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south africa: the struggle deepens





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south africa STRUGGLE AGAINST APARTHEID DEEPENS

by LANGA

According to official figures, 172 Africans were killed and 1,200 wounded by South African police in Soweto, Alexandra, and other racist cheap labor camps around Johannesburg and Pretoria between June 16 and 20. Unarmed, the Africans had risen up against the use of Afrikaans and Bantu and for the use of English as the language of instruction in the schools, against the Bantu Education Act, against the partition of South Africa into a "White South Africa" and a number of Bantu "homelands," and against the final disenfranchisement of the non-Europeans — the loss of South African citizenship and nationality and the substitution of "homeland" tribal and "ethnic" "citizenship." The implied essence of the uprising was the struggle for one undivided non-racial nation.

The same basic issues remained central in the flare-ups that continued throughout South Africa during August, with more than 100 more Africans massacred, again according to official figures. There were mass boycotts of the location schools and many of them were burned down. The underlying motivation here was the demand to live in the cities themselves as full and equal citizens. Missionary churches were put to the torch around Johannesburg and later, in mid-August, near Port Elizabeth in the Eastern Cape. The underlying motif was again the same: rejection of white Anglican, Catholic, and Liberal racist and imperialist paternalism, the centuries-old racial segregation of the European churches, and their systematic indoctrination and intellectual starvation of the oppressed people. In the Transkei, which is due to become "independent" on October 26, 1976, tens of thousands of students demonstrated against this "independence," against "ethnic self-determination," and for a single, common South African citizenship for all; 286 students were arrested. In the "Botswana homeland" the toilers burned down the Botswana "parliament," built by Prime Minister Vorster and his tribal Quislings in Mafeking.

The content of the nationwide struggles was the total rejection of racial partition and the demand for absolute equality (which has nothing to do with the American racist-paternalist notion of "integration"); these were

the underlying characteristics of the struggle of the workers and students. It was part of Vorster's strategy to arrest not only the non-collaborators, but also the collaborators. By August 24 the total number arrested since June 16 had risen to more than 2,000; the official death toll stood at 282, of whom only 3 were white, all of them policemen.

The Bantu Affairs Department and the government, backed by the pro-British United party and the Liberal "opposition," took a "hard-soft" line against the uprising. The "soft" side was to hold conferences with "leaders" in Soweto, to make certain property concessions to an aspiring ghetto trading and professional group, and to allow the Bantustan chiefs, Matanzima, Buthelezi, and others, to assemble at Jan Smuts airport on August 21 to denounce the repression of the anti-Bantustan struggle and apartheid. The "hard line" was clearly spelled out by Michael Botha, a government minister, on August 20: "The urban blacks were present in the white areas to sell their labor and for nothing else," he said. "Those who accepted the citizenship of a tribal homeland would be more welcome in white areas than those who did not." But the struggle of the Africans was against both the "hard" and "soft" line of the racist "Boer" regime, British-created and backed by the EEC, NATO, and U.S. imperialism.

Non-European unity

Against the background of the attempted general strike by more than 250,000 workers near Johannesburg during the first and third weeks of August and of the anti-tribal struggles in the locations and "homelands" (cheap-labor rural reserves), the struggle spread to Cape Province. As a protest against the Bantuization of education and citizenship, it was taken up by layers of the so-called colored population (defined by the Population Registration Act as "neither white nor black"). The government failed to seal this section of the oppressed off from the African section. "Colored" students from the tribal "colored" "Bush college" at Belville near Cape Town marched in support of Soweto during the second week of August

and many were arrested. Further "colored"-African solidarity actions took place in the Western Cape on August 24, after thirty workers and students (official statistics again) were killed in an African location outside Cape Town. Information reaching this writer but not reported in the Western press indicates that in Worcester and other towns of the Western Cape "colored" students defied police patrols and guard dogs placed outside the mission and the state school gates. And at the giant "colored" location of Bontheuvel, Cape Town, police fired on a mass protest of 5,000 "colored" workers and students, killing several. Bontheuvel was sealed off by police on August 26-27. These demonstrations were against the Coloured Affairs Department and colored tribalization as well as the Bantu Affairs Department and Bantu tribalization. Demonstrators declared: "We will never stand with the whites. We stand together with the Africans." This, together with non-collaboration, is the heritage of the Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM). The NEUM itself clearly has to be re-created by the new generation of non-collaborators along with those of the old generation who have not succumbed to abstention.

Western press reports of anti-Indian riots in Soweto are false. According to information received by this writer, one such incident was due to mistaking an Indian for a white, and in others Indians actually assisted the Africans materially, and also politically in two areas. Unless the "black consciousness" agents of the government divert the struggle, the government will be unable to repeat the anti-Indian pogrom organized by the British in Durban in 1949.



Adding fuel to the fire

In an atmosphere of near panic — marked, among other things, by a 20 percent slump on world stock markets of Rand and Free State mining shares, which are held by some 300 British, German, French, Italian, U.S., Canadian, Israeli, and Australian companies, plus An-

glo-Boer associate companies — the government made a number of hasty "concessions." These included an offer to cancel Afrikaans as a compulsory language medium in the schools. The students and teachers replied with a demand for the withdrawal of police, the elimination of Bantu Affairs Department control, and the release of the arrested students and workers. The schools were boycotted and burned down in some cases. The Bantu education issue remained the central one, spreading to all major locations in all the main city areas of South Africa.

The African National Council (ANC) and the Communist party, never accustomed to making Bantu education or the Bantustans a major political issue, were caught unawares. Winnie Mandela and others in Johannesburg suddenly found themselves being offered the government-controlled television to broadcast the expected and required militant speeches in order to draw the struggle away from the major questions of Bantu education and "homelands" and onto the usual "militant" ANC stunts separating the "pass laws" from the central political issue.

When this ruling class maneuver failed, Winnie Mandela and others were arrested. These arrests of members of the ANC and other groups, including SASO (South African Students Organization), were designed partly to terrorize the people and partly to hold up collaborationist, supposedly militant leaders before them. The same purpose was behind the arrest of the collaborationist Democratic party "opposition" to Matanzima in the Transkei "homeland," for this partly made it possible for Matanzima, Vorster's Quisling, to use the Nunga (the fake "homeland parliament") to present himself as the loyal opposition.

The latest concession of Vorster and his Minister of Justice Kruger was to offer "home ownership" rights to the handful of petty-bourgeois aspirants in Soweto. They would be allowed to own their own cages instead of renting them from the Bantu Affairs Department. This move was transparently designed to cut off a section of the location exploiters against the tailing masses, and it was foredoomed to failure, because it was precisely against the location system, as part of the "homelands" fraud, that the anti-Bantuization struggle in Soweto was being waged.

For the same reason, Vorster's much-vaunted concession of August 8 — that the "residents" of Soweto and other locations would "run their own affairs" — was in fact not at all a concession but rather an intensification of the Bantu "self-determination," "autonomy," and "self-rule" policy of white domination. The regime's concessions merely added fuel to the fire.

During the last week of August, however, the government, backed by heads of the Chambers of Mining, Commerce, and Industry, who began a witch-hunt against strikers, was partly successful in using "Zulu" collaborators to induce re-tribalized "impis" (so-called war parties) to attack strikers and students. More than



thirty people were killed, some by police and some by thugs, while the police watched from their EEC-built armored cars.

The strike itself was 90 percent successful in the big industrial areas of Langlaagte and Industria and was nearly 100 percent solid in the city department stores. Nevertheless, there was no strike in the big industrial firms and the mines, the hub of the whole South African economy, nor in the massive municipal services.

The Namibia concession to Germany

Parallel to his "hard-soft" reaction to Soweto, Vorster announced that Namibia would become "fully independent" on December 31, 1978; until then it would be ruled by an interim white-dominated government under an African "chief." This was the first fruit of the Vorster-Schmidt-Kissinger talks held in Germany last June, during which Schmidt, on behalf of German imperialism, demanded "independence" for Namibia, which would then become a neocolony in which the property of German former Nazis, who still control a large portion of the economy, would be guaranteed.

The SWAPO and ANC, along with their white CP, Liberal, Anglican, and Catholic patrons, are steeped in a tradition of working within political apartheid. As late as 1922 the CP itself called for a "white socialist South Africa" during a strike by white miners against the African miners' being given the right to perform skilled labor. After its formation by white labor aristocrats and liberal Europeans, the CP ran apartheid unions and violated the non-European boycott of apartheid elections

by putting up white Communists as "native representatives" under the Native Representation Act of 1936. During the first two years of the second world war the CP collaborated with the Nationalist Boer pro-Nazis, and later switched to support General Smuts and the British empire. None of these parties paid serious attention to the Bantu Education Act or the Bantustans — until now, when they are trying to cash in on the independent, self-organized struggles of the toilers. The toilers are struggling against Bantuization because they know that it is a major pillar of dispossession and disenfranchisement. The oppressed workers of South Africa want an end to this dispossession and disenfranchisement. They want to disposses their dispossessors, to own the whole of South Africa and to have full democratic rights for all on a non-racial (not multiracial, which is actually racist) basis. There is only one basis for self-determination in South Africa: the expropriation of the expropriators and the enfranchisement of the oppressed. This is one combined and inseparable demand. This inseparability is precisely the dilemma of the Herrenvolk imperialists, who know that they cannot separate the question of property from the question of the franchise, as they did in most of the rest of Africa (Nigeria, Kenya, Tanzania, etc.).

The toilers of Soweto said clearly: We don't want Soweto. We don't want a Transkei Bantustan or its citizenship. We don't want to "run our own affairs" in Soweto or in any other of your labor camps. We don't want "separate development." We don't want "our own identity," tribal or "national," which is the identity of segregated, inferior cheap labor slaves. We don't want to separate or be separated. We don't want the partitioning of South Africa into a white part and a black part, which is to-

day's reality anyway. We reject the idea that the Xhosa or the Zulu or the Sotho or the Tswana are "nations." We reject the idea that the Boers are a nation, or the English, or the Jews, or the whites as a whole. Although it was not expressed explicitly, the clear implied goal of the rebellion was this: The dismantling of the entire fabric and machinery of separation and the building of one undivided non-racial nation with full and equal rights for all and with the whole territory as the property of one and only one nation. This and only this is self-determination for the oppressed of South Africa. And this and only this is the implication of Soweto's rejection of Bantu education and Bantustan "independence." Any separate state for any group is a racist fraud aimed at perpetuating the status quo of white supremacy.

Soweto: a working-class struggle

Soweto, Alexandra, and the other "townships" in which the June uprisings against Bantu education occurred are working-class labor-camp ghettos. Nearly half of the urban non-European working class (African, "colored," and Indian) live in these "townships." These locations, along with the compounds for mining and heavy industry (these are mainly bachelor concentration camps for cheap labor) lie along the famous Rand, a gold-bearing, uranium, coal and industrial-commercial belt some 100 kilometers long, with the city of Johannesburg as the buckle of the belt. Most of the means of production in this belt are owned by British imperialism, along with other EEC imperialist investors, as well as U.S., Canadian, Australian, and Israeli capital. In other words, it is a concentration of world capitalism.

The African workers in this belt live in giant racial ghettos outside the cities of Johannesburg, Benoni, Germiston, etc., far from and excluded from the city streets, bars, cafes, parks, public buildings, cinemas, theaters, swimming pools, schools, universities, hospitals, and so on. They have no trade-union or political rights. They cannot own houses or flats or choose where to live. They do not even have the right to live permanently in the peri-urban locations, for their residence there is strictly limited on the basis of the old British-imposed pass laws of the nineteenth century. The miners' families live thousands of kilometers away, in the "Bantustans," which are rural, cityless, industrially starved reserves of cheap labor. Likewise, the workers in heavy industry and transport are separated on a large scale from their families and live in labor compounds or barracks.

This "de-urbanization" of the proletariat is a long-standing policy of the ruling class. It is coupled with the denial of land to would-be peasants. All this was created and is preserved mainly by British imperialism. The Boers are mainly the managers; the white workers are labor aristocrats and bureaucrats in a social alliance with the Boer, British, and European capitalists against the non-European working class, which alone produces surplus value in South Africa. Such is the basic social structure. This was the class line-up into which Soweto

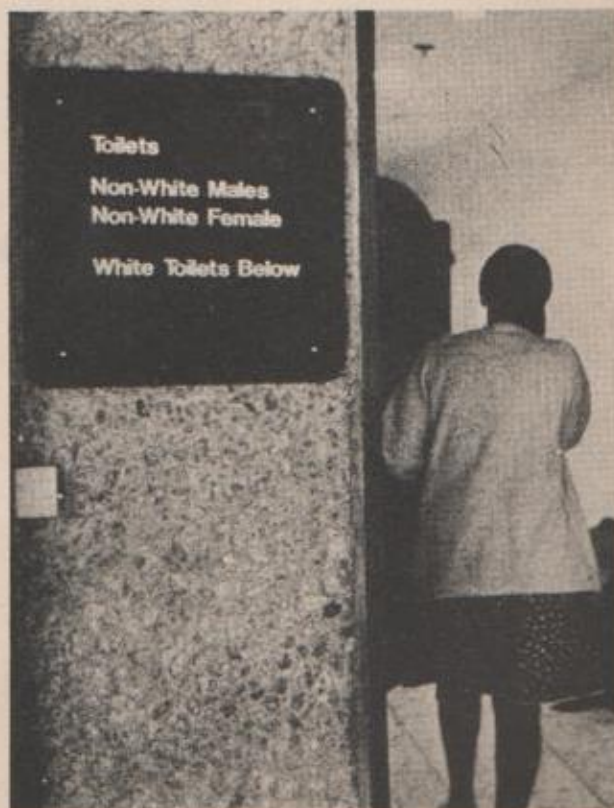
fitted as a major part of the South African industrial working class (which is formally denied the right to do skilled labor and is paid at unskilled rates for the skilled labor it does perform in reality).

