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**ARGENTINA:
Perón faces
workers
upsurge**



**INDIA:
against
Gandhi's
repression!**



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SUMMER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

One more issue of INPRECOR (July 31) will appear before we take our summer vacation. No issues of INPRECOR will be published during August. We will resume our regular fortnightly schedule beginning with the issue of September 11. Our next issue, the last before vacation, will be specially devoted to the Indochinese revolution and its regional and international implications.

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ARGENTINA:



NEW WORKERS BREAKTHROUGH

by LIVIO MAITAN

The forty-eight-hour general strike in Argentina, which ended on July 8, represented the culminating point of a many-dimensional crisis whose roots extend far into the past. It could become the jumping-off point for a new crisis, the exact development of which is difficult to predict at this time.

By the very fact that it was directed against an important decision of the Isabel Perón government, the general strike revealed the overall failure of the operation of political, social, and economic stabilization undertaken by the Argentine bourgeoisie with Peronism's return to power in May 1973. This failure can no longer be concealed by any tricks of propaganda. The Argentine bourgeoisie had hoped to take economic advantage of the increases in the prices of raw materials that occurred for a whole period. It had hoped to benefit from the attempts of European and Japanese capitalists to expand their investments. The plan had been to maintain relative "social peace" by relying on a combination of the prestige of Perón, the old charismatic leader, and some modest wage increases to compensate for losses in buying power. The bourgeoisie had further counted on the USSR and the other workers states, Cuba included, to offer increased maneuvering room. Success in this overall project would have endowed the Argentine bourgeoisie with a relatively stable leadership after years of political and social crisis and thus would have permitted bourgeois democracy to function, at

least partially. (Officially, this was baptised "the process of institutionalization.")

The outbreak of the international recession was a severe blow for the Argentine economy. The bourgeoisie's maneuvering room was suddenly reduced, if not wiped out altogether. The turnabout in the situation of the meat market in Europe hit hard at the export of agricultural products, while the increases in production costs of industrial products reduced their competitiveness on the world market. According to official sources, there was an intensified decline (or, in the best of cases, a stagnation) of exports of principal products during the first three months of 1975. There is no indication that this trend will be turned around during the second quarter. At the same time, inflation has intensified. It has taken on dimensions never before seen in the country's history, to use the formula of the most representative Argentine bourgeois dailies.

There is no doubt that the major burden of this unfavorable economic evolution of Argentine capitalism has been borne by the workers and the toilers in general. This does not mean that the "social pact" was rigorously respected, as had been hoped for by the bourgeoisie and the Peronist leadership. On various occasions resolute struggles of some sectors and categories of the working class succeeded in winning gains that went beyond



the limits set by the accords. Even more important, the myth of the old caudillo suffered severe blows, even before his death. His return to power occurred in a context vastly different from that which prevailed during his rise to power in the 1940s. The concessions to the masses that had formed the basis of his popularity at the end of the second world war could in no way be repeated. Justicialist rhetoric became increasingly insufficient for maintaining Peronism's unity; still less could this rhetoric guarantee the continuity of Peronism's ties to the masses. The first direct and resounding break between Perón and the left wing of his movement occurred during the official May Day demonstration in 1974, when thousands of youth responded to Perón's insults by walking out of the rally. In past months, the strike in Villa Constitución (see INPRECOR, No. 26, May 22), despite its outcome, which was certainly not successful, had likewise signaled an open clash between the Isabel Perón government and an important section of the workers. Other episodes could also be cited; here we will simply point to two of the most significant ones.

At the beginning of June Alfredo Gómez Morales was replaced by Celestino Rodrigo as minister of economics. This was supposed to be a decisive step in pushing through the economic measures the bourgeoisie considered necessary to straighten out an increasingly deteriorating

situation. Essentially, these measures involved a new devaluation of the Argentine peso in order to stimulate exports, a considerable increase in the price of public services in order to reduce the budget drastically, and a radical limitation of wage increases under the guise of slowing down inflation (in official circles there was talk of holding wage increases down to 38-45%, while the cost of living was going up at an annual rate of 150%). In other words, it was an attempt to drastically reduce the consumption levels of the masses, even at the risk of provoking a deflationary turn so sharp that a serious recession might be triggered.

To judge from the comments of political formations and employers organizations up to the eve of the crisis that broke out at the end of June, the bulk of bourgeois forces agreed with the measures of the new economic minister. These measures were also supported by international capital, which was obviously concerned about the gravity of the Argentine situation. (It must be remembered that in spite of the severity of the official repression and the criminal actions of the parallel gangs of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance (AAA) and in spite of the massacres of militants and intellectuals of the left and the far left, bourgeois "order" had scarcely been restored; the clandestine organizations, especially the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (ERP — Revolu-



tionary Army of the People) and the Montoneros, have not at all reduced the level of their activity.) On June 18, as a sign of support to Celestina Rodrigo's attempts to straighten out the situation of Argentine capitalism, eight multinational automobile companies (representing German, French, Italian, and North American capital) signed an agreement not to repatriate profits during a two-year period; they also agreed that during the same period they would accept payment for various patent rights and technical assistance in Argentine Central Bank certificates instead of currency. In exchange for this concession, the price of automobiles in Argentina will be exempt from the official system of price-setting.

But the project of the government and the new minister quickly ran up against the resistance of those who would have had to bear the burden of the measures. Within a few days after Rodrigo's decisions, a large number of collective contracts of important categories of workers began to expire (metalworkers, construction workers, bank employees, public service employees). Rank-and-file pressure was so strong that in most of these cases the wage claims that were demanded and won were far in excess of the limits set down by the new economic policy; for some categories, the wage increases reached or even exceeded 100%.

It was not out of the goodness of its heart that the trade-union bureaucracy supported the demands put forward by the rank and file. In fact, in many sectors the bureaucracy began by slowing down or opposing mobilizations, putting forward proposals more in line with the government's projects, and trying to prevent the outbreak of strikes. But the bureaucracy was confronted with an explosion of workers' combativity of such scope that any head-on attack on the movement for these demands would have resulted in a generalized loss of control over the working class. That certainly confirms the fact that the Villa Constitución strike represented a turn in the objective situation in Argentina, a turn that combined the final episode of a long series of defensive battles by vanguard sections of the working class with the beginning of a generalized mobilization of the working class as a whole.

Thus, in the provinces, especially Córdoba and Santa Fe, coordinating bodies of activists and of the factory-level workers' commissions, which had been gradually set up after the regime ousted the elected combative worker leaderships, began to act as real alternative leaderships, organizing strikes and demonstrations during the period June 10-24 and countering the bureaucratic and police provocations and repression, which were still being carried out throughout that period.

ARGENTINA



Demonstrators in Buenos Aires burn López Rega in effigy.

It is significant that just after the announcement of the Rodrigo measures sectors like the teachers mobilized for their demands in a manner just as unanimous as that of the traditionally most combative elements, like the autoworkers, metalworkers, and printing and graphic arts workers. Thus, a strike proposal for teaching instructors that was opposed by the UDA, the union bureaucracy that is "recognized" in this field, was approved by a majority of 65% in the city of Buenos Aires, 95% in the province of Buenos Aires, and between 95% and 98% in the interior of the country.

The government was thus confronted with a dramatic choice: either approve the collective contracts that had been forced on the employers and the trade-union bureaucracy by enormous rank-and-file pressure, which would have meant scuttling the Rodrigo project before it was even launched, or else refuse to ratify the agreements and thus risk a test of strength with the whole working class and the trade-union bureaucracy, that is, an open "breach" in the Peronist movement. The trade-union bureaucracy, having exhausted all possibilities of maneuver and compromise, clearly announced its determination to defend the gains of the contracts. On June 26 it proclaimed an initial "official" work stoppage and called for a workers demonstration in the Plaza de Mayo for the following day.

The bureaucracy did this because it was constrained and forced to do so by the many wildcat strikes and other spontaneous demonstrations of workers combativity that had already broken out. It did so with much hesitation,

which was shown by the fact that when the June 27 demonstration lasted beyond the scheduled time and began to take a more and more radical turn, the leaders of the CGT (Confederación General del Trabajo — General Confederation of Labor) took to the public address system to call on the demonstrators to disperse, an action that did not produce impressive results. (In all, the demonstration lasted for nearly ten hours; more than 100,000 workers participated.)

On June 28 the government announced its choice in a radio and television address by Perón herself. All the labor contracts that had been arrived at by the parity commissions were annulled. A rigid 50% limit was set on wage increases effective June 1, additional raises of 15% being permissible on October 1, 1975, and January 1, 1976. Isabel did not hesitate to criticize the workers, accusing them of not respecting the promises she claimed they had made to her late husband, promises to "work harder to produce more." She also accused them of "facilitating an easy victory for mercenaries, enemies of the fatherland."

But in addition to this reactionary rhetoric, she confessed the failure of the Peronist policy that has been followed during the two years since the electoral victory of the Justicialist front: "The Argentine nation is now facing what I would call the zero hour of our decision to obtain definitive freedom on all fronts. . . . Production is going down. Speculation seems to be spreading beyond all limits. Enormous sums have been spent on activities that are useless to the goals of the nation." She was even compelled to add explicitly: "The only possible solution for reestablishing an equilibrium and reconstructing the nation is to maintain a just and healthy austerity, to avoid superfluous expenses, and to increase production to the maximum, as though we were in a war economy."

The announcement of the government's decision immediately provoked a furious reaction from the working class. The CGT announced that it would meet on June 30 at 10:00 a.m. to decide what to do. But even before the bureaucrats could get together, four provinces — Córdoba, Mendoza, Chubut, and Santa Fe — were completely paralyzed by spontaneous general strikes. This time the wave of radicalization hit the city of greater Buenos Aires too; throughout the capital factories were shut down by general assemblies held in the work places. Many delegations marched from their factories toward the central headquarters of the CGT to put pressure on the trade-union leadership. The government concentrated vast security forces around the Casa Rosada (the presidential palace) and access to the Plaza de Mayo was forbidden.

Torn between pressure from the rank and file and pressure from the government, the CGT leadership still sought to gain time and decided to postpone its decision until Wednesday July 2. But the spread of wildcat strikes was so extensive that in order to try to keep its "troops" under control the trade-union bureaucracy, after the failure of the attempts at conciliation with the govern-

ment, was forced to call a forty-eight-hour general strike for July 7 and 8.

The government's decision to annul the collective contracts provoked not only the massive reaction of the working class, but also a deep political crisis. Nearly all political formations and even various employers associations disassociated themselves from the government.* The Peronist movement itself was deeply divided, the differences even extending into its parliamentary group. It is here that another important aspect of the change in the objective situation signaled by the Villa Constitución strike made itself felt. Not only sectors of the workers vanguard, but also substantial sectors of the working masses as a whole openly took aim at López Rega, Isabel Perón's "grey eminence" and Peronism's ideologue and strong man.

At the June 27 demonstration the trade-union bureaucracy had tried to get the tens of thousands of assembled workers to sing the Peronist hymn — in vain. The demonstrators were not prepared to follow this advice. But the demand for the removal of López Rega became more and more generalized in their chants and slogans. And when the CGT was compelled to call for the July 7-8 general strike, the demand for López Rega's removal was included among the official goals of the movement.

Obviously, this was an event of great importance. López Rega has been the real instigator of the increasingly reactionary course of the Peronist regime after the brief interlude of Cámpora's presidency in 1974. It was López Rega who began using the many leaders and torturers of the repression under the Onganía regime, unleashing a repression on a grand scale against the Peronist youth, the revolutionary organizations, and the cadres and leaders of the class-struggle tendencies in the trade unions.

A ferocious anticommunist whose ideology is semifascist, an open admirer of Mussolini and Franco, a purger of universities and intellectual circles, López Rega is the real organizer of the "unofficial" terror of the Argentine Anticommunist Alliance. In association with sections of the trade-union bureaucracy, he tried to systematically break the class-struggle trade-union leaderships that had emerged in various sectors during the preceding period of the workers radicalization. For all these reasons, he is considered the embodiment of the antiworker and counterrevolutionary repression in the country.

This judgment, at first put forward systematically only by the revolutionary organizations and other opposition

*Among the rare political forces that came out in favor of Isabel Perón's decisions were the Maoists of the PCR (Revolutionary Communist party), who asserted that "in a situation of national crisis" it was correct "for the united Peronist people to confront the Russo-Yankee conspiracy, on the road to the definitive liberation of the people and the fatherland."

forces, has now been taken up by broad sections of the working class itself. While it is premature to see this as evidence of a decisive break of the Argentine working class with the bourgeois ideology of Peronist Justicialism, it is undoubtedly a step that brings closer the Argentine proletariat's winning of political class independence.

