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ITALY

facing the elections

WEST GERMANY

a turn in the class struggle



SPAIN

the referendum that never was

PORTUGAL

a revolutionary candidate



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ITALY THE BOURGEOISIE, REFORMISTS, & FAR LEFT FACE THE JUNE 20 ELECTIONS

by LIVIO MAITAN

The campaign for the June 20 elections is now fully under way. All the conflicting political forces have set down their orientations, put forward their projects and proposals, and chosen their candidates. This preparatory process has most often been very laborious because of the deep differences that exist within many parties and the difficulty in unraveling some rather intricate knots. Two significant examples, in two opposite camps: The formation of the list of Democrazia Cristiana (DC — Christian Democracy) gave rise to a two-week, no-holds-barred battle that ended only at the last minute, not without striking developments (in particular regarding the Senate candidacy of Umberto Agnelli, one of the bosses of Fiat) and not without breaks of discipline (in the Lombardy districts the local DC leadership rejected the decision of the central leaders and presented its own list of candidates, confronting the central leaders with an accomplished fact). And Democrazia Proletaria (Proletarian Democracy) — the united list of the far left — was still not prepared to present a program of its own, even though the drafting of this program was consigned to the PDUP (Partito di Unità Proletaria — Party of Proletarian Unity) and Avanguardia Operaia, to the exclusion of Lotta Continua and the other organizations participating in the slate.

The great maneuvers of the bourgeoisie

The precipitation of the crisis of political leadership, especially after the elections of June 15 last year, had provoked a process of critical rethinking among all sectors and at all levels of the ruling class, a process which, beyond the sometimes paradoxical forms in which it was expressed, posed crucial questions: Was it possible to establish a new political leadership formula in the short term? Given the irremediable bankruptcy of the center-left and the impossibility of a conservative bloc that would include the neofascist right, was the prospect of a government in which the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI — Italian Communist party) would be present an acceptable one? How could the traditional bourgeois parties, primarily the DC, reestablish the necessary dialectical relations with the various social layers they represent, or strive to represent, relations that were being eroded, if not actually broken, with the conse-

quent isolation of these parties from "civil society," to use a Gramscian term that has again become current?

In this article we will not return to the discussions that took place at the congress of the Christian Democracy, which were described in the previous issue of INPRECOR (No. 51, May 13.) It may be noted that the attempt at "renovation" sketched out by party secretary Benigno Zaccagnini had been limited from the very outset. But even the few innovations that could have been introduced were rapidly annulled both by the composition of the new leading bodies (Zaccagnini is in a minority in the leadership; Amintore Fanfani, old boss of the DC, was elected president of the party National Council) and by the political actions taken by the party, such as the bloc with the neofascists on the question of abortion and against the Communist mayor of the city of Naples. On May 20 the DC National Council confirmed its clear rejection not only of the prospect of the "historic compromise" (the DC-PCI bloc proposed by the Communist party), but also of the proposal for a government coalition of national unity, put forward by the PCI as a solution for the immediate period after the elections. Once again, the only possibility that emerged was a new version of the center-left in the form of a special collaboration with the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano — Italian Socialist party). And as we noted in our previous article, the PSI rejected this proposal. In practice, this means that the Christian Democrats do not intend to alter the status quo, hoping that the electoral relationship of forces will allow them to get away with this. In any event, they prefer not to define themselves too clearly; that way they can pick up the greatest number of votes on both the right and the "left."

The "renovation" was also rather more formal than real on the question of the composition of the slate of candidates, even though Zaccagnini, supported by the "left" tendency in the DC, had made this change of the parliamentary guard one of his main battle cries. There has been some quantitative change (about 40 percent of the DC Senate candidates and 27 percent of the candidates for the lower house are new), but to a large extent this is an almost physiological phenomenon. The key posts remain firmly in the hands of the old leaders

and cliques, and the usual names head the list of candidates in the most important cities and districts, from Rumor to Andreotti, Gava to Colombo, in spite of the violent attacks from the major bourgeois dailies and weeklies to which these personalities have been subject during past months. As for the "inter-class" composition — that is, the presence on the DC slate of industrialists and trade unionists, intellectuals and big financiers, landed proprietors and representatives of the "new" middle classes — this is no novelty for the Christian Democracy either, and the change is almost exclusively a matter of a shift in the balance between party members and so-called independents.

The polemic around the candidacy of Umberto Agnelli has a significance that transcends the specific case. After Umberto's brother Gianni had decided not to be a candidate, Umberto agreed to run as a DC candidate for Senate in the province of Turin. Leaders of the DC "left" like Donnat Cattin and Bodrato revolted against this. However, they proposed not that Agnelli should be excluded from the slate, but only that he be run in the Abruzzi district in the South. In the end, Agnelli was shifted to Rome, but the incident reflected the more general difficulty of leading industrialists' playing a more direct political role.

The polemics around this question within the employers' organizations have been quite lively over the past few

months. More or less hazy projects for the "renovation" of the apparatuses and political instruments of the ruling class have been drawn up. Some said that the economic employers' organizations like Confindustria (Italian Industrialists Federation) should have taken on the de facto function of a political party; others floated the idea of a sort of bloc between "modern" industrialists and trade unionists against parasitic layers, an idea that was rather arbitrarily characterized as "Peronist" by its opponents. What appeared to everyone as extremely difficult, if not impossible, was the creation of a new bourgeois party able to pick up the torch from a worn-out and discredited Christian Democracy. (As for authoritarian projects of a fascist or putschist type, in the present period they can be aired only by marginal groups or personalities.)

The solution that finally prevailed was a more direct political participation by industrialists and other representatives of the ruling classes. These people are divided among three parties: the Republicans (PRI), the Liberals (PLI), and the Christian Democrats. Their participation in the lists of the PLI is traditional. What is interesting is the attempt of the PRI to use them more extensively, an attempt which, although it failed to win Gianni Agnelli to the Republican slate, nevertheless did attract various representatives of industry and finance. The PRI is thus assuming the function played by the Liberals in the immediate postwar period. Sectors of the bourgeoisie thus seem convinced that the PRI, whose leading representative, Ugo La Malfa, has headed up the economics ministry for long and important periods, may turn out to be a useful instrument in a situation in which the contending forces are balanced out. In the event that the workers parties win a majority in the elections, the PRI could play the role of Trojan horse in a popular-front government.

For the moment, however, the major role continues to be assigned to the Christian Democracy. In this sense, Umberto Agnelli's choice is eloquent, as are the choices of Stammati, representative of high finance, and the leaders of the Confagricoltura (the organization of landlords and agrarian capitalists). Although all these people had zeroed in on attacking the DC and its regime, when push came to shove they had to recognize that the survival and possible strengthening of the DC was obligatory. Indeed, in face of the existing social and political polarization, the DC must inevitably play out its role as conservative pole and present itself as the number one antagonist of the workers parties. This is the logic by which, in spite of the decisions of the congress, the Christian Democratic electoral battle will be waged much more along the old line of Fanfani than along the "new" line of Zaccagnini.

A few words about the neofascists. The Giorgio Almirante leadership, which maintains control over the Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI — Italian Social Movement) is aiming at a situation in which the strength of the MSI will be indispensable in preventing the workers parties from winning a majority. In this sense, the MSI is continuing to follow a conservative rightist orienta-





tion. But the actions of the "extreme" fascist wing and groups, regardless of who takes the initiative in these actions, are not necessarily in conflict with this project. A situation of great tension — created, for example, by overt attacks, murders, and so on — could be used to fuel a law-and-order psychosis and thus could facilitate the crystallization of a reactionary bloc.

The new PCI formula

The presentation of its slate of candidates gave the PCI yet another opportunity to appear as an effectively organized party capable of implementing its policy of broad alliances. Not only did the party of Enrico Berlinguer not offer the unattractive spectacle of squabbling over the choice of candidates as did all the other parties (Democrazia Proletaria included), but it also managed to include a large number of independents on its slate, representatives of various social forces and diverse politico-ideological conceptions.

In presenting the list of candidates, the May 18 issue of *l'Unità*, the PCI daily, wrote: "More than 120 of our candidates are workers, peasants, laborers engaged in production; 150 are intellectuals, teachers, university instructors, and members of the liberal professions; about 50 are small and middle-sized entrepreneurs; 45 are commercial artisans and shopkeepers." Some of the names on the PCI slate made a sensation, even internationally: Altiero Spinelli, a member of the European Economic Commission who has assumed important tasks in this institution, and Nino Pasti, former air force chief of staff. No less significant is the participation of economists like Luigi Spaventa and of a high-level magistrate like Gennano Guadagno. The Vatican was literally thrown into crisis by the appearance of noted

Catholics on the PCI slate, prestigious intellectuals and journalists like La Valle, Pratesi, and Gozzini.

The orientation of the PCI campaign was set by a report to the Central Committee delivered by Berlinguer. The program presented was eventually approved unanimously. The only new element in the report compared with the previous positions of the PCI was the proposal for the period immediately following the elections. The strategy of the historic compromise, Berlinguer said, remains, but in the more immediate future he proposed that "Italy be directed by a broad, united government coalition composed of all the democratic and popular parties, including the PCI." Such a coalition government would have to remain in office "for some years" in order to extract the country from "the grip of the crisis." After which everybody would make their own more long-term choices.

The aim of this new formula is to provide further guarantees, to even further pacify the decisive sectors of the bourgeoisie. One of the arguments advanced in the discussion of this proposal was that the Christian Democracy would be too weak to tolerate a confrontation with the PCI within a coalition in which the Communists could also rely on the support of the Socialists. Another argument was that if the DC and the PCI make an alliance, all the other parties will be shut out, reduced to the role of spectators. Berlinguer himself sought to oppose both these arguments. First, he said, we are prepared to form a government with the Republicans, Social Democrats, and even the Liberals; the DC will thus have greater room to maneuver and nobody will be excluded. Second, the new proposal appears more concrete in that it does not postpone the solution to the problems to the indefinite future. Finally, Berlinguer accepted, at least implicitly, the traditional thesis of emergency national unity, the inevitable result of which would be an economic restabilization on the basis of the social and political status quo, the much-vaunted reforms being postponed to a later stage.

The program approved by the Central Committee clearly falls within the framework of the political project of the historic compromise and of a coalition government of all the "democratic" parties. In this sense, although it adds nothing new, it does further accentuate the PCI's moderate tones and waters down the content of its project. As an example, we may note that the word nationalization was not even used; the capitalists were asked only to "reinvest their profits in Italy and to concentrate all their efforts and initiative capacities in the productive sectors." Moreover, this does not apply exclusively to the small and middle-sized industrialists so fondly regarded by the PCI. A central passage of the program affirms: "Not only the particular social function of the small and middle-sized enterprises must be recognized, but also the freedom of initiative of all private enterprises. These enterprises naturally tend to operate on the basis of market demand with a view toward making a profit. Without ignoring the play of market mechanisms, the policy of programming must attempt to create new incentives for the decisions of the



Berlinguer & De Martino of the PSI.

enterprises and to utilize the larger enterprises and employers' organizations, through appropriate procedures, in order to attain the goals decided upon in the general interest." As for political structures, the program repeats the usual litany on the implementation of the constitution of the republic. The title of two of the most important chapters of the program are illustrative: "For the democratic renovation of the state" and "For an effective executive." Finally, the international section of the program once again takes up the themes that have now become customary: The renunciation of any struggle for withdrawal from NATO is reaffirmed, and respect for "Italy's international alliances" is proclaimed. The program goes so far as to express the will of the PCI "to contribute to the development of friendly relations between the Italian Republic and the United States" and makes no explicit mention of the Soviet Union!

The opening notes of the electoral campaign have already demonstrated that the leaders of the PCI will not be able to escape one difficulty. What will they do if the workers parties win more than 50 percent of the vote and the DC and the other parties reject collaboration? As usual, Berlinguer and company are trying not to respond to this question and are reaffirming their desire for "concord" within the framework of the historic compromise or a national coalition. But the logic of the situation and the pressure from the rank and file are such that on a number of occasions the PCI leaders have been compelled to moderate their unyielding attitude on this point. In responding to a question posed by journalists, Lama, a top PCI trade-union leader, who is far from under the influence of extremist ideas, was compelled to say that in the event that the workers parties win a majority of the vote and that the other parties reject collaboration, "the new majority, even if it is limited, would have to assume all government responsibilities." Around the same time, similar indications, albeit more hazy, came from Berlinguer himself.

The PSI is maintaining the general line set down at its last congress. (See INPRECOR, No.51, May 13.) During the last meeting of the Central Committee, PSI secretary Francesco De Martino interpreted the new PCI proposal for a democratic coalition government as an abandoning of the historic compromise and a vindication of the Socialist political project. Regardless of whether this interpretation is valid or not, it is certain that the convergence between the policies of the two workers parties has been further accentuated. In addition, De Martino proposed that in the event of a "slight left majority" and a refusal by all the other parties to participate in a coalition government, it was possible that the PSI would assume government responsibilities.

The united far-left slate

After some shifting back and forth, the political polemics within the far left and among the broad vanguard on what attitude to take toward the elections of June 20 concluded with the presentation of a single slate to the left of the PCI, the slate of Democrazia Proletaria.⁽¹⁾ This occurred despite the fact that the PDUP had voted (about 70 percent to 30 percent) in favor of the Magri-Rossanda-Pintor tendency, which opposed any accord with Lotta Continua. (This vote was taken not only in the Central Committee, but among the rank and file as well.) The reversal of the PDUP's decision was determined on the one hand by strong rank-and-file pressure for unity and on the other hand by fear of a split at such a delicate moment, which would have placed a question mark over the PDUP's project of unification with Avanguardia Operaia.

Unity was established on the following basis: PDUP and Avanguardia Operaia will remain the sponsoring organizations of Democrazia Proletaria (this designation was used by the two groups during the elections of June 15, 1975); they demand the right to draft the program and oversee the political conduct of the campaign. Candidates of Lotta Continua will be included on the slate (although not members of Lotta Continua's national secretariat), as will candidates of other organizations prepared to support Democrazia Proletaria. (The Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari — GCR, Revolutionary Communist Groups, Italian section of the Fourth International — will be in this second category.)