The Soweto workers fighting apartheid form an integral and basic part of the international proletariat. The fact that history has not shaped this class in the classic mold, that it is not properly urban or industrial, is itself characteristic of the specific semicolonial nature of this proletariat. But a proletariat it is, and Soweto, like Sharpeville in 1960, is part of the long history of international labor in its struggle for emancipation from capital.

'Self-determination' and 'independence' frauds

The Vorster regime, in collaboration with EEC and American imperialism and with the full support of all white groups and "cultures" in South Africa (Afrikaans, English, Jewish, and German, mainly) is increasingly counterposing the slogan of "self-determination" to the demand for unconditional, non-racial democracy and equality.

In countries like South Africa, in which the whites live in an "imperialist country" and the non-whites in a semicolony (or colony, as Trotsky said in his 1935 letter to South Africa), the "national question" is different from what it was in Tsarist Russia. In Russia the Tsars had a policy of Russification, denying national rights to the Georgians, Uzbeks, Poles, Cossacks, etc., preventing the formation of national states within the empire, denying self-determination and secession. In South



Africa, on the other hand, imperialism, both Boer and British, has always tried to create separate tribal mini-states, has encouraged tribal languages, sponsored "cultural identity," and marked out separate territories for white and "black" (the latter territories further divided among Africans, Indians, and "colored"). The African population was then additionally divided along artificially preserved and sometimes recreated tribal lines. The penultimate culmination of this was the policy of indirect rule; the ultimate form is "independent" Bantu states, with all Xhosas holding citizenship in Xhosaland, all Zulus in Zululand, and all non-Europeans losing South African citizenship. The whites, of course, would then be the sole citizens of the white Republic of South Africa.

As against the Russification policy of the imperialist and racist Tsars, the oppressed peoples of Russia fought for and, after the Russian revolution, won national self-determination, autonomous republics with the right to secede, which right was in fact exercised in some cases. As against the racist self-determination policy of white imperialism in South Africa, however, the oppressed stand for unity and equality, which is opposed by the Western-backed racist regime of South Africa. The "self-determination" sponsored by the regime boils down only to this:

*Sixteen million Africans (or "Bantu") will have tribal homelands without cities, industry, or wealth;

*The 2 million "colored" people, mainly in the Cape, and the 1 million Indians, mainly in Natal, will be placed in a similar situation. In fact, on August 9, after Soweto, Vorster appointed a new commission to advise his government on how to fit the latter two groups into his partition scheme. The previous commission had recommended that steps be taken toward political integration of them, but this was rejected by the government in 1976. The fact that sections of the "colored" oppressed risked their lives in demonstrations supporting the Soweto struggle during the first two weeks of August shows that any attempt by the regime to turn the "coloreds" into whites will not work, nor is it likely to be acceptable to either side. It would involve equalization of wages, which would ruin white-owned industry and farming in the Cape and Natal. It would also be the thin edge of the wedge of general political equality and social integration, the type of reform that would tend to escalate;

*The four and a half million whites will remain the sole citizens and owners of 90 percent of the land area of South Africa, holding all the cities, railways, harbors, airports, mines, farms, universities, hospitals, and natural resources. In fact, it is the whole of South Africa to which both the white oppressors and the black oppressed lay claim, and neither will or can accept a state or citizenship in less than this whole. In this context, any "self-determination" or "autonomy" for any particular ethnic group is entirely a white racist concept. This defines the national question in South Africa. The only possible solution is equal and full citizenship in a single non-racial state, as the Non-European Unity Movement has always said.

Running your own ghettos

An integral part of the policy of Bantuization is local "self-rule" within each location and compound inside the separate white state of South Africa, the 90 percent of the territory left to the whites after partition. Inside Soweto, for example, which like most locations is already divided into artificial tribal units, there will be a new tribal form of the old Location Advisory Boards. The Xhosas in Soweto will "run their own affairs," which means the compulsory use of Xhosa as a medium in the schools in order to further the process of tribalization. The Zulus will have "their own councils," with Zulu as the language medium, as well as Zulu-speaking schools, and so on. There may be an "inter-tribal" council for the whole location of one and a half million people. They will have "their own" tribal police to keep "order." All this is not conjecture but the "solution" to the Soweto problem announced by Vorster, Botha, and Kruger on August 9.

This offer of local self-rule for non-citizens lacking all rights, future immigrant workers holding citizenship in some remote Bantustan, was forcefully rejected by the people of Soweto and Alexandra immediately as Vorster made his announcement. The rejection took the form of burning government buildings, schools, and transport, and a largely successful general strike, which lasted for three days. In Soweto alone, some 200,000 workers stayed off the job. These actions were not staged at the work places or in the cities, where the white regime is in complete control and the whites a majority, but in the ghettos themselves. The strikes clearly said: "We don't want Soweto, we want Johannesburg! We don't want locations and Bantustans, we want the whole of South Africa for everybody!" And it was this implied but deep-seated rejection of "self-determination" and instead the demand for full democratic rights which caused Vorster to say that his location Quislings were no longer "able or willing" to collaborate with him.

The imperialist gold-mining and financial multinational corporations that really own South Africa are beset by the recession, which has affected South African gold shares and the price of gold itself (especially, paradoxically, during the upturn). A boycott by labor in the imperialist countries of South African imports and exports, especially gold, uranium, diamonds, oil, and arms, would deeply assist the South African proletariat in its struggle against racism and apartheid. The boycott is debased and made meaningless by the Communist party and ANC would-be collaborators and by the Western liberals and World Council of Churches, whose constituents have heavy investments in South Africa. It can become a weapon of liberation only if it is based on the principle of non-collaboration with imperialism, that is, if it becomes an international working-class weapon. This requires patient explanation, industrial action, and a self-interested "sacrifice" of immediate and national interests to the long-term and internationalist ones of the world proletariat, of which the workers of Johannesburg, Soweto, Port Elizabeth, Cape Town, and the "homelands" are a basic and inseparable part.

August 25, 1976

Spain



THE FINAL ASSAULT

by PEDRO AGUIRRE

At the moment when the mass movement is preparing for its final battle against the Francoist dictatorship, all the contradictions born of Spanish capitalist development are sharpening in an extraordinary manner. Spanish society has been transformed into a developed capitalist society. But this transformation has occurred within the framework of a bloody and repressive dictatorship. All the contradictions and corruption characteristic of imperialist decline are thus being doubly intensified within the Spanish state.

The social composition of the country has changed substantially. Already the active population in the countryside represents no more than 25 percent of the total population. The greater part of the population is concentrated in the great industrial cities and the working class represents more than 70 percent of the total population.

But this process of capitalist transformation has not been accompanied by substantial structural reforms. Spanish capitalism has relied on completely external factors for its "miracle" of industrialization: the incomes of the workers forced to emigrate to other European countries, the income from tourism, foreign investment, etc. Today, when the crisis of international capitalism is being openly manifested, the structural weakness of Spanish capitalism is likewise becoming patent, along with its lack of competitive strength compared with Europe, its inability to grant significant improvements to the mass movement in the country, and so on.

For years the maintenance of the dictatorship as a specific form of bourgeois rule enabled the ruling class to extract superprofits through the superexploitation of the workers and to prevent the organization of the mass movement. But throughout the fifteen years of struggles since the general strike of the Asturian miners in 1962, the mass movement has been imposing its positions, has increased its organization, drawn in all the oppressed sectors behind its mobilizations, and has now signed the death warrant of the Francoist dictatorship.

The regime that arose out of the defeat of the proletariat in the civil war is no longer useful for Spanish capitalism. It is no longer capable of preventing the working class from fighting for its economic demands or from organizing. The number of strikes has risen to levels comparable to those of the most combative countries of Europe. Concurrently, the maintenance of the dictatorship constitutes an extraordinary factor of politicization in each of the mobilizations; the lack of legal channels for organization stimulates the self-organization of the masses. Finally, the dictatorship also constitutes an obstacle to the organization of the bourgeoisie itself into political parties.

Spanish capitalism has been conscious of this reality for some time now. But it has run into a total impasse in offering a solution. To immediately abandon the dictatorship, to do so without organizing its own forces while confronting a workers movement and a number of workers parties with great experience in organization, would run the risk of opening up an accelerated process toward proletarian revolution, which the bourgeoisie and the reformist parties would be unable to divert into parliamentary channels. But to maintain the dictatorship meant to increase the politicization and organization of the mass movement and to allow its growing experience in united activity. The means by which Spanish capitalism attempted to escape from this impasse was the "reform of the dictatorship." The first government of Juan Carlos became the agency charged with carrying this process forward.

Failure of the first government

The essential objective of the project of reform of Francoism was to avoid an open confrontation with the mass movement, to avoid the overthrow of the dictatorship through the direct action of the masses, to avoid the opening of a prerevolutionary process. Spanish capitalism hoped to be able to succeed in transforming the dictatorship into a strong state before this confrontation came

about. Winning some legitimacy for the monarchy in the eyes of the masses lay in the center of this operation. This required that the Communist party of Spain (PCE — Partido Comunista de España) and the far left remain illegal, while the development of the bourgeois parties and the Social Democracy would be fostered and conditions would be created that would permit a future trade-union division in the workers' ranks.

Achievement of this project required that three conditions be met: ability to establish an "internal pact" with the apparatus of the dictatorship; integration of the "democratic opposition" into the plan; and demobilization of the mass movement.

Far from accepting the reform of the dictatorship, however, the apparatus of the regime fiercely opposed it. Thus, the government, the realization of whose project had to be effected through the Cortes (the Francoist "parliament") and the Consejo del Reino (Council of the Realm), ran into open opposition from these bodies. Nor was the democratic bourgeoisie able to be integrated. From the beginning it was aware of the advantages the government's project would grant it, and some of its spokesmen did not fail to indicate this openly.

The reform of the dictatorship held out the possibility of making up for lost time, of organizing more solidly, and of allowing the Social Democracy to gain strength while the PCE and the organizations of the far left would remain illegal. But the democratic bourgeoisie could not openly and actively compromise with this project. To do so would have risked precisely the loss of any possibility of legitimizing its "democratic" character in the eyes of the mass movement. The action of the "democratic bourgeoisie" had to be centered on achieving a pact with the workers organizations on the basis of the bourgeoisie's own program whereby the bourgeoisie would attempt to remain the protagonist of the mass movement while preparing the conditions for compelling the traditional workers parties to impose a "social pact" on the workers movement in order to make it possible to prevent the end of the dictatorship from being transformed into the beginning of the revolution. This would grant capital a margin for maneuver in order to reconstruct the bourgeois state and would definitively assure the time needed for resolving the crisis of Spanish capitalism.

But it was above all the mass movement that resoundingly brought down and destroyed the projects of the first government of the monarchy. After the death of Franco the mass movement, with the working class in the lead, launched the greatest mobilizations of the past forty years. And within this process the general strike of Vitoria, the massive and violent confrontation with the repressive forces, the general strike of solidarity in Euzkadi (a million people participating), and the solidarity demonstrations throughout the Spanish state constituted the final end of the government project, the practical proof of the impossibility of "anticipating" the action of the masses.

General lines of the evolution of the mass movement*

From its origin the present mass movement has been marked by some original characteristics which have defined its development since the beginning of the 1960s and have forged its capacity for resistance and offensive against the dictatorship. Today these characteristics continue to shape the final assault on Francoism and contain the key to the future activity of the masses.

The profoundly unitary character of the mass movement has been decisive on the one hand for the protagonist role of motor force which has been assumed by the industrial proletariat in the battle against the dictatorship and exploitation in such a way that the other exploited and oppressed sectors have come into action by passing through the breeches opened up in the Francoist armor by the struggles of the workers, and on the other hand for the clarity with which the workers and people have perceived the existence of a common enemy, the dictatorship. An immense aspiration for unity in action and active solidarity has been present in all the workers and people's mobilizations, from the 1962 miners strike to the Vitoria general strike.

Today this aspiration has become a decisive factor in the situation; no communist policy can situate itself on the margins of this aspiration, and still less in opposition to it.

The unevenness of experience and mass consciousness has been a product in the first place of the objective contradictions within which the working class took shape during the postwar period, the accelerated social restructuring that was at the origin of capitalist development in the country beginning in 1959 and the consequent effects on the national question and regional inequalities. Second, this unevenness is the product of the illegality imposed by the dictatorship on the organization of the workers, which made the existence of stable mass organizations impossible, thus making it difficult to accumulate and transmit the experiences undergone by the mass movement. Third, it grows out of the reformist illusions peddled by the practice of the PCE, the major subjective obstacle to overcoming this unevenness, to waging comprehensive struggles under proletarian leadership, which are summed up today in the general strike against the Francoist monarchy.