As of this writing it seems that the government has capitulated to the general strike on the question of wage increases; Isabel Perón has refused to abandon López Rega, but she appears to be prepared to sacrifice Rodrigo and other unpopular ministers. The government formally resigned; a cabinet shake-up of greater or lesser scope has become inevitable. The military officers, who refrained from openly intervening in the crisis, but seem to have brought pressure in the direction of a "reconciliation" with the trade-union bureaucracy, could well return to top position. An attempt to relaunch "left Peronism" could possibly be made, utilizing such personalities as Cámpora, for example. Isabel could try to get out of the situation by recomposing the various elements that represent Peronism in power.

But whatever happens, there is no doubt that the crisis of Peronism has reached a new stage. Never have its relations with the working class as a whole (and not simply with certain sections of the working class) been as tense as they are today. The trade-union bureaucrats understand very well how dangerous the current developments are both for the future of their own positions and for the future of Argentine bourgeois society as a whole. That is why they are ceaselessly reaffirming their fidelity to Peronism and are seeking to save the reign of Isabel Perón, even while they tried to recover their control of the masses by the proclaiming the general strike.

In such a context, revolutionaries must stand in the front lines of the great ongoing battles, making their contribution to the broadest possible mass mobilization, for it is only such a mobilization that could lead either to Isabel Perón's total capitulation or to her removal. The decision to annul the collective labor contracts must be purely and simply rescinded. Wage increases that fully compensate for the effects of inflation and preserve the buying power of the workers must be won and guaranteed by a sliding scale that responds to any new price increases.

At the same time, revolutionaries must insist on the necessity of preparing to respond to any reactionary attack, whatever its character, and of organizing workers self-defense on the broadest possible scale against official and unofficial repression. It is intolerable for worker militants to fall under the blows of the AAA and other antiworker gangs. The release of the political prisoners must be won. The organization of self-defense must become an irreplaceable guarantee for the victorious outcome of the new phase of mass workers struggles that has now opened in Argentina.

July 9, 1975

INDIA:

END THE STATE OF EMERGENCY! FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS!

Declaration of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International

The Fourth International condemns the Indira Gandhi government's declaration of a state of emergency in India and the measures that have followed it, such as the arrest of thousands of people, the outlawing of twenty-six organizations, and the imposition of rigid press censorship. While presently directed mainly against the right-wing parties, these measures include attacks on working-class parties like the Communist party of India (Marxist) and the banning of several Maoist organizations. They constitute an attack on the Indian workers movement and the oppressed masses as a whole. It is they who will suffer most from the Gandhi regime's dictatorial turn, as has already been demonstrated by the wage freeze and the restrictions on the right to strike. The measures taken by the Congress party government mark a further deterioration of India's already fragile bourgeois democracy and bring the Indira Gandhi regime into line with the other regimes of South Asia: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka are now ruled under states of emergency. In Bangladesh, the newest of these states, this state of affairs has already been institutionalized by the creation of a one-party state, mass arrests of radicals, and the banning of the left-wing weekly *Holiday*.

The suspension of civil liberties in India reflects the Indian bourgeoisie's inability to find a solution to the social crisis that has plagued the country for nearly two decades and has led to a massive loss of confidence in the Gandhi regime.

Indira Gandhi's overwhelming victory in the 1971 general elections was the result of her appearance as the "liberator of Bangladesh" and of her radical demagogy during the campaign, which was summed up in the slogan "End poverty." This demagogy was given added credibility by her alliance with the Communist party of India (CPI), while at the same time she dispensed with the services of many veteran right-wing Congress leaders and party managers. But the worsening of the social and economic crisis after 1971 gradually began to erode popular support for Gandhi and the Congress party. Mass famine on a scale not seen since the 1930s and 1940s, food hoarding, a thriving black market, smuggling on a vastly increased scale, and a further generalization of corruption caused the seething discontent of the masses to erupt in huge mobilizations. The failure of the mass workers organizations to provide leadership for this explosive mass discontent or to provide a national focus for an opposition to the Congress party based on class politics enabled reactionary forces employing populist demagogy to assert a strong influence in the leadership of the mass mobilizations. This explains why the Gandhi

regime's attack on right-wing forces is actually a prelude to a broader general attack on the masses as a whole.

The tragedy of the Indian workers and poor peasants lies precisely in the fact that the two largest workers parties, the CPI and the CPI(M) are completely incapable of developing a struggle against Indian capital in the interests of the working class and oppressed poor. This failure has been clearly manifested in these parties' inability to organize any response at all to the wage freeze and in their abject failure to mobilize support for and solidarity with the 1974 railway workers strike, which was brutally crushed by the Gandhi government. The CPI and the CPI(M) have put forward class-collaborationist policies instead of a class-struggle line based on the needs of the masses. Thus, while the CPI has hitched onto Gandhi's coattails, the CPI(M) has blocked with other bourgeois forces, even right-wing communalists.

The CPI's decision, fully backed by *Pravda*, to support the state of emergency and to offer its full cooperation to Gandhi once again reveals the political and moral bankruptcy of Stalinism. Under the guise of opposing reaction the CPI is now openly backing repression, justifying the arrest of its former comrades in the CPI(M) and praising press censorship.

While unequivocally condemning the new measures of the Gandhi government and demanding their immediate repeal, we emphasize that these measures are the culmination of a series of repressive steps that have been taken in India since 1967-68 and have been directed against the workers movement. The international bourgeois press, now shedding hypocritical tears over the demise of "Indian democracy," has been silent about the continuing imprisonment, torture, and killing of radicals. There are some 40,000 political prisoners in India today, many of them belonging to Maoist groups. Hundreds have been killed in prison. Two of them, Kista Gowd and Bhoomia, are still awaiting execution in Andhra Pradesh prison. The bourgeoisie remains silent about these prisoners.

The Fourth International calls for a resolute campaign throughout the international workers movement to demand the immediate end of the state of emergency in India and the release of all political prisoners. We call for the broadest possible united-front effort toward this objective.

July 6, 1975



on the background to the Indian crisis

Indira Gandhi was led to further reduce the already narrow breadth of bourgeois democracy in India because of a worsening of the social, political, and economic crisis of the country. This crisis has many aspects, each of which has played a role in generating the current, virtually catastrophic situation:

Aggravation of the social and economic crisis. The available per capita grain and vegetable seed (starches) in India in 1971 was the same as it had been in 1954: 15.7 ounces per day. That figure is lower than it was in the period 1959-65. It has declined further since 1971. Real per capita income in 1974 was no higher than it had been in 1964; the figure for 1975 will be lower. The real wage of an industrial worker in 1970 was lower than it had been in 1939, and has declined continuously since 1970. The official figure for urban unemployment has risen constantly: from 5 million in 1950 to 7 million in 1961, 10 million in 1966, and 15 million in 1974. Ranadive, a leader of the Communist party of India (Marxist) estimates that rural and urban unemployment together amounts to 50 million.

Social polarization in the villages and speculation. The "green revolution" has strongly intensified social differentiation in Indian villages. The proletarianized section of the rural population is growing rapidly in size; the concentration of surplus food in the hands of a few rich peasants is concurrently on the rise. In an atmosphere of permanent shortage and endemic famine, there is a good deal of stockpiling of food for purposes of speculation. A typical example is provided by the state of Maharashtra, a reputedly rich area. There are 5.4 million landless families and 1.7 million families working farms of less than one acre in size; that is, a

total of 7.1 million families who lack the means to provide for themselves. The approximately 80,000 families who own more than twenty acres each are the only ones able to produce a real surplus of food. The landless peasant families have become passive consumers of food who in practice no longer produce any food. Many of them are moving to the cities. The others are "saved" from famine by public projects financed by the state; these operate for several months of the year and pay wages of a few rupees a day.

Smuggling, corruption, and bourgeois politicians. In a country as poor as India, the threefold combination of a state capitalist sector, a public budget that accounts for more than half of industrial investments, and a powerful bourgeois class secretes and strongly stimulates corruption on a colossal scale. The Indian economist Shenoy, who is an ardent defender of "free enterprise," estimates that of the 41 thousand million rupees expended in the public sector of the economy, as much as 40 percent may have been diverted to the private sector through bribes and embezzlement.

Innumerable ruling politicians have been implicated in corrupt practices. Not a week goes by without some scandal coming to light. Smuggling has taken on gigantic dimensions. The customs administration estimates its magnitude during the fiscal year 1974-75 at 9 thousand million rupees on the western coast alone. Most of the goods illegally brought into the country are synthetic textiles; other smuggled commodities include watches, electronic gadgets, pharmaceutical products, and automobile parts. Most of the products illegally exported are foodstuffs! In fact, rice, whose price is

subsidized by the government, can be bought in India at 6-7 rupees per kilogram and then sold in the countries of the Arab-Persian Gulf at 30 rupees per kilogram because of the dizzying rise of food prices in these countries. Many of the richest smugglers are also the major financial contributors to the bourgeois parties, including the ruling party. Hence the impunity they enjoy.

Divisions within the bourgeoisie. Following the winning of independence, the major Indian capitalist groups advocated a strong public sector of the economy. In fact, heavy industrial companies were slow to start functioning, did not bring in profits for long, were not competitive on the world market, etc. But in the long run, some public companies began to become profitable. There were rivalries between the public and private sectors over the disposition of available investment resources. Hence the pressure of a section of the bourgeoisie in favor of a total or partial reprivatization of the public sector (through the establishment of "joint enterprises"). The major bourgeois opposition parties — the "Old Congress," the Jan Sangh, and Swatantra — favor this reprivatization; Indira Gandhi opposes it to some extent.

What this represents, however, is a divergence within the bourgeoisie over what policy would better serve the interests of the ruling class and not at all an opposition between a "capitalist" line and a "noncapitalist" or even "socialist" line. The Birla group, one of the most powerful capitalist groups in the country, continues to support Indira Gandhi. And after the failure of the nationalization of the grain trade, the prime minister had modified the course of her economic policy, favoring the private sector.

Origins of the Jaya Prakesh Narayan agitation. The mass agitation had been initiated by the students, especially the students of the states of Bihar, Gujarat, and Uttar Pradesh, to protest against the injustices of the university system and the corruption prevailing there. The agitation was directed against the most general targets: price increases, food shortages, corruption and incompetence in the state governments, etc. It forced the prime minister of the state of Uttar Pradesh to resign and led to the dissolution of the state assembly in Gujarat.

Jaya Prakesh Narayan is an old Social Democratic leader, an advocate of nonviolence whose prestige predates the independence struggle and whose anticommunism has become increasingly pronounced. He refused to orient the mass agitation of which he had become the symbol and major spokesman toward precise economic and social objectives and instead raised to vague populist objectives like "the reestablishment of an honest administration" and the "struggle against corruption." Consequently, he was able to be easily manipulated by the rightist and far-right forces that command solid organizational structures, while he himself has no apparatus and no party of his own. Objectively, his function has been to divert the growing anger of the youth and the un-



Narayan



ganized oppressed masses toward paths that do not challenge the survival of the reign of the Indian bourgeoisie.

Two political coalitions. The Communist party of India (CPI), faithful to Moscow, has supported the Indira Gandhi government for a long time, even when it broke the strike of the railway workers (see INPRECOR, No. 4, July 18, 1974) and when it proclaimed the wage freeze. The CPI even supports the present repression, including the arrests of leaders of the CPI(Marxist) and the Socialist party.

Drawing no lessons from the miserable failure of their policy of coalition government with the bourgeoisie in the states of West Bengal and Kerala, two workers parties to the left of the CPI, the CPI(M) and the Revolutionary Socialist party (RSP), have concluded alliances called for by Jaya Prakesh Narayan for exclusively electoralist aims, alliances that include, in addition to the SP, the Old Congress (established by leaders of the Congress party apparatus who Indira Gandhi disposed of in 1970-71) and rightist and far-right parties like Swatantra and Jan Sangh (Hindu racist). This bloc hopes to turn Indira Gandhi out of office during the legislative elections that are supposed to take place next year — through the simple addition of the votes of all the opposition parties. This calculation has just achieved success in the elections to the state assembly in Gujarat. Obviously, only the bourgeoisie profits from such unprincipled operations.