In its presentation of the decision of the Central Committee, *il Manifesto*, the daily newspaper of the PDUP, insisted on the fact that this was a sort of compromise, concluded mainly in order to avoid a dispersal of the far-left vote; the subordinate role of Lotta Continua in the whole operation was stressed.

In fact, Lotta Continua has been assigned 15 percent of the candidates (a proportion not respected in all districts), for a total of around 90 candidates out of some 700. (As a form of protest, Lotta Continua wanted all its candidates to be listed together at the end of the slate.) The PDUP and Avanguardia Operaia will make the decisions on the organizations not as strong as Lotta

Continua.(2) The methods used were openly attacked in the pages of the newspaper Lotta Continua when the slate was announced.

Commenting on the positive result of the battle for a united far-left slate, the GCR's organ, *Bandiera Rossa*, which is appearing weekly during the campaign, wrote:

"We who posed the necessity for a united far-left presence as long ago as the 1972 elections will be the last to underestimate the value of the united slate. It is of great importance that this has been imposed by a genuine rank-and-file movement, not for emotional reasons, but as a political necessity. In addition, we reaffirm the judgment we have already expressed, that the discussion which took place among the formations of the



Rossana Rossanda and Lucio Magri of PDUP

far left, with the participation of many cadres and militants of the vanguard, in spite of the inevitable simplifications, permitted crucial problems of workers strategy in this period to be posed. Everyone has an interest in the continuation of this discussion and in its development through new unitary motion after June 20. We are convinced that if this thrust prevails during the coming weeks and if the campaign is conducted in a responsible manner, highlighting in a rigorous but non-sectarian manner the differences between the far left and the reformists, the result will be positive, including in terms of the number of votes won.

"Nevertheless, we consider it indispensable to express our evaluation of the manner in which the presentation of a united slate was achieved. First of all, it is a serious limitation, one which the reformists have sought and are still seeking to exploit(3), that the convergence was not realized on the basis of a common political platform and was even presented as a compromise agreement aimed mainly at averting a dispersal of the far-left vote.

"We want to avoid any possible equivocation. In our view the political and theoretical bases for the unification of the far left into a single party, and even for long-term strategic unity, do not exist. But a political agreement on the basis of a platform for this electoral campaign was possible. . . . As regards the method used, there was only one legitimate possibility: to establish an accord, on a parity basis, among all the organizations present on a national scale or present in important cities. This would have necessarily meant the creation of unitary bodies representing all the forces in order to conduct the electoral campaign politically and organizationally and the inclusion in the slate of representatives of all organizations prepared to support *Democrazia Proletaria*. This was not the method that was used. . . . The PDUP in particular lent too much priority to its own internal exigencies and sought to make the other groups pay the price for the crisis in its own ranks due to the fact that the solution that was imposed did not correspond to the orientation of the majority of its leadership bodies and its membership.

"This critical evaluation will not prevent the militants of the GCR from fully committing themselves to the campaign in order to make sure that *Democrazia Proletaria* registers a political success on June 20. We will make the maximum effort and will seek to have the spirit of unity prevail. We will commit ourselves to the construction of united committees of *Democrazia Proletaria* at all levels in order to stimulate the campaign, to make sure a concrete alternative to the reformists emerges. A success could create a new situation within both the workers movement and the far left itself and could lay the basis for overcoming the limits and contradictions that have weighed on the political events of the past two months as well."

May 22, 1976

FOOTNOTES:

1. As of now, we do not know whether far-left lists independent of *Democrazia Proletaria* will be presented on a local level. Probably not. In some districts the Partito Operaio Europeo (European Workers party) is present. This outfit is linked to the so-called European Workers Committees, the phantom European branch of the shady Lynn Marcus group in the United States.
2. The GCR were given only three candidates, in Naples, Turin, and Salerno; some GCR candidates were removed at the last minute as a result of internal maneuvering. In the negotiations, the GCR requested twelve candidates, eight of whom were workers recognized as cadres of the workers movement in their factories.
3. The PCI daily newspaper has frequently attacked *Democrazia Proletaria* as a sort of unprincipled electoral combination, going so far as to devote an editorial signed by the editor-in-chief to this subject.

printers
strike



DRUCKARBEITER bei SPRINGER
im STREIK für 9%

turn in the w. german class struggle

by WINFRIED WOLF

The struggle of the printing workers of West Germany, which lasted from April 29 to May 13, represents a turn in the class struggle in the Federal Republic of Germany. Since the strike of the public employees during the spring of 1974, there had been no further open confrontations between capital and labor until the beginning of 1976. The trajectory of the new rise of workers struggles, which had begun with the wildcat strikes of 1969, seemed to have been interrupted.

The wave of token strikes by 400,000 metalworkers, who used these strikes as a means of putting strong pressure on "their" employers during the March-April 1976 renegotiation of their national wage contract, had already indicated that a turn was in the wind. The struggle of the printers and typesetters, which was ended by a contract vote on May 18, constitutes the turn properly so called. The very fact that the struggle took place is in itself of historic significance. But this observation acquires more importance when account is taken of the concrete form of the struggle and of the experiences the workers underwent during it. All this lends this struggle an exemplary character.

It is first necessary to rapidly sketch out the background to the upturn of class struggles in West Germany, in the framework of which the strike of the printing workers took shape. (See INPRECOR, No.27/28, June 5,

1975, for a fuller description of the West German economic situation.)

The principal experience of the West German working class since the recession of 1974-75 has been this: The Federal Republic of Germany is not an island in the capitalist ocean. The 1966-67 recession in West Germany was not a "freak accident." It cannot be attributed to the "administrative errors" of the Christian Democratic government in power at the time.

At the height of the economic crisis of 1974-75 there were 1,200,000 people totally unemployed and nearly a million partially unemployed. May 1976 is the eighteenth consecutive month during which there are more than one million West German workers unemployed. As in the spring of 1975, all the spokespeople of the bourgeoisie have continued to prattle: "The upturn is on the way, the upturn is at hand." It must be recognized that this year these prophets were right. But they are proclaiming only a half-truth.

It is true that the upturn has begun in terms of the increase in turnover, sales, production, and above all profits. The year 1975 saw the highest stock market rises in many long years. A real growth of the gross national product of at least 5.5 percent is expected for 1976, and according to official estimates, profits will rise by at least 14.5 percent.

On the side of the working class, however, there is little reason to rejoice in the sort of upturn that is now going on. Unemployment has decreased slightly during the past several months. But it remains in excess of one million, and all predictions agree that the average number of unemployed will hover around a million throughout the year.

During the years 1975 and 1976 broad sectors of the West German working class suffered average annual declines of 2-4 percent in their real wages. Fundamentally, this situation has not been changed by the struggles that have occurred in the metal industry and among the printers during recent weeks. Only an upturn in struggles by broader layers of the working class during the autumn of this year could generate a turnabout in the situation on the real-wages front.

Limited experiences in struggle

The economic crisis had struck the West German working class at a moment when it was not prepared — the lack of preparation was deeper than it was in most of the other capitalist countries of Europe. To begin with, the West German working class had accumulated fewer struggle experiences than the other working classes in the course of the two previous decades, for well-known historical reasons. Elements of a class-struggle leadership were even more cruelly lacking in West Germany than in the other countries.

After the defeats of the 1948-52 period, the first great struggles — leaving aside the metalworkers strike of 1963 — occurred only during the years 1969-73, during an uninterrupted boom of the West German economy.

The result of this has been that the West German working class, unlike the working class in other countries, was for all practical purposes not confronted with the problem of massive unemployment during this period. Even the question of factory shutdowns did not play an important role. The boom allowed many small and unstable enterprises to float on the waves of economic growth.

In addition, the change in government that occurred in 1969 (when the Social Democrats, in alliance with the Free Democrats, took over) shook up the situation on the political field. The impression could have been created (and the Social Democrats did everything they could to present things this way and to strengthen this impression) that it was the government of the CDU (Christlich-Demokratische Union — Christian Democratic Union) that had been responsible for the recession of 1966-67 and that a government of the Social Democracy, the "friend of the workers," would pursue a policy capable of averting crises of this nature and could in any event guarantee, or at least make possible, a constant increase in real wages.

In fact, West Germany remained an exceptional island in the capitalist world during the 1971-72 recession. Although there were a total of 10 million unemployed

in the imperialist countries during that winter, there was only very limited unemployment in West Germany (200,000-250,000 on the average). And there was also a palpable increase in the real income of the working class during those years.

The workers thus had relearned how to struggle, but they did so only under conditions of economic boom. The leadership that began to crystallize in such a situation had experiences limited to this type of struggle. And above all, this leadership was still tightly linked to the trade-union bureaucracy, which, during the period 1970-74, had succeeded in maintaining control over the workers struggles thanks to an active trade-union policy. (The 1973 wildcat strikes were an exception to this rule.) So long as the trade-union bureaucracy still had some margin for maneuver, that is, so long as the Social Democratic government accorded the bureaucracy this margin, the problem of a conflict between the new leadership of workers struggles at the rank-and-file level and the trade-union bureaucracy could not immediately come to the surface.

With the beginning of the international economic recession and the outbreak of a more serious crisis in West Germany itself, this period came to an end. The employers laid down the rules to be followed in overcoming the recession. The SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands — Social Democratic party of Germany) accepted these rules and transmitted them to the trade-union leadership, itself closely linked to the SPD. The public service strike of 1974 and the manner in which then Chancellor Willy Brandt intervened indicated this clearly and publicly. The turn was too sharp, however, and trade-union struggles broke out nonetheless and even won victory. But this was the final point of the whole 1969-74 phase.

From that time on, the trade-union leadership capitulated before the SPD government. The working class was drawn into the whirlpool of massive unemployment — and with no organized response. The leadership of the struggles, which had crystallized on the factory level and among middle trade-union cadres, was disarmed in face of this new situation. Hence, there was a prolonged halt in workers struggles.

It would nonetheless be erroneous to believe that the period from 1974 to the beginning of 1976 meant that the development of new leaderships at the factory level and the assimilation of new experiences had also been halted. Ferment continued under the surface. In some places important changes were heralded, the occupation of a factory in Erwitte in the state of Westphalia being the clearest sign of this. In certain cases this subterranean evolution led to ferment within factories and trade unions on the brink of open struggles (DVA in Stuttgart; Audi/NSU in Neckarsulm; VFW in Speyer). But in general the working class was not prepared to break out of the trade-union framework. Because of the weakness of any alternative leadership, the workers were also unable to risk an open struggle. And precisely such an open struggle would have been necessary in order to

overcome the alliance between the trade-union bureaucracy and the government, an alliance under Social Democratic leadership.

1966-67 and 1976: a comparison

The rapidity with which the working class responded when the recession ended in 1976 and the comparison with the reactions of the workers to the crisis of 1966-67 enable us to detail the changes that have occurred in the combativity and consciousness of the West German workers.

The 1966-67 crisis ended for the employers at the beginning of 1967. A comparison in purely economic terms would permit the identification of February 1976 with February 1967. But the wage agreements for 1967 and 1968 remained very low, in part linked to contracts of particularly long duration. Simultaneously, there was a boom of capitalist profits that could no longer be hidden. But it was only in September 1969 that the working class responded in the form of a wave of wildcat strikes. These strikes undoubtedly were of exceptionally great political importance, but in terms of the number of fighters involved, they represented only a fraction of the mobilizations of the spring of 1976.

This year things went much differently. Scarcely was the crisis of capitalist profits over and scarcely had the figures for predicted economic growth for 1976 been published, but the struggles broke out. Moreover, as long ago as autumn 1975 a broad layer of trade unionists affirmed that a "second helping" would be needed for those sectors of the working class that had been forced to conclude their negotiations too early and at too low a level, for they had to be satisfied also.

It must be recognized that from their own point of view the capitalists were not wrong when they complained that this threatened to put the screws on profits, even if this is in contradiction with the "left Keynesian" theory that exercises some influence in West German trade-union milieus.

What made the employers uneasy was not so much the absolute figures on the increases in nominal wages as the fact that the workers had been able to win those increases. What bothered them was above all the fact that the struggles had started up immediately. For the West German capitalists, this represents a negative sign for the coming stage of interimperialist competition on the world market. The employers had counted very heavily on this new stage. They wanted a new rise of exports of both commodities and capital, both to be made possible by the reduction of the real wages of the West German workers and by a very low rate of inflation compared with the rate prevailing in the countries that are West German imperialism's major competitors. But the workers struggles that broke out again right at the beginning of the economic upturn and the prospects that may be traced out by such a dynamic threaten to place a question mark over the capitalist predictions, or at least to render them problematical.

The trade-union bureaucracy

The upturn in struggles in West Germany was initiated by the trade-union bureaucracy, first of all by the metalworkers union. In this case, the leadership of the union around Loderer was opposed to a combative line during the wage negotiations. But such a line was imposed by the regional bureaucracy under Steinkühler (in Baden-Württemberg) and by the rank-and-file mobilization that followed. To be sure, superficial observers with short memories would be tempted to hail the panegyrics of the trade-union leaders after the token strikes of the metalworkers and the strikes of the printing workers. Weren't they sly to wait for the end of the crisis and then to trigger off struggles as soon as the crisis ended? Such a judgment would be erroneous. This becomes clear precisely on the basis of an analysis of what has really happened so far this year.

It is correct, on the other hand, to stress that within the working class and among its leading cadres on the factory level, the experience of the economic crisis has been assimilated and that in certain places this has led to consciousness of the fact that struggle can be waged, albeit in different forms and for different goals, even during a period of crisis. It is likewise correct to note that for broad layers of the working class the end of the economic crisis has been the signal that the pause that had been imposed on them is over.

The trade-union bureaucracy has followed this evolution closely. It has constantly measured the pulse of the working class, although not necessarily with noble intentions. To this it must be added that the trade-union leadership drew its own conclusions from the wildcat strikes of 1969 and that it does not want to live through a second experience of struggles breaking out beyond their control in such a manner that the leaders are forced to spend long years regaining the lost confidence of the workers, as happened after 1969.