The new rise of the mass movement since the death of the dictator, the incorporation of the immense majority of the workers and popular sectors into the struggle, the continuity these struggles have acquired, the imposition of a certain margin of legality on the dictatorship, the experience of general struggles of a political character (amnesty, for example) and of struggles for economic

*The following section is drawn from the resolutions of the recent congress of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria/Euzkadi to Askatasuna-VI (LCR/ETA-VI — Revolutionary Communist League/Basque Nation and Freedom-Sixth Assembly), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Spain.

demands in various sectors waged on a state-wide (banks, telephones, health, teaching) or regional scale (construction, metals, textiles, etc.) have all modified this unevenness in a twofold sense:

* On the one hand, extending both the upper and lower limits of the activity of the masses in which more basic levels of organization and consciousness are appearing ("legal" strikes and demonstrations with the applauding of the police, strictly legal organizational forms) along with levels higher than those ever achieved before (strikes led by assemblies or coordinating bodies of delegates, the Vitoria general strike, massive demonstrations for amnesty and the dissolution of the repressive corps, etc.);

* On the other hand, a shift "to the left" of the entire activity of the masses is occurring, which raises the average political and organizational level.

The disorganization and "atomization" of the workers has been the fundamental political function of the Francoist dictatorship. For years it was only during the peaks of the most radical struggles that the mass movement achieved a direct organizational form: the assembly. Under these conditions, the workers movement created the sort of organization for its vanguard best suited to its situation of illegality: the workers commissariats.

Thus, while it prevented the stable organization of the masses, the dictatorship simultaneously stimulated the masses' instinct for self-organization, even though this could occur only in temporary and discontinuous forms having diverse content, from the "passive" assemblies to the assemblies as decision-making centers. The latter forms arose especially in the big industrial centers with the greatest tradition of struggle and less frequently in more dispersed sectors or those more separated from the "school of organization" the capitalist factory represents for the workers.

These conditions account for the sort of development that gave rise to the great desire for organization with which the mass movement greeted the disappearance of the dictator, a development in which two organizational processes of distinct political content were intimately combined:

* On the one hand, a firm aspiration to reconstruct the mass organizations that are "natural" in capitalist society, especially the trade unions but also popular neighborhood organizations, sectoral organizations (women, youth, etc.), and so on;

* On the other hand, a search for forms of self-organization based on the direct exercise of workers democracy, forms capable of assembling the working class and all the popular sectors in struggle, which concentrate all their authority in the rank and file and see themselves as capable of responding to any sort of social, political, or economic problem: the price-watch committees that have appeared in some neighborhoods and the committees to investigate Francoist crimes which

have arisen in some areas of Euzkadi respond to particular themes in this process. The tendency to lend organizational support to solidarity and overall struggles, which has been manifested, for example, in the past struggles in the Madrid educational system, goes in the same direction. And, above all, the extension of the experiences of coordination of delegate assemblies, the great acquisition of struggles since the beginning of this year, serves to verify the depth of this desire for self-organization.

The most important thing is to understand that these two processes are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary emerge as linked in practice within this great overall attempt at organic recomposition of the mass movement through which we are now living. The movement's conquest of legality will produce a combined development of these processes in such a way that the construction of the trade unions in particular will itself have a strong content of self-organization and will coexist with experiences of direct self-organization in the factories, neighborhoods, and so on.

The contradiction between the levels of combativity on the one hand and political consciousness on the other has been another of the basic characteristics of the mass movement. The workers have had the experience of repeatedly having to wage prolonged and very difficult battles to win minimal demands; there has thus developed an unquenchable combative will, a profound hatred for the dictatorship, and an immense longing for liberty. The mass movement has acquired a well-developed anti-capitalist instinct, but its consciousness has not yet been able to clearly assimilate the experiences of the conscious and direct struggles against the bourgeoisie in all its political variants. Francoism has acted simultaneously as a stimulant to the politicization of the movement, which has had to confront the repressive instruments of the dictatorship, and as a veil obscuring the actual anticapitalist content of the movement's activity.

Since the death of the dictator, the masses have entered an accelerated process of politicization. They want to be active politically, have seen liberty within their grasp and have fought for it, awakening all the demands, all the "running accounts," of forty years of exploitation and oppression. Undoubtedly, their "democratic illusions" have not only been maintained but have even been extended, but these illusions are permanently subjected to the test of action. The attitude with which the mass movement has approached government "tolerance" is exemplary in this regard. Understanding that the decapitation of the dictatorship held out unprecedented possibilities for making use of legality and for winning a de facto "legality" going well beyond that allowed by the Francoist legal code, the workers, guiding themselves on the basis of the effectiveness of action without making a fetish of either legality or illegality, made extensive use of the Candidaturas Unitarias Democráticas (CUD — Democratic Unitary Candidacies) during the trade-union elections and the Neighborhood Associations, as well as various semilegal organizations,

especially those of an anti-repressive character, while always maintaining the assembly in the center of their organization. When the narrow limits of this "tolerance" became clear, the movement, in spite of the legalism and general moderation of the majority workers leaderships, quickly developed the appropriate slogans (dissolution of the repressive corps, exaction of responsibility for Francoist crimes, rehiring of workers fired for trade-union activity, etc.) and the proper organs (delegates) for the new experiences.

Thus, as always occurs during impetuous upsurges of the mass movement, class consciousness began to become "the most dynamic factor in the situation"; leaps forward in the situation of the masses that would have taken years under normal conditions now occurred in a matter of days.

The weakness of the hegemony of the PCE is a factor which politically sums up (in both its aspects, "weakness" and "hegemony") all the characteristics mentioned above. The essential inability of the historic Social Democracy to fulfill its political role under conditions of clandestine existence permitted the PCE to play the political role of reformism without competition; it is on this that its hegemony over the mass movement is based. But the whole objective dynamic of the struggles has repeatedly come into practical contradiction with the pacifist and conservative line of the PCE, within which the activity of the masses is supposed to have the exclusive function of exerting pressure. Because of this there have been rather frequent instances of the reformist leadership's being massively outflanked and mobilizations have occurred that have escaped reformist control from the outset (especially in Euzkadi). These factors explain how revolutionary positions more or less consis-

tent with a line of class independence have, in competition with this reformist hegemony, acquired a mass audience and have been able to contest in practice the PCE's leadership of the movement and often to win that leadership. There is no doubt that these instances of outflanking are not irreversible and do not represent any political break with reformism by the masses, but they have meant an accumulation of experiences, of acquisitions of the movement, which embody the existing possibilities of openly joining the battle with reformism for leadership of the mobilization of the masses.

This generalization of the movement, the first phase of which we are now experiencing, has already implied and will imply even more strongly in the immediate future the growth of the traditional organizations, not only the PCE but also and especially the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español — Spanish Socialist Workers party, the Social Democracy). But this growth does not eliminate the possibilities of intervention by revolutionaries, who will extensively reap the fruits of the "shift to the left" of the activity of the masses to which we referred above.

The hegemony of the PCE will be contested both by the Social Democracy and by the far left; its political line will thus feel the effects of having to make concessions to the bourgeoisie and the workers simultaneously. The relationship of forces within the mass movement as a whole will take on an extreme mobility, which will be reflected in processes of recomposition and internal crises within the various political currents.

This totality of characteristics is now acting within the movement as a system of forces whose results will alter the leadership according to the concrete course of events, but the basic thrust will persist: the class polarization of Spanish society.

Suárez: a transitory government

Big capital has clearly become aware of the failure of the project of "reforming the dictatorship." From the very moment of its formation, the second government of King Juan Carlos publicly affirmed its transitory character. The Suárez government totally lacks any program for responding to the key problems of Spanish capitalism. Its entire operation is aimed at fostering a gradual erosion of the relationship of social forces in order to allow the bourgeoisie to acquire the possibility of establishing a new political stability based on the Christian Democracy and the Social Democracy. This has been the meaning of all the initiatives taken up to now:

"The attempt to defuse the issue of amnesty and above all to rob it of its content as an immediate conquest. The amnesty granted by the government affected nearly all the militants of the PCE who were in prison. But many members of the ETA and the LCR/ETA-VI, the great majority of them Basque militants, continue to languish in Francoist jails; in fact, conditions in these



prisons have even worsened. The basic objective of the government is to make the mass movement accept an evolution by stages in this domain as well as in others. While cleverly lamenting the limits of the scope of this amnesty, an important part of the supposedly "independent" press has claimed that with the "concession of amnesty" the basic problems now shift to different political themes. Even Felipe González, secretary general of the PSOE, has contributed to the orientation of the government, explaining that total amnesty would be possible only under a "provisional government."

"Accelerating the division of the workers movement to the advantage of the Social Democracy through direct and privileged negotiation with the Social Democracy. Behind the surface appearance of simple exchanges of impressions, the meetings of the president of the government with Socialist leaders and above all with Felipe González himself are aimed at pursuing this objective.

"Maintaining the "principle" of the illegality of the PCE, not because it is believed that this illegality is really a principle, but in an attempt to secure greater concessions and above all to make sure that the workers party that holds hegemony will accept the imposition of the "social pact."

"Reducing "tolerance" of the activity of the masses: minimal broadening of controllable legal activity combined with greater rigidity in regard to whatever becomes uncontrollable; systematic repression of street actions; organization or paraorganization of provocative actions; intensification of repression on questions that are "non-negotiable," such as the monarchy, the army, strike pickets, and so on.

Economically, the activity of the government is also reduced to taking tactical measures. On the one hand to place leadership of economic policy directly in the hands of big capital, on the other hand to delay any measures of economic stabilization until the general elections have been held so that greater "political confidence" can exist in the mass movement. In view of the facts that this year's inflation rate will be the highest ever, the problem of unemployment (there were nearly a million unemployed at the end of last year) has not been broached, Spanish capitalism is still far from being able to keep up with the relative economic reactivation that has begun in Europe, the entry of currency has diminished considerably, and so on, this means that the government will face the coming autumn and winter, when the labor contracts will come up for renewal, in a very tough social atmosphere.

The democratic opposition: broaden the 'pact'

It is significant that the formation of the Coordinación Democrática, which "overcame" the previous division between the Junta Democrática and the Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática, occurred immediately after the Vitoria events.(1) With the Coordinación, the dem-

ocratic bourgeoisie sought to provide itself with a body that would really be able to perform the function of coming to an agreement with the government over the "peaceful transition," the definitive abandoning of the dictatorship. Hence, the fundamental objective for which the CD was created was simply to exist in order to bring this pact about. Initiatives of mass mobilization, even reduced and controlled mobilization, were excluded from the CD's program. But the enormous pressure of social struggle prevented the CD from remaining completely locked into these positions. If it had not responded to the demands of the movement, and in particular if it had remained totally inactive on the question of the political prisoners, the CD would have begun to lose its credibility in the eyes of the masses. This is what induced the Coordinación to call a pro-amnesty week at the beginning of the summer. But if it hoped to be able to control these demonstrations, the CD made a big mistake. In each province and city up and down the Spanish state tens of thousands of people came into the streets, most often clashing with the repressive forces, combining slogans on amnesty with calls for the dissolution of the repressive corps and the exaction of responsibility for the crimes of the dictatorship.

This open outflanking of "amnesty week" and the consequent effects on the maneuvers of the new government have reshaped the activity of the democratic opposition, inducing it to take a new step to the right in its orientation:

"Adapting itself to the Suárez government's "transformation by stages," the democratic opposition has begun to develop the theory of partial conquests, conquests which in any event are no more than promises in most cases. The "democratic break" and the provisional government, up to now axes of the opposition's orientation, have given way to the theory of a "government of broad representation" or a "government of broad democratic consensus" which would serve to "prepare" general elections.

"The democratic opposition is now seeking new pact structures in which the PCE would still be present, but with less weight than it has in the CD, bodies which above all would be exclusively frameworks for pacts, with no pretensions in regard to mobilizations. The re-



cent documents of the "32" and the "44," the *Cena de Aravaca*," and so on(2) represent various forms of preparing structures for pacts that are broader (in the direction of the bourgeois right) than the *Coordinación Democrática* and that reduce the already minimal program of the CD.

*In this sense the role of the CD must continue to be mainly to assert its mere existence. It is symptomatic that it was after the very success of amnesty week that there began to be more insistent talk that the CD was "in troubled waters" (as was pointed out by Tamames, the PCE representative in the CD). In reality, even controlled and limited mobilizations are scarcely compatible with the negotiating projects, when both sides are supposed to be working within the same body. The CD is ever more clearly a vehicle (within which the bourgeois opposition stands side by side with the two major workers parties) through which the Christian Democracy and the PSOE are carrying out only a small part of their policy. The maintenance of this body corresponds only to the need to maintain the illusions of the mass movement in some sort of pact organ and to an attempt to confine the activity of the masses to the limits laid down by the interclass bloc. The PCE and the three Maoist organizations that are part of the CD have exactly the function of transmitting this pactist policy to the mass movement.

*Finally, the democratic opposition is seeking to establish a political framework that permits strict control over the pace of the transition from dictatorship to democracy. The attempts to work out a new constitution, the search for a single body through which to negotiate on the scale of the entire Spanish state, the attempts to concretize governmental plans, the drawing up of "shadow cabinets" (leaving adequate room for those sectors of the regime willing to negotiate) — all this is oriented toward convincing big capital and the army that it is possible to "take the plunge" without causing the definitive explosion of the social crisis. The attitude of the PCE itself toward the U.S. military bases in the Spanish state, affirmed by Santiago Carrillo himself, who said that the Communist party does not demand the dismantling of these bases under the new democratic state, is also aimed at winning the confidence of big capital.