Immediate buildup to the Gandhi measures. The immediate motivations for Gandhi's proclamation of the state of emergency seem to have been her electoral defeat in Gujarat and a judge's verdict provisionally annulling her election to the central parliament on the grounds of electoral fraud. The deeper motivation is likely twofold: on the one hand, a real fear of losing power during the legislative elections that are supposed to be

held next spring; on the other hand, the appearance in her own party of a significant tendency seeking a compromise with Jaya Prakesh Narayan and a recomposition of all the bourgeois political forces of the country. It is not excluded that a section of the army is in sympathy with this project.

The immediate perspectives. While intensifying the repression (the censorship has even banned reproduction of the books of her father, Jawaharal Nehru, if they are judged "subversive" in the present situation), Indira Gandhi has also launched a populist counteragitation. She has relaunched her campaign to "abolish poverty" and has proposed a new ceiling on the size of agrarian property as well as a halt to seizure of cattle and land for nonpayment of debts. These promises, which have been reiterated for two decades now, first by Nehru and then by Gandhi, may leave the village poor rather skeptical if they are not followed up by action. But as a bourgeois politician, Indira Gandhi cannot really attack the rich peasants and the rural bourgeoisie, who form the basis and apparatus of her party. Moreover, the maintenance of repressive measures and the opposition's gradually moving underground place her at the mercy of the slightest accident (the death of one of the opposition leaders in prison; cops opening fire on demonstrators on a large scale; the sudden outbreak of a peasant revolt), which could provoke a generalized explosion.

The failure of the left has allowed the bourgeois opposition to take the initiative. The ruling party has been deeply discredited. The three immediate candidates for power — Indira Gandhi, the "united" opposition, and the army, acting as an arbiter — all represent bourgeois alternatives. The objective conditions for a revolutionary upsurge are favorable. But the depth of the crisis of the subjective factor is such that the pendulum threatens to swing even further to the right before it is able to swing back to the left. ■



Britain
will win
with
Labour.

wilson attacks wages

by BRIAN HERON

On July 2, just two days after Prime Minister Harold Wilson gave a speech rejecting "panic solutions," Chancellor of the Exchequer Dennis Healey announced to Parliament stringent wage-control measures. The measures, to be immediately placed on the statute books if no satisfactory agreement was reached with the TUC (Trades Union Congress) within one week, include a 10% ceiling on all wage increases, cash limits to check public expenditure, and an end to "excessive" subsidies in the public sector. The very thin sugar coating around this bitter pill is that the wage limits will be enforced through the price code. This means that no trade unionists will go to jail or face fines for opposing the measures. Instead, individual employers will have to keep their wage bills under the ceiling announced by the government. If they allow their workers' wages to rise above that ceiling, they will not be allowed to compensate by increasing their prices. This government sanction against defaulting employers is likely to be coupled with others, including refusal to provide them with government contracts. Despite possible plans to set up insurance schemes to bail out employers facing fierce wage struggles, the logic of the measures is to drive those firms that cannot withstand their workers' struggles into bankruptcy, thereby increasing unemployment (which now stands at nearly 900,000).

Harold Wilson, who has said that he would introduce statutory incomes control only in war time, was allowing the trade unions to acquiesce in the measures voluntarily if they wished. "Unions and employers have ef-

fectively been served a weeks notice to come up with a voluntary agreement to comply with the ten percent limit on wage increases in the next round. Failing that the Government intends to make its proposals statutory." (Financial Times, July 2, 1975.) It seems the speed with which the TUC rushed to comply with the government proposals was not wholly sufficient. The July 10 Financial Times reported, "there will almost certainly be reserve statutory powers on employers backing up the TUC's voluntary scheme," although the government may not move immediately to pass legislation. On July 9 the TUC had voted 19-13 to accept the government wage proposals. Despite appeals by the TUC to suspend price increases during six month intervals (a retreat from their previous position demanding that the prices of certain key commodities should be frozen indefinitely), at the moment there appears to be no government proposal to curb prices any more than has been normal (some goods have had government subsidies to prevent price increases). Even "cosmetics" (like the TUC demand that no one earning more than £7,000 a year should receive any increases for as long as the measures are in effect) are being resisted by the government and the Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Up to now, the real wages of the working class have been rising at about 6% a year, taking into account the 25% rate of inflation. The new proposals, if successfully implemented, will reduce the standard of living of the working class by about 15% a year if the current rate of inflation is not reduced. (And that figure does not take account of reductions in social services.)

The piper calls the tune

Despite some appearances to the contrary, this wage restraint attempt bears only a passing resemblance to the previous attempt of the 1964-70 Wilson government. The most obvious difference is that the economic situation is far worse, combining inflation with recession and unemployment. Despite the improvement of the balance of payments caused by the precipitous decline of the exchange rate of sterling in world currency markets, no export-led revival of investment is occurring. A recent survey conducted by the Financial Times commented, "industry sees . . . investment declining for at least another year ahead." As for exports: "the larger companies are . . . hopeful about stepping up their export sales." (Financial Times Survey of Business Opinion, June 2, 1975.) Industry consistently complains that its extra capital is soaked up by increased costs in Britain (mostly on the wages front) and by interest on loans that have been necessary to avoid massive cutbacks in production. But the source of these loans is now in considerable danger. The run on the pound (whose exchange value had declined a record 28.9% since December 1971) threatened to create a real flight of capital from London, thus eroding the basis for any further subsidies to industry and undermining the government's ability to maintain its huge deficit (now running at an estimated £9 thousand million per year). While Wilson was talking of the folly of acting in haste, a situation was developing that threatened to precipitate a sudden collapse of the British economy. The demand of the 260,000 miners for wage increases of 64% (a basic rate of £100 per week) appeared to indicate that the situation for British capital was rapidly worsening. In an atmosphere of near hysteria induced by the economic situation, "absolutely basic policies of the government" went crashing down one after the other and the proposed measures found little immediate opposition within the Parliamentary Labour party and only slightly more inside the TUC.

Lead-up to the proposals

The political and social instability of British society accentuated by the fall of the Heath government in early 1974 — essentially as a result of industrial action and the threat of extension of that action — reinforced working-class combativity, created uncertainty and political paralysis among sections of the ruling class, and welled over to affect the stability of the parliament. The minority Labour government and the politically decentralized character of the Tory party are both reflections of this crisis. But the campaign around the recent Common Market referendum and its result offered the ruling class the possibility of emerging from its paralysis and thus represented a limited defeat for the working class. The explanation of this defeat lies in the contradiction between the lineup of social forces on the one hand and the absence of a clear class-based political alternative on the other hand.

All the mass organizations of the working class favored

British withdrawal from the Common Market, just as they had opposed the Heath government at the time of the miners' strike and the introduction of the three-day week. Such an intense period of class struggle occurring at a time when the economic basis for far-reaching reforms did not exist could not fail to find a deep echo within the Social Democracy.

Tied hand and foot to the trade-union bureaucracy, the Labour party left made its political debut as a potential leadership of the working class during the referendum campaign. It was, however, shackled from the beginning. Even though it had all the legitimacy of the Labour party behind it, even though it was defending positions that had been approved by the congresses of the party and the trade unions, and even though it had behind it majority votes of the Labour executive and the TUC, the Labour left voluntarily refrained from throwing all its resources into the balance and from utilizing the whole apparatus and all the financial resources of the party, a generosity the Labour right surely would not have displayed had the relationship of forces been the other way around.

This was not a matter of political stupidity or lack of character. Rather, it was a deliberate and debilitating choice, a result of the special position the Labour left occupies in the British social and political scene. Seeking to win the leadership of the Labour party as the political expression of the trade unions, the Labour left is not at all interested in stepping beyond the traditional reformist framework that identifies the "struggle for socialism" with the "conquest of a majority in parliament." Hence, it finds itself doubly handicapped from the beginning. On the one hand, it must avoid a deep split in the Labour party, which from its standpoint would destroy any possibility of winning a parliamentary majority in the short or medium term. On the other hand, it has to avoid any exacerbation of the social crisis to the point that a significant wing of the trade-union bureaucracy might line up in the camp of the "defenders of the traditional order."

Now, a total mobilization of the resources of the Labour party to win a victory for a "No" vote in the EEC referendum inevitably would have provoked both this split and an institutional crisis. From the standpoint of the Labour left, there was even a serious risk that a majority in Parliament (all the MPs of the bourgeois parties plus the Labour right) would have refused to abide by the verdict of the voters, which would have provoked an extremely serious crisis of the legitimacy of parliamentary institutions. In order to avert all these risks, the leaders of the Labour left refrained from any initiative aimed at mobilizing the masses against the Common Market. They lined up on a narrow nationalist opposition platform that had no chance of being considered as an alternative class policy by the masses of workers. They thus courted certain political defeat, which they undoubtedly preferred to the risks that a victory would have entailed.

The probing of the class relationship of forces in this

complex political issue and the public examination of the strength of the Labour party left that the EEC referendum entailed created some of the preconditions for the launching of an all-out attack on the working class on every field.

Undoubtedly, what scared the majority of the TUC into supporting the Wilson measures was the threat that if Wilson did not have their support, or that of most of the lefts in the government, he would have been forced to rely on the votes of the Tories and Liberals in Parliament to push the measures through against the Labour left. That would have created a new de facto majority in Parliament composed of the Labour right, the Conservatives, and the Liberals, with all the attendant dangers of an open split in the Labour party.

The specter of a "new 1931" was not an idle threat on the part of the Labour right. But under present conditions, an open split in the Labour party would have disastrous consequences for the British bourgeoisie. It would practically hand the Labour party and the trade unions over to a leftist leadership, which is considered incompatible with the normal functioning of the parliamentary system under conditions of aggravated social and economic crisis. In addition, it is not likely that Wilson would enter a government of national union, for it would mean abandoning the Labour party to Wedgwood Benn. He still has various alternative solutions, for instance abandoning the government to the Tories, as Atlee did in 1951. But instead of forcing Wilson to play that sort of hand, the Labour left scurried to capitulate, and Wilson's bluff succeeded — at least for the moment.

Wilson, who is undoubtedly an extremely clever maneuverer, has engaged in a textbook application of the *salmi* tactic. The Labour left in the government was taken on and isolated around the referendum campaign. The trade-union bureaucracy accepted the fate of the lefts, even telling Benn (who had been minister of industry) not to resign from the government when he was "reshuffled" to a less important cabinet post. The trade-union bureaucracy did this on the basis that a new social contract would be negotiated and that they would not find themselves facing a statutory wage freeze supported in Parliament by Tory and Liberal votes, which they would have had no choice but to oppose. Now Benn and the left are partially neutralized; the trade-union bureaucracy, judging that it was inopportune to fight against the attack they faced, has been drummed into line. The bureaucracy will face the burden of hostility from the rank and file for accepting these measures. If further attacks come from the government, the bureaucracy will oppose them from a greatly weakened position.

The proposals

The form taken by the Wilson proposals is important. Some sectors of the ruling class based exclusively or mainly on finance capital would have preferred a clas-

sical deflationary policy, with massive factory closings, the loss of a part of the productive apparatus (in any case considered worn out and noncompetitive), and massive unemployment (2 or 3 million) in order to break the strength of the trade unions and slow down or halt the rise of nominal wages. Instead, Wilson acted in accordance with the interests of the sectors of industrial capital that want to avoid such drastic measures, for reasons that are as much political as economic. Nevertheless, the proposal to place the burden of maintaining the wage norms on the individual employers is bound to lead to a weeding out of the financially least viable firms and thus to increase the number of unemployed. Its central purpose, however, is to make the package as a whole more acceptable to the trade-union bureaucracy by ruling out fines and imprisonment against trade unionists. At the same time — and this is important for the Wilson government — it decentralizes the focus of attack for those who will struggle against the new pay norms, thus allowing the Wilson government to defuse any centralized offensive against the pay norms as a whole. Despite the uneasy acquiescence of the trade-union bureaucracy and despite the temporary neutralization of the left in the government, Wilson wants to avert any possibility of a united offensive against his proposals. Further, the notion of the fixed amount for possible wage increases (£6) cuts against the traditional wage differentials in the trade-union movement. Most of those bureaucrats who voted against the Wilson proposals in the TUC did so on the basis of opposing the erosion of pay differentials within the same industry and between sectors. Such an approach is not best designed to unify all workers around those who might go into struggle against the norms.