Obviously, it would be an exaggeration to claim that the trade-union bureaucracy as a whole had grasped this new situation. Such an interpretation would imply a static view of the trade-union bureaucracy. There were only parts of the leadership that understood the danger of continuing the practice of signing wage contracts that meant reductions in real wages under conditions of the end of the crisis and the beginning of an upturn. This applies to the regional leadership of IG Metall (the metalworkers union) in Baden-Württemberg, which is led by Steinkühler, and to the national leadership of IG Druck und Papier (the printing and publishing workers union). It is difficult to believe that it was Mahlein, the official leader of the printers union, notorious for his repressive attitude within the union, who really represented this coming to consciousness. In fact, while he appeared as an individual during the contract negotiations, he occupied a purely symbolic position, even within the leadership of his own union. The decisive influence toward a combative attitude within the

leadership of IG Druck und Papier was exercised by Hensche, editor-in-chief of the union newspaper. In fact, the well-informed sections of the bourgeois press attacked him as the "hidden orchestra conductor" of the agitation in the book publishing industry.

This reflects an interesting evolution within the trade-union bureaucracy, an evolution that cannot yet be evaluated definitively. In both cases in which a tough confrontation occurred between the unions and the employers during the spring of 1976:

* A part of the trade-union bureaucracy lined up firmly behind the policy of the SPD-led government. This section of the bureaucracy was notably represented by Loderer, the head of IG Metall, and in part also by the group based around Mahlein in the IG Druck und Papier leadership. This faction either came out against the struggle openly (Loderer) or adopted a clearly vacillating attitude (Mahlein);

* Another part of the union bureaucracy, in all cases under the influence of "left intellectuals," either cleverly reflected the rank-and-file pressure (Hensche) or even anticipated it (Steinkühler). Hence, this faction initiated tough struggles that led them to the brink of conflict with the government and, at least in the case of the printers, clearly went beyond the maximum wage increases that had been agreed to by the employers and the government.

One must be very cautious about this evolution. It is not a matter of differences or of a splintering of the trade-union bureaucracy. The pressure of the rank and file is still too weak to provoke such differences. It could, it is true, be a matter of precursors of a process of differentiation within the bureaucracy. The different lines proposed in the wage negotiations by Loderer and Mahlein on the one hand and Hensche and Steinkühler on the other hand reflect the twofold character of the union bureaucracy: linked to the bourgeois state on the one hand and to the rank and file workers on the other hand. Steinkühler and Hensche acted very clearly in the interests of the union bureaucracy as a whole, perhaps even more so than Loderer himself. They better understood the danger the massive attack of the employers against the working class can represent even for the unions themselves. They foresaw better than Loderer that a capitulation of the trade-union leaders to the employers could once again provoke a loss of control over the workers.

The printing workers struggle

"We discussed with all the great (!) trade-union leaders before the conclusion of the wage contracts, but not with the little (!) printers' union of Mahlein," declared Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, who was irritated when the printers strike broke out. Leaving aside the arrogance expressed in these words, Schmidt's interpretation is profoundly "idealist." It reduces the problem of the printers strike to the question of whether there was a tête-à-tête between Schmidt and Mahlein or not. The

development of the strike, however, indicates to what extent the personality of Mahlein as president of the union had little to do with the conduct of the fight. In the final analysis, it was the rank and file that drove the struggle forward.

The struggle passed through several phases, which sowed some confusion among uninitiated observers. This is explained above all by the hesitant attitude of the union leadership, especially Mahlein.

1. First of all, there was a referendum on the proposals of the employers. Nearly 90 percent of the union members rejected these proposals and came out for measures of struggle.

2. The union then called a strike in some key companies including some 15,000 workers. Four hours later (!), the employers responded with a national lock-out of all the 140,000 workers in the printing and paper industry.

3. After four days of strike and lockout, the union leaders and the employers came to an agreement to halt all measures of combat (that is, stop both the strike and the lockout) and to take up negotiations again. The rank-and-file workers rebelled against this rotten compromise.

4. Two days later, the union called a national strike, despite the fact that the difference between the employers' offer and the official wage demand of the union leadership had in the meantime narrowed to 0.2 percent.

5. Five days later, the union again went back to a partial strike in the key companies. The justification for this was that the strike fund was insufficient to finance a total strike. Once again, a section of the rank and file rebelled. In northern Germany, the total strike continued.

6. Two days later, on May 13, the union leadership concluded the agreement that entails an increase of 6.6 percent, if account is taken of the indirect benefits. The date of the referendum to determine whether this was acceptable or not was set for six days later, and the workers were called upon to return to work immediately.

Two conclusions may be drawn from the zigzags of the struggle in the printing industry.

The first concerns the attitude of the employers. They called for a lockout of all workers immediately after the proclamation of the partial strike on April 29. They thus made their own contribution to radicalizing the struggle. Their plan failed. But it was not a plan of desperados. It had a precise aim. On the one hand, it was necessary to erect a backstop to wage increments beyond what the employers considered acceptable in the framework of their basic plan to increase profits. The taken strikes of the 400,000 metalworkers had already won an increase (6 percent) that slightly surpassed this limit. On the other hand, it was necessary to give a clear warning to the union bureaucracy as a whole in order to curb excessive hopes concerning a "second helping" of wage increases during the autumn of 1976.



In this sense, it was not the industrialists of the printing sector itself who aggravated the conflict. It was the personal intervention of Schleyer, head of the employers' association, who pressured the industrialists of this sector to show maximum firmness. The violence of the employers' reaction clearly indicates how important it remains for the West German capitalists to limit any new wage increases during autumn 1976.

It must be added that the employers in West Germany have traditionally resorted to the lockout much more rapidly than their colleagues of the neighboring capitalist countries (in which the lockout is often illegal). This weapon was previously used in the metal industry in 1963 and 1971. It was used this time in the printing industry. More than any other "legal" weapon of the employers, the lockout confirms that there is a small class of owners who hold a monopoly of access to the means of production and defend this monopoly tooth and nail.

The second conclusion concerns the relationship between the union bureaucracy and the rank and file. In an exemplary manner, the strike in the printshops showed the difficulty met by the bureaucracy in conserving control over the rank and file during a tough union struggle. During the phases of "halting the strike" and of "transition from the total strike to the partial strike" there were many open conflicts, in the course of which the union bureaucracy had to yield rapidly most of the time.

The result of the May 18 referendum reflected these difficulties met by the union leadership. Only 55 percent of the membership accepted the content of the final agreement reached with the employers. And even more important, the majority of the workers of the big companies, the companies in which combativity had been very pronounced, rejected the final accord and voted to continue the struggle.

But these conflicts were only one of the aspects of the relations between the leadership and the ranks. The other aspect is equally significant: There was no emergence of organizational forms outside union control. All the struggles in all phases of the conflict unfolded within the narrow framework of the unions. One sentence that appeared in the official strike newspaper of IG Druck und Papier is extremely significant in this regard: "Monday, when the central leadership had decided to interrupt the strike, it was often necessary to wait for hours before the striking and locked-out comrades were willing to go back to work. 'The comrades cried,' reported a desperate shop steward in one plant." Translated into clear language, this means: The workers acceded to the instructions of the union leadership, but they did so with grit teeth.

It is an important characteristic of the West German working class that it chooses insofar as possible to struggle with the aid of the trade-union organizations and that it tries to avoid struggles not sanctioned by the unions (wildcat strikes), especially after the negative experiences of 1973. The basis of this behavior must be sought above all in the weakness of the workers' leaderships and of the elements favorable to determined class struggle at the factory level. The high degree of trade-union organization, higher than in most of the other big capitalist countries of West Europe, also contributes to this.

The experiences of the printers strike are extremely important. Although it was a question of a struggle organized on the trade-union level, which is "legal" even from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie, in the course of the struggle there were violent physical confrontations between the strikers and the police. In several cities (notably West Berlin, Frankfurt, Stuttgart, and Reutlingen), the police intervened with clubs against strike pickets and assemblies of strikers. The aim of these police interventions was most often to make possible the appearance and distribution of bourgeois newspapers or to club open the way for trucks loaded with papers produced by strikebreakers. Often it was only necessary for a strong police contingent to arrive on the scene and form up into ranks in a threatening manner for the same result to occur. Since the trade-union leaderships in all cases called upon the strikers not to resist the police, the pickets often remained passive.

The massive intervention of the West German police in this strike, usually with helmets, clubs, sticks, and so on, deeply impressed the printing workers. Up to now, this sort of open state repression has been used only against "anarchists," the far left, or, in the worst of cases, wildcat strikers. The attempts of the left parties to explain that all this repression was in fact directed against the workers movement as a whole remained abstract for the broader masses of workers. The experience of the printers strike has now provoked clear fissures in the ideology that presents the police as the "friend and helper" even of the working class.

A second important experience for a part of the strikers was the solidarity of other sectors of the working class. On the whole, this solidarity remained at the level of resolutions adopted in factories and various trade-union organs. But in some cases there was direct support to the strike (in the Stuttgart area, for example). This is especially important in that the leadership of the DGB (the national trade-union federation) did all it could to prevent such practical solidarity.

A third important experience of the printers strike was the punctual collaboration between the strikers on the one hand and the students and other non-proletarian sectors on the other hand. In various cases, for example the Mercator printshop in West Berlin, strike pickets were composed of both workers and students. In Berlin there was even a massive confrontation between a mass of printing workers and students against the police. Similar incidents took place in Reutlingen in southern Germany.

It is important to insist on the fact that with a few exceptions (Kiel in 1969 and Merck-Darmstadt in 1971), there has never been such a massive intervention of students in a strike, an intervention accepted by the workers. The separation of the mobilizations of the students, high-schoolers, and apprentices on the one hand and the struggles of workers on the other hand had been one of the negative characteristics of the upturn in workers struggles in West Germany during the period 1969-73.

A fourth experience of the strike was the effective organization of strike pickets that did not have a purely symbolic character. In some places, for example, flying squads were formed that functioned day and night, and the strike pickets were often involved in physical confrontations. When one knows of the restorationist "social law" that prevails in the Federal Republic of Germany (there are, for example, court decisions declaring the formation of chains of strike pickets illegal), one can understand the importance of these experiences.

The strike's political character

Schleyer, chief of the employers, declared in regard to the printing strike: "Manifestly, it is not a question of wage increases, but a conflict of a political character." (Der Spiegel, No.20-21, 1976.) He is right. From the purely quantitative standpoint, the balance-sheet for the printing and paper workers boils down to a clear decline in real wages (and the workers know this; at the beginning of the conflict their own union indicated that at least a 9 percent wage increase would be needed to preserve buying power). It would nevertheless be quite erroneous to measure this strike purely by the material results. Its political character was more important. The strike broke the wage policy called for by the government, its "experts," and the employers. In the final analysis, this is expressed in the desperate

attempts made by both sides. The union clearly tried to break the wage framework (at least once a day Mahlein insisted on the necessity "of there being a 6 before the decimal point"), while the employers tried to hold the nominal wage increase below 6 percent (during the final negotiations, they proposed 5.9 percent several times, plus various supplementary benefits that, taken together, would have brought the package to 6.5 percent; this was rejected by the union).

The fact that the workers broke through the maximum wage increases set by the accord between the government and the employers is undoubtedly the most important success of the printing workers. Another factor also gives this strike a very great political importance. The printing workers showed that it is possible to successfully struggle under conditions of economic crisis, even when one has to confront an alliance of all the bosses, the government, and "public opinion" (apparently indignant over the "attack on freedom of the press"). The fact is that the printing workers were strongly isolated. The trade unions of other industrial branches did not declare themselves prepared to support the printers financially with the money in their strike funds. On several occasions Mahlein repeated that the international printers union was behind the strike, but no mention was made of aid from the DGB.

It may be supposed that the West German working class understood the signal to struggle from the printing workers. The bureaucracy certainly has. It has already begun to pour water onto the fire. "One must not talk so much about a hot autumn in such a way as to provoke in advance what will be regretted later," warned Loderer, chief of IG Metall, an allusion to the hot autumn of 1969, the wave of wildcat strikes.

The uneasiness is also great within the Social Democracy. Nothing is more disagreeable for Helmut Schmidt than an important workers struggle on the eve of legislative elections. That would damage his "image" before the employers, the image of the man who brought profits out of the impasse by lowering real wages, while still remaining capable of maintaining the workers and the unions in a passive attitude. Some bourgeois newspapers reported immediately after the printing strike that Schmidt was now trying to convince the employers to voluntarily grant a new wage increase after the summer in order to avert struggles that are now probable.

Whatever the maneuvers of the trade-union bureaucracy and the Social Democratic leadership, the printers strike constitutes a turn after two years of halt in class struggles in West Germany. Other parts of the working class will certainly interpret this strike as a sign that struggle is possible and that it can lead to success even under conditions of economic crisis and under unfavorable initial conditions. After two years of reductions in real wages, the slogan for the coming struggles must be: "We must make up the ground we have lost because of the crisis."

May 22, 1976

Portugal

We are publishing below the text of the political accord reached by the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League) and the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers party) on the basis of which the two revolutionary Marxist organizations are fielding a common candidate in the presidential elections, scheduled to take place on June 27. This document is important in more than one respect. First, it constitutes a clear political basis for the intervention of revolutionary militants in the Portuguese situation after the victory of the workers parties and organizations in the recent legislative elections. (See INPRECOR, No. 51, May 13, 1976.) It also testifies to the possibility of a rapid unification of all those forces in Portugal claiming allegiance to Trotskyism. The common activity and orientation of the LCI and the PRT during the electoral campaign around a candidate of workers' unity and independence of the capitalists and generals supported by the reformist leaderships is thus an important step forward toward the construction of a strong Portuguese section of the Fourth International.

The candidate supported by the LCI and the PRT is Arlete Vieira da Silva, a woman, a worker, a revolutionary. She was born in 1940. A militant of the Communist party since the age of sixteen, she worked under underground conditions for many years and was one of the key cadres of the CP in its work in the Lisbon industrial belt, where she organized several strikes. This unceasing activity, especially after her expulsion from her teaching job in 1965, cost her five long terms in the jails of the PIDE, the Salazarist political police. The last sentence was for five years, during which she was subjected to torture. She was not allowed to sleep and was repeatedly beaten with clubs; the traces can still be seen on her broken wrists. She emerged from this hell without having talked. The CP, after sending her to various cadre schools in the USSR and Prague, assigned her to her former tasks. Arlete resigned from these responsibilities after April 24, 1974, and then left the CP at the end of the same year. "How could I accept seeing the party fight against strikes and sit down at the same table with Spínola and Sá Carneiro?" she explained.