Our alternative

A central question is now posed for the mass movement: What more is needed to get rid of the dictatorship? The working class and all the oppressed sectors have waged repeated struggles, undergone constant experiences of general strikes, occupied the streets, and utilized all available forms of struggle, legal and illegal. But the dictatorship has not yet been overthrown. The majority workers parties have refused to offer a mass action political response to this question. Their pacifist policy requires the subordination of the movement to the programs and projects of the bourgeoisie.



For us, the response is composed of four elements, which taken together define the political alternative to the present situation: the battle for immediate election by universal suffrage of a Constituent Assembly; the battle for the formation of National Assemblies that permit the immediate self-determination of the oppressed nationalities; the mobilization to carry the overthrow of Francoism through to the end; and, through all this, and combining it with all the social demands of the masses, the battle for the organization of the general strike.

Immediate elections to a Constituent Assembly

The government's refusal to legalize the whole of the mass movement and the workers parties, as well as the conciliatory attitude of the democratic opposition, which seeks a "constituent" period under the control of a strong state with significant restrictions on the full exercise of democratic rights, imply the refusal of all of them to face immediate democratic elections in which the decisive weight of the mass movement would be expressed in the conquest of clear positions of strength for the workers organizations, despite all the limits and deformations of elections in reflecting the relationship of class forces.

But the mass movement now possesses sufficient strength to defeat all the plans of the bourgeoisie. The immediate convocation of a Constituent Assembly means the legalization of all the political and trade-union organizations and the full exercise of democratic rights, in short, the end of the dictatorship. It thus constitutes the central political slogan today by which to stimulate the activity of the masses against the Francoist regime and by which to confront any maneuver that, in the name of "democracy" or "democratic consensus," deprives the movement of the right to provide itself with the constitution and government it chooses itself. Merged with this battle, the raising of the slogan "For the Republic" must serve the mass movement to oppose the at-

tempts, accepted by the democratic opposition and the leading workers parties, to maintain the monarchy as the guarantor of the stability of the bourgeois regime.

Self-Determination. National Assemblies

The national question has become one of the most acute problems of the class struggle in the Spanish state. The general social crisis which constitutes the essential characteristic of the present situation has generated a growing wave of radicalization against one of the essential elements of the Francoist dictatorship: ultracentralism, the fierce repression of any form of expression of the nationalities. The present government has been compelled to freeze the project of "regionalization" that had been initiated by Fraga, minister of the interior in the previous government, conscious that this project would serve only to sharpen the struggle of the oppressed nationalities. Maintaining national unity "above all else" and rejecting any "negotiation" in this domain, the government is attempting to find compromise solutions with the "democratic" bourgeoisie of the nationalities under which this bourgeoisie commits itself to uphold acceptable projects that integrate the present sensitivity of the masses. This has been the essential objective of the contacts between the government and the Catalan democratic opposition.

For their part, the reformist workers parties are taking many initiatives to find pact formulas that are acceptable to the bourgeoisie of the nationalities and avoid the proletariat's revolutionary assumption of the struggle against national oppression. The general political framework of this policy is summed up in the slogan for the "autonomy status" granted during the Seguna Republic, a status which amounted to dependence on the decisions of the central Cortes and implied absolute rejection of the exercise of the right of self-determination by the oppressed nationalities. The formation of the Consell de Forces Politiques(3) (Council of Political Forces) in Catalonia (in which only bourgeois parties and the PCE participate) and the support to the Basque Government (whose basic force is the Basque Nationalist party) in Euzkadi are the concrete ways in which the PCE is attempting to integrate the radicalization of the oppressed nationalities into its interclass projects.

As against this, we revolutionary Marxists affirm the sovereign right of the Catalanian, Basque, and Galician peoples to decide for themselves what sort of relations they want to maintain with the rest of the Spanish state; we pledge ourselves to completely respect this decision, even if it is to separate and form an independent state. Of course, we believe that in the present historical situation separation would not constitute the most adequate alternative for the interests of the proletariat and people of these nationalities. We believe that in the present circumstances the most adequate framework is a federal republic of all the nationalities and regions that are now under the Spanish state. But we affirm the right of all these nationalities to separate; we defend the immediate exercise of the right of self-determination of all of them as an inalienable principle. We thus reject any other measure that does not include this right.

Neither the central Constituent Assembly nor the "provisional governments" imposed on the Basque, Galician, and Catalanian masses represents a real political solution to national oppression, nor do they have any right to interfere with or control national self-determination. The slogan of the election by universal suffrage of a sovereign National Assembly for each of the nationalities which would guarantee national self-determination is the objective that responds to this problem.

Complete the destruction of the dictatorship

A single virus can infect the whole country again. This is an idea we stress constantly in our agitation. The bourgeoisie is attempting to base itself on a substantial part of the dictatorship to reconstruct the new "democratic" state. The dictatorship has been the specific form taken by the bourgeois state for forty years. Its complete dismantling constitutes a real danger for the class power of the capitalists. But the mass movement cannot agree that the democratic liberties it wins can be defended and guaranteed by the same rifles that murdered five revolutionaries a little less than a year ago or by the same repressive corps that have massacred every demonstration and mobilization. The dissolution of the repressive corps, the dismantling of all Francoist legislation, and the exaction of responsibility for all the crimes of the dictatorship constitute objectives that the mass movement cannot abandon.

In addition, the repressive corps form the basis from which the fascist attacks are organized and carried out. From Mantejerra to the kidnapping and probable murder of "Pertur," a militant of the ETA-V, to the murder of Normy Menchaca in Santurce to the attacks on the "del Antigua" neighborhood in San Sebastián to the sacking of the Usera youth club in Madrid, the fascist commandos have been created out of the repressive forces themselves, especially the political police and the Guardia Civil.(4) The struggle against all this must be prepared immediately. The committees to investigate the Santurce crime and the Pertur kidnapping and the antifascist vigilance committees that have begun to be set up are the instruments of struggle and organization with which to take this battle forward today and with which to assure tomorrow's fight for the complete destruction of the murderous dictatorship.

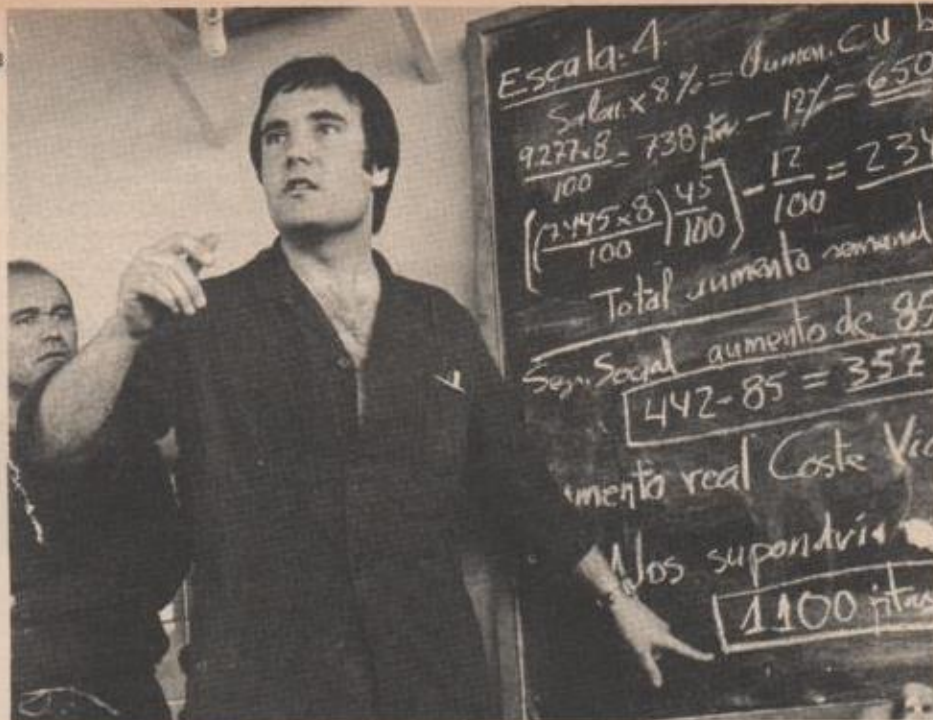
Organize the general strike

The perspective of the general strike and its use as the central slogan at times like the present correspond to four objectives:

*Unification of the central political slogans and the economic and social demands of the masses, centralizing the struggle to bring down the dictatorship and the anticapitalist mobilization into a single battle.

*Development of the centralization of the organs the masses have created for the struggle, from the workers commissions and workers parties to the factory strike committees.

*To make the motor-force of the mass movement in the overthrow of the dictatorship a living and conscious factor in the activity of the movement itself, combat-



ing the attempts of the democratic bourgeoisie and the reformist parties to make the conquest of democracy appear as the result of their pacifist policy.

*To cut the ground from under the policy of "partial conquests" adopted by the democratic opposition, to place the necessity for the overthrow of the dictatorship in the very center of the activity of the masses.

A decisive autumn

The battles of coming months will be decisive for the political situation in the Spanish state. Through these battles the mass movement will have the opportunity to bring down the dictatorship definitively.

The labor negotiations

The economic decisions adopted by the government mean that the mass movement will face unusual toughness from the employers, with the threat of unemployment and repression; in addition, the bourgeoisie will attempt to exacerbate trade-union division.

As against this, the working class will be able to triumph only if it strengthens the weapons it has forged in the course of the first months of this year: comprehensive struggles, united platforms of demands, assemblies and delegates (of these assemblies) for negotiations, and the strike.

The collapse of the CNS (the official, vertical union) has already gone so far that the employers themselves believe that it has ceased to be useful for negotiating contracts. To attempt to base the organization of the struggle for trade-union demands solely on the structures of militant CNS delegates would be a serious error.

In order to stimulate self-organization and a united struggle coordination is necessary, genuine united activity among the workers commissions, the Unión General del Trabajo (UGT — General Union of Labor), the USO (Unión Sindical Obrera — Workers Union Federa-

tion), and the other trade-union bodies. The task of such coordination is to provide the means by which to stimulate the coordination of the representative bodies of the rank-and-file assemblies so that the working class can deal with all the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie and can provide itself with united instruments with which to direct its struggle for demands.

Trade-union unity

While the leadership of the UGT is maintaining its divisive positions in the trade-union domain, the majority current in the workers commissions, the PCE, continues to fail to lend these bodies a stable organizational form on the factory and branch level and continues to reduce the activity of the workers commissions to the activity carried out by the narrow leadership structures that control them. This poses a real danger to trade-union unity, which is a need profoundly felt by the immense majority of the workers of our country. All the present projects attempting to achieve this unity remain confined to the limits laid down by agreements between the bureaucrats of the workers commissions and those of the UGT. In this domain as well, the reformist workers organizations are trying to deprive the masses of their leading role, to avoid the active role of the masses in the united construction of the trade unions.

As against all these maneuvers, the battle for a united trade union born of a constituent trade-union congress based on assemblies in the factories and work sites must continue to be the central axis of the trade-union alternative of the revolutionary Marxists. But the practical realization of this trade-union congress is possible only after the conquest of legality for the entire workers movement. And this poses the necessity of offering concrete tactical responses in the present situation.

The first axis of this tactic rests on the necessity of the workers commissions' adopting a stable, organized trade-union form, from the factory level to the leadership bodies, which permits the effective activity of the thousands of workers who identify with the commissions and

prevents the leading bureaucracy from substituting for this activity. Thus, the battle for a democratic organization of the general congress of the workers commissions that was called by the general assembly of the workers commissions held last spring must serve as the occasion for the workers commissions to adopt a stable and centralized organized trade-union structure, democratically elected from the rank and file to the leadership. Along with this, the battle for the conquest of legality for the workers commissions must be placed in the center of revolutionary activity, stimulating the organization of open sales of the bulletins of the workers commissions at all levels, the opening of headquarters for the commissions, etc.

Preparing the conditions for the future united trade union and providing it with adequate instruments at the factory level with which to negotiate the contract demands of the workers requires that this battle be combined with the stimulation of the formation of united factory unions that include all the trade-union currents that exist in each factory.

The struggle for amnesty

The government attempts to divert mass attention from the question of amnesty have not succeeded. Especially in Euzkadi, the will of the masses to continue the fight until not a single political prisoner or exile remains has not flagged. But this struggle must be redoubled, because the relationship of forces is such that the mass movement can win total victory in this domain more than in any other.

But in addition, the broadening of the battle for amnesty in the factories, the highpoint of which was marked by the demonstration of 250,000 people in Bilbao, permits and requires that this slogan be placed in the very center of the negotiations over the demands of the working class. In many workers bastions amnesty for all those fired for political or trade-union activity since 1936 has already been won; these victories must be extended and the same battle must be won in all the sectors in which the dictatorship and the employers have removed the most combative workers from their jobs.