Perspectives and the left

At the moment it seems that the section of the left of the Labour government tied to the trade-union bureaucracy will swallow the measures whole. Benn summed up this position and the reasons for it in a speech to the miners conference on July 9, reported in the *Financial Times*: "The failure of the 1970 Labour Government lay in the separation of the Labour Government from the Labour Movement. The key to the future . . . lies in the development of relations between the Trade Union Movement, the Labour Party and the Labour Government." In other words, Benn and his cothinkers will not make a move against Wilson except at the behest of the trade-union bureaucracy. Whatever immediate opposition that emerges in the Parliamentary Labour party to the Wilson proposals is more likely to come from those sections of the left that are based on the constituency parties than those that are linked to the trade unions.

Even so, it is unlikely that exactly the same pattern of struggles as took place during the 1960s (unofficial rank-and-file fights opposed by most of the bureaucracy and the government) will simply repeat itself. The consequences of the struggles against Wilson's measures are far more grave than those of the struggles of the

1960s. Those, like the International Socialists, who so far project a simple syndicalist line in response to these attacks misestimate the situation.

From the start the struggle against Wilson's policies will be integrally bound up with the development of the left in the Social Democracy. There are a number of reasons for this. First, the trade-union bureaucracy was shifted left during the struggles of the 1960s. It is deeply divided, with the engineers, miners, public employees, the locomens unions and others voting against the Wilson proposals in the TUC. The position of the bureaucracy as a whole is far less stable than it was during the early 1960s. At the least, the section of the bureaucracy that favors the government measures needs time to conduct a fight to bring the others into line. But time is precisely what they lack. The TUC national congress is scheduled for September, and there will be virtually no opportunity to heal the rift before then. The miners' wage claim will be presented around Christmas, and most economic indicators suggest that the situation will be worse by then, thus requiring even more drastic measures.

Second, there has been an important series of social struggles. Unlike the struggles against nuclear weapons or the war in Vietnam, these struggles have shown a real involvement of the trade-union movement from top to bottom. In some cases these fights have been around direct political campaigns: on the abortion issue, for example, there have been struggles against recent attempts to make reactionary changes in the law; there have been fights around the defense of jobs, with factory occupations and demands that the government nationalize the ailing concerns; other struggles have been waged in defense of the health service and against cuts in public expenditure. This last fight was reflected in the motivation of Alan Fisher of the public employees union in his vote against the Wilson proposals, when he pointed out that there were no guarantees against further social service cuts.

All these struggles have involved sections of left Social Democracy and will not disappear with the implementation of the Wilson wage proposals. More likely is the development of centralizing tendencies within these movements against the Wilson leadership of the party. In the context of a Labour government, the place of the left Labourites in these struggles has directed the attention of the participants toward the national political scene and toward the question of the role of the Labour party.

Third, we must expect a reasonably vigorous struggle within the Labour party itself. The division between the party rank and file and the government is now deeper than at any time since the second world war. The difference is that some political life is now beginning to emerge in and around the Labour party at the base. Most observers note a small upturn in party membership and activity compared with the previous period. This is yet another indication of the differences between the situation during the 1960s and the situation today. One striking

feature of the Labour party the last time it held office for several years (1964-70) was the massive and continuous decline in working-class membership and participation in the party.

Finally, the possibility that the wage norm now being introduced will simply be a prelude to more drastic measures later this year or early next year is a prospect that will strike the Labour party to its roots if it becomes a reality. Such a situation would inevitably provoke the explosion of some form of mass struggle and thereby implies a head-on collision with the trade-union bureaucracy. The Labour party would be electorally annihilated if it tried to go to the country on the issue of defense of its anti-inflation measures against the line of the trade unions.

Such a conflict, the germs of which are already contained in the divided TUC vote on the Wilson measures, would provoke intolerable tensions within the Labour party. It seems clear that under such conditions the ruling class would prefer to bring the Tories back to power (whether in alliance with the Liberals or not) rather than sacrifice the major political trump card represented by a mass party of the working class under a moderate and controllable leadership capable of politically channeling the combativity of the working class into paths compatible with the survival of the capitalist system. Early elections leading to a bourgeois majority would be preferable to a 1931-type coalition in which a marginal fringe of right Labourites would remain in Parliament and the Labour party as a whole would be handed over to the Labour left. For Wilson, even having to wage a fight against the left from a weakened position would be preferable to purely and simply abandoning the party to Wedgwood Benn.

But whatever happens, a higher-level class confrontation is in the cards. A Wilson cabinet compelled to take further measures attacking the living standards of the working class would place a question mark over all the basic elements of the present two-party system. The question of various sorts of coalitions, of right or left splits in the Social Democracy, would be posed in such a situation. It is extremely unlikely that all this will fail to have an effect on struggles that erupt.

Workers who go into struggle against the Wilson proposals will from the outset understand some of the stakes of their struggle, remembering what circumstances caused the collapse of the 1970 Labour government. In other words, the basic trade-union struggles of the next period pose the question of whether the government will continue in its present form. Under those circumstances the workers will pay the greatest attention to the policy and action (or lack of it) of the leadership of left Social Democracy.

Thus, the preparation for such a confrontation must involve not simply a beefing up of the trade union struggle, but a political line of march that is capable of dealing with all the questions posed, all the dimensions of the attack. The most important immediate step is to centralize the struggle organizationally and politically.

The question of program

Wilson is perfectly capable of posing the continued existence of a Labour government around the success or failure of these measures. Indeed, the government will not be able to continue in its present form if the measures are quickly and decisively defeated. In this light, the attitude of the left within the Labour party is suicidal. By not taking up the fight against Wilson both inside and outside the Labour party, they offer no leadership to the workers going into struggle and thereby create the possibility of condemning themselves, their party, and the whole working class to a significant defeat.

For millions of workers the continuation of the Labour government is not an idle question. In the absence of a clear alternative, Wilson's demagoguery will have an impact. No group of workers will want to take the responsibility for unseating the government; but the logic of their struggle might very well lead to that result. The alternative to the present government cannot be abstract. Given the depth of the present crisis, no alternative will convince anyone or stimulate struggle unless it comes to grips with the basic organization of capitalist society. The program of the left Social Democrats, even if they were to take up a wholehearted struggle for its implementation, is hopeless. It contains a mixture of utopian economics and dangerous political formulas. Plans for massive increases in investment with capital gained through the state takeover of some banks and insurance companies are all very well, but in the absence of a general takeover of industry and an assault on the political and state power of the ruling class, they will lead to nothing. An investment strike, a flight of capital, and economic sabotage will undo their effects, as has been shown by the examples of Portugal and Chile, among others. Import levies are useful only if there is a monopoly of foreign trade and if capital exports are controlled. Otherwise they simply lead to shortages, a black market, and accentuated inflation. Without the development of a convincing alternative program, confusion and disorientation will set in among the working class.

Not for the first time, the basic trade-union strength of the British working class will not be enough. In order to utilize that strength, the workers need to concentrate and direct it against the correct target. The central slogan of the International Marxist Group (British section of the Fourth International) to meet this problem is that the left must unite and organize to smash Wilson's capitalist policies. Unity in action must be forged with all those inside and outside the Labour party on the basis of defeating Wilson and his supporters in the government. Within the Labour party we should demand the removal of Wilson, Healey, and their supporters. Other demands and forms of action then fall into place:



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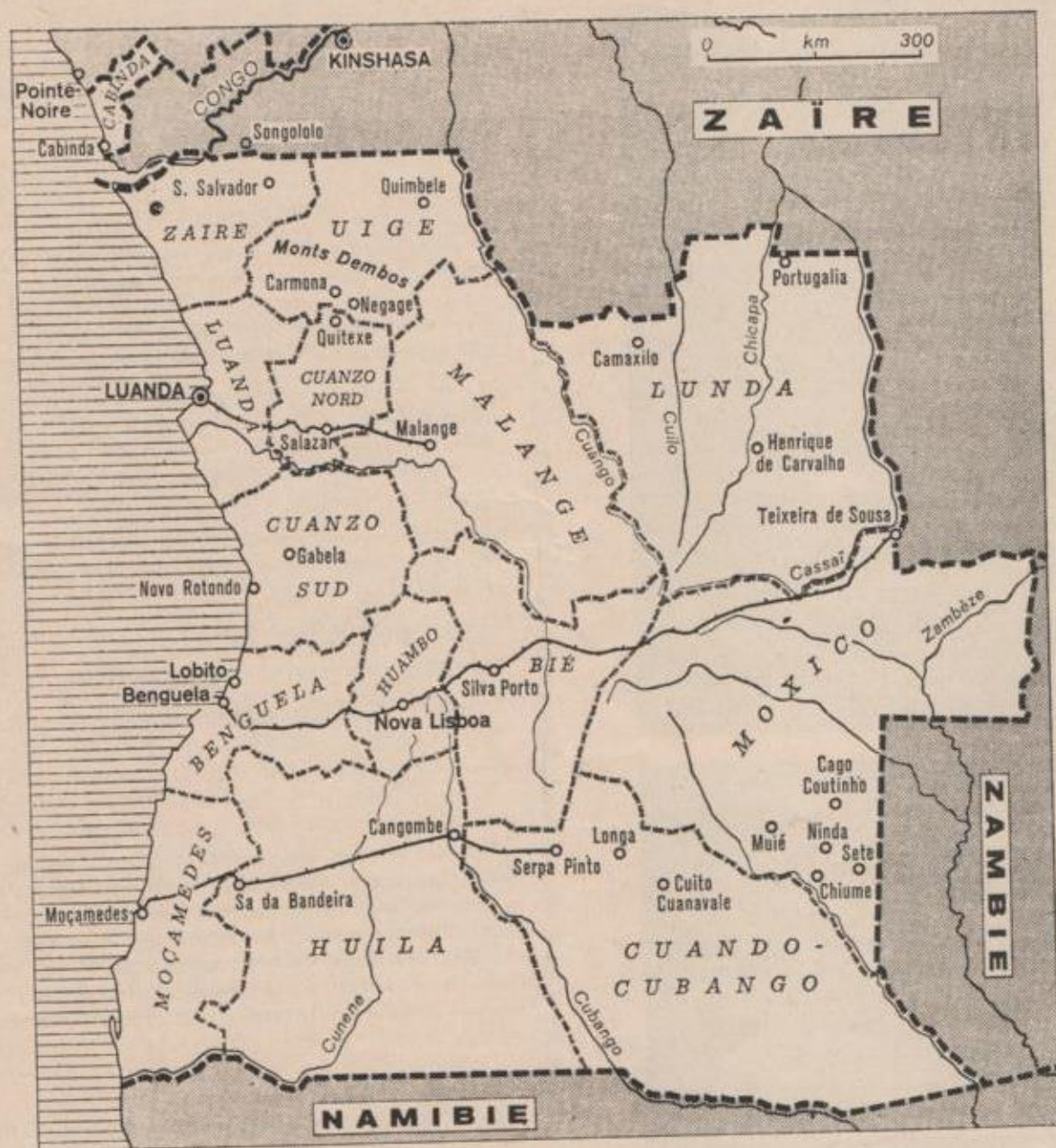
- *Opposition to any form of incomes policy, statutory or voluntary, under capitalism. Solidarity with all workers opposing the norms. End the TUC-CBI-government talks on incomes policy.
- *Automatic increases in public expenditure to compensate for inflation and protect the value of the "social wage." A sliding scale of wages.
- *Opening of the capitalist books and imposition of workers control of industry to enforce work-sharing with no loss of pay instead of redundancy.
- *Nationalization of the banks and finance system to create conditions for control over industry and destroy the currency speculation. Abolition of capitalist defense expenditure and confiscation of all income over £10,000 a year to release resources for investment.
- *A massive program of public works to soak up inflation, nationalization without compensation of all firms creating redundancy, and development of an economic plan to expand production based on the takeover of the leading industrial and financial firms.
- *Free abortion and contraception on demand, equal pay for women, free 24-hour community-controlled state nurseries.
- *Opposition to all forms of racism.
- *Immediate withdrawal of troops from Ireland.
- *Solidarity with the Portuguese revolution and with the workers struggle in Spain.

In addition to these demands the IMG is also putting forward proposals for immediate action that include recalling the Labour party and TUC conferences, establishing links between all the rank-and-file workers organizations for united action against the Wilson proposals, and calling local conferences of the Labour movement to build local committees to coordinate the struggle.