A WORKERS CANDIDATE



AGAINST THE CAPITALISTS AND GENERALS

On April 25, 1976, the Portuguese workers voted massively for the workers parties and organizations, especially the Socialist party and the Communist party.

In maintaining the bourgeois parties in the minority position in which they already find themselves in the Constituent Assembly, the women and men of the toiling classes clearly demonstrated their will to defend and extend the conquests they have won during these two years of the revolutionary process in Portugal. They thus used the limited instrument provided them by the elections — the ballot box — to say No to the fascist terror of the hangmen of the PIDE, No to capitalist co-optation, No to the tutelage of the generals, No to repression of the workers, No to restrictions on their democratic rights.

The results of the elections to the Assembleia da República (Assembly of the Republic, the legislative assembly) constitute a victory for the laboring masses, two years after the fall of the dictatorship. In entrusting the majority of their votes to the two big workers parties, in which they recognize their interests, the workers also clearly pointed to the road to follow in order to extend this victory into the domain of the presidential elections: The presentation of a united SP-CP candidate.

Whatever their disagreements with the orientation of these two parties, all toilers, all worker militants, would support such a candidate, for in the present phase of development of the class struggle, it would be the best concrete expression of the unity of the workers and the independence of the workers movement from political combinations with the representatives of the bourgeoisie, whether civilian or military.

But the capitalists and the officers, with the active or passive complicity of the leaderships of the SP and the CP, are trying to rob the Portuguese workers of the fruits of their victory of April 25, 1976. The workers, whether they are Socialists, Communists, members of other currents of the workers movement, or belong to no party at all, are now witnessing the lamentable spectacle of their parties, which won the majority in these elections, being hitched to the wagon of a general whose past and present, whose statements and actions, constitute the most complete profession of faith in the capitalist order. Were the millions of men and women who voted for the workers parties, and above all for the SP and CP, placing their trust in Ramalho Eanes, Pinheiro de Azevedo, or Costa Gomes in order to guarantee a future without exploitation and oppression? The leaders of the SP and CP know very well that this is not the case, and it is for this very reason that they are carrying out their maneuvers in the corridors of the government and especially in the Council of the Revolution. Nevertheless, we can have no doubt about the objective of these maneuvers. The leaders of the SP and the CP want to use the confidence they still enjoy in the eyes of the majority of the workers to hand that confidence over to a general who will certainly not be long in using it against the aspirations of the working masses.

This policy, which the LCI and the PRT combatted during the legislative elections, represents a grave threat to the independence of the workers and to the future of their struggles. The LCI and the PRT address themselves to all the Portuguese workers, to all the organizations of the workers movement, and particularly to the SP and the CP, calling upon them to present a united workers candidate in the presidential elections. This is absolutely necessary in order that the workers, by voting for their own candidate, may continue to express the will they exhibited on April 25, 1976, when they elected a left majority to the legislative assembly. And in spite of their probable differences with the platform of such a candidacy, the LCI and the PRT would add their votes to those of millions of workers, who would thus assure the victory of this candidate against all bourgeois adversaries, whether in or out of uniform.

In presenting their candidate right now, the LCI and the PRT have no intention of blocking this road, but on the contrary of holding it open until the last minute. The presence of a worker candidate constitutes a guarantee from the LCI and the PRT that in the absence of a candidate presented by the SP or the CP — or, better still, by both parties together — they will be able to vote for a workers candidate not linked to the bourgeois parties, the state apparatus, or the military hierarchy.

The two organizations are prepared to discuss the platform of this candidacy, or any other platform that may be presented, with all the forces of the workers movement. But the LCI and the PRT consider the following points, upheld by their joint candidate, as minimum conditions for guaranteeing class independence from the bourgeoisie and for making an effective contribu-

tion to strengthening the indispensable unity of the workers:

a) The candidate calls for the establishment of a government representing the will of the workers as expressed in the elections to the Assembleia da República. In voting for the SP and the CP the mass of Portuguese workers renewed their support for the two majority parties of the working class and their support to the formation of a government without capitalists or generals.

With this objective in mind, the candidate pledges that in the event of his or her election, he or she will charge Mario Soares, secretary general of the SP, or another Socialist leader chosen by the SP, to form a government representing the majority will of the workers, that is, a government without capitalists or generals, based on the left parliamentary majority and on SP-CP unity in the struggle and in the mobilization of the workers. In taking this position, the candidate does not agree with the programs of the SP and the CP, but on the contrary affirms the determination, in spite of the political differences, to respect the will of the workers as expressed in the 53% of the vote that went to these two parties.

b) Respect for the will of the workers implies breaking with all compromises with the bourgeoisie. Through their votes for the workers parties, the workers voted against class collaboration with the bourgeoisie, its parties, and its civilian and military institutions. In



Eanes

calling upon the SP and the CP to break with collaboration with the bourgeoisie and to annul the anti-worker pact signed by the Council of the Revolution and the major bourgeois and workers parties, the candidate pledges to struggle so that the government, like the left majority in the Assembleia da República, may govern and legislate freely, independent of all the conditions and obligations the pact imposes on the government and on this majority because of the exceptional powers conferred upon the Council of the Revolution and the president of the republic.

c) The candidate will intransigently defend the necessity of the unity of the workers movement and its organizations against the common enemy of the toilers: the bourgeoisie, civilian and military. During the campaign, the candidate will defend the necessity of the workers united front in which the SP and the CP will have the greatest responsibilities, in the struggles, in the Assembly, and in the government.

The candidate will tell the Socialist and Communist workers that only a break by the SP and the CP with the bourgeoisie and the anti-worker pact, only the unity of their organizations, only a government of their majority parties based on the united mobilization of the workers can open the way to allowing the workers to respond to the present capitalist crisis.

In calling for an SP-CP government representing the great mass of workers through their two majority parties, the candidate will explain that such a solution can be an important step forward on the road to the unity and independence of the working class. The presence of ministers of the CP, however, or of those of the SP, does not in itself guarantee the anticapitalist character of the government. But at least it makes the leadership of the CP and of the SP assume their joint responsibilities to the workers.

It is for this reason that in the event of the formation of an SP government, the candidate will respond to the SP leadership's ambition to "govern alone" by challenging the SP to form a government without capitalists or generals.

In any event, the formation of such a government would have to respond to an essential condition: that the SP, as well as the CP, break with the pact between the Council of the Revolution and the parties and that instead of the collaboration it has practiced with bourgeois forces up to now, the SP work for the unity of the workers and their organizations, that is, an SP-CP accord to defend the interests of the laboring masses.

d) But the emancipation of the workers must be the work of the workers themselves. Their liberation from exploitation and oppression depends not on a good president of the republic, but rather on their daily battle against capital and its state, parties, and generals.

The workers of the cities and the countryside themselves must now work out the immediate demands that must

be satisfied in order to guarantee their standard of living in face of the crisis of capitalism. The demands put forward in many trade-union and workers' commission platforms must lead to the elaboration of an emergency plan of struggle for all the workers.

These measures include the following, among others:

- * Immediate wage increases of 2,000 escudos a month for all;

- * Minimum wage of 6,000 escudos a month;
- * Against the rising cost of living, for a sliding scale of wages; against unemployment, for the sharing of all available work among all able-bodied workers;

- * Prohibition of any layoffs and application of a plan of public works;

- * Against the attempts to impose the authority of the employers in the factories and of the landlords in the countryside, defense and generalization of nationalizations, workers control, and agrarian reform;

- * Against militarist discipline, democratic rights for soldiers;

- * Against terrorist attacks on the organizations of the workers, for workers self-defense;

- * Against the exploitation and oppression of women:

- equal pay for equal work,

- liberation of women from household tasks: for

- child-care centers, laundromats, and canteens subsidized by the state,

- free contraception and abortion on demand.

e) The candidate will support the convocation of a democratic congress of all the trade unions to discuss and democratically elaborate this plan of struggle. Beyond this, the congress must devote itself, within the framework of free discussion among all the tendencies of the workers movement, to the transformation of the Intersindical (the trade-union federation) into a genuine united and democratic trade union of all the workers. Moreover, the congress must demand that the government take responsibility for the application of this plan of struggle discussed and voted on by the workers.

f) Concurrently, the candidate will defend the necessity for the coordination and centralization of the workers commissions — regionally, by industrial branch, and nationally. These are indispensable conditions for the masses' extending their anticapitalist mobilization, coordinating and deepening their experiences in workers control and self-defense and, through their own organs of power, overthrowing the bourgeois state and initiating socialist management of society, with socialist planning of the economy.

In presenting their common candidate in the presidential elections, the LCI and PRT are conscious that they are taking a step forward in their common activity, a step that must lead these two organizations as rapidly as possible to the unification of their forces in order to build the Portuguese section of the Fourth International.

Lisbon, May 9, 1976

Liga Comunista Internacionalista

Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores

SPAIN



THE REFERENDUM THAT NEVER WAS

by M. SAURA



The political impotence of the first government of the Francoist monarchy is decidedly evident. Its activity is subject to implacable laws that determine the following scenario: great mass mobilization; savage repression by the police; announcement of "acceleration" of the program of reforms; publication of the corresponding draft laws; rejection of these draft laws with rare unanimity on the part of all the political sectors of the country, including the political groups linked to the ministries in office; outbreak of government crisis. Then the cycle starts again. In reality, these implacable laws are clear and well known: Their origins lie in the relationship of forces between the bourgeoisie and proletariat that now exists in the country, the real battering ram that has wrecked the Francoist "reform."

The referendum has suffered the same fate as the projects that preceded it. (See INPRECOR, Nos. 50, April 29, and 51, May 13, for descriptions of the referendum on "constitutional reform.") What aggravates the situation is that before the referendum the present government still retained the possibility of resorting precisely to a referendum as a magic formula capable of overcoming the obvious crisis of the Francoist "reform." But since the concrete content of the referendum was announced, there are no longer even any magic formulas. In its present form, this referendum is a beautiful lead lifebuoy for the drowning Francoist monarchy. Thus, the king had to enter the scene.

All the king's men

The king had a specific role to play in the project of the reform of Francoism. He was supposed to "represent" power but not "exercise" it. He was supposed to stand apart from the concrete political decisions, as the only way to obtain—if not some authority at least a minimum of consensus among all the bourgeois political factions. Only the king could occupy the center position in a new balance of interbourgeois forces, the creation of which was the government's task. But the government was a direct product of the "old" balance of forces. It corresponded to the "era of Franco" and was intrinsically incapable of creating a new balance. All its projects were the result of an "inter-Francoist" pact and not of an "interbourgeois" pact. The king thus had to begin to act as a "Bonaparte" if he wanted to hang on. And the least one can say is that up to now he has not run into the slightest obstacle from the "opposition."

In fact, some representative figures of the "democratic opposition" (Gil Robles of the Christian Democratic right, García López of the Social Democratic right, Ollero of the liberal monarchists, etc.) have had audiences with the king and have emerged from the palace like medieval courtesans recounting marvels about the "profound love for democracy" evidenced by the king. Even more significant audiences have been announced for the future. Tierno Galván (Socialist left) has indicated that he is "open" to contact with the king. Felipe González of the Partido Socialista Obrero Español

(PSOE — Spanish Socialist Workers party, the Social Democracy) affirmed only a few days ago that he would refuse all such contact so long as four leaders of the Coordinación Democrática (Democratic Coordination) remained in prison; but just today Enrique Múgica, number two man in the PSOE and top representative of its right wing, told the press that if a proposal for an audience with the king was forthcoming, "the PSOE, for its part, would not shun this contact, just as it would not shun any other contact."

It may be said that this political operation does not suffer from lack of intelligence. In an editorial in the May 5 *Mundo Obrero* significantly entitled "Juan Carlos's Responsibility," Santiago Carrillo, head of the Communist party, summed up his sentiments in an elegant formula: "Either the king makes a courageous gesture and breaks with the bunker (the hard-line Francoists) from the inside, or else he continues to be part of it, and in that case he runs the risk of suffering the same fate." This "blank check" to the king, translated into formally threatening language, is the best possible summary of the "negotiated break" (*ruptura pactada*).

It is said that the king asked Gil Robles whether the Communist party would be inclined to accept a "negotiated" government in which the CP itself would not be present. It is also said that Gil Robles replied that the CP would accept it but that he himself would not. It is possible that this conversation is fictitious, but it would not be extraordinary if it were genuine. The bourgeoisie's need to "anticipate" the action of the mass movement; the political capitulation of the "democratic" bourgeoisie and the reformist workers parties; the explosive character of the situation in the country when every day brings the threat of new "Vitorias" (Montejurra, Aranjuez*); the growing tension within the Francoist apparatus, which has undoubtedly been aggravated by the government's ban on the "homage to Franco" demonstration projected by the bunker; the paralysis of the government, the final product of which is precisely the referendum; and finally, above all, the growing activity of the masses as demonstrated by the May 1 actions, by the recent demonstration in Bilbao for amnesty, by the metalworkers struggles in Madrid and Barcelona, by the chemical workers struggle in Madrid, by the struggles arising in the telephone system, health, and education, and by the huge turnout for cultural events laden with political content, such as the 60,000 people at the recital of the Iberian people in Madrid, the 15,000 at the Lluís Llach recital in Barcelona — all these things add up to an intolerable situation. The bourgeoisie cannot and does not hope to maintain the entire workers movement in conditions of illegality. Its only hope is to tightly control the so-called transition. And Santiago Carrillo still speaks of "courageous gestures"! The courage is in the factories, the workshops, and the streets. The political projects of the bourgeoisie and its reformist allies are acts of fear.

*An assembly of 7,000 members of neighborhood associations was repressed by the rifle butts of the Guardia Civil; 200 were hurt, about 40 arrested.

What is requested of the king is that he assume this fear, that he act like those who fear the mass movement more than they fear the bunker. Those are the ones who will guarantee the "transition."