Against the fake referendum

After postponing it again and again and without ever defining its exact content, the government has now announced that the referendum will be held at the end of this year. The position on this should be unanimous: Out with the referendum! No hesitation, no vacillation on this point while amnesty has not been granted and while the workers parties and organizations continue to be illegal. But the referendum can provide an opportunity for a united mass mobilization around central political objectives: For the election of the Constituent Assembly. For the republic. For the election of sovereign National Assemblies for each nationality. The workers' response must be unified and the unity in action of all the workers parties and trade-union organizations must be structured around these slogans. This is the "workers vote" that must be counterposed to the farcical referendum of the Francoist monarchy. □

FOOTNOTES:

1. The Coordinación Democrática was founded on March 29, 1976; it included various bourgeois groups and personalities (the Christian Democracy among them), the PSOE (Social Democrats), the Communist party, and two Maoist-centrist organizations, the Labor party (PTE) and the Communist Movement of Spain (MCE). A third centrist formation, the Revolutionary Workers Organization (ORT), has since joined. The Coordinación arose out of the fusion of two previously existing organs of class collaboration, the Junta Democrática (Democratic Council), which was founded in July 1974 and included the Communist party, the PTE, and several not very significant bourgeois personalities, and the Plataforma de Convergencia Democrática (Platform of Democratic Convergence), which was created in June 1975 and included the Social Democrats (PSOE), several Christian Democratic groupings, and the MCE and ORT.

2. The two documents were published immediately after the statement of the Coordinación Democrática just after the amnesty decree. They were signed by bourgeois representatives in the CD, representatives of the PSOE and PCE, and other representatives of the bourgeoisie not present in the Coordinación, while the Maoist-centrist groups were excluded. These documents put forward a much more "shaded" criticism of the government's reformist policy. The Cena de Aravaca, a dinner held on August 5, was a meeting of the same type. The PSOE and the Maoist-centrist groups of the CD did not participate. During the dinner there was discussion of the formation of a united opposition body "broader" than the CD; there was also speculation about the formation of a provisional government.

3. The Consell (Council of Political Forces) was formed early this year and includes only bourgeois forces plus the United Socialist party of Catalonia (PSUC), which is the Catalanian branch of the Communist party. It was seen by the Catalanian bourgeoisie as an alternative to the Asamblea de Catalunya (Assembly of Catalonia), which is made up of various left centrist groups and mass neighborhood organizations, workers commissions, etc., in addition to some bourgeois personalities and the Communist party. The Asamblea had played a role in many mobilizations.

4. In Montejurra two participants in the annual festival of the Carlist followers of Victor Hugo were assassinated and many were wounded. The shots were fired by alleged partisans of an opposing Carlist current, who in reality were members of fascist and parapolic groups. The Guardia Civil did not intervene, even though the presence of armed elements in the area had been reported the day before. "Pertur" was kidnapped in the French part of the Basque country last July 23 by "unknown elements" (members of parapolic gangs). His present whereabouts are unknown and it is not unlikely that he has been murdered. Menchaca was murdered in July of this year during a demonstration for amnesty. The killers were dressed in civilian clothes but were recognized as members of the Guardia Civil.



THE RACIST THREAT IN BRITAIN

by **ANDREW JENKINS**

At the beginning of this year, there was a great deal of official self-congratulation over the satisfactory state of race relations in Britain. Both Alex Lyon, the minister responsible for immigration and race relations, and a representative of the Pakistani Embassy announced that apart from a few loose ends that remained to be tied up (like the entry of the East African Asians who hold British passports and of the dependents of those immigrants who had arrived before 1973), Britain was well on the way to becoming a successful multiracial society.

This mood was so pervasive that even Siva Sivanandan, a radical commentator on race questions, wrote that British capitalism was renouncing the use of racism and was embarked on a course of integrating the black middle class. An apparently acid test came when the racist demagogue Enoch Powell made a major speech accusing officials of producing fraudulently low figures on black immigration: the speech was greeted with near total apathy. Six months later, however, Alex Lyon had been sacked, two fascist candidates had been elected to local councils, the Tory press had lionized a National Socialist who had displayed a sign stating his refusal to sell his house to blacks, three black students had been murdered, and more than a thousand attacks on immigrants had been registered.

Shift in immigration policy

It was not surprising that there was such a growth in racist activity. British capitalism's need to decisively change its pattern of immigration and its immigration laws had become pressing. Since the early 1950s, British capitalism had recruited black workers from the Commonwealth. These immigrants settled in the country and came to legally possess full civil rights. This put the immigrants in Britain in a far stronger position than those in other countries of West Europe, who generally entered on labor contracts for limited periods of time. Beginning in 1962, the ruling class started to limit the right of black Commonwealth citizens to enter the country.

These moves were accelerated as the long capitalist boom came to its end and as British capitalism relinquished its imperial policy for one based on the EEC. One of the more embarrassing links with the old empire was the existence of several hundred thousand black people who held passports proclaiming that they were citizens of the United Kingdom and the Colonies and who thus had a right to enter Britain. The first attempt to qualify that right was carried out in 1968 by James Callaghan, then Labour Home Secretary. An Act was passed that stipulated that only those British passport holders who had a connection with the United Kingdom by virtue of their own birth (or that of their father's or grandfather's) had an automatic right to enter the country. Full British citizenship had become a function of color. The 1971 Immigration Act passed under the Tories ensured that future immigrants would not be allowed to settle but would come over on limited duration labor contracts and would be under police supervision and subject to savage deportation clauses. The effect of these laws was not merely to control immigration but to put pressure on those black workers already in the country. The final step needed to complete this process is the passage of a new British Nationality Act (Labour Home Secretary Roy Jenkins has recently announced that this is in preparation) that would make a clear distinction between a British passport holder and U.K. citizenship, so that only the latter would automatically have the right to enter the country. Another step aimed at finally ending the old pattern of immigration will be to limit the right of existing immigrants to bring in their dependents, mainly from the Indian subcontinent. Part and parcel of this final pulling up of the draw-bridge on black immigration was the encouragement of racist moods among the white working class.

Inciting the racist wave

Part of the reason for the susceptibility of the working class to the racist offensive has been the extremely chauvinist strand within left Labourist ideology. The Labour lefts have waged a consistent campaign for import controls to "protect British jobs." This campaign allowed fascists to intervene in the trade unions and to point out that another logical way to protect British jobs was to get rid of the immigrants. Unfortunately, a section of the trade union bureaucracy has followed this path.

The TUC Catering and Hotel Committee called on the Labour government to reduce the number of work vouchers for immigrants, a request that was soon granted. In February 1976 it was revealed that the Department of Employment, then run by the left-winger Michael Foot, had issued a memorandum stating that work permits would not be renewed for foreign workers if British nationals were available for work. It was also made clear that these sackings would not be subject to appeal against unfair dismissal. Perhaps the worst example of this trend occurred in early June, at the height of the racist hysteria, when the TUC Hotel and Catering Committee went to the Home Office to ask for tighter controls to flush out "illegal" immigrants. The Committee demanded that the "Immigration Act should be amended to force potential employers to check whether a foreign national seeking work had or needed to have a work permit."

The final aspect that led to the upsurge of racism relates to the overall relationship of class forces in Britain. The Labour government has registered considerable success in forcing down the standard of living of the working class and in allowing profit levels to rise by means of the first phase of the "Social Contract." Social expenditure has been restrained, which has meant a deterioration in educational, health, and housing provision at the same time as unemployment has been allowed to rise. In a situation in which the working class has suffered defeats, albeit not decisive ones, at the hands of the Labour government in alliance with virtually all of the trade-union bureaucracy, including the traditional lefts such as Jack Jones and Hugh Scanlon, it is not surprising that racist moods are erupting within the working class. In the absence of a fight back against the capitalist offensive, the white workers had become susceptible to racist agitation that made the blacks the scapegoats for the dole queues and the crumbling welfare state.

The Tory party and the Tory press incited racist feelings among the working class with the aim of dividing it along lines of race in order to weaken opposition to further attempts to attack the standard of living of the workers and help prepare the ground for a Tory electoral victory if the Labour government outlived its usefulness. A recent study by Donley Studler found that the Tories gained an extra 6.7 percent of the votes in the 1970 election due to their harder stance against immigration, while a Community Relations Commission Report in October 1975 showed that Labour had been put into power in both February and October 1974 because the black vote just tipped the balance.

There are limits to the extent to which the ruling class as a whole (as distinct from the particular interests of the Tory party) wishes to raise the degree of racism in British society. Whereas the capitalists are happy to see a divided working class, at this stage they are not anxious to see an organized racist movement. The emergence of a fascist nucleus that is relatively large (for Britain) makes this problem more acute. If a racist movement did get out of hand, there would be an explosive response from the black workers. The strategy of the

capitalist class has been to operate within a framework of integration/selective repression. The racist 1968 Immigration Act was balanced by the 1968 Race Relations Act, which outlawed racial discrimination to a limited extent. The present project of passing a new British Nationality Act occurs at the same time as the passage through Parliament of a new and more stringent Race Relations Bill. Over the past period, however, the emphasis has swung toward selective repression. The police have been periodically unleashed to search for "illegal" immigrants and have also engaged in systematic harassment of unemployed West Indian youth. At times, this has escalated into near or outright battles.

The first indication that the surface calm did not reveal the real state of race relations in Britain came when Callaghan succeeded Wilson as leader of the Labour Party and Alex Lyon was sacked. Lyon was not a left-winger but rather belonged to the old Gaitskellite tradition, which was liberal on the issue of immigration and sentimental about the empire. Lyon has made it abundantly clear that he favors stopping further immigration but is anxious to wind up as quickly and humanely as possible the commitments to the 40,000 East African Asians and the some 100,000 wives and children of those who had entered Britain from the Asian subcontinent before 1973. From 1968 to 1970 the average yearly entry of black immigrants was 63,000. The Tories reduced this to 45,000 between 1970 and 1972; in 1973, after the 1971 Act went into effect, the figure had fallen to 34,000. By speeding up procedure and increasing quotas, Lyon raised the entry figure to 50,000. A poll conducted by the Labour party among rank-and-file trade unionists indicated that immigration was regarded as the second most important issue, after inflation and unemployment. The dismissal of Lyon was regarded by the leaders of the immigrant communities as a sop to the racists and in line with Callaghan's reputation as a hard-liner on immigration. Lyon himself commented, "I have paid the price of trying to get justice for the blacks in this country. Jim has never had much time for those who espoused that cause." Lyon also made the point that the civil servants, who were under pressure from racist forces, had frustrated his attempts to introduce reforms. He further argued that money had to be spent to combat the disadvantages suffered by inner-city blacks in order to avoid the development of an American situation.

The offensive begins

In early May the news media splashed a story that two homeless Asian families who had been expelled from Malawi had been put up in a luxury hotel by a Sussex local council at a cost of £600 a week. An orgy of racist headlines resulted on the themes that a new mass "invasion" of Asians from Malawi was about to take place and that immigrants were scroungers who wanted to enter Britain to live off social security provided by the British taxpayer. There was an explosion of racist feeling. The Tory High Sheriff of Sussex called for the

establishment of a transit camp in the county for homeless Asian immigrants: "Let us make it as uncomfortable as possible." The accommodation provided, he said, should be "primitive."



Powell entered the prejudice sweepstakes and was now able to gain a ready audience. He revealed that there was a secret Foreign Office report, which had got into his possession by some mysterious means, that showed that there was a massive traffic in "illegal" immigrants and that the number of dependents waiting to come in from the Indian subcontinent was limitless. He blamed the blacks for crime, civil unrest, and daily assaults on the police. He said he worried about guns and explosives being "injected" into the "picture." The "thing" would go on until "Belfast today might seem an enviable place." Powell's answer to this apocalyptic threat was to stop all further immigration. All sections of the Tory party, "lefts" as well as right-wingers, joined in demanding stricter examination of immigrants before they were allowed to enter the country and restrictions on the entry rights of dependents. And Labour MPs were not left out. Bob Mellish, Labour Chief Whip under Wilson, called for a total ban on immigration: "This country has done all it should have done. Its record is one of great honour and integrity but I say 'enough is enough.'" Callaghan's reply to the offensive of Powell was to hint that immigration control would be tightened.

But the real action was on the streets. On May 22, two black students were stabbed to death in East London. By June 3 the Pakistani Embassy issued a statement that attacks on immigrants and their property had become "not uncommon." Late on Friday, June 4, Gurdip Singh Chaggar was stabbed to death in Southall, an area of London containing many Asians. Thousands of Asians took to the streets to demonstrate against the murder. Organizations like the Southall Asian Youth Movement and the Asian Socialist Forum began to provide a lead for the Southall Asians and argued for militant self-defense of the community, as against the passivity of the "respectable" black leaders. Self-defense groups sprang

up in a number of areas including Blackburn and the East End of London.

On Sunday, June 7, a large demonstration of Asians went down to Southall police station and forced the police to release Asian youth who had been arrested earlier in the day. Praful Patel, a conservative Indian leader, commented, "Asian leaders are being rejected by the young militants. . . . If we are not seen to be doing something, the little respect we still have will be lost." An Asian Action Committee was set up by the community notables, which asked Callaghan to denounce the killing and to meet with them. Four days later, the convenor of the Committee, Shigbat Kadri, was quoted as saying, "To our utter shock and horror, we have not even received a reply." Eventually Callaghan did see the leaders. He gave a pledge that he would continue, as before, his opposition to racism but concentrated on telling the leaders that black vigilante groups would be dealt with severely.