The overall character of the capitalist crisis to which the Wilson measures are designed to respond actually requires a global response. These measures simultaneously involve an attack on living standards and initial steps toward an assault on the political independence of the working class and on those forces within Social Democracy representing the most immediate threat to the established leadership on a whole series of issues. The stakes of the struggle are decisive; the workers movement in Britain stands at an important turning point.

July 11, 1975

ANGOLA



**in the whirlwind of
permanent revolution**

by C. GABRIEL

Because of its strategic position and economic potential, Angola represents an important prize for the entire African revolution. Its economy has many ties with the other countries of the region: The hydroelectric project in the Cunene basin, which involves South African interests and concerns northern Namibia too, the coffee production linked to imports from Zaïre, and the Benguela railroad, export route for Zambian and southern Zaïre mining production are illustrations of these ties. The existence of ethnic groups divided over borders (Bakongos in the north, Ovambos in the south) further strengthens these ties by involving the neocolonial governments of the entire region.

Moreover, neocolonial reaction has clearly understood the stakes represented by Angola for the future stability of the Congolese, Zaïrois, Zambian, and even Tanzanian regimes.

Mobutu's regime in Zaïre is confirming its function as strong link in the imperialist chain by arming, training, and financing the FNLA (Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola — Angola National Front of Liberation), a rightist organization originally founded on a Bakongo regionalist basis. Zambia and the Congo have stepped up their factional manipulations within the MPLA (Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola — People's Liberation Movement of Angola), as was especially clear during the Lusaka congress of this organization, held in August 1974.

From another angle, the oil companies — acting through the good offices of Brazzaville (the Congo) and Kinshasa (Zaïre), the two cities that harbor the two factions of the so-called FLEC (Frente de Libertação do Encravado de Cabinda — Liberation Front of the Cabinda Enclave) — covet Cabinda and its oil.

In addition, African diplomacy as a whole, through the intermediary of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), weighs on the Angolan situation, pressing in the direction of a neocolonial solution, with Kenya acting as a go-between for the FNLA, MPLA, and UNITA (União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola — National Union for the Total Independence of Angola), as it did at the time of the Mombasa accord and during the latest negotiations in Nakuru.

The Angolan situation thus plays a decisive role in the framework of the modification of imperialist tactics in southern Africa. South African diplomacy, which is temporarily aiming at achieving a consensus with the neocolonial regimes and the FRELIMO in Mozambique, is disturbed by an Angolan situation that could not only threaten South African economic interests in Angola, but more importantly could trigger a political and social crisis throughout the region.

Thus, all the imperialist and proimperialist factions and forces are seeking to intervene in the Angolan situation in order to preserve their share of the profits; the intervention extends all the way through to Brazil, which is playing the game of "impartial" aid, in the name of

the interest of all Portuguese speakers.

Concurrently, it is the duty of the proletariat and the international revolutionary movement not to abandon Angola to imperialist appetites without a struggle. From this point on, the revolutionary lessons that must be drawn from the mobilization of the laboring masses of Angola — a mobilization that is occurring through workers struggles and the exemplary forms of organization developing among the urban masses — go well beyond the narrow national framework and concern the whole of the African revolution.

It is therefore indispensable for African youth and the international anti-imperialist movement to become conscious both of the continental dimension of the Angolan crisis and of the necessary tasks of support that this implies.

Against the neocolonial holy alliance it is crucial to organize the revolutionary elements of the Congo, Zaïre, and Zambia in a framework of permanent militant support to the Angolan masses in struggle for their emancipation.

But the Angolan situation is also important for all European and North American revolutionaries, for it involves large investments by the various European bourgeoisies and the American bourgeoisie, and what happens in Angola also affects the relationship of forces in Portugal.

Thus, international solidarity with the Angolan masses will become an important factor in the future evolution of the relationship of forces in the country.

This is especially true because the Maoist policy of supporting Mobutu's sinister game in the framework of maintaining good Sino-Zaïrois relations and of supporting the FNLA (Chinese military advisers are training the FNLA's aggression troops) contributes to bolstering the imperialist project of creating a neocolonial Kinshasa-Luanda axis. In the meantime, the Soviet Union and the "people's democracies" of East Europe are content to provide only eye-dropper-sized aid to the MPLA, the aim being to safeguard their future relations with Holden Roberto (the FNLA).

The evolution of the political situation in Angola will thus condition the future relationship of forces in central Africa and the southern subcontinent to a large extent; the future of the new independent state of Mozambique will be especially affected.

The political tasks of Angolan revolutionary Marxists must be worked out within the framework of a conception that integrates the evolution of Angola into the entire African revolutionary process.

From Spínola to the transition government

The essential aim of the reorientation of imperialist strategy in southern Africa that has occurred in the recent period is to limit both the impact of the "decolonization" of the Portuguese territories in Africa and the dynamic of the popular mobilizations that have followed that decolonization, thus assuring the transition to a new regional economic and political integration based around South Africa.

Thus, in Angola an attempt was made to set in motion a neocolonial solution under the auspices of Mobutu and with the participation of the Portuguese government.

The Portuguese bourgeoisie and imperialism counted on settling the thorny problem of the colonial war and simultaneously maintaining capitalist exploitation in Angola by implementing Spínola's neocolonial plan, which called for a slow and complex "decolonization" project including an immediate cease-fire, the formation of a coalition government, and a referendum to be held in the framework of a federation with Portugal.

This process was based on the exclusive recognition of the rightist nationalist forces (FNLA and UNITA) and on the drafting of "independence" agreements in association with the direct representatives of the colonial bourgeoisie (Angolan Unity Front, Angolan Christian Democratic party, etc.) with a view to their participation in the transition government.

The secret talks on Sal Island in Cape Verde between Spínola and Mobutu, who presented himself as a spokesman for Chipenda (at the time an MPLA dissident), Holden (FNLA), and Savimbi (UNITA), were clearly part of this project, which was aimed at shunting aside the MPLA at a time when it was racked by a grave internal crisis that was not unrelated to the approach of important political events. (The Chipenda tendency later left the MPLA and joined the FNLA; the "Active Revolt" tendency, led by the Andreade brothers, remains in the MPLA.)

But the MPLA's relative intransigence on the principle of independence, its popularity among the urban masses, and political developments in Portugal itself (with the ouster of Spínola) altered the unfolding of the initial neocolonial process. It was above all the entrance onto the political scene of the Angolan laboring masses through workers strikes and broad mobilizations in the urban centers that forced the Portuguese bourgeoisie to recognize the right of the peoples of the colonies to independence.

After Spínola's departure, however, the main lines of his neocolonial plan were reaffirmed by his successor, Costa Gomes. On October 10, 1974, a new meeting was held between Fontes Pereira de Melo, Mobutu, Holden, and Chipenda, while in Angola itself the racist fury of the white colons was unleashed against the African masses.

Nevertheless, the deepening of the MPLA's influence among the urban workers, the growing radicalization of the struggles, and the violent, virtually spontaneous reaction of the popular masses of the musseques (urban slums) to the racist aggression forced the recognition of the MPLA and marked the end of the federalist pretensions of the Spínolists; the imperialist strategy was thus partially frustrated.

We then saw an acceleration of the "process of decolonization," with a spectacular "reconciliation" of the three liberation movements in Mombassa (Kenya), the signing of the Alvor accords with the Portuguese government, and the establishment of a quadripartite transition government charged with administering the country until elections, scheduled to be held just before legal independence in November 1975.

Thus, the initial neocolonial project was very much altered by the development of the revolutionary struggles of the workers of Angola and Portugal. Nevertheless, the context in which the recognition of the MPLA occurred (in association with the rightist nationalist movements FNLA and UNITA) corresponded to the imperialist desire to "neutralize" the revolutionary dynamic of the independence struggles by incorporating the MPLA into the neocolonial process through the transition government.

The Alvor accords, although silent on the future of imperialist interests in Angola, are very explicit as to "respect" for the interests of the colonial bourgeoisie. They thus set the general framework for a neocolonial solution, which is now implicit in the facts of the situation, the major instrument of that solution being the transition government. The absence from this government of the Chipenda faction of the MPLA (which had not yet joined the FNLA when the government was formed) and the direct representatives of the colonial bourgeoisie thus appears as a temporary measure aimed at staggering the incorporation of the various elements of the neocolonial plan. In fact, Chipenda's participation in the government is now envisaged (he was part of the FNLA delegation in Nakuru).

The central task of the transition government is to prepare the neocolonial juridico-political framework to guarantee, by virtue of "electoral legitimacy," that the transition of power will take place without any anticapitalist popular mobilization of any scope. The first measures taken by this government (the banning of "popular assembling," the appeals to workers to return to work, the "militarization" of labor in the ports) clearly attest to this concern. The transition government today appears as a "legal" cover for the anti-working-class measures that have been proposed by the FNLA, UNITA, and the Portuguese high commissioner and sanctioned in effect by the MPLA, which is increasingly squeezed between its collaboration with reactionary forces at the top and its tactical support of the mass movement.

In the most recent period, the widespread outbreak of armed clashes has dangerously compromised the "peaceful process of decolonization" and the electoral perspective and has made it necessary to hold a "meeting to amend" the Alvor accords so as to permit their actual implementation. African diplomacy has again mobilized to defuse the Angolan powderkeg. Kenya is once again serving as an intermediary among the three movements, President Jomo Kenyatta seeking in this way to head off the crisis of his own regime by appearing as the "providential man of reconciliation" in the eyes of African opinion.

The Nakuru conference decided to create the Angolan national armed forces, disarm the civilian population, promulgate an electoral law on July 15, and conduct a census with a view toward holding elections to a constituent assembly in October 1975. The plan to disarm the urban masses corresponds to the FNLA and UNITA's broader desire to deal a blow to all the structures of workers self-organization "not provided for" in the Alvor accords.

The attitude taken by the MPLA in Nakuru further reveals the opportunist character of the leadership of this organization, which is prepared to cling to governmental power at any price. Nevertheless, if the disarming of the urban masses is actually carried out, it will represent a new and decisive change in the relationship of forces in face of the imperialist counteroffensive, a factor that would deepen the internal contradictions of the MPLA. Such a policy could well be suicidal, even for the elements of the MPLA who most respect the unity of the government. If a partial defeat for the masses can be imposed by selective massacres, the Angolan laboring masses would be beaten and the petty-bourgeois leadership of the MPLA, rendered inoperative, could well be swept out of the government.

But the formation of a Zaire-Angola neocolonial axis under the auspices of Mobutu and the FNLA, an axis that might later be in position to take excessive advantage of its role as policeman of the region, could appear dangerous for certain imperialist interests. The recent rumors of a coup in Zaire could be an expression of the fear of certain imperialist sectors of the formation of such a bloc. In this context, UNITA could try to offer a way out of the scrape by coming forward as a miracle solution, with the support of the most right-wing elements of the MPLA. That was certainly what UNITA was aiming at in sending its representatives on a tour of European governments recently.

The workers mobilization

In recent years the center of the struggle of the Angolan masses has shifted from the rural regions (to which the armed struggle and the liberated zones of the MPLA had been limited) to the urban centers, where workers combativity has been forcefully asserted, as was demonstrated by the Luanda general strike of September 1973. While the MPLA was experiencing serious difficulties (internal

divisions, military problems), there emerged in the urban centers a young, strongly concentrated, and very combative proletariat, the direct product of capitalist exploitation. Although it lacked organic links to the armed struggle, this proletariat was much impressed by the MPLA's prestige and burst onto the political scene, combining in its struggles economic demands and an advanced anticolonialist consciousness.

The new situation created by the April 25, 1974, coup in Portugal and the relative liberalization that followed gave the signal for an offensive of struggle. The combativity of the Angolan proletariat, long contained by colonial repression, exploded in many local strikes that clearly attested to the workers' desire to expel the fascist employers and managers and put an end to capitalist superexploitation. But the first significant victory of the Angolan proletariat over the stalling of the Portuguese government came with the nearly spontaneous response of the laboring masses to the racist crimes committed by colonial reaction. The relationship of forces between the laboring masses and the ruling class in the urban centers was suddenly transformed, enabling tens of thousands of workers to go through the experience of mobilization and struggle. The period of isolated economic strikes severely repressed by colonial reaction then gave way to a period of struggle for elementary democratic rights in the factories.