Crystal democracy

And they are certainly inclined to guarantee it. In a colloquium on "the economic alternatives of the opposition" José Sandoval, spokesman of the Communist party, said things like this: "For the Communist party it is necessary to aid, very tactfully, in the stage of transition that would be opened with a provisional government during a constituent period. During this period the CP rejects any sort of nationalization, for the important thing is the consolidation of democracy and the averting of the imbalances of a premature structural change. During the initial stages of the consolidation of democracy we must not reach objectives that are unacceptable to the democratic right. Without a political pact there can be no talk of a social pact. In an atmosphere of social pact, which this government is not helping to create, there would be a way out of the crisis. Without the participation of big capital it would be very difficult to guarantee the climate of transition."

At least it cannot be said that the CP is concealing its objectives. And it is not only the CP that wants to work sensitively, in a "non-extremist" manner, toward "transition." (In the current language of the opposition, this word is used in place of *ruptura pactada*, which some consider an excessively radical formula.) Thus, the secretary general of the Movimiento Comunista (MC — Communist Movement) — a Maoist group which in the course of its latest lurch to the right has initiated a maneuver aimed at getting closer to the Federation of Socialist Parties, a "modernist" Socialist current one of whose components, the Socialist Convergence of Catalonia, has some political influence — declared several weeks ago: "The way things are going, and as long as there is no pressure 'from below' forcing it, I doubt very much that there will be a fiscal reform of any coherence and daring during the transitional period, which will last several months, and I think it will be difficult, unless we achieve a very large increase in resources, for the state's economic policy to be substantially different from the present one. This is the impression I get when I look at the political forces of the Junta and the Convergencia" (the two bodies that have now fused into the Coordinación Democrática). And finally, the Partido del Trabajo (Labor party) declared: "In an initial phase nationalizations can represent an erroneous criterion. It would first be necessary to know the nature of the state in order thus to delimit the political implications of nationalization. As long as the regime does not correspond to a democratic will, these nationalizations must be postponed. In face of the transition, there is no sense in talking about nationalizations."

The "pessimism" with which these organizations approach the "transition" in the realm of economics has a coher-

ent and complementary logic on the political terrain. The "radical" measures are to be held in reserve for "after" this "period that will last for months," during which the very fragile "crystal democracy" resulting from the royal "act of valor" will be protected by the weavers of the "social pact."

The workers have their own plans

All these gentlemen are dividing a pie that has not yet been baked. It is necessary to understand their projects in order to get an idea of the crisis that exists in the country. To get an idea, for example, of how it is that the referendum, announced with such fanfare only a few weeks ago, appears to have gone up in smoke. Important sectors of the government, as well as the king himself, considered the referendum unviable without what Areilza called a "national pact," some sort of agreement with the "opposition" that could count at least on the neutrality of the Communist party.

But the real nub of the problem lies in whether this very "national pact" has any possibility of assuring the "iron control" over the transition to which we referred earlier. Once again, the answer to this question is No. To think that the legalization of the entire Spanish

workers movement will be able to be controlled by the Spanish bourgeoisie, even with the determined collaboration of the reformists; to think that the workers will accept a "social pact" with a capitalist system in open crisis (a system for which total economic insolvency at the 1958 level is predicted within two years); to think that the national question will be resolved with a few drops of "autonomy"; to think that the mass movement will tolerate rigid restrictions on the democratic rights it has so painfully conquered (the right to strike, for example); to think that the mass movement will resign itself to the maintenance of the Francoist repressive forces, will consider the army untouchable, will go along with promises for a Constituent Assembly that may never materialize, will tolerate that "extremists" who refuse to accept the limits of puppet democracy are sent back to prison, will remain passive in face of fascist provocations (how many pistols like those that were fired in Montejuorra have been distributed throughout the country?); to think all this is to believe in pure illusion. The workers have their own plans. And the orientation that best corresponds to the strengthening and development of these plans is the general strike against the Francoist monarchy. In this we place our trust and for this we struggle.

May 18, 1976

Comrade Mandel Speaks in Madrid

At the invitation of the economics and sociology departments of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, comrade Ernest Mandel, member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, held two public conferences in Madrid May 5 and 6, 1976.

On May 5 at the department of economic sciences, he analyzed the place of the generalized recession of the international capitalist economy in postwar history before an audience of 1,500-2,000 people; the meeting was held about fifteen kilometers from Madrid. The following day, the auditorium of the sociology department was filled to overflowing by 4,000-5,000 people. Many people stood in the corridors, and many had to leave because they could not find space.

In his speech comrade Mandel dealt with the nature of the bourgeois state, the impossibility of using the bourgeois state apparatus to achieve socialism, the necessity for overthrowing the bourgeois state, the importance of the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the identity of the dictatorship of the proletariat with socialist democracy, that is, the exercise of power by democratically elected workers councils within which there would be freedom of action for all parties, representatives of which would be elected by the workers. The passages of the speech opposing reformism and calling upon the workers to prepare the seizure of power, as well as those defending the dictatorship of the proletariat and condemning the Stalinist dictatorship of the bureaucracy and calling for the democracy of workers councils, received enthusiastic ovations from the audience.

The speech was followed by ample discussion, with interventions from striking telephone workers and from a leader of the construction workers who has been laid off. The meeting was punctuated by cheers for the Fourth International, Trotskyism, the workers commissions, amnesty for political prisoners, the workers in struggle in the Spanish state, the struggles of the oppressed nationalities, and workers unity. The police had surrounded the campus, but in view of the huge crowd they refrained from intervening (except to sabotage the loudspeaking system for about half an hour). In their own way, the authorities drew the conclusions of the success of the meeting, which was reported in several daily newspapers and many weeklies: they banned the third meeting comrade Mandel was supposed to have addressed in the Ateneo on May 17.

SPAIN

the neighborhood movement



We are publishing below an extract of a contribution of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria/Euzkadi ta Askatasuna-VI (Revolutionary Communist League/Basque Nation and Freedom-Sixth Congress) to the discussion on the mass movement in the urban centers of the Spanish state. The development of this movement, with tenant associations, neighborhood commissions, and similar phenomena, is one of the notable features of the popular mobilization today.

The characteristics of the process of capitalist industrialization under the Francoist dictatorship, especially since the crisis of the policy of "autarky," engendered, throughout the 1960s and into the 1970s, a growing concentration of the working-class population in the "periphery" of the major urban centers. (Madrid, Barcelona, and Biscay include 26 percent of the total population of the country.) They also created chaos, a consequence of the forms taken by this industrialization and of the capitalists' hunt for maximum profits. Thus, while on the one hand the development of production and the division of labor were creating new needs for the reproduction of labor-power, on the other hand new requirements of capital accumulation were also stimulated, and this gave rise to an intensive utilization of the cities by the bourgeoisie.

Under the Francoist dictatorship, especially because of the links of this dictatorship with speculative real-estate capital, the contradiction between the new needs of the working population (health, housing, education, transport, etc.) and the interests of capital garbed in the cloak of the dictatorship (land speculation, orientation of investments toward the most profitable sectors, which meant the sectors with the lowest costs, lending of priority to private services as opposed to public ones, etc.) has become openly manifest during the past several years. This contradiction has been accompanied by significant tensions among various factions of capital itself, in accordance with the particular interests of these factions and the dictatorship's excessive support to one of them.

Three factors have contributed to raising the specific problems of the neighborhoods to a position of prime importance: First, the plans for the "ordering" of territory in the direct service of private interests (highway construction, buildings), which have tended to destroy the environment as well as cultural and historic

acquisitions. Second, the constant degradation of living conditions in the popular neighborhoods, a consequence of the anarchic character of the process of industrialization, of the massive shift of people of rural origin to the cities; this took the form of the absence of basic social services (even infrastructural ones like electricity, gas, and water) and the proximity of the neighborhoods to dirty or dangerous industries (pollution, atomic power plants, etc.). Third, the constant increase in the level of needs and aspirations of the working population (housing, health, schools, cultural and sports centers). The interests of the ruling class in its "ordering" of the city and the country appear clearly in the combination of these three factors. For capitalism, it is a matter of seeking to reduce the costs of the reproduction of labor-power to the lowest possible level and of endowing itself with instruments of ideological control over the population. The antagonism between these interests and the satisfaction of the rising needs of the working population appears even more sharply in the context of a more general crisis of capitalism.

Thus, the factors mentioned above have had their impact on a given political situation: crisis of the dictatorship, rise of the workers movement, radicalization of specific sectors of the population (youth, unemployed, women, nationalist currents, various cultural activities, etc.). The mass movements that are developing in the neighborhoods and the legal, paralegal, and illegal structures that are now arising are the product of the convergence of this series of factors. These movements are now entering a directly political phase. They are supporting the struggles of the workers and other sectors (like teachers), massively taking up the struggle against repression, and, above all, increasingly denouncing the present municipal councils as institutions controlled by the dictatorship and the capitalists. These

are the most outstanding features of the neighborhood movements. If to this we add the dictatorship's narrow margin for economic "concessions" as a means of partially resolving the most urgent problems of the population (this is a result of the economic situation), then the full gravity of the social crisis of Spanish capitalism appears.

From the protest against pollution by the people of Erandio in 1969 to the present politicization of the Asociaciones de Vecinos (tenant associations) in Madrid and Barcelona, broad sectors of the masses have travelled a long road.

There have been mobilizations for adequate inexpensive housing (which have occurred in the "marginal" neighborhoods—chabolos—as well as in those that depend on the state housing authority). There have been mobilizations for adequate transport (especially in areas like Santo Coloma in Barcelona), against pollution (mobilizations against atomic power plants in Biscay or against the construction of cellulose factories in Orense), against the high cost of living (solidarity between housewives and shopkeepers in Madrid against middlemen, convergence of demands with those of the working class, like "Down with prices, up with wages!"). There have been mobilizations for adequate and free child-care centers and schools (the raising of this theme during the struggle of the teachers is the best example), for medical centers and free, preventive medical care (accidents and scandals around the social security system have provoked massive protests), against the lack of the most elementary infrastructure (lighting, water, traffic lights), for parks, and against partial and regional plans that benefit the speculators, destroy cultural facilities, eliminate zones slated for public services, and destroy the environment and the countryside (the Mediterranean Highway, for example; now there is a plan to build a road through the coastal zone near Coto de Doñana de Huelva).

All these struggles have interlaced with the struggles of youth (for the establishment of cultural and sports centers at state expense, for the institution of permanent polyvalent professional training, against unemployment), women (for adequate social services, centers for sexual information and education, free contraception on demand), the unemployed (for adequate unemployment insurance, sliding scale of hours, public works projects), retirees (against low pensions and for the establishment of adequate recreation centers). These struggles have also linked up with direct struggles against repression (the amnesty campaign) and with the fight against national oppression (for self-determination and autonomy status, for the spread of national or "regional" languages and cultures). In addition, teachers, technicians, and other "middle strata in process of proletarianization" have joined these struggles (contributing their specialized "know-how" to the denunciation of the official "urban policy"). The neighborhood mobilizations have also converged with directly political activities (creation of rank-and-file bodies against the interclass blocs, open debate around the alterna-

tives upheld by various political currents) and are coming to define alternatives counterposed to those of the present municipal councils (the campaign for "democratic" municipal councils).

The structure of this movement varies greatly according to whether we are dealing with a "middle-class" neighborhood, a popular neighborhood, or a "marginal" one (that is, a lumpen one). The structure also depends on whether it is a mainly "residential" community or is directly linked to the factories in the area.

The most general features are as follows:

*In the most combative areas there is a combination of various structures, some directly representative of the movement (tenants assemblies and elected committees), others conducting permanent legal and paralegal activity (tenant associations with commissions within them, youth clubs, etc.), as well as bodies that include the most radical layers of the vanguard ("far-left" neighborhood committees).

*In general, however, except in moments of struggle or in places in which reformist influence and control are weak, the major organizational network of the movement is provided by the tenant associations, and it is within the commissions of these associations that the "class-struggle" current is developing its work.

*In the present political situation, we are beginning to see a relative upturn in "democratic assemblies" and similar bodies, as well as a tendency for the tenant associations to take positions on the local coordinating bodies that support the interclass fronts in the country. The constitution of these "democratic assemblies" can take various forms, from bureaucratic installation to "mass" discussion stimulated by centrist groups that aim at transforming these assemblies into points of support for their tactic of outflanking reformism.

*In backward neighborhoods, or in those in which there is not much mass activity, there is nevertheless a division between reformists (who are dedicated to preparing the emergence of legal bodies) and revolutionaries (who in general hold up the neighborhood commissions as alternatives, sometimes in a sectarian manner).

*In cities in which the mass movement is less advanced but in which the far left holds a strong position the situation can vary and the neighborhood commissions can play a more central role, provided they do not counterpose themselves to the utilization of legal possibilities.

*Likewise, combined with the organization of specific sectors around the neighborhood commissions (women, youth, unemployed, teachers, etc.), there are inter-neighborhood commissions that permit a relatively independent dynamic of development and radicalization.

Whatever the form, the diversity of the existing bodies expresses a growing coordination of distinct sectors at the neighborhood level and a consciousness of the need to go beyond this; in other words, the need to aim at a "citywide" centralization (both vertically and horizontally) and at an alliance with the working class. □

RHODESIA



Smith and Nkomo during talks in Salisbury

The Contradictions of Nationalism

by C. GABRIEL

The situation in Zimbabwe makes it one of the hottest spots in Africa today. INPRECOR has already published a number of articles on this. In order that our readers may more closely follow the events in this country, we are furnishing here, as we did in the case of the Portuguese colonies before April 24, 1974, a brief run down on the nationalist political forces. For the precise unfolding of events up to now, we refer our readers to the previous articles of John Blair.*

Nationalism's first steps

The plan for a Greater Rhodesia had not been new, but toward 1920, when fabulous copper resources were discovered in what was then northern Rhodesia (Zambia today), the Rhodesian colons found an unexpected economic base for a federation whose institutions would

*See especially "Repercussions of the Angolan Civil War," No. 43, February 5, 1976.

cap their right of autonomy from the colonial office and guarantee their supremacy over the African masses. But it was only in 1953 that the Rhodesia-Nyassaland federation saw the light of day. (This federation included the area that now constitutes the states of Rhodesia, called Zimbabwe by the Africans, Zambia, and Malawi, formerly Nyassaland.) Harold Macmillan, British Prime Minister from 1957 to 1962, declared that "the federation was a good idea, but it foundered for two reasons: first, the wind of change that was blowing in Africa with unforeseen force; second, the policy of Huggins (who has since become Lord Malvern) and then of Welensky who acted in such a way that the Federation appeared to the Africans as a symbol of white domination." (The End of the Day, p. 329.) Thus, the "rational" project of British imperialism and the Rhodesian colons quickly clashed with the nationalist movement. At the end of the 1950s most of the Rhodesian political parties were "multiracial" in composition but obviously controlled by whites.