Floods of reports of racist assaults were received by Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladesh officials. In Barking 8 Asians were surrounded by 150 whites. The police intervened and arrested nine people, seven of whom were Asians. The new factor in the situation was the willingness of the black workers to take action on the streets. This had been seen over a period of months, as thousands of blacks had taken part in antifascist demonstrations. In Bradford on April 23, thousands of black youth had turned out and thoroughly frightened National Front demonstrators as well as the police who were escorting them on a march through a black area of the town. Bricks were thrown and police cars were overturned. After the Southall murder, the West Indian Standing Conference decided that community defense groups should be set up to "ward off attempts on the lives of black people." In Blackburn, where racist assaults were taking place at the rate of three or four a day, the Indian Workers Association was considering the defense perimeter that might have to be established around the immigrant area. The readiness of the blacks to defend themselves cooled the ardor of the "respectable" racists of the ruling class, as they began to see that the price they might have to pay for stirring the racist pot could be the loss of control of many city centers.

The fascists have been able to gain extensively from the racist upsurge. At the beginning of this year they had been in some disarray. The largest of the fascist organizations, the National Front (NF), had split, a minority leaving to form the National party (NP). The National party denounced the Front as being an undemocratic organization controlled by Hitlerites, while the NF denounced the NP as consisting of an alliance between agents of the Tory party and neo-Marxists. Both organizations are in fact fascist but deny the fact for cosmetic reasons, since fascism has non-patriotic connotations in Britain. Both groupings did well in the May local elections, polling a total of nearly 90,000 votes, together with some smaller organizations.

In Blackburn, a town with a large immigrant community and a declining textile industry, the National party

won two seats in what had previously been safe Labour wards. These victories were helped by the Tory party's not fielding candidates or a full slate of candidates in these wards. The average vote won by all fascist candidates in Blackburn was around 37 percent. A spokesperson for the Labour group commented that they were worried by the fascist victories, but not more so than they would be if Communists had won. The fascist victories made Blackburn one of the worst areas for racist assaults the following month. On May 22, an antifascist demonstration had to be protected by police with drawn batons from attack by hysterical bystanders. In Bradford, another textile town, the National Front polled well in the working class wards, particularly the ward where the Mayor stood. Significantly, the ward where the black youth had attacked the fascist demonstration went against the national pattern and was a Labour gain from the Tories.

In Leicester the NF won 18.56 percent of the vote compared with 35.3 percent for Labour and did particularly well in Labour-controlled council estate wards against established right-wing Labour figures such as the previous Lord Mayor and another ex-Lord Mayor who had, when in office, placed advertisements in East African papers advising Asians not to come to Leicester. In one ward the NF came within sixty-three votes of winning the seat. The Leicester Labour leader, the Rev. Ken Middleton, hoped that it was a "passing phase, a moment of aberration" and argued against those local Labour party members who were taking part in antifascist activity. But where Leicester antifascists had been actively campaigning there was a noticeable decline in the NF vote.

Unfortunately, electoral support for the NF has not proved to be just a passing phase. In a London borough by-election held in a solid Labour area on July 1 Labour got 43.5% of the vote, the NP 26%, the NF 18.5%, and the Tories 12%. The combined fascist vote was thus greater than that for Labour.

Response of the workers movement

At this stage, there is no possibility of the capitalist class seriously backing the fascists, but there has been a clear demonstration that racism can be used to divide the working class and was one of the factors enabling the Tories to win seats in the local elections in May. The response of the Labour movement to the racist upsurge has been either inadequate or pernicious. The Labour government has announced that it will consider opening a register of dependents of immigrants who have already come into the country. This will inevitably lead to a tightening up of controls. A number of local Labour leaders have demanded a ban on immigration. The Labour Party Organizing Committee, however, has called for an antiracist campaign, but it is difficult to establish what, if anything, is being done. The only clear call was to argue that Labour party members should not join in counterdemonstrations against the NF and other racist groups. Otherwise the Labour and trade-

union lefts have maintained a stiff-lipped silence on the issue.

The Communist party has been involved in organizing conferences and marches against racism, but its political line has been bad. It has avoided taking a clear attitude of opposition to all immigration legislation. Its central slogan has been "One Race — the Human Race," which is intended to electrify such crucial layers as progressive clergy and mild liberals. The central thrust of the CP has been for strengthening the new Race Relations Bill so that the state will be forced to outlaw racism. And this in spite of the fact that race relations legislation is inherently limited, as has been shown by the actions of Robert Relf. Relf, a self-confessed admirer of Hitler, was put into prison in early May for contempt of court after refusing to take down a sign outside his house which read, "For sale to an English family," in contravention of the Race Relations Act. Relf commented, "We have come to a sorry pass where an Englishman has been gaoled for putting Britain first." The Tory press built Relf up into a folk hero. A rash of similar signs were put up and collection sheets were passed around many factories. Six weeks later an embarrassed government managed to engineer the release of Relf, who was greeted by a triumphant fascist welcoming committee. Relf has now joined the NF and will be going on a speaking tour. At about the same time as Relf was being released, the police arrested an antifascist in Rotherham for painting the slogan "Black and white unite and fight" — and the charge was brought under the Race Relations Act.

The use of racism by the British ruling class cannot be seen as merely an isolated incident. Although it does have its limits, as mentioned above, this weapon has proved too useful not to be used again. Even if the racists win their battle to prevent any further black immigration, they can then start their clamor to begin the repatriation of blacks. It has become a major priority for revolutionaries to begin the process of building a long-term antiracist campaign among the working class. It is necessary to win advanced sections of the workers to the ideas of black self-defense as a first step to the self-defense of the entire workers movement. All immigration controls must be opposed. In order to explain this to workers who believe that the crisis of social expenditure and unemployment are caused by immigration, it is crucial, within the context of supporting all immediate struggles against the employers offensive, to pose an action program for a working-class solution to the crisis. The racists inside the labor movement have to be kicked out and the fascists driven off the streets.

There is a lesson of the past few months which, if learned, may enable the British left to come out of this period stronger than when it entered it. The immense trade-union strength of the working class in Britain cannot compensate for its low political level. The struggle to build a mass left current that can defeat the present offensive of the employers requires a consistent fight against weaknesses of the working class such as sexism, anti-Irish chauvinism and, above all, racism. □

France



GISCARD & CHIRAC FALL OUT

by PIERRE FRANK

On August 25, with the vacation period not yet over, Jacques Chirac publicly abandoned his post as French Prime Minister, which automatically entailed the resignation of the government. President of the Republic Valéry Giscard d'Estaing named another government. Apart from the facts that the technocrat Raymond Barre, who is politically unaffiliated, took the place of Chirac, a member of the Gaullist Union des Démocrates pour la République (UDR — Union of Democrats for the Republic), that three or four ministers were replaced, and that several others switched posts, it could seem as though nothing important had happened. Nevertheless, this shake-up of ministers has generated considerable emotion in the political world of the French bourgeoisie. It was learned from the parties concerned themselves that Chirac had wanted to resign as early as July 26 and that he had remained at his post at Giscard's request. The causes of the governmental changes reveal the depth of the crisis brewing in France.

In taking his leave Chirac declared that he was doing so because he no longer possessed "the necessary means with which to effectively fulfill" his functions, which is another way of saying that Giscard had not provided him with these "means." For his part, Giscard, after recalling that according to the constitution he is number one in the country and the prime minister is subordinate to him (which was not contested by Chirac in any case), added that the former minister had not assembled a coherent team around himself and that during the recent session of parliament the parties had "exercised excessive influence on governmental action," thus accusing Chirac of having dragged his feet when it was necessary to line up the UDR group, which had rebelled against a bill Giscard strongly supported. Above all, Giscard explained that there had been a disagreement between him and Chirac, the premier desiring to proceed to early parliamentary elections this autumn, while Giscard advocated waiting until the regularly scheduled elections of 1978. The real explanation for the change in government lies in this disagreement and the factors that gave rise to it.

Problems of the Bonapartist regime

To understand the deeper significance of the government change, it must first be recalled that the Fifth Republic has a Bonapartist constitution tailored to fit De Gaulle. It is not true, as was claimed by P. Viannson-Ponté writing in the August 26 *Le Monde*, that with the departure of Chirac "it is the breakup of the regime . . . perhaps the end of the Fifth Republic . . . and the advent of the Sixth Republic." No one has yet offered a definition of this Sixth Republic; in any case, it will be born not of a simple change in government, but rather of a gigantic social and political crisis with great political confrontations (which may be placed on the agenda sooner than is generally thought). In the meantime, the Bonapartist regime has outlived De Gaulle. It was, as we wrote at the time, "a Bonapartism without a Bonaparte." But someone had to occupy the place of the Bonaparte, left vacant by the departure of De Gaulle. There were some deputy Bonapartes and even deputy



Chirac

deputy Bonapartes who occupied this post or desired to do so, since politics, like nature, abhors a vacuum. But there was no real Bonaparte available; circumstances like the war and the resistance are required to raise the possibility of creating such a personality. Even De Gaulle — who had succeeded in playing this role for years, winning votes of confidence in referenda with the character of plebiscites, obscuring lines of class division, and taking as many as a million votes away from the Communist party — saw his pedestal shaken by May 1968 and had to step down. His successors (first Pompidou and now Giscard) have had to deal with a rise of the masses, and they have not had the use of the weapon of referenda (Pompidou, who tried one referendum, wound up with a 60 percent abstention rate). In 1974 Giscard was elected with just under 51 percent of the vote. The economic difficulties have not at all broadened his base since then; just the opposite.

What is more, since his election Giscard has been unable to get the three parliamentary formations that back his government to march in step. In any event, all three know that the majority will suffer losses in the next elections, and they are squabbling among themselves for the best positions. The differences within this majority, both in parliament and in the government, have broken out almost daily. They worsened and engendered growing tension between Giscard and Chirac after the

defeat suffered in the cantonal elections last March. (See INPRECOR, No.49, April 15, 1976.) These elections were the prelude to the municipal elections of spring 1977, which are themselves the prelude to the legislative elections of 1978. In fact, the electoral campaign is practically open already and the problem facing these gentlemen is this: How to avoid defeat?

Two projects

There is nothing secondary about this problem. It is more than a matter of a change in the parliamentary majority, but relates to the problem posed by the prospect of an election that could lead to the entry of members of the French Communist party (PCF) into a government led by Socialist party leader François Mitterrand. It is the French expression of the problem that concerned Ford and Kissinger, Helmut Schmidt, James Callaghan, and Giscard himself during their meeting in Puerto Rico a few months ago, namely the accession of Communist party members to posts in the ministries of governments in West Europe. The leaders of the big capitalist powers know very well that the European Communist parties do not seek to overthrow the capitalist system. But they are afraid both of the class dynamic that could be touched off by the illusions the workers have in the presence of Communist ministers and of the possible inability of these ministers to retain control over this dynamic.

How is this problem posed in France in practice? It is now certain that the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left, the bloc dominated by the SP and CP) will not break up before the elections of 1978. This may happen later if the Union de la Gauche does not win those elections. Winning a majority in the elections depends on the shift to the left or right of about 400,000-500,000 votes out of a total of about 28 million; that is, it depends on about 2 percent of the voters. This small number of fluctuating votes lies essentially in what is called the "new middle classes" whose support all the bourgeois parties and mass workers parties, the SP and CP, are now trying to win.

There was no disagreement between Giscard and Chirac on some of the means by which to pick up votes, for example pandering to fear by denouncing delinquency, fostering racism and xenophobia, using the police extensively under the pretext of guaranteeing the "security" of old people, and so on. They also generally agreed to try to win over some votes through subsidies, grants, and bonuses to certain categories (peasants, the aged, etc.). The disagreement lay elsewhere. Giscard's project is to enact some "reforms" of small scope that correspond to the "modern" spirit of the layers he is trying to attract, for he believes these reforms will be sufficient to win over to his side voters who are now attracted to the Union de la Gauche but who nevertheless fear the unknown represented by the entry of Communists into a government. It is true that these "reforms," or rather mini-reforms, are displeasing to a large part of the voters who support the current majority, but Giscard believes that these voters will have no alternative but to vote for him anyway against the "Communist danger."

Chirac had a different analysis. These "reforms," he thought, far from enabling the majority to erode support for the left, would only fuel the desire for new reforms; they would not win over votes from the left but would even result in losses due to abstentions on the part of the right. To wait for 1978 would be to head for certain defeat. Thus, in an aggressive mood, he proposed to sweep aside the wait-and-see attitude of the Union de la Gauche, rapidly gather the majority together, and proceed to early elections this autumn, when the recent attenuation of the recession would still be felt and before the situation deteriorates once again and the effects of the austerity measures needed to combat inflation and make up the trade deficit make themselves felt.

Giscard's point of view prevailed and Chirac left; convinced that the Union de la Gauche was going to win, he wanted to bear no responsibility for this. To those who may ask which of the two was correct from the capitalist standpoint, one must respond that it is not a question of a good or bad solution in this domain; the problem for the bourgeoisie is rather to choose the lesser evil. For the immediate future, Giscard has picked up some slim advantages at the expense of the UDR and Chirac, who cannot attack him openly without further worsening the situation of the majority. It is more probable that Chirac, while expressing his political positions in some circumstances, will wait for Giscard's failure, which he considers inevitable.