Through these mobilizations the Angolan workers gradually became familiar with forms of organization and struggle that were wholly new for them. Advanced experiences of workers self-organization through the formation of rank-and-file committees in the neighborhoods and factories illustrate the radicalization of this movement.

Thus, exactly during the period of the establishment of the transition government, the coordinating body of the neighborhood committees of the capital initiated a "week of national action for people's power," proposing that "progressive student organizations, workers commissions, and workers associations" hold general assemblies in the factories and neighborhoods to discuss the slogan "consolidate people's power."

In the most recent period there has also been a proliferation of strikes and a conjunctural decline in the productivity of important economic sectors. In face of this situation the transition government passed a decree providing for the "militarization" of any factory (public or private) "in case of emergency" so as to prevent the process of production and the economy in general from "falling into chaos and anarchy." Applied to the port facilities of Luanda, this measure met with a broad response from the port workers. They denounced the decree through their trade-union committee, refusing "to be treated as objects or instruments of enrichment in a process of exploitation that remains unchanged." There was a demonstration of several thousand workers in the capital. This represented the first assault against the very instrument of the neocolonial process issuing from the Alvor accords: the coalition government.



From left: Agostinho Neto of MPLA, Holden Roberto of FNLA, Jonas Savimbi of UNITA.

Through these experiences of struggle, these strikes and demonstrations, and under the impetus of the MPLA, acting in the framework of its tactical support to popular mobilization, a trade-union movement took shape that will be an important factor in the future evolution of the relationship of forces. Thus, on May 22, 1975, in Luanda hundreds of thousands of workers responded to the call of UNTA (National Union of Angolan workers) and demonstrated their solidarity with the MPLA, denouncing the FNLA's reactionary offensive and the support this undertaking receives from Zaire as well as the passive complicity of the Portuguese authorities. They also demanded the removal of General Silva Cardoso, the Portuguese high commissioner in Angola.

Thus, the central question of the workers seizing power as the result of the present struggles has been posed by the beginning of the emergence of a situation of dual power. The attempt to coordinate the rank-and-file committees for people's power in Luanda is a first step in this direction. But the mere reference to people's power with a relatively imprecise class content is not sufficient to trace out the road to the seizure of power by the laboring masses.

The proliferation of economic strikes directly threatening the profits of the colonial bourgeoisie and asserting the workers' desire to win real independence by putting an end to capitalist exploitation urgently requires unified anticapitalist perspectives capable of offering an indispensable overall alternative if the erosion of workers combativity under the blows of reaction is to be averted.

One of the essential tasks of the Angolan revolutionary vanguard is to advance an anticapitalist action program that draws together the unifying economic demands that have been raised in the present struggles and the demands for democratic rights in the factories, calls for

the expulsion of the fascist employers and the nationalization of their companies under workers control, denounces the imperialist grip on the Angolan economy, calls for the nationalization of foreign trusts, develops democratic trade-union structures in the factories and rank-and-file bodies in the neighborhoods, calls for the development of popular self-defense militias against reactionary attacks, denounces the attempts of the Zairois bourgeoisie and imperialism to impose a neo-colonial solution in Angola, and finally, links the struggle for independence to the struggle for social transformation and the socialist revolution.

Against the reactionary offensive—workers self-defense

The recent provocations by the armed gangs of the FNLA are expressions of the desire to overturn the relationship of forces as the date of the independence elections approaches in a situation of growing radicalization of the struggle of the Angolan workers. After a lively campaign denouncing the structures of popular power, the strikes, and the forms of independent workers mobilization, the FNLA in March 1975 launched a real military offensive against the militants of the MPLA and the radicalized elements of the workers mobilizations. These murderous operations — which have killed several thousand civilians — are characterized by a determined desire to intimidate the popular masses (machine-gunning of demonstrations, murders in the pro-MPLA urban slums, etc.).

Initially localized in the capital, the attacks later spread to all the urban centers of the country. They have been combined with a vast military occupation of the northern regions of Angola near the Zaire border, carried out by the FNLA with the collaboration of the colonial planters; MPLA militants have been systematically driven out of these areas. In the meantime, the

Chipenda faction in the east and UNITA in the center-south are trying to occupy the countryside in order to counter MPLA hegemony in the urban centers.

At first, these attacks, which call into question the holding of elections before independence, enjoyed the passive complicity of the Portuguese authorities. But the offensive was thwarted by the military reaction of the MPLA and the armed mobilization of some neighborhood committees, which guaranteed the defense of popular neighborhoods against the military attacks of FNLA forces. Far from bringing the popular mobilization to a halt, these attacks openly revealed the counterrevolutionary character of the FNLA, led to the development of elementary forms of armed self-defense in some popular neighborhoods, and thus became a threat to the smooth functioning of the "process of decolonization." The Portuguese authorities, particularly High Commissioner Silva Cardoso, thus broke their silence to denounce the participation in the clashes of civilian militias fighting side by side with the MPLA. A new agreement, the stakes of which will be the very existence of these advanced forms of mass self-organization, then became necessary. That is what was discussed in Nakuru, Kenya.

It is thus clear that the FNLA today is the most reliable pawn in imperialist strategy in Angola. Its ties to imperialism are obvious; they are reflected in the aid the organization receives from Mobutu in Zaire (the bastion of capitalist investment in central Africa) and in the relations it has established with the African-American Center of the International Confederation of Free (sic) Trade Unions. Fundamentally regionalist (founded on the basis of the Bakongo ethnic group in the north) and rightist, this movement has recruited a genuine border army among Angolan emigrés in Zaire; it is this army that is now occupying northern Angola.

The FNLA, which has asserted itself as the motor force of the repression, increasingly appears as the central axis of reactionary military potential. Strengthened by the recent incorporation of the Chipenda faction, the FNLA is the essential instrument in a strategy that is moving forward by means of successive hammer blows against popular mobilizations, the aim being to inflict significant defeats on the laboring masses before independence comes. But so far the repeated attacks of the FNLA have not only failed to reduce workers combativity significantly, but have even permitted the strengthening of the mobilization and the vigilance of the working masses.

Nevertheless, the anti-working-class repression being carried out by the FNLA against the radicalized elements of the MPLA and the mass movement, combined with the absence of a central alternative perspective, could in time give rise to phenomena of demoralization and localized retreats in an ongoing situation of tension. This is especially possible because the repression is becoming more selective. The political commissar of the MPLA general staff, commander "Jika," was murdered in an ambush in Cabinda; the leader of the MPLA youth, M. Pereira Dos Vandunen, was gunned down while

driving in his car; and the MPLA has denounced the presence in Luanda of a Brazilian "death squad" composed of individuals who "worked for the CIA in Chile."

As for the UNITA of Jonas Savimbi, who for a long time collaborated with Portuguese troops against the MPLA, it is an organization founded on a regional basis (the center-south, around Nova Lisboa). In spite of the support it has been receiving from China since 1970, its regional character resulted in its being integrated into the imperialist project very early on. After April 24, 1974, UNITA enjoyed the support of some white colons in the center-south region, and Savimbi established fruitful contacts with the FUA (Angolan Unity Front), led by the engineer Fernando Falcão. His past collaboration with the Portuguese colonial army and his recognition by a not insignificant portion of the white colon population gained UNITA entrance into the Alvor negotiations as an indirect representative of the interests of the colonial bourgeoisie.

After its incorporation into the transition government, UNITA made an effort to obtain a minimum implantation in the urban centers by "suspending" its embarrassing contacts with the white colons and affirming its position as a mediator between the FNLA and the MPLA during the recent clashes. Through this attitude UNITA hopes to expand its influence by taking advantage of the FNLA's discredit among the urban laboring masses; it intends to do this with the aid of calls to "peace and unity." Nevertheless, far from being a "third force," UNITA, by virtue of the ties it has established with the colonial bourgeoisie and the support it seems to be receiving from the European imperialist sector, appears as a complement to the FNLA and a possible alternative solution for imperialism.

The current massive departure from Angola of white colons who are heading back to the colonial metropolis has deprived UNITA of an important part of its social base. The organization is therefore trying to recompose that social base, seeking to extend its influence on the basis of regionalist propaganda. Utilizing the feelings of insecurity that the actions of the FNLA are generating in Luanda, UNITA is promoting demonstrations in Luanda by workers from central and southern Angola to demand that they be repatriated to their regions of origin. Paradoxically, the "rigid position of not permitting the exodus" of workers from the capital that has been adopted by the Angolan government may serve to reinforce the impact of the regionalist propaganda UNITA is conducting and in time could permit the growth of its influence among the most backward layers of the Angolan masses.

Ambiguous response of the MPLA

In face of the existence in Angola of social and political forces especially committed to the maintenance of imperialist domination through the stabilization of a neocolonial regime, the responses of the MPLA, which is caught up in participating in the government and in the agreements signed with the reactionary forces of the

FNLA and UNITA, are not sufficient to trace out the road to real independence. By not preparing the laboring masses for the inevitable confrontation with reaction and by sowing illusions about the possibility of a "democratic process of decolonization" in such a context, these responses trace out the potential lines of a retreat of the workers mobilization under the blows of the counterrevolutionary attacks.

The MPLA's acceptance of the Alvor "compromise" thus tallies with the general line of the opportunist decisions that have been taken bureaucratically by the MPLA leadership under neocolonialist pressure. The crudest example of this was the MPLA congress in Lusaka in August 1974; because of the approach of important political events (the negotiations with Portugal), the manipulations of African diplomacy carried the day and created the general staff of the MPLA. The neocolonial pressure, combined with the gradualist illusions of the organization, are now preventing the MPLA as a whole from going beyond its policy of tactically supporting the mass movement in the framework of a reformist program of narrow national dimensions.

Just after April 25, 1974, when its participation in the negotiations with Portugal was not yet certain, the MPLA, acting from Brazzaville, raised the slogan of the formation of movement action committees in the urban centers of Angola. This call, which coincided with the spontaneous eruption of the urban laboring masses onto the political scene, permitted the proliferation of rank-and-file movement structures and the massive adherence to the MPLA of a whole current of radicalized workers who were later to form the core of the MPLA's middle cadres in the urban centers.

But the MPLA adopted an ambiguous attitude in face of the radicalization of these mobilizations. Beginning from a conception that views the mass movement as an instrument for improving the relationship of forces at the top, the MPLA supported the mobilizations in order to break its way into the government. Later, basing itself on the narrow framework of the "agreements that have been reached," the MPLA presented the electoral perspective set out by the Alvor accords as the only outlet for the workers struggles. Thus, in an attempt to be "realistic" so as to block the path of the extremist colons, the MPLA declared itself in favor of an alliance with "democratic" sectors, an alliance that was put into practice by collaborating with the Angolan Democratic Movement (MDA). On the one hand, the MPLA called for closer collaboration within the government in the name of "national unity"; on the other hand, it upheld the theme of "people's power" in popular meetings and in the neighborhoods. But the mere tactical reference to "people's power" is not enough to open the way to the seizure of power by the laboring masses, especially since the slogan reflects multiclassist conceptions. Thus, for Augustinho Neto, president of the MPLA, "people's power" means the power of "all social layers of society," while the central function of independence is to make "all the social layers of society share political power."

These frontist illusions are at the very heart of the political limitations of the MPLA.

A heterogeneous movement founded on the basis of the urban petty bourgeoisie, the MPLA inherited the frontist and gradualist illusions characteristic of petty-bourgeois nationalism, illusions that were further reinforced by the Stalinist conceptions of the Angolan Communist nucleus. Nevertheless, the orientation toward armed struggle and the mobilization of the peasantry, conceived on the basis of an empirical approach to the specific character of Portuguese colonialism, represented a real break with reformist nationalism. Thus, the MPLA, a revolutionary nationalist movement, may be located somewhere between the limits of petty-bourgeois gradualist nationalism and an empirical revolutionary approach with a socialist dynamic. Nevertheless, this evolution occurred without any profound political clarification, especially with respect to frontist illusions.

The MPLA thus developed into a movement with a multiclassist bent unable to actually create a broad interclass front in the context of the Angolan social structure of the 1960s. In reality, the careerist petty bourgeoisie of the cities had partially hooked up with the "democratic" sections of the colon population, while the proletariat remained numerically weak. Angolan social structure of the 1960s thus provided a favorable basis for the development of interclassist illusions within the MPLA, particularly because the organization's influence was essentially restricted to rural areas where social differentiation is slight.