Thus, Joshua Nkomo joined the United Federal party (UFP) of Godfrey Huggins, and Ndabaningi Sithole joined the Central African party (CAP) of Garfield Todd. This was a political expression of the hopes of a section of the colonists that elements of the African urban petty bourgeoisie and intelligentsia could be integrated into the white order as "equal" servants. This set the Rhodesian situation off from those prevailing elsewhere in the region, notably in Angola and South Africa, a fact that was not without consequences for the political trajectory of some indigenous politicians.

Nevertheless, some political figures, like Edison Sithole and Dunduza Chisiza, chose a genuinely nationalist road with the creation of the Youth League. In 1957 these men, along with one Robert Chikerema, the president of the Capricorn Society, which was a "multiracial" creation of pro-British liberalism, organized a boycott of the buses in Salisbury to protest against a fare increase. The boycott was a success, and the Youth League began to grow rapidly, but the hand of white liberalism, Anglicanism, and Fabianism was already on its helm.

On this basis they sought to unify the black movement through a general conference. On September 12, 1957, the date of the "national" holiday of the whites, this conference was held and gave rise to the African National Congress (ANC), with J. Nkomo as president and George Nyandoro, a trade unionist, as secretary. There was nothing revolutionary about the program of this ANC. It proclaimed itself in favor of political equality and advocated following legal channels. In 1960 the ANC adopted the name National Democratic party (NDP). While in northern Rhodesia and Nyassaland the nationalists challenged the federal framework in order to obtain their independence, in southern Rhodesia the men of the NDP instead acted within the constitutional framework and advanced the slogan "one man, one vote," seeking the support of "democratic Great Britain."

The 1953 provisional constitution of the "Rhodesian Federation" expired in 1960. On December 5 of that year a round table conference was held at Lancaster House with the participation of British representatives, Nkomo (from southern Rhodesia), Banda (Nyassaland), and Kenneth Kaunda (northern Rhodesia). By December 12 the conference had reached an impasse, the Africans slamming the door in face of the intransigence of the Rhodesian colons and the old British-imposed pattern of racial discrimination.



Abel Muzorewa

From that point on, Banda and Kaunda negotiated separately for independence for Nyassaland and northern Rhodesia (Zambia), while in the case of southern Rhodesia the British government concocted a new constitution. The Africans were granted fifteen seats in a sixty-five-member parliament. (The black population represents 94% of the total.) The nationalists rejected this. They called for a boycott of parliament and organized their own referendum. But in a referendum held in July 1961 the whites, 77 percent of whom participated, approved the new project by a vote of 41,919 to 21,846. The British government recognized the results of the official referendum and declared the new constitution in effect as of December 6, 1961. This was the British-made color-bar constitution that was to become the constitutional basis of the Smith regime.

Defeated in the institutional framework in which they had placed too much trust, the Africans saw the Rhodesian Front, a far-right party, come to power. Allegedly enlightened imperialist observers believed Nkomo had made a mistake boycotting parliament, for they saw acceptance of the 1961 constitution as allowing for a stage in the democratization of Rhodesia, an alternative to definitively dividing the two communities. It

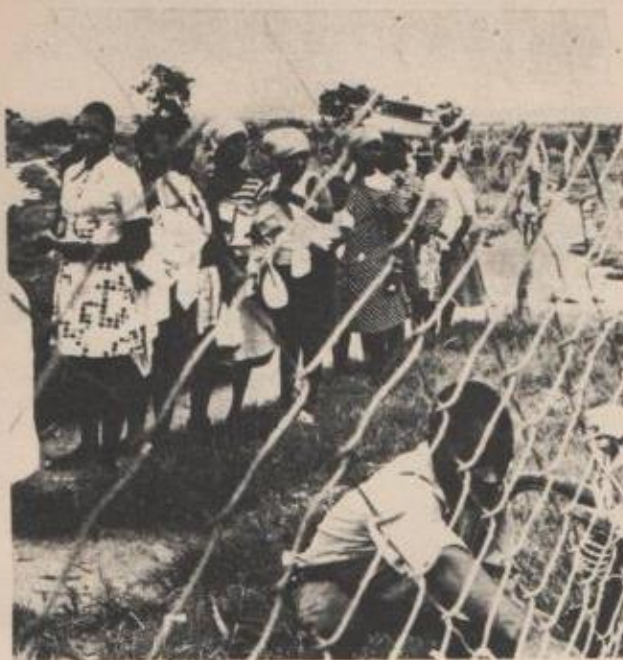
is nonetheless obvious that such a constitution in no way represented a "stage of democratization," but rather set up an institutional impasse that was in fact aimed at getting the Africans to collaborate. Nkomo's "sin" was not an excess of radicalism; he chose to fight exclusively on the level of "multiracialism" without attacking the system that was to preside over the maintenance of a state preserving both the property rights of the whites and imperialist domination.

In the course of these years the Zimbabwean nationalist movement was essentially urban. The leaders were members of the urban petty bourgeoisie. On the basis of their social origins they believed in formal democracy, international diplomacy, and institutional debate. Just after Nkomo's rejection of the British draft constitution of 1961, when street demonstrations broke out, the peasant masses did not move. The so-called tribal chiefs collaborated with imperialism to save the countryside from agitation.

The coming to power of the Rhodesian Front was to sharpen up the repressive arsenal of the colonists as the white fist of British "democracy" in Rhodesia. They were aided in this by the utter subservience of the traditional chiefs of the countryside to the British policy of indirect rule, which had been worked out by Cecil Rhodes, the Scottish peers who settled in Rhodesia, the Anglican church, and all the British parties.

But the collaboration of the chiefs did not serve solely to maintain order in the countryside. The point was also to have these chiefs, along with the Rhodesian Front, play along with "multiracial Rhodesian action." Thus, in October 1964 the regime organized a five-day-long charade at the end of which 622 traditional chiefs "showed the world" that they stood with Field and Ian Smith for the government and "independence." The same Smith declared: "A referendum is impractical. The Africans of the rural zones are most often illiterate. To ask them to approve of the idea of independence has no meaning for them. Their chiefs, on the other hand, who are in daily contact with them, can perfectly well express their opinions. To organize a referendum would be to publicly question the chiefs' authority and raise the prospect of troubles throughout the country."

In December 1962 Britain recognized Nyassaland's right to leave the Rhodesian federation. On March 29, 1963, the same recognition was granted northern Rhodesia. On July 25, 1963, the British parliament put an end to the federation. But this decision, while it permitted the future states of Malawi and Zambia to accede to independence, was nonetheless also the result of pressure from the most traditional sectors of the Rhodesian white colonists, the supporters of the Rhodesian Front, the tobacco planters, and the "beef barons." The direction of this pressure was clearly toward total independence for Rhodesia. On April 13, 1964, Ian Smith replaced Field in the post of prime minister. On November 5, 1965, the Rhodesian government, after a fake referendum, proclaimed independence.



Wilson, who was then British prime minister, called for sanctions, but explained that "in no case would there be a resort to force." This development was to provoke violent demonstrations in Rhodesia. The repression was merciless.

The age of illusions

The NDP of Nkomo had been outlawed by the British regime (before Smith) on December 17, 1961. Immediately after, the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU), led by the same Nkomo, was created. In December 1962, after the declaration of a state of emergency, ZAPU was also banned, but the organization remained underground. "Thus, in spite of the changes in name and context caused by government repression, there has been a continuity in the national liberation struggle and its leadership since 1957." (Interview of G. Nyandoro of ZAPU taken in 1968 by Interview in Depth, Canada.)

But in 1963 a split broke out in the leadership. A minority created the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), led by the Reverend Sithole. On March 17, 1972, after years of mutual anathema, the two groups agreed to establish a joint political council and a unified military command. Nevertheless, the application of this accord remained very delicate for several years.

In the meantime, on October 1, 1971, James Chikerema, the vice-president of ZAPU, and George Nyandoro, ZAPU's general secretary, split from ZAPU and created FROLIZI, the Front for the Liberation of Zimbabwe. In December 1971 a legal organization emerged in Salisbury. It re-adopted the name ANC and was led by Bishop Muzorewa; it seems to have included some militants of both ZAPU and ZANU. In December 1974, under the pressure of the regimes in the region, a con-

ference was held in Lusaka, Zambia, which regrouped the four organizations — FROLIZI, ZAPU, ZANU, and the ANC — under the heading of the ANC. Nonetheless, several months later, the unified ANC split once again, this time into an ANC-exterior led by Muzorewa and Sithole and an ANC-interior led by Nkomo.

This entire imbroglia in the history of the Zimbabwe nationalist movement requires a precise social and political characterization of these groups and leaderships. The analysis of the differences as they have been publicly expressed shows that there are no real strategic disagreements (for example, over real and not merely formal equality, the character of the state that should be built). The conflicts center of the tactics to follow (relations with London, whether a legal organization should be created, etc.). Moreover, the expression of these differences varies a lot over time. Thus, in May 1968 George Nyandoro (of ZAPU) was interviewed on these questions and declared: "The imperialists, particularly the United States, became deeply involved in the promotion of ZANU. This was evidenced by the ZANU leaders themselves, who were offered sums of money from the West if they were successful." (LSM Information Center, Canada.)

But the Nyandoro-Chikerema group, which left ZAPU in October 1971 to create the FROLIZI, was in turn denounced as traitorous. George Silundika of ZAPU declared: "It was obvious that the British neocolonialists were taking advantage of Chikerema's credulousness in order to manipulate the party." (LSM, interview of November 1972.)

In 1968 Nyandoro explained the ZANU split from ZAPU by the fact that "these people" had previously been part of "multiracial" groups. But this did not at all prevent Nyandoro from splitting from ZAPU along with Chikerema, who had been a member of the "multiracial" Capricorn Society, behind which stood the imperialist liberals and churches.



Obviously, the truth lies elsewhere. The successive turns of the various factions are explained by the petty-bourgeois social character of the leadership of the nationalist movement and by their training by British liberals, missionaries, and Fabians. In 1963 ZAPU accused ZANU of being a rightist and opportunist movement; but in 1975 it was Nkomo, the leader of the ex-ZAPU, who associated himself with the worst bargaining with the Smith regime, suffering the invectives of Sithole and Muzorewa. Too often, nationalism in the British colonies has born the stamp of legalist and institutional illusions bolstered by the cultural and political effects of British colonialism. This situation was especially important in Rhodesia since the regime being fought is regarded as illegal in both international and British law. Thus, beyond the radical and guerrillaist professions of faith, the various groups have always maintained, each in their own way according to the period, a tender attraction for judicial battles, appeals to Britain and the United Nations, and so on. For many years the term used by all the currents in characterizing the Salisbury regime has been "rebel regime." Rebel against what? Against the British crown! Such behavior has made these leaderships extremely vulnerable to imperialist pressure, pressure from neocolonial African states, and very often personality conflicts, careerism, and bureaucratization of the external apparatuses.

The political inconsistency of these leaderships may be easily measured by a reading of several documents. For example, in the issue of *Zimbabwe Review*, the organ of the unified ANC, dated March-April 1975, that is, a few weeks before the split into two factions occurred, we read: "Certain ignorant or ill-intentioned people are expressing doubts (us among them — C.G.) about the solidity of unity, for in their minds the ideological differences between ZAPU and ZANU, as well as among the individuals who lead ZAPU, ZANU, and FROLIZI, are incompatible. Certain Zimbabweans, it is true, are professional splitters and have proclaimed themselves and themselves alone the liberators of Zimbabwe. . . . With the exception of a few borrowed slogans, which can be eliminated in one day, there is no fundamental ideological difference between ZAPU and ZANU. We all share the philosophy of scientific socialism." So there they are, all "scientific socialists," all scrambling for places at round tables with Vorster, Callaghan, Kissinger, or Waldheim.

Already in January 1976 some militants of the ex-ZANU were being attacked, resulting in about 100 dead in Mozambique and fifty-three in Zambia; one of the leaders, Herbert Chipeto, was killed.

A specific context

The particular character of the regime being fought influences the political course of the nationalist leaderships. In the Portuguese colonies the crudity of the forms of white domination forced the PAIGC, MPLA, and FRELIMO to commit themselves to armed resistance and to seek a real base among the peasantry, which fostered the radicalization of these movements. The present lead-

erships in Rhodesia are definitively enmeshed into African diplomacy, especially that of Zambia, Tanzania, and Mozambique. A prolonged military crisis, if it finally comes to that, would be much more tightly controlled by the regimes in the region than was the case with the Angolan struggle. These regimes, including those of Mozambique and Tanzania, fear the implications of the uncontrolled development of struggles in Rhodesia, particularly because of the possible reactions of South Africa, with which they are collaborating in Vorster's so-called dialogue, resumed after the South African withdrawal from Angola in April 1976.



Although it is difficult to make predictions on this point, it is highly likely that a broad mobilization of the Zimbabwean population would not take the same forms as the Angolan mobilizations. One difference in the two situations is that the Rhodesian colons, unlike the Portuguese, themselves form an army and police. One of the decisive questions in Rhodesia is the land question, and particularly the prospect of recovering the best land, which has been appropriated by the colons. Surprisingly enough, in this part of Africa it is perhaps in the countryside that one must expect the national apparatuses to be outflanked. But more so than in the cities, this development will not be able to occur in a beneficial manner unless it is taken in charge by a homogeneous political leadership offering an anticapitalist perspective. In the immediate future, the point is to take advantage of the embryonic forms of radicalization that are appearing in Salisbury on the fringes of the big negotiations. But the period opened by the Angolan crisis requires an integrated conception of the building of revolutionary parties in the region. Imperialism commands complex means of integration in this part of Africa, which intensifies the bankruptcy of the perspectives advanced by the ANC, both interior and exterior. Finally, the reconstruction of a bourgeois state in the People's Republic of Angola just after the liberation of the country underscores the gravity of the strategic problems that must be resolved in order to provide a genuinely revolutionary outcome for the national struggle. That is why the building of an anticapitalist vanguard organization in Zimbabwe will necessarily be combined with similar processes, especially in Zambia and South Africa.