The new government has not yet made its program known in detail. It has indicated that the first objective is the struggle against inflation. The question of the "security" referred to above has been designated as the second priority. It has "forgotten" to mention unemployment, which is now approaching the figure of 1,200,000.

Since the cantonal elections, the leaderships of the PCF, SP, and the trade-union federations have believed, like Chirac, that time is on their side, that nothing should be done to disturb the shifting part of the electorate which they seem to have won over for the time being. They regarded the Giscard-Chirac conflict with



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an indifferent air: the policies of the two are the same, each doomed to failure, etc. At the same time, in order to harden up a part of these shifting voters, Mitterrand made some subtle overtures to Giscard, declaring that there would be no obstacle to Giscard's remaining president if the Union de la Gauche wins the legislative elections in 1978. This provoked some rumblings from the PCF ("Giscard will have to submit or resign"), which amounted to just what Mitterrand was saying.

In addition, with the same intention, they sought to win over a section of the Gaullists who have grievances against Giscard because of his foreign policy, which is no longer that of the "European Europe" of De Gaulle, but that of a Europe closely associated to the Atlantic alliance and the United States. To do this the PCF proposed the "Union of the People of France" and was openly supported by a section of the SP leadership. It appears to us doubtful that this policy will lead many Gaullists to vote for the PCF, or even for the SP, but it certainly does add to the confusion these parties are sowing within the working class.

We will never know whether Chirac's plan for early elections under the conditions in which he wanted them to be held would have succeeded. For now, however, the government shake-up has turned the situation around; there is wavering in the UDR and trouble among the majority voters. The austerity measures will also contribute to creating discontent in the period immediately ahead, especially among the new middle classes. It follows that the leaderships of the workers movement would have an interest now in demanding early elections. They may be asked: Why do you wait until 1978 when success is within your grasp? You easily have the means to force Giscard's hand: Have about twenty Socialist and Communist parliament members in carefully chosen districts around the country resign and you will provoke by-elections in which you will win with increased majorities and Giscard will not be able to turn a deaf ear. It is probable that the leaders of the SP and PCF will refuse to resort to such tactics, because they fear any excessive political agitation before the official election campaign. Limited demonstrations around economic demands are sufficient for them, so long as they are not oriented toward a struggle for power.

The foot-dragging attitude of the leaderships of the workers movement is one thing. But the economic difficulties are growing, and austerity will hit at all those who live by their labor. The new government will be led to intensify repression against the laboring masses in order to apply its program. Struggles are inevitable, in fact some are already taking shape on the horizon. Their breadth and political level are not yet discernable, but it is probable that the situation will not be at all restful for the government. It is not out of the question that when the municipal elections take place in the spring, the bourgeoisie may experience a crisis graver than that which divided Giscard and Chirac, a crisis that would not remain confined to government circles.

September 1, 1976

SWEDEN



BEFORE THE ELECTIONS

by G-I JOHANSSON & TOM GOSTAFSSON



General elections to the Riksdagen, the Swedish parliament, will be held on September 19. The Observer's correspondent in Sweden recently compared the elections to the famous horse race the Steeple Chase. It is

impossible to predict who will win. Anything can happen. The result will be unknown up to the last jump, for one of the contestants can fall at the last ditch. The comparison is very accurate. At the moment the race has disappeared from the view of the spectators. It's on the far side of the course and we don't know who is leading.

One thing can be said with certainty: It will be very difficult for the Social Democrats to once again retain their seats in the government. When the election campaign began before the summer holidays, opinion polls gave the Social Democrats 38 percent. This was the first time in several decades they have fallen below 40 percent. The immediate reason for the Social Democrats' loss of popularity was a series of scandals of which two of the best known are the smuggling of funds to the Finnish Metalworkers' Union and Ingemar Bergman's flight from Sweden due to a dispute over taxes. The polls reflected the dissatisfaction of important middle layers who always tend to vacillate between the Social Democracy and the two bourgeois "center" parties, the Liberals and the Center, and who are tired of the often clumsy methods of the Social Democratic bureaucracy.

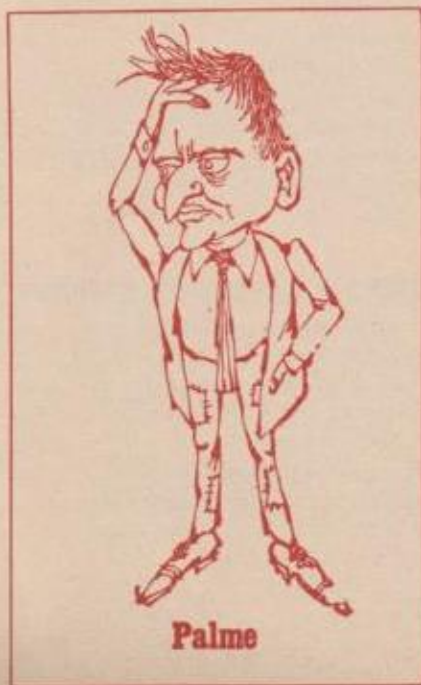
The main question for the Social Democratic tacticians has been how to win back these middle-layer votes. But the real problem, of course, is much more fundamental. In reality the choice is between seeking a more long-term cooperation with bourgeois center parties or trying to maintain an independent "left" position in the parliament. (During the last election period the situation of stalemate in the parliament gave rise to political cooperation with especially the Liberals.) For forty years the Social Democrats have been in the government continuously. During more than thirty of these years they have formed the government alone. Throughout the entire period they have succeeded in integrating and channeling the aspirations of the working class through the reforms the party has proposed and carried out. In several hard election fights they have appeared as the party devoted to defending the interests of the workers. But like all reformists, the Social Democrats are pragmatists. This, together with their often farsighted (from a capitalist point of view) reformist ideology, has created strong ties to leading sectors of the bourgeoisie, who have seen that the Social Democrats actually can serve many of their interests. And most important, they do so without losing hegemony in the working class!

This double allegiance of the Social Democracy has been based on an expanding economy, which has allowed reforms that have corresponded to the aspirations of broad layers of the working class, even if in a distorted way. The disappearance of this basis drastically reduces the Social Democrats' ability to maintain the confidence of the workers and their parliamentary majority. The present crisis of the Danish Social Democracy is an excellent example of this. It must, however, immediately be said that the Swedish economy is still far from the drastic crisis of the Danish or other economies on the continent. The last deep international recession, for instance, had only marginal effects on the Swedish

economy. But the trend is nonetheless clearly felt and has affected the politics of the Social Democrats. They have been forced to rationalize in the public sector, which means at least a slower expansion if not yet reductions. They are forced to keep the trade unions on a defensive policy, even if they have still avoided an open incomes policy.

The petrified party

Forty years of administering the capitalist state have left their scars on the party's organizational structure and social composition. At one time the party not only organized the working class but also activated it. Today the majority of the party's active members come from layers other than the working class. A study of the class composition of the party's elected leaders and functionaries has shown that even at the regional level less than 20 percent are working class. More than 50 percent belonged to the middle layers and about 20 percent to upper petty-bourgeois layers. This social regroupment of the party's active members (as a whole, 83 percent of the members are workers, because of the system of collective membership practiced by most trade unions) is due to the party's close interrelationship with the state apparatus. A good part of the leaders and functionaries who lead the party are simply apparatchiki with their base in the state apparatus or in party activity closely linked to the state apparatus. Together with the lack of a material basis for a political differentiation from and polarization in regard to the bourgeois parties, as was the case during the 1950s and 1960s, this lack of a base of active members in the factories and work places has created difficulties in gaining active support from the broader layers of party members for the government's program.



Results of 1973 Elections

Conservative party
 Liberal party
 Center party. total of 48.8%

Social Democracy
 Communist party. total of 48.9%

Opinion Poll of August 1976

Conservative party 17%
 Liberal party 12%
 Center party 22% . . . total of 51%

Social Democracy 42.5%
 Communist party 4.5% . . total of 47%

Thus it is a series of phenomena which together explain the difficulties confronting the Social Democrats in this election campaign. It is not only a question of strengthening the links to the working class and maintaining an influence over middle layers, but of doing this under partially new and more arduous social conditions and with a party more separated from the working class than ever before.

The temporary solution

The Social Democrats opened their election campaign in complete disarray. It looked as though they had no plan, no coordination. In fact, various leading figures seemed to be running different campaigns, in different directions. The result was an inability to put out a clear message to the voters and even an incapacity to create enthusiasm among the party's campaign activists. The parliamentary-based section of the leadership was preoccupied with wooing the important middle-layer voters who are wavering between the Social Democracy and the Liberals and Center. The trade-union section of the leadership, as well as lower-ranking party functionaries, is more concerned about the party's links to the workers and especially the party's inability to canalize the aspirations of broad layers of workers as in the past. These aspirations have increasingly been expressed outside the framework of the Social Democracy and the trade unions in the form of wildcat strikes at various moments.

The solution arrived at by the party leadership is a division of labor between the various parts of the Social Democratic movement. While the trade unions can "disregard political realities" (as the chairman of the national trade union federation put it) and can concentrate their campaign on the working class, the party can concentrate on winning the middle layers.

The main campaign of Landsorganisationen (LO — the national trade-union federation) speaks of "power on

the job," while Prime Minister Olof Palme speaks about security for the aged, child care, and the national interest. As part of this division of labor Palme declared in an article in the country's biggest bourgeois daily newspaper that while LO is a pressure group or organization, the party takes all social forces into consideration and for that reason must maintain its independence of the trade-union movement. The importance of this article should not be overestimated, but it nevertheless is without precedent in the Social-Democracy's modern history.

It is probable that the Social Democracy's tightening up of the election campaign will succeed in recapturing a large part of the voters lost at the beginning. Whether or not they can recapture enough remains to be seen. And the party leadership's tactic of moving toward the center in Swedish politics can definitely not appeal to the aspirations of broad layers of workers. Instead of solving their problems, the Social Democrats are only pushing them a bit into the future. They have found a temporary solution which may work until September 19, but the question is whether they will be able to enjoy the fruits of their possible victory.

The bourgeoisie: innermost dreams and realistic goals

"To be, but not to be seen" has been the motto that has guided Swedish big capital's actions on the political scene for a very long time now. During the forty years of Social Democratic rule it has been possible for big capital to apply this motto with great success. The economically, politically, and ideologically leading sectors of the bourgeoisie have been able to maintain generally good relations with the Social Democratic leadership. Social Democracy has also been able to play the role of intermediary between its parliamentary mass base and the needs of big capital. But one of the preconditions for this, which is now eroding, was economic expansion that provided the material basis for Social Democratic policies.

Leading figures of the bourgeoisie are conscious of the problems this poses for the future. One of them, Lars Eric Thunholm, managing director of Skandinaviska Enskilda banken, Sweden's largest commercial bank, wrote in an article in the conservative newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* that "since we can't avoid inflation it's just as well that we learn to live with it, even if it means extremely unpleasant consequences. The future inflationary society? It can't be democratic in the traditional sense — democracy and inflation can't live together. An authoritarian regime is necessary to handle society's adjustment to inflation.

"If we can't stop inflation, we'll have to get rid of democracy. Such a change, of course, cannot come all at once but must come gradually. Various government regulations, price controls, subsidies, fiscal measures, etc. will gradually undermine the free market economy.

"One must, in this connection, remember that among the strong groups is the organized workers movement. Sooner or later this process must result in a collision between the political regime on the one side, which must secure for itself more and more authoritarian power, and the trade unions on the other side. This is a confrontation that is taking place in several European countries today."

But Thunholm is speaking about the future. He realizes that it is necessary to go forward slowly. He is conscious that his ideas are not very practicable in Sweden at present. As yet, the bourgeoisie is not prepared to cut its ties to the Social Democracy. It is rather a question of scouting the political terrain to find new trails, to begin to discuss an alternative direction in the future.

We see already how big capital has begun to abandon its motto "to be, but not to be seen." It has begun to use its own organizations like the Employers Association and the Industrial League for a direct political appearance. A taste of this was given last spring when the Industrial League presented its views on the government's economic policy in a ten-point program. The contents of the program amount to social service cutbacks, wage freeze, and increased efforts to make industry more profitable. To spread these ideas is no easy matter for the bourgeoisie. One would expect them to depend on the bourgeois parties. But these parties are prisoners in the parliamentary framework and incapable of fulfilling this function. In order to get the chance to play the role of intermediary between big capital's desires and the broad masses the bourgeois parties must first win a majority in the parliament. But their chances of doing so depend not on their becoming the direct spokesmen for big capital but rather on their ability to appeal to the dissatisfaction with the Social Democratic government felt by broad groups of wage-earners on the periphery of the working class and by sections of the middle classes. But this dissatisfaction does not coincide with demands for wage-freeze or cutbacks in social services. It is rather a dissatisfaction with heavy taxation and the worst forms of bureaucratism practiced by the Social Democratic apparatus. Therefore the slogan "social reforms without socialism" is used by the Liberal party to appeal to this dissatisfaction.