However, under the impact of the evolution of colonial rule and imperialist pillage, Angolan social structure in the urban centers has become largely differentiated since that time. The opening to imperialist capital beginning in the 1960s stimulated the development of a proletariat that was young and strongly concentrated, although it was not very skilled and lacked traditions of struggle. Later, beginning in the 1970s with the development of a transformation industry linked to the colonial market, a real industrial proletariat emerged. In 1973 manufacturing production employed about 130,000 wage-earners, mainly concentrated in the industrial zones of Luanda and Lobito. The Angolan capital city included half the skilled labor force employed in manufacturing industry. Furthermore, the economic ramifications of the colonial presence, combined with Portuguese neocolonial inclinations, fostered the development of an indigenous petty bourgeoisie, both commercial and administrative. Today the political limitations of the MPLA do not enable the organization to grasp the fundamental importance of the emergence of a proletarian social force in the heart of the imperialist industrial apparatus; this results in the MPLA's inability to put forward political responses in class terms or to go beyond its original multiclassist positions.

Nevertheless, although the MPLA's expressed desire to "put an end to the exploitation of man by man" and to establish a "democratic and popular regime" did not constitute proof of any really profound radicalization



The Angolan workers refuse to bear the burden of a "process of exploitation that remains unchanged."

when this perspective was advanced within the liberated zones (which were essentially rural and characterized by only a slight social differentiation), such references have totally different implications when they are asserted in the urban centers today. For the laboring masses in the urban centers today, references to people's power and the end of exploitation of man by man have a very immediate and precise class content: the power of the workers and poor peasants and the end of capitalist exploitation.

A prisoner of gradualist conceptions, the MPLA as a whole is incapable of offering the laboring masses a

central anticapitalist perspective able to lead to workers and peasants power. But the anticapitalist dynamic of the workers struggles urgently requires such a perspective. In face of this urgency, the MPLA finds itself torn between its links with reactionary forces at the top and the rank-and-file's participation in the mobilizations of the workers. This is especially the case in that the first mass assaults against the anti-working-class measures of the transition government are now beginning to take shape.

Thus, in spite of the radicalization of workers struggles, the MPLA is clinging to the electoral perspective pro-

vided for in the Alvor accords and reaffirmed in Nakuru. But in the present Angolan context one must have the greatest doubts in the possibility of these elections taking place "democratically." The northern part of the country, for example, is "occupied" by the troops of the FNLA, who are hunting down MPLA militants, while UNITA is doing the same thing in the south. Moreover, the example of Portugal itself shows that given laboring masses who are on the whole little politicized and still subject in certain regions to tribalist pressure exacerbated by the FNLA and UNITA, the possibilities of reactionary manipulation of the electoral game in order to prevent the real relationship of forces from being reflected electorally must not be underestimated.

Nevertheless, it is certain that the electoral campaign for an MPLA majority in the constituent assembly will be an important focus and an object of broad mobilizations of the urban workers. This could be the occasion for the workers to advance a whole set of demands taking up all the demands put forward during current struggles, centralizing them in a clearly anticapitalist perspective, and forcing the constituent assembly that comes out of the elections to implement them.

But the real revolutionary alternative to class collaboration with reactionary forces is to be found in the centralization and unification of the workers struggles. This is especially true since there is evidence that a disturbing unification process is going on between UNITA and the most right-wing elements of the MPLA. This process is based around denunciation of "strikes endangering the national economy" and calls for collaboration with the "political formations not present at Alvor," thus laying the basis for broadening the transition government to the right.

Thus, the factors that are in fact acting to incorporate the MPLA into the neocolonial process are the heterogeneity and political limitations of the organization, its bureaucratic deviations, and its integration into the game being played by African diplomacy; these factors have been expressed in the MPLA's acceptance of the Alvor accords, its collaboration with the FNLA and UNITA in the government, and its recent acceptance of the Nakuru accords.

For a revolutionary alternative

But the mobilization the MPLA is tactically supporting gives rise to a dynamic of struggle that comes into conflict with the MPLA leadership's opportunist policy toward the petty bourgeoisie and the "liberal" section of the colonial bourgeoisie, thus intensifying the internal contradictions of the organization. On the other hand, the bureaucratic practices of the leadership and the limits it has set on workers mobilization are the factors that prepare the ground for the radicalization of the rank-and-file militants who are in direct contact with the popular mobilization. The MPLA's participation in

the state apparatus intensifies the neocolonial pressure on the organization; at the same time, the leadership's political independence from the rank-and-file militants is increasing. The recent FNLA attacks have had a twofold effect on the MPLA. On the one hand, they have stimulated the emergence of armed popular militias and accelerated the radicalization of MPLA militants in contact with these mobilizations; on the other hand, they have made the necessity of a compromise with UNITA more credible in the eyes of the rightist elements of the MPLA. Thus, the MPLA youth published a communiqué denouncing the union with "reactionary forces who, behind the mask of a false nationalism, are only spreading horror among the Angolan people and committing indiscriminate massacres"; meanwhile, in Nakuru the MPLA leadership decided during the "peace conference" with the FNLA and UNITA to disarm the civilian population.

The MPLA now is undergoing a twofold internal reorganization. On the one hand, the Neto current is growing in strength, the two other tendencies that came out of the last congress have been eliminated, and an increasingly assertive rightist tendency is developing; on the other hand, a rank-and-file radicalization and a flowering of local committees permeated by many political currents has begun. The latest decisions of the MPLA Central Committee (February 1975) clearly illustrate these developments. On the one hand, a reorganization of the movement was planned in order to ensure that the MPLA would "more consistently follow a mass line" and that "a close link between the rank and file and the leadership" would be established; on the other hand, the organization's desire to "closely collaborate" with the government was reaffirmed.

The strengthening of the Neto current, a result of Neto's "historic" prestige among the Angolan masses and the support he receives from local reformists, has been effected through the integration into the MPLA of some members of the Angolan Democratic Movement, an organization with "liberal" conceptions composed of lawyers and members of the liberal professions who are rather close to the Portuguese Communist party.

Moreover, the two tendencies that emerged from the Lusaka congress have been eliminated.

The negotiations that have been opened between the Neto leadership and Mario and Pinto de Andrade and Gentil Viana, representatives of the "Active Revolt" tendency, seem to be oriented toward an individual reintegration of these elements. Cut off from the mobilization of the workers, these people now seem to have no future. Moreover, a good number of them have either simply left politics or rejoined the MPLA individually already.

The case of the "Revolt of the East" tendency led by Chipenda is different; it was settled much more energetically. The MPLA launched a military operation against the representatives of this faction, which was more and more openly emerging as an element in a reactionary plan for civil war. But this "military operation"

— undertaken without any call for the mobilization of the workers — was conceived by the MPLA in the context of respecting the Alvor accords, which are described as the "political and constitutional basis . . . for the decolonization of our country." And today Chipenda is able to participate in the general staff negotiations as a member of the FNLA and has been incorporated into the imperialist strategy for which the Alvor accords are a cover. This policy of wheeling and dealing at the top can only encourage the reactionary forces to be more aggressive and increase the cohesion of the rightist currents within the MPLA.

Such a tendency is now emerging within the leading bodies of the MPLA. Fundamentally anticommunist, it calls for a special alliance with UNITA against the FNLA. Lacking any base in the rank and file, this tendency is represented in the Central Committee by Lucio Lara. It does not have any real political independence, and its essential function is to enable Neto to play a balancing role between the right and left elements of the MPLA and thus to push the organization to all sorts of compromises in the name of the unity of the movement. The absence of debate and democratic life within the organization, in addition to its political limitations, is now being manifested in an extreme heterogeneity and in the omnipotence of a political leadership representing a reformist nationalist current.

The most radicalized elements of the urban workers are assembled primarily in the rank and file local committees of the MPLA, an integral part of the workers vanguard that has emerged from the struggles of the urban masses since April 25, 1974. Because of the position it occupies in the process of capitalist exploitation, this vanguard is the driving lance of the entire revolutionary process today.

But many of these committees remain locked into a radical nationalism cloaked in gradualist Maoistic formulations and limited to tailending the MPLA leadership; a leftist pinch of "maximum program" expressed in the form of propaganda for "people's democracy" is added to spice things up. These Maoistic groups are somewhat embarrassed by their international reference point, given China's present attitude toward the Angolan crisis. In face of the necessity to go beyond the MPLA within the perspective of a resolute struggle for the socialist revolution, these currents, disregarding the tasks of centralizing the workers struggles with the perspective of a revolutionary seizure of power, cling to a virtually moralistic conception of the unity of the MPLA; in the process they deny the extreme heterogeneity of this organization.

In face of the emergence of a workers vanguard in the urban centers — a vanguard that is organized in the rank-and-file bodies of the MPLA (the action committees), UNTA, and the pro-trade-union commissions — the political responses these groups offer are insufficient. The question that is now being posed by the various ongoing struggles is whether or not capitalist exploitation is to continue. The Angolan workers refuse to bear the burden of a "process of exploitation that remains unchanged." For them, the only real independence will be one that permits their total emancipation and puts an end to capitalist rule. Angolan revolutionary militants must determine their positions in light of this necessary transformation of the struggle for independence into a struggle for the social emancipation of the workers, into a struggle for the socialist revolution.

The necessity for such a transformation is not the product of any intellectual imagination; on the contrary, it is the central question that has been posed by the tens of thousands of workers struggling in the factories, companies, and ports of Angola. Thus, contrary to what the reformist leadership of the MPLA likes to suggest, the time is certainly ripe for the class struggle in Angola — a struggle whose stakes are decisive for the future of revolutionary struggles throughout the region.

There are already elements within the MPLA who are aware of these stakes and who define themselves around a class-struggle position and fight for the emergence of an overall anticapitalist alternative. These revolutionary militants have set themselves the task of elucidating the full dimensions of what is at stake in the present struggles of the Angolan proletariat; they are doing this by developing propaganda for self-organization and self-defense, popularizing exemplary workers strikes and assuring them militant solidarity, denouncing the reactionary parties and their collusion with the rightist nationalist movements, and calling for the formation of class trade unions for the proletariat, the only social force capable of actually carrying out the tasks of national liberation through going beyond them in the struggle for the power of the workers and peasants, through the "revolutionary union" of the Angolan proletariat and poor peasantry, and finally, through making their struggle part of the fight of the oppressed masses of the entire African continent for their total emancipation, for the socialist revolution.

As against the ambiguous responses of the MPLA, this is the only strategic response capable of preventing the erosion of workers combativity under the blows of reaction and of counterposing the road of workers power in Angola to any neocolonial solution. ■

*Some
consequences
of the*



*revolutionary
rise of the
masses on the
Communist
& Socialist
parties of West Europe*



by PIERRE FRANK

The European workers movement is the oldest and best structured in the world. Since their accession to power after the second world war, the Communist parties of East Europe have constituted particular cases. In West Europe, Socialist and Communist parties have the support of the overwhelming majority of the working class. With the exception of the Communist party of West Germany, the political structure acquired by the workers movement after the failure of the 1917-1923 revolutionary wave has remained virtually stable, although there were some limited changes just after the second world war. On the one hand there were countries in which the Socialist parties generally held hegemony and the Communist parties had only minimum strength as parties (although many of their members personally

held influential positions in the trade unions); on the other hand, there were countries in which the Communist parties held hegemony against Socialist parties more or less strongly implanted in the working class. With May '68 a revolutionary far left reappeared. Since then, there has been an initial change in this structure: In France the Socialist party, under the leadership of François Mitterrand, has applied a policy of united front with the Communist party and has scored electoral gains to the point of overtaking the CP on this field.

But we are now seeing growing tensions in this decades-old structure, within both the Socialist and Communist parties; these tensions are the point of departure for more profound and extensive phenomena.

Differences among the Socialist parties

Recently two separate international meetings of West European Socialist parties were held on the same days (May 24 and 25). They could even be called two "tendency" meetings. In Latché in the South of France, Mitterrand's turf, representatives gathered from the Socialist parties of France, Belgium, Spain, Italy, Greece, and Portugal. In Vienna leaders assembled from the Socialist parties of Austria (Bruno Kreisky), Sweden (Olof Palme), and West Germany (Willy Brandt).