April 1, 1976

VIETNAM: ELECTIONS AND REUNIFI- CATION

by PIERRE ROUSSET



A new National Assembly for the entire country was elected in Vietnam on April 25, 1976, thirty years after the formation of the first Ho Chi Minh government and the establishment of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, twenty years after the date called for in the Geneva accords, and at the cost of innumerable dead and wounded. This assembly is soon to adopt a constitution. The April 25 elections marked a new stage in the process of reunification that has been under way since the liberation of Saigon about a year ago. That is what was emphasized by Nguyen Huu Tho, president of the National Liberation Front, in a recent interview granted to the journalist Patrice De Beer: "Since April 30, 1975, reunification has been realized in many domains. In some cases, the army for example, it was done immediately. In others it took time. In the educational system, managed by the state in both zones of the country, the reunification of programs and orientations was effected rapidly. As for the status and organization of (administrative) personnel, this could be done only gradually. As far as the economy is concerned, there are two sectors in the North, state and cooperative, and five sectors in the South, state, cooperative, mixed, private enterprises, and individual enterprises. The reunification will be more rapid in the branches managed by the state." (Le Monde, May 8, 1975.)

Considered as a stage in the reunification, the April 25 elections aid in an examination of the progress and present problems of the Vietnamese revolution.

There is still no overall figure providing a precise estimation of the existing relations among the various economic sectors in southern Vietnam. A series of revolutionary measures were taken just after the seizure of power (nationalization of enterprises abandoned by their former owners, monopoly of the banking system, control of foreign trade) and in September 1975 (fiscal measures and the campaign against the "compradores"). (See INPRECOR, No.42, January 22, 1976.) But the absence of a comprehensive economic plan, which was then in preparation, and the urgency of reinitiating

production were reflected in the diversity of situations and the relative empiricism of decisions.

In agriculture, the condition of the agrarian reform, extended and deepened just after the liberation, varies considerably according to region. In the zones that had been liberated previously the preconditions for a voluntary transition to cooperatives were gradually assembled. In the villages most recently liberated, notably inhabited by Catholic refugees, the agrarian reform is only taking its first steps (distribution of land to poor peasants and the formation of "mutual aid teams"). This is the case, for example, in the village of Thai Lac, where the former parliamentary deputy, a landed proprietor, took flight. (See *Courrier du Vietnam*, No.44.) State farms are to be established in the large-scale plantations and in the "new economic zones." These latter zones are those that suffered most from the war. They were razed, and their soil has become difficult to cultivate because of the extensive use of defoliants. (The United States army used 71 million liters of defoliants against the liberated zones of southern Vietnam, a territory as large as northern Ireland!) These "new economic zones" have been completely overhauled, with the aid of unemployed citizens. In one of them, located in the province of Cu Chi in the old "iron triangle" of the resistance, near Saigon, each citizen receives a straw hut, 1,000 square meters of land, a rice allocation for an indefinite period, and financial aid. In the future, these new farmers will become workers in state farms in a rubber plantation. They will continue to work their land as individual plots. (P. De Beer, *Le Monde*, May 14, 1976.)

In industry, the extreme dependence of the old productive apparatus on imperialist supplies (raw materials, spare parts, energy) continues to slow down the economic upturn. While the bulk of the enterprises seem to have undertaken production again, on the eve of the April 25 elections they were producing at only 50-60 percent of capacity as a whole. Exhaustion of stocks is a constant threat. The objective is to reconvert the sources of supply by taking advantage of national re-

sources; but this can be carried out only in the medium term. The handicrafts sector continues to produce a great part of industrial goods, and the private capitalist sector accounts for perhaps 30 percent of production. The state sector remains weak, but already controls supplies and trade channels and sets down the orientation of production. For Nguyen Huu Tho, "the development (of the state sector), which will play a leading role in the two zones, will aid in regularizing activities and in the development of other sectors in the South, fully utilizing their positive aspects, while limiting their negative ones with a view toward orienting their activities in conformity with the national plan." (Le Monde, May 8, 1976.) Likewise, Hoc Tap, the party's theoretical review, has written that "in the immediate period ahead, we must utilize, guide, encourage, and aid the private economic network in order to develop production and the enterprises in the general interest . . . because the socialist elements are still very weak," (Le Monde, May 15, 1976.)

The social measures

Progressive socialization of the economy and relaunching of production through an NEP-type policy require the adherence of the workers. This is also true in agriculture, in regard to which Nguyen Huu Tho has noted that "we are not yet engaging in agrarian collectivization in the South. What is necessary is that the peasants see this as being in their own interest and in that of the state." It is therefore necessary for the improvement in the living conditions of the population to be constant, despite the enormous difficulties faced by the new regime.

In the countryside the end of the war and the collapse of the puppet forces had immediate consequences: end of usury and high rent, distribution of land, peace and the end of the bombing, reestablishment of the market. Even though the work remains difficult (especially because of the lack of mechanization) and life is austere, the endemic poverty and permanent danger have come to an end. In industry a few examples may be cited to indicate the road that has been traveled. In the Hai Vuong refrigerator company, managed by the PRG, a medical center has been installed, two months maternity leave has been introduced (90 percent of the workers are women), and a free canteen has been organized. In addition, there are free complementary educational courses, and the hourly wage system has been abolished in favor of a general monthly salary, which has allowed working hours to be reduced. (Bulletin d'Information du GRP, No. 49.) In the Cotylen factory, which manufactures synthetic textiles and is also under the control of the PRG, wages are no longer paid by the hour, but by the day (one dong per day, or about US\$.60). The workers get one free meal per day and are given coupons for the purchase of 9 kilograms (about twenty pounds) of rice at controlled prices. Health insurance now exists, but monthly salaries are rare and a worker may be fired after three reprimands. (The proletariat in this factory is also composed of women, often Cath-

olics.) (P. De Beer, Le Monde, May 15, 1976.) In the nationalized Vikyna factory, which assembles tractors and produces water pumps, the wage scale approaches that of the North: The lowest salary is 40 dongs a month, the average is 60, and the highest, that of an engineer, is 180. The factory manager receives a salary of only 40 dongs a month, but he gets free rent, water, electricity, and food, and has an automobile and chauffeur. (Le Monde, May 15, 1976.) In a private paint company the wages of the workers were increased 20 percent and the salaries of the boss and the managers were reduced 50 percent. (Libération, May 4, 1976.)

It is this totality of economic and social measures that has made it possible to hold general elections for reunification only one year after the victory of April 30, 1975. They also account for the complete political hegemony that has been established throughout the country by the Vietnamese Communist party (the Workers party of Vietnam).

Reaction's low profile

The social and political situation is certainly not completely stabilized. Less than 500,000 inhabitants of Saigon, most of them refugees, had returned to the countryside as of the eve of the elections. (This is less than the number hoped for by the VCP leadership.) Unemployment remains massive and the number of opponents of the regime is high. Saigon is being decongested only very slowly. From this standpoint, the results of the elections in the Saigon region — where Madame Binh headed the list with 97 percent of the vote, 98 percent of the population having voted — do not accurately reflect the present difficulties and sociopolitical problems. The elections took the form of a plebiscite on the regime.

The pre-electoral campaign was intensive, and it appears that the voter card is to become both the identity card and the supply card. This means that refusal to vote, an act of political opposition, will be recorded on identity papers. The incentive to vote was therefore great, which partially explains the rate of participation in the South (95 percent). Nevertheless, this would mean that there are about 500,000 people who did not go to the ballot boxes (overall figures have not yet been published).

The reactionary opposition was taken apart through the arrest of persons linked to the Thieu regime. There are probably more than 200,000 people still in "re-education camps": officers, high functionaries, and politicians and agents of the Thieu regime, half of whom come from Saigon. But nearly a million others — rank-and-file soldiers and functionaries — were released after several-day-long periods of "reeducation" organized in their living quarters, and the great majority of them were granted the right to vote. There seem to have been no executions by the PRG, not even among the highest ranks of the puppet army. Finally, the officers and functionaries now in the "reeducation camps"

seem no worse off than the average among the population. They take political reeducation courses, work in the fields or at handicrafts jobs, and are required to carry out household tasks for people who had previously been their servants. (P. De Beer, *Le Monde*, May 12, 1976.)

But all this is not enough to explain the electoral plebiscite on the regime. It was also a reflection of the depth of the American defeat and of the scope of the victory of the revolutionary forces. The attitude of the Catholic hierarchy, both North and South, is significant here. In 1954, just after the Geneva accords, the hierarchy had engaged in a virulent anticommunist campaign that ended with the exodus of several hundred thousand Catholics from the North to the South, fleeing the Antichrist. After that period, the Catholic hierarchy remained the backbone of the puppet regime. The hope of a victory by the Christian West has now disappeared. The church in the North (with about 1,200,000 members) marked the event just after the liberation of Saigon. For the first time, Monsignor Khué, archbishop of Hanoi, paid an official visit to the authorities, "for before," he said, "we were not sure that the Communists could win. Now we are." (Hugues Tertrais, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, May 1975.) In the South, several months after the liberation the Catholic hierarchy has in its turn recognized the revolutionary victory. Monsignor Binh, archbishop of Saigon, has disavowed the action of small counterrevolutionary groups and has published a personal pastoral letter hailing reunification.

Although reaction preserves some means by which to act and has not been completely disarmed, it declined to make the elections a test of strength by calling for a boycott or a blank vote. But while high party officials were often elected with more than 90 percent of the vote, Reverend Father Chan Tin, who had fled south from the north, was the only one of the seven former members of the "third force" who ran in the elections not to be elected. Of the fifteen women candidates, six were elected.

The Communist party's political monopoly

The April 25 election was a plebiscite in more than one respect. During the electoral campaign there was no debate on orientation as regards the pace of reunification and socialization, the content of the coming constitution, or the nature of the Communist party's relations with the masses. There were single lists of candidates, even though they contained more names than there were seats; they were presented on the motion of rank-and-file organizations by the NLF and the Alliance of Democratic Forces of the South. The candidates did not have the right to carry on individual campaigns. The members of the former third force in Saigon ran as personalities and not as representatives of political organizations. The program on which the candidates were elected was extremely general: recognition of the hegemony of the VCP and approval of the process of socialist

reunification of the country now under way. The discussions on orientation remained the exclusive province of the upper reaches of the party.

In Saigon, Madame Ngo Ba Than, a personality of the former third force, explained the particularities of the electoral decree-law in these terms: "What we consider extremely original, as a demonstration of genuine democracy, is that the candidates in the elections must be presented by the revolutionary mass organizations. That is a necessary guarantee. For under the present conditions in southern Vietnam, the population, barely liberated from the fascist regime of the American puppets, is still subject to the influences of the fraudulent elections of the past and needs to be guided by the intermediary of this guarantee of the majority bloc." (*Bulletin du GRP*, No. 50.) It would be hard to find a sharper expression of the party's substitutionist role in regard to the masses!

The bureaucratic weight

We have seen the gravity of the problems posed by the sociopolitical structure of Saigon, shaken by fifteen years of the multiform American war (see INPRECOR, No. 42, January 22, 1976.) Unfortunately, however, the problem is much more vast. Indeed, in the North, where the workers state was established twenty years ago, the form of power, the party's monopoly over the political life of the country, does not differ very much from what prevails in the South today. Here again, the choices have been made by the upper reaches of the party, the elections ratify the decisions that have been made, and the discussions among the rank and file are aimed only at studying the application of these decisions. In Hanoi the legislative elections had this plebiscitary character: 99.82 percent voted, and 99.76 percent of the votes cast went to Political Bureau member Le Duan. In Saigon the VCP's monopoly over political life is not challenged by the publication of independent Catholic journals such as the weekly *Cong Jiao Va Dan Toc* and the monthly *Dong Day*.

This monopoly over national political life exercised by the Vietnamese Communist party is combined with a genuine taking in charge of local problems by the masses and, very probably, with an advance in class consciousness in the cities of southern Vietnam since the liberation. The "administrative committees" have not been elected, but provisionally appointed (in reality by the VCP). The composition of the management committees in the factories varies. In the Vikyno factory the committee includes the new director, two engineers, the trade-union leader (normally elected by the membership), and one assistant member, the secretary of the party cell. In the Qué Hong foundry, composed of an association of several local capitalists and merchants, the administrative committee includes: the former owners of the associated workshops, the merchants who own stock, and the workers, who are also stockholders. (*Le Monde*, May 15, 1976.) In general, however, according to the available testimony, the mass organizations have experienced a qualitative growth. In the



workshop, the factory, and the village, problems of production, of the organization of labor, and of living conditions are discussed collectively. The direct intervention of the masses in the management of local affairs has never been so great, even though it is lacking on the national scale.

At bottom, this paradoxical feature of the Vietnamese revolution reflects the inexistence of a soviet system of power, which enables the direct representation of local mass committees up through the highest levels to be assured and the discussions on the choices of orientation throughout the whole society to be centralized. The nature of the April 25 elections, which assured neither the direct representation of the committees nor the confrontation of possible different programs for development, thus reflect the existence of a bureaucratically deformed workers state in Vietnam.

It is within this gap between the mass mobilization and the mediation of the party in power that the bureaucratic phenomena, nurtured by the economic poverty of the country, have taken root. The scope of the bureaucratic weight comes through in the official statements of Pham Van Dong, prime minister of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, for whom "bureaucratic, red-tape, and authoritarian phenomena are constant and sometimes serious at all levels in some of the state services, thus violating the rights of the people, who are masters of the collectivity." (Le Monde, April 22, 1976.) "It is regrettable," wrote the theoretical magazine Hoc Tap, "that some cadres and militants have committed errors . . . in the domain of respect for the democratic rights of the masses." (Le Monde, May 2-3, 1976.) The Saigon newspaper Giai Phong declared in a caustic attack on those "who act like Mandarins": "Now that they are in power, they are beginning to

detach themselves from the people." (Libération, May 4, 1976.)

