrested June 1972. Condemned by the War Council to 12 years in prison.
 Arrizabalaga Basterrechez, Andoni. Arrested April 1969. Condemned to death by a military tribunal in Burgos (the sentence later commuted to life imprisonment).

Bilbao Cos, Josu. Arrested January 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 15 years in prison.

Bedialauneta Laca, Andoni. Arrested April 1969. Condemned by the War Council to 25 years in prison.

Carrera Aguirrebarrena, Antxon. Arrested March 1969. Condemned by the Burgos trials to 12 years in prison.

Eguireun Totorica, Jose Luis. Arrested March 1971. Condemned by a military tribunal to 20 years and by the Public Order Tribunal to 6 years in prison.

Garcia Arambarri, Inaki. Arrested April 1969. Condemned by a War Council to 25 years in prison.

Garitaonandia Garnacho, Carmelo. Arrested March 1971. Condemned to terms of 5 years and 20 years in two trials before the Public Order Tribunal; still must go before a military tribunal; risks a 20 year sentence.

Guesalaga Larreta, Enrique. Arrested April 1969. Condemned in the Burgos trials to 50 years in prison.

Ibargutxi San Pedro, Josu. Arrested April 1968. Condemned by a military tribunal to 46 years in prison.

Izaguirre Esnal, Felipe. Arrested April 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 10 years in prison.

Jaca Aranalde, Patxi. Arrested April 1968. Condemned by a War Council to 20 years and by the Public Order Tribunal to 6 years.

Lorono Echevarria, Josu. Arrested May 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 14½ years in prison.

Sarasketa Ibanez, Inaki. Arrested May 1968. Condemned to death by a military tribunal (sentence commuted to life imprisonment).

Solaguren Urruchurtu, Lucio. Arrested in 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 20 years in prison.

Urquiza Arrasate, Luis Maria. Arrested in 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 21 years in prison.

Viar Echevarria, Ianak. Arrested in 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 20 years in prison and by the Public Order Tribunal to 5 years; a further trial before the Public Order Tribunal pending, 5 year sentence possible.

Zubicaray Osa, Juan Maria. Arrested January 1973. Condemned by the Public Order Tribunal to 3 years in prison.

Zugadi Ramirez, Pedro Maria. Arrested in 1969. Condemned by a military tribunal to 16 years in prison. ■

Spain: an appeal for **SOLIDARITY**



We are publishing below a letter appealing to Trotskyist militants and sympathizers throughout the world for international solidarity. It was written by twenty militants of the Liga Comunista Revolucionario/Euzkadi ta Askatasuna-VI (LCR/ETA-VI — Revolutionary Communist League/Basque Nation and Freedom-VI), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Spain. The twenty comrades are prisoners in Segovia. The sentences that have been handed down against them total 383 years in prison and two death penalties. Most of these comrades were militants of the ETA when they were arrested and were won to the LCR while in prison, when the LCR fused with the revolutionary Marxist wing of the ETA to form the LCR/ETA-VI.



The process that opened last year in Portugal and Greece with the overthrow of the dictatorships in these two countries has left Francoism as the only remaining representative in Europe of the open dictatorial forms of rule that the bourgeoisie adopts to perpetuate its class rule. But the Francoist dictatorship will not escape this process.

The nearly forty-year-long bloody period through which the working class and the popular masses in the Spanish state has suffered is coming to an end. The crisis that began with the Burgos trials and has emerged ever more clearly in the past few years has now attained such depth that an important effort from revolutionaries in Spain and throughout the world is necessary to overthrow Francoism and to make the process opened by that overthrow culminate in the socialist revolution in the Spanish state.

In the course of its long years of rule as the faithful guardian of the interests of the bourgeoisie, the Francoist dictatorship has systematically used the weapon of repression to paralyze the mobilizations of the masses and above all to terrorize the workers movement. The struggle against repression that has been going on during the past several years has in its turn proved to be the best weapon in the hands of the working class and the popular layers in the fight to overturn the repressive plans of the dictatorship and to extend consciousness of the necessity for its overthrow.

The main example of this was the Burgos trials, during which the dictatorship was forced to retreat and renounce its criminal plans in the face of the mass mobilizations in the Spanish state and internationally. But the dictatorship has not given up its criminal plans — as was shown by the murder of Salvador Puig Antich in March 1974 — and it will not give them up, for repression is the pillar of every dictatorship; and the Francoist dictatorship today is much more bloody and vicious than ever, for it is approaching its end.

The Spanish bourgeoisie today, acting through the intermediary of its faithful guardian, is preparing new trials of the Burgos type with the clear intention of duplicating the execution of Salvador Puig Antich and of doing what it was unable to do in 1970: execute at least three militants who were imprisoned last summer, accused of responsibility for the execution of Carrero Blanco, the president of the government. The dictatorship has found itself obliged to find scapegoats, and thanks to its sinister policy, it has been easy to do so. Eva Forest, an internationalist militant active against the war in Vietnam; Antonio Durán, well-known militant and leader of the workers movement in Madrid; Salvador Garmendía, Basque nationalist militant; and other comrades have been "elected" for this trial, during which several death penalties will probably be requested.

The lives of Eva Forest and her comrades are hanging by a thread. Francoism wants to use this trial to "teach a lesson" to all those who are consciously struggling against it and to the workers and people's movement, which for years has been asserting itself ever more vigorously. As good Leninists, revolutionary Marxists cannot let the slightest acts of repression that the bourgeoisie tries to carry out go by without denouncing and combating them.

The frame-up trials against Eva Forest and her comrades are the bloodiest and most criminal that the bourgeoisie has tried to conduct in the Spanish state since the Burgos trials.

For Spanish Trotskyists, the struggle that we are waging today against the dictatorship means the struggle for the defense of these comrades, who

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