The Latché meeting was "informal" and issued no communiqué on its work. But it is known that there was discussion of relations with the Communist parties and of NATO and that it was decided to lend support to Soares, who had been unable to attend the first day's sessions because he had been called back to Lisbon due to the República affair. With the exception of the Belgian SP, the Socialist parties that came to Latché have to deal with strong Communist parties that they cannot afford to ignore in their political orientation; likewise, they are up against a more powerful upsurge of the masses than the corresponding parties in the other countries. Moreover, some of these parties have a short-term perspective of entering governments that include representatives of the Communist parties, as Soares has already done. Neither Mitterrand nor Soares nor any of the other leaders at the Latché meeting has any special love for the Communist parties; if they could, they would treat the CPs in their countries just as Helmut Schmidt treats the German CP. But Mitterrand and his tablemates jointly examined the problems posed for them by a collaboration with the Communist parties that is inevitable.

On the other hand, the Socialist parties represented in Vienna apparently have little or nothing to fear from their respective Communist parties, and the masses are not as radicalized in their countries. Nevertheless, they cannot remain indifferent to the collaboration of the other Socialist parties with the Communist parties. Their own governments are not altogether stable, and every election is worrisome for them. The bourgeois parties have not failed to raise the bogey of these Socialist parties' potentially collaborating with the Communists. In addition, American imperialism, supported by the governments of bourgeois parties in Europe, is certainly putting pressure on these SPs to try to provoke a break between Mitterrand, Soares, etc. and their respective Communist parties. The Vienna conference examined "the perspectives and the principled question of democratic socialism" and declared itself "against any collaboration between Social Democratic and Communist parties." (Le Monde, May 27-28.) Some days later, Olof Palme denied this latter point, but it must not be forgotten that he cannot totally ignore the Swedish Communist party.

André Cools, president of the Belgian Socialist party, explained the current situation among Socialist parties in these terms:

"Here in Belgium we are convinced that we are in good position to avoid excessive distance between the various conceptions of European socialism. . . . Our geographic situation and the political diversity of Belgium put us in position to understand all our friends of the European Socialist family." (Le Soir, June 25, 1975.)

It is to be noted that the British Labour party, for decades the largest of the Socialist parties, did not attend either of the two meetings. It has its own internal problems, which are causing big difficulties. The SP meetings were held just several days before the Common Market referendum, in which Harold Wilson rendered great service to British capitalism by keeping Britain in the EEC. But he was unable to do this without provoking serious tension within the Labour party. In spite of Wilson's ability to maneuver and in spite of the cowardice of the Labour left, the tensions within this party will intensify. The "no" votes in the referendum came essentially from workers who saw the vote as a way to express their discontent. And this discontent will inevitably increase and find expression within the Labour party after the measures taken by the Wilson government in face of the disastrous economic situation.

Differences among the Communist parties

Recently, the European Communist parties managed to come together and produce a common document on the peasantry, a problem that, given the current state of urbanization and industrialization in West Europe, has only relative importance in comparison with its importance thirty or forty years ago. But when it comes to general policy or to certain burning issues, not only is agreement more difficult to achieve, but differences are manifested publicly.

For many months preparations have been under way for a general conference of all European Communist parties (East Europe, West Europe, and the Soviet Union). According to current Communist party rules, a common document is supposed to be drafted before this conference. But preparations have been going on for more than a year now, and according to information from these parties themselves, great difficulties have come up. The task was consigned to commissions and subcommissions. A text prepared by the Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands (SED — Socialist Unity party of Germany, the East German CP), was immediately rejected by the Italians, Spanish, Yugoslavs, and Rumanians. A "parity"-type commission was said to have been designated last May. The origins of the differences lie in the refusal of certain parties to line up behind the Kremlin's policies in regard to preparation for a worldwide conference of CPs, condemnation of the Chinese CP, etc.

But while these controversies are still being played out in the shadows, it was the question of the policy of the

Portuguese CP that put the torch to the powderkeg. The ban on the Portuguese Christian Democratic party had already been opposed by the Italian Communist party. The question came up at the recent conference of the Italian CP (when the "historic compromise" was reaffirmed), because the ban in Portugal was embarrassing the Italian CP in regard to the Italian Christian Democracy. The República affair lent considerable dimensions to the differences among the Communist parties. The Polish and Hungarian CPs either remained silent or observed the strictest neutrality about what was going on in Portugal. The Yugoslav and Rumanian parties reported the statements of Soares and were more discrete about Cunhal's. Moscow was favorable to Cunhal, but maintained a moderate attitude until the República journalists published a forgery attributed to Soviet CP leader Pomarev. In West Europe too the issue took on considerable importance. The Italian and Spanish Communist parties disavowed the policy of the Portuguese party. The leadership of the French CP defended the Portuguese party and went even further. Cunhal himself went so far as to state before reporters that the Spanish Communist party "would do better to join the Second International!" French CP leader Georges Marchais, speaking of an anticommunist campaign in which the Socialists were participating, accused the Italian CP of "interfering in the internal affairs" of the Portuguese party, to which Italian CP leader Enrico Berlinguer easily responded that Marchais's intervention itself represented interference in the internal affairs of the Italian party.

The differences over the question of Portugal cannot be attributed simply to the various CPs' agreeing or refusing to line up with Moscow. According to reliable information, the leaders of the Socialist party in France — among them Mitterrand, who recently held talks with a Soviet CP delegation headed by Brezhnev — believe that the Kremlin does not want the Portuguese Communist party to seek to eliminate Soares's party or to break with him. That would run counter to the policy of "détente." In fact, the quarrel among West European CPs over the República affair was most lively; this is because these parties were directly affected by this question both in their daily policy and in their basic orientation.

It is easy to see what divides the Communist parties that have been most involved in this quarrel. Those on the one side (the Italian and Spanish parties) are not and do not expect to be in minority positions with respect to the Socialist parties. This is obvious in Italy, especially after the recent elections, in which the CP got nearly three times as many votes as the SP. The same appears to be true in Spain, although it remains to be seen what will happen when the Franco dictatorship falls, political parties are legalized, and the broad masses begin to take action in the political arena. The other Communist parties (in France and Portugal), while they have an advantage over the Socialist parties in terms of the number of militants, presently find themselves in a minority with respect to the Socialist parties on the electoral field. That is a new situation for the French CP, and perhaps was unexpected for the Portu-

guese CP, which in view of its greater implantation and its past record, had had great hopes of overtaking Soares's party after the fall of the dictatorship.

The idea that there is a Communist line emanating from Moscow and more or less well adjusted for each country is untenable. From now on, the exigencies imposed by the upsurge of the masses enter into greater consideration in the policy of each mass Communist party, although this of course does not mean that this upsurge could act to transform these parties into revolutionary parties. Thus, the peculiarities of each party and leadership must be examined. Until a little more than a year ago, Cunhal had never stood at the head of a mass movement. He had long experience in the bureaucratic leadership of a small clandestine organization. He does not yet have the democratic veneer that the French party has acquired during more than thirty-five years of bourgeois parliamentarism. Cunhal's deficiencies are at times manifested in a certain crudity, which was especially remarkable when it was exhibited just after a Socialist electoral victory.

The French Communist party had gone through a honeymoon period with the Socialist party, which had reached its highest point during the presidential campaign of 1974. The CP leaders began to get annoyed in September and October of the same year when they saw that the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left) was benefiting the Socialist party more than the CP and that in serving as a supporting prop for the SP the CP was suffering electoral losses and was even coming under attack in the factories. The CP then launched a polemic against the Socialist party, bringing up both old complaints and new ones, real and imagined. Predictably, the CP was able in this way to harden up a good number of its members who bear old grudges against the Socialists, but the polemic was not understood by the broad masses, as nearly all the by-elections have shown.

While more or less vigorously waging their polemics against the Socialist parties, the leaders of the Communist parties of France and Portugal have understood that they also have to offer more political responses and, especially, that they have to present pledges, or at least the appearance of pledges, on the point on which they are particularly vulnerable: the subject of democracy, a question on which they are weighed down by their Stalinism. Thus, at a recent Central Committee meeting (at the end of May 1975), Marchais got a "declaration of liberties" adopted in which he in effect promised not to employ the measures that have been taken against oppositionists by the Kremlin; he also presented a new position on Stalinism. It was, I believe, the first time that he used this term — between quotation marks, of course, but he used it abundantly. The new line is to say that Stalin was politically correct up to 1935 and even after, but that after that date he began to abuse his authority. This is new for the French CP; but more important, the Central Committee decided to distribute 10 million copies of Marchais's text. The figure is probably exaggerated, but the number will certainly be very high, which attests to the fact that what is involved is

a question that is of interest to the masses not for historical reasons but for very concrete political ones. And let us add that the CP will make this effort in vain; it will not be able to unload its Stalinist past. Moreover, at this same Central Committee meeting Marchais added Kanapa to the Political Bureau to replace the late Jacques Duclos. Kanapa is a Stalinist of the purest sort, if one may employ such a qualification.

As for Cunhal, he has tried, at least verbally, to offer a political response to the problems raised by the upsurge of the masses. Here, for example, is an excerpt from the editorial published in the May 28 issue of *Avante*, organ of the Portuguese Communist party:

"This attitude (of the SP), supported, although feebly, by the PPD (Partido Popular Democrático — Popular Democratic party), throws into relief the existence of two contradictory dynamics: One, electoralist, aims at setting up a bourgeois-parliamentary democracy of a Social Democratic type; the other, drawing its support from the revolutionary process embodied in the alliance between the people and the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) aims at the democratic revolution on the road to socialism. The electoralism is irreconcilable with the revolutionary process and could even wind up destroying it in the short term. The pact between the parties of the coalition and the MFA is very precise as to the insertion of the electoral process within the revolutionary process. . . .

"The realization of the priority tasks of the democratic revolution implies the mobilization of the best energies of our people, their strictest union with the MFA; in this process, the action of the parties really interested in achieving socialism is indispensable. The people's movement goes beyond the parties, creating its own organs that will express the originality of our revolutionary process, which tends in its forms toward the alliance of the people with the armed forces — or more precisely, of the popular movement with the MFA — assuming a generally unitary and operational character. Workers 'control' in the nationalized state enterprises, the formation of agricultural cooperatives and of peasant organs for agrarian reform, the strengthening and dynamization of the trade-union movement, and the proliferation of workers commissions, tenants commissions, popular assemblies, and other varied forms of popular organs that the process in its dynamic requires in order to assure its own development — all this forms the field of action on which the sons of the people in and out of uniform will create the democratic and socialist Portugal of the future."

The general orientation of the Portuguese Communist party — democratic revolution on the road to socialism, alliance with the MFA — is extremely dangerous for the Portuguese revolution. But what the editorial says about popular organs, if they are not simply verbal declarations with no future (and we are afraid that is what they are), if they give rise to even a beginning of implementation, could provide Portuguese revolutionaries a not unimportant link for carrying forward the march of the revolution in their country.

The tensions and differences among the various Socialist parties, among the various Communist parties, within these parties, and in the relations among these parties have a common initial source: the upsurge of the masses, which has not yet attained its highest point. At a time when the Franco dictatorship is in its death agony, everything points to the approach of big struggles in Europe, as was predicted in the "Theses on the Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe" adopted in March 1974 by the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International. These theses also stressed the recomposition of the workers movement that was taking place under the pressure of the masses in motion. The phenomena that we have noted in this article constitute only a beginning of this recomposition, which in the long run cannot take place within the framework of the old traditional parties. The emergence of leftist-oriented tendencies in the Socialist parties, the growing embarrassment of the Communist parties about their own past and their relations with Moscow, and the lively controversy between Socialist and Communist parties even when they are collaborating politically — all this is only the beginning. We will refrain from drawing more precise conclusions at this time, for the development of the class struggle in each country will have uneven effects on variable leaderships. But the European sections of the Fourth International must very closely follow even the smallest changes in the traditional workers parties. These changes will enable our sections to better understand developments in the working class, of which the changes in the traditional workers parties are distorted reflections to a certain extent. They will also permit our sections to better adjust their policies and to intervene more forcefully in the class struggle so as to press forward workers democracy, the creation of organs of the soviet type, and the building of revolutionary Marxist parties.

July 2, 1975

correction . . .

An error of translation appeared in the article "The Recession and the Prospects for the International Capitalist Economy," published in our June 5 issue (No. 27/28). The first sentence of the last paragraph on page 15 should read: "3. The 1974-75 recession did not act — and, in an atmosphere of inflationary 'reflating,' could not have acted — to detonate a massive devaluation of capital, which is the role a crisis of overproduction normally plays in improving the conditions of capital profitization — that is, in permitting an increase in the average rate of profit in the short term."



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