A certain malaise seems to exist in the South between the cadres coming out of the resistance and those coming from the North, who are accustomed to advantages and seniority benefits. In fact, the problem of the payment of cadres and functionaries has still not been settled. For this reason they do not yet receive salaries, but instead an indemnity and subsidies. In the North bureaucratic behavior seems to be crystallized in a layer of intermediary cadres between a population that is little prepared to accept them (and which makes them the leading figure in clown shows) and a political leadership concerned about their possible consequences, not only politically but also in terms of the management of the economy. In the North it was decided to constitute a corps of "popular inspectors" elected by the rank and file, which would oversee production and would have extensive powers of inquiry into bureaucratic behavior. In the South, the apparatus is supposed to control itself, under the pressure of the mass organizations. In any event, the institutional problem is not posed.

The victory of April 30, 1975, and the depth of the socioeconomic upheaval that has occurred since then demonstrate the vigor of the Vietnamese revolution. But the elections of April 25, 1976, confirm that these victories have not been sufficient to modify the character of the political and institutional relations established between the party and the masses. The question of soviets, of workers councils, is decisive at bottom, because only soviets can guarantee the direct participation of the masses in the leadership of the state, the democratic confrontation of development orientations in the framework of socialism, the control of cadres and functionaries and the elimination of bureaucratic phenomena, the elaboration of an economic plan that takes precise account of the requirements of the population, and the permanent raising of the class consciousness of the workers.

This question was absent from the preparatory discussions around the elections. The soviet conception of the state, in fact, is too foreign to the orientation of the VCP, the previous forms of mobilization of the population, and the world context born of the Stalinist degeneration of the USSR to be spontaneously reborn in Vietnam today. It can be imposed only on the basis of a new experience of the Vietnamese proletariat in the framework of the socialist industrialization of the country; this may be aided by developments of the socialist revolution in West Europe and Japan as well as by the political revolution in the USSR and China. The soviet conception of the state will thus be born of a combination of political and social conflicts and not of a simple advance in the consciousness of the party apparatus as it exists today. Indeed, the soviet conception of the state is one of the unresolved questions of the Vietnamese revolution, one of the decisive stakes in the new stage opened by the final victory over imperialism.

May 20, 1976

BRAZIL



ERNESTO GEISEL

For a Campaign to Defend the Popular Will

The following statement was issued April 5 by the Liga Operária (Workers League) and the Partido Operário Comunista (Communist Workers party), two revolutionary Marxist organizations in Brazil. The English text appeared in the May 10 issue of Intercontinental Press.

After making a detailed analysis of the national situation and the events leading up to the expulsion from parliament of Nadir Rosseti, Amauri Muller, and Lisânias Maciel, three deputies from the Grupo Autentico wing of the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (MDB — Brazilian Democratic Movement, the only permitted opposition party), the Liga Operária and the Partido Operário Comunista, the Fourth International organizations in Brazil, decided to issue a joint statement to the workers, students, and other sectors of the masses in this country, and to international democratic public opinion.

1. The recent expulsions from parliament of three deputies from the "Autentico" wing of the MDB fit into the context of a clear shift to the right by the bonapartist Geisel government. This turn began in the first three months of 1975, with the repression against workers, students, trade-union leaders, and members and leaders of the Brazilian Communist party.

These actions once again reflect the vacillations, zig-zags, and indecisiveness of the ruling classes, the imperialists, the industrial and landowning big bourgeoisie and their defenders, the military, over how best to repress the workers and the Brazilian people, how to keep the present dictatorial regime intact and overcome the economic crisis.

The manifestations of the economic crisis hitting the country are a fabulous external debt, continual deficits in the balance of payments and the trade balance, the resurgence of inflation, falling investments, unemployment, and a decline in the buying power of broad strata of the population.

These expulsions from parliament affect the mass movement as a whole, and in particular representative sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, which in the November 15, 1974, elections saw the MDB as the only alternative to the military dictatorship and the only channel for expressing their discontent. These impeachments represent a counteroffensive by the most ultrarightist sectors of the government, which were momentarily neutralized after the mobilizations that followed the murder of the journalist Vladimir Herzog and the death of the worker Manuel Fiel Filho in the dungeons of the dictatorship.

These sectors see repressing any organized form of opposition and smashing the mobilizations of the mass movement as the only way to maintain the present system. So, in the eyes of the civilian and military ultraright, any liberalization, even the "relaxation" plans of Geisel and his team, is synonymous with social chaos, with unrest, and with a threat to their domination.

2. However, the rightist turn the government began in February and March 1975 and made official in August — when the dictator himself took on the job of making it clear to those sectors that had illusions about the "relaxation" what distinct limits any political liberalization would have — also ran up against limitations imposed by the situation.

Unable to solve the most immediate problems of the broad masses, to make any concessions even to the purely economic demands of the masses; incapable of allowing the workers and the petty bourgeoisie the least room for representation in government or the right to organize and demonstrate; unable to let parliament and the bourgeois parties function as anything but window dressing; unable even to come up with effective and coherent solutions that could meet the demands of the ruling classes themselves, which are in the grip

of the economic crisis — the military government stands more and more isolated, with scarcely any significant support among the exploited sectors of society, in particular among the urban petty bourgeoisie and the workers.

Any attempt to deepen the repression and to develop the regime in a fascist direction will run up against this isolation and lack of support. It will run up against the impossibility of mitigating the social contradictions and of preventing the masses from more and more expressing their discontent. So, besides the economic crisis, the possibility in the near future of popular explosions and mass demonstrations sparked by dissatisfaction with and opposition to the dictatorial regime will become another specter haunting the dictatorship, the imperialists, and the big bourgeoisie.

3. The present economic and political impasse the ruling classes have gotten themselves into has an eminently political solution. This will depend entirely on the capacity of the masses, the workers and their allies, to wage a militant and organized struggle against the dictatorship, to provide a focus for the popular discontent, and to mobilize to block any plan for economic recovery that the technocrats and capitalists may dream up based on increasing the rate of exploitation of the workers and applying a "wage freeze." The solution will depend on the masses winning the right to organize independently of state tutelage and on them winning democratic freedoms to demonstrate and express themselves.

4. The country is still in the counterrevolutionary stage that opened in 1964 and deepened in 1969. This stage has been marked by severe repression against workers, peasants, students, and progressive intellectuals under Institutional Act No. 5 and Decree-Law No. 477, by the imposition of the death penalty, and by the cancerous growth of military and police repressive bodies. This phase has also gone hand in hand with relative economic growth and cohesion on the part of the ruling classes.

However, the trend has begun to turn in favor of the exploited classes. Although still scattered and isolated, the struggles of the working class have begun to multiply. The most common actions have been strikes and slowdowns, and sabotage of factories and trains in protest against starvation wages and miserable living and working conditions. In the struggle against the bosses and union bureaucrats, important trade-union opposition movements are starting to develop in the country's key centers.

On the other hand, the discontent of the middle layers has been finding more and more outlets. One form of expression was a massive antigovernment vote in the parliamentary elections. Another is the reactivation of the student movement. The struggles of this sector against the dictatorship are achieving a greater national impact today. Another way discontent has been expressed is in actions by professional groups, as when

the journalists mobilized to protest the murder of Vladimir Herzog and the imprisonment of a large number of their colleagues.

Moreover, the small and middle business sectors that for years fed to their fill on the crumbs of the "economic miracle" are now hard pressed by the recession and find their survival threatened by the imperialists and the big bourgeoisie. Although timidly, they are beginning to experiment with protests through their associations and institutions as well as through the MDB.

5. In this situation, the task of revolutionists, especially those who adhere to the Fourth International, is to build, organize, encourage, and offer political orientation to the embryonic struggles of the mass movement. By helping the workers, students, and peasants create their own independent bodies, by helping to strengthen and consolidate militant leaderships in all the mass organizations, revolutionists will be fulfilling their vanguard role. At the same time, they will be laying the bases for building the revolutionary party of the working class in Brazil.

It is particularly important in this process for the revolutionary vanguard to be able to give a focus to all the popular discontent by combining even the most purely economic struggles of the masses with the fight for democratic freedoms. This means mobilizing the workers, students, peasants, and intellectuals in struggle to wrest from the dictatorship the freedom to organize, freedom of expression, and freedom to demonstrate, freedom to set up their own political parties and independent trade unions. These struggles for democratic freedoms must not, however, be conducted or seen as reformist or liberal sentimental appeals for humanizing the regime of generals and bosses. They must be indissolubly bound up with overthrowing the military dictatorship, with the struggle to create embryonic organs of workers and people's power and to install a workers and peasants government in Brazil. Revolutionists must link the democratic demands of the exploited masses with slogans that can mobilize them in a process leading uninterruptedly toward socialism.

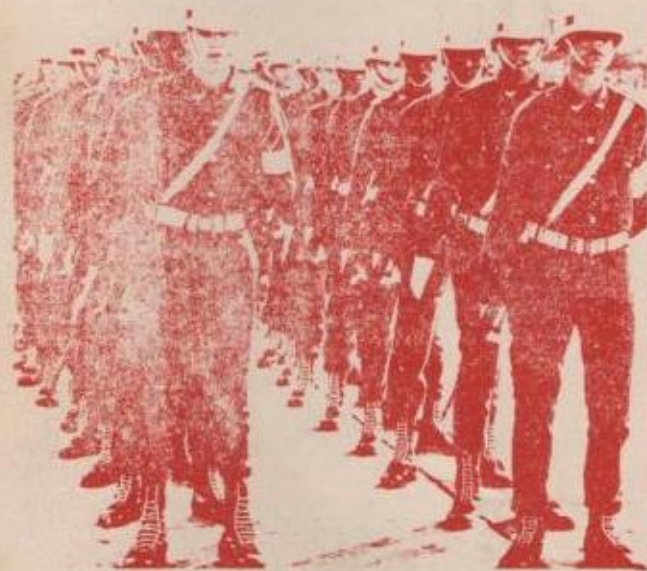
6. However, all revolutionary action starts from the concrete demands of the class struggle. And the concrete demand at the moment is, starting from a clear analysis of what the MDB represents, to wage a national struggle in defense of popular sovereignty.

The new expulsions of deputies from parliament — five in the last three months alone — once again mark the failure of the official opposition party to constitute an alternative to the military regime. This has also helped to destroy the illusions of all those who saw the MDB as a channel through which a people's party could be built, those who believed that it would be possible to reform it from the inside, to put pressure on and push out its bourgeois leaders.

In the last parliamentary elections, the MDB attracted fifteen million votes. At first it loomed up as the only

apparent alternative. It was a party through which the discontent of broad layers of the population would be expressed.

However, following the precedents set even before the November 15 elections, the MDB's course was marked by continual betrayals of the masses who had placed their hopes in it. At no time was the MDB able or willing to uphold consistently the banners of struggle that it raised in the electoral campaign. Its course consisted of constant and continual capitulations to the government, to "moderation," to conciliationism, to collaboration with the military government, as well as of suppression of the more militant voices that spoke out inside the party.



In these five recent cases in which deputies have been deprived of their seats, the bourgeois leadership of the MDB showed by its inertia, its false prudence, and its accommodationism how determined it is to get the military government's seal of approval as an acceptable party, one that does not challenge the "revolution," that is, in fact, a party of the "revolution," as its leaders never tire of proclaiming.

Since the MDB leadership wants to isolate its radicals, that is, the most active members in its workers and women's sections, in the Juventude Democrática (Democratic Youth, the MDB youth organization), and in the parliament itself, these leaders were relieved at seeing some of their most combative deputies removed by impeachment.

7. In view of this, the Partido Operário Comunista and the Liga Operária issue an appeal to the militant forces working today in the MDB, to the party youth, its workers, women, and intellectuals, to make a clean break from this bourgeois party. We call on them to withdraw the support on which this conciliationist and traitor leadership bases itself. We call on them to unite with all those forces on the side of the people that are

committed to an independent struggle by the workers and their allies, to winning a revolutionary struggle for democratic freedoms.

Confronted with the farce of the bourgeois parliament and the caricature of elections the bourgeoisie allows, we must be clear about the need to overthrow the dictatorship and all its repressive legislation. Likewise, we have to have a clear understanding of the importance of a revolutionary struggle for a constituent assembly to which the Brazilian people, the workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals could freely elect their political representatives in a vote where they would have all the conditions for a free choice and where their real parties could participate.

8. So, since we see these impeachments as part of a broader process of the regime moving to the right and of deepening exploitation and repression of the working masses, and since we understand the need to link up struggles in defense of living standards and working conditions with the more general struggles of society, the Liga Operária and the Partido Operário Comunista call on the other organizations that speak in the name of the workers and on the militant forces in the MDB to organize a national campaign to defend popular sovereignty. We call on them to organize a campaign for the repeal of Institutional Act No.5, for the legalization of all workers and people's parties, and for free and direct elections.

9. Finally, the Liga Operária and the Partido Operário Comunista call on our sister parties in the Fourth International, particularly the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire in France and the International Marxist Group in England, as well as the other working class parties, unions, and union federations there, to show active solidarity with the Brazilian workers and people during the upcoming visit of the dictator Ernesto Geisel to these countries.

By denouncing the superexploitation of the Brazilian workers, the lack of the most elementary democratic freedoms for the broad masses, the torture and murder of hundreds of revolutionists and democrats in the jails of the dictatorship, by making France and England too hot for the dictator, the workers in these countries can make a decisive contribution to wearing out and isolating the dictatorship, along with showing real proletarian internationalism.

Down with the impeachments, Institutional Act No.5, and all the repressive legislation!

Independent organization and freedom to demonstrate for the workers, students, peasants, and intellectuals!

Overthrow of the military dictatorship, legalization of all the workers and people's parties, genuinely free, direct elections!

For the calling of a Revolutionary Constituent Assembly!

International solidarity with the Brazilian workers and people!