The dilemma for a bourgeois government

The tactic of the bourgeois parties has some chance of success in the September 19 elections. But it is a tactic that can neither satisfy the needs of the employers nor reduce the economic and political struggle of the workers. A bourgeois government would have even greater difficulties than a Social Democratic one. On the one hand, the expectations of the bourgeoisie would be very great; on the other hand, such a government would find it extremely difficult to defuse and canalize the workers struggles. This is especially true in the case of the national contract negotiations, which will begin immediately after the elections. Direct representatives for the bourgeoisie as well as spokesmen for the bourgeois

parties are quite conscious of this problem. Curt Steffan Gisecke, chairman of the Swedish Employers' Association, has pointed out that a Social Democratic government would probably lead to a calmer climate for the contract negotiations. Gunnar Heckscher, ex-chairman of the Conservative party, formulated the problem in the following way:

"There are a number of special difficulties which a non-socialist government will have to take into account. Among the most important are the lack of experience in government, the relationship to the trade unions and other economic organizations, the attitude of the administrative personnel and their relationship to the mass media.

"Will the trade unions confine themselves to the framework of union activity or will they, as the British trade unions a few years ago, try to use union activities to sabotage the work of the government?"

"Will the other side, the employers and industrial organizations, restrain themselves or will they scent blood and make demands which the government can't satisfy without committing political suicide?"

Thus, a bourgeois election victory on September 19 would offer no easier solution to the bourgeoisie's current problems than a Social Democratic government. For that reason the big bourgeoisie has refrained from throwing its full weight behind a change of government.

The dilemma for a Social Democratic government

A Social Democratic government, of course, would face basically the same dilemma. It would also have to steer a course between the expectations of the working class and the needs of the capitalist economy.

"Hard times await the country's wage earners, regardless of the outcome of the elections on September 19," declared Gunnar Sträng, Social Democratic minister of finance, in a television interview a few weeks ago. The trade-union leadership has said the same thing in preparation for the national contract negotiations: Demands must be held to a minimum.

But even if the dilemma is basically the same, a Social Democratic government has the advantage of being able to use its political influence over the working class. It would try to weather the storm through reforms for "participation in decision-making" in the enterprises, which the Social Democrats have proposed. By means of intensive ideological propaganda in which they point to long-term goals of a "workers' government" they will try to restrain wage struggles.

The majority of the Swedish working class consider the Social Democratic government to be "their" government. For forty years they have been accustomed to having "their" party in power. In election after election the

working class has been mobilized to ensure "early gains" and to make possible "future progress." A defeat in the elections and a change of government would be considered a setback. It would mean that workers had become passive and had either not voted or voted for one of the bourgeois parties.

But there is no reason to believe that a change of government would lead to more than a very temporary passivity in the workers struggles, which during the last years have been the most extensive in decades. If the Social Democratic government falls it will be entirely its own fault. It will fall because its policy has been unable to instill enthusiasm in the ranks of its own party and because it has chosen to solve its tactical problems by extending its positions toward the "middle area in Swedish politics," as Palme put it.

The choice facing revolutionaries in the elections is thus not to choose between a bourgeois government and the bourgeois politics of the Social Democratic government. It is rather to demonstrate that there is a third alternative capable of offering Thunholm and his friends a real fight in the struggle for the future of society. It is with this perspective that the Kommunistiska Arbetarförbundet (KAF — Communist Workers League, Swedish section of the Fourth International) is participating in the elections with its own candidates.

It has been claimed that KAF's election campaign could help the bourgeois parties win a majority. This, of course, is nonsense. If the Social Democrats lose it will be because their bourgeois politics offer no solutions to the problems facing the working class. The Social Democrats have chosen to base themselves on the capitalist economy instead of the organized strength of the workers movement. Instead of building and strengthening the movement they have disarmed it through anti-labor legislation, class collaboration on all levels, and bureaucratic measures that pacify the workers.

We do not want a bourgeois government. But as long as the Social Democrats can continue to disarm the workers movement, the threat of a bourgeois government will always be present. In fact, the threat will become greater and greater. As we see it, the best way to combat this threat is to work to break the passivity and demoralization in the workers movement, to arm our class organizations, to work for a democratic and combative workers movement. It is only in this way that we can create the basis for a real workers government capable of standing up to the bourgeoisie and defending the needs of the working class.

We will not get many votes — perhaps a few thousand. They will not make a big difference for the Social Democrats. But a few thousand voices raised in the trade unions, the solidarity movements, and the neighborhoods every day after September 19 will be an important step forward in rearming the workers movement for the struggle against capitalism and for socialism.

September 1, 1976

MEXICAN ELECTIONS

advance for the left

by FELIPE GARCIA CASILLAS



The campaign of the left in the Mexican presidential elections (held on July 4) concluded on June 27 with a central meeting in Mexico City. More than 15,000 people packed the Arena México and wound up the campaign singing the Internationale and raising hundreds of red flags. At the podium, together with the leaders of the Partido Comunista Mexicano (PCM — Mexican Communist party) and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista (MOS — Movement of Socialist Organization), stood the leaders of the Liga Socialista (LS — Socialist League) and the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League), representing the strong and militant contingent of the Fourth International, made up of more than 1,000 comrades who occupied part of the stadium. Thus ended the most important electoral campaign organized by the left in Mexico in at least forty years.

But the importance of the campaign that presented Valentín Campa, a member of the PCM, as a candidate for president went beyond the mere fact that the left parties participated in the elections for the first time in a long while. Above all, the importance of this experience was rooted in the fact that in spite of the small mass influence of the Mexican left, the Campa candidacy was the only genuine alternative to the candidate of the ruling party. At the same time, the campaign also showed broad sectors of the masses the antidemocratic character of the regime, which denies all legal rights to the genuine opposition parties.

In fact, the antidemocratic Mexican election law lays down a series of requirements for any party's obtaining legal registration (and with it the right to participate in the elections) such that in practice it is only the gov-

ernment itself that decides whether a party is legal or not. In this manner, ever since its consolidation under Cárdenas, the Bonapartist regime has granted legal registration only to parties linked to the government, besides the party of the "revolution become government," the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI — Institutional Revolutionary party).

The debate in the left

The electoral experience of the left in Mexico has been extremely meager and negative. Nearly all this tradition and experience has been linked to the Communist party. Since its presentation of Hernán Laborde as a presidential candidate in the 1930s, the CP had not run any candidates officially; on the contrary, it had supported the candidates of the PRI, as in the case of Avila Camacho and Miguel Alemán.

On the other hand, because of the weakness of the left, since 1968 the predominant attitude has been to call for abstention and to denounce the elections of 1970 and 1973 (for president and parliament respectively) as a farce. These positions coincided with the growing disinterest of the population in elections and their disillusionment due to the frustration caused by various electoral frauds staged by the government against opposition candidates who had massive support.

Thus, early in 1975, when a debate began on the electoral practice of the left, not only was there no experience to fall back on, but on the contrary there was a great tradition of abstentionism, as in other Latin American countries, as well as a great mistrust in this method of struggle.

Because of the experience of the past, in many radicalized sectors the tactic of electoral participation was regarded as synonymous with conciliation with and tail-ending of the class enemy. The dead weight of abstentionism affected all the currents of the left. Because of this, the organizations claiming allegiance to the Fourth International in Mexico, while differing over what particular tactic to recommend, agreed from the beginning that it was correct to participate in the elections at this juncture and struggled against the ultraleft and sectarian currents, which were present especially in the student movement.

The Partido Mexicano de los Trabajadores (PMT — Mexican Workers party), founded after the massacre of June 10, 1971, by some leaders of the 1968 movement such as Heberto Castillo and by Demetrio Vallejo, leader of the railway workers union, finally decided after some vacillations to abstain from electoral participation. The PMT made use of some of the slogans of the student movement in an attempt to give a left cover to its decision, which was profoundly reformist and electoralist at bottom. Asserting that they were not inclined to "play into the hands of the government," the PMT leaders refused to participate since the government had denied them legal registration and their votes would thus not have been counted. In fact, the PMT has been the only left organization in recent years to make the effort to fulfill the requirements demanded by the election law in order to obtain registration. Conceived as an electoralist party with a reformist and gradualist line, the PMT certainly acted consistently in refusing to participate in the elections once the government denied it all guarantees for its participation. In any event, the decision was inevitably a difficult one for the ranks of this party, who have been trained for electoral participation and whose main work during the past two years has been the campaign for massive affiliation aimed at making sure that the party had the number of members required by the law for legal registration. At the least a small trade-union sector of the PMT broke with the party when it decided to abstain. This sector went over to the CP in order to be able to propose one of its trade-union leaders as a candidate for parliament.

After trying to obtain the agreement of the Partido Popular Socialista (PPS — People's Socialist party), the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (Socialist Workers party), and the PMT, the Communist party finally had to form the Coalición de Izquierda (Left Coalition) with only the Liga Socialista and the Movimiento de Organización Socialista.

The Coalición de Izquierda

While we have said that the elections of 1976 were marked fundamentally by the presence of the left, at the same time we must explain they were centrally marked by the Coalición de Izquierda made up of the CP, LS, and MOS. It was this coalition that objectively constituted the reference point for all political currents.

The debate over what attitude to take toward the elections was axised around the policy of the Coalición.

The traditional abstentionism of the left was thrown into crisis by the Campa candidacy. In spite of its electoralist conception, the PMT was outflanked by the Coalición. The major centrist current — the group around the magazine *Punto Crítico* — began by calling for abstention under the slogan "Our candidate (Marx) is not registered," but wound up on June 27, the day the campaign ended, calling for a vote for Campa. One week before the elections! Such a sharp turn was exceeded only by the Posadista grouplet, which first called for a vote for Campa and then, one week later, switched to support López Portillo, the PRI candidate! Its self-criticism stated that the error had been corrected thanks to a letter from "Comrade J. Posadas."

The unpopularity of the Mexican CP among certain sectors of the broad vanguard resulted in the fact that much of the criticism they made of the Coalición was genuinely sectarian — for example the accusation that the Coalición was a popular front or the embryo of a popular front. We do not deny that the CP was interested in this. Its policies are in accordance with such interests. Besides, we have said that before forming the Coalición the CP tried for a popular front with some bourgeois forces. But faced with the refusal of these forces, the CP was compelled to reach agreement only with the Liga Socialista and the MOS. Hence, the Coalición de Izquierda was not a popular front.

In order to be able to speak of a popular front it is not enough for there to be a reformist program or for the CP to be prepared to hitch itself to the wagon of the "democratic bourgeoisie"; a key element is necessary: the presence of a bourgeois force holding hegemony in the Coalición. There was no such force. The MOS is no more than a reformist grouplet in process of being assimilated by the PCM, which was obviously the hegemonic force in the Coalición.

Still more sectarian and groundless was the criticism of the LS according to which the LS had violated principle by signing platforms and making electoral blocs with other political organizations, especially the PCM. Apart from the experience of the Bolsheviks' making electoral fronts with the Mensheviks, it is obvious that there are more recent examples in which supporters of the Fourth International itself have made use of just this possibility. For example, in 1958 the Socialist Workers party, the American Trotskyist organization, called for the creation of an "electoral coalition of socialist forces for united political action of socialists," as was explained by Comrade James P. Cannon in a meeting in which Vincent Hallinan, who had been the presidential candidate of the Progressive party in 1952, also participated.

On the contrary, it is much more important to highlight the unprecedented character of the Mexican Communist party's making an electoral bloc with an organization of the Fourth International. This event is a sign of the

new times in which we are living. The PCM is now unable to slander the Trotskyists, calling them agents, for it has even established electoral blocs with them. In this context it is noteworthy that in an interview with the magazine *Excelsior* a few days before the elections Valentín Campa himself admitted that he had been expelled from the Mexican Communist party in 1940 for opposing the assassination of Trotsky (only because he believed that Trotsky was already "liquidated politically"). In a biographical note on Campa, *Oposición*, the official organ of the PCM, affirmed even more audaciously that during the time he was outside the party it was Campa who represented the real "Communist tradition." Because of this, while some people were denouncing the LS for allegedly having capitulated to Stalinism, a rightist split from the pro-Soviet PCM was denouncing that party for having capitulated to Trotskyism!



The Front of the Revolutionary Left

The other organization of the Fourth International in Mexico, the LCI (formerly the GCI, Internationalist Communist Group), did not participate in the *Coalición de Izquierda*. Its refusal to do so was not based on the sectarian reasons mentioned above. The LCI's criticism of the *Coalición de Izquierda* related to the platform it put forward.

The LCI called for the formation of a *Frente de la Izquierda Revolucionaria* (FIR — Front of the Revolutionary Left) around a revolutionary program. It did not call for fielding another candidate but instead for supporting Valentín Campa, thus expressing a class-against-class vote. But at the same time the LCI called for a vote to an alternative program to that of the *Coalición* through the formula "FIR-Campa."

Nevertheless, the LCI's project of grouping the revolutionary left together did not succeed. While agreeing

with the electoral platform proposed by the LCI for the FIR, the great majority of centrist currents refused to participate jointly with the LCI because of the LCI's insistence on calling for a vote to Campa. The sectarianism of the centrists toward the PCM further isolated and weakened them in this important conjuncture, but it also prevented more forces from coming together with the LCI in the FIR.

The LCI's overestimation of left centrism had its counterpart in an underestimation of the PCM. The only peculiar feature of the PCM is its relative weakness. It is this weakness and not any supposed revolutionary character that prevents it from coalescing a popular front. It is also this weakness that compels it to negotiate with organizations of the Fourth International. It is obvious that such negotiations on an electoral front between the PCM on the one side and both the LCI and LS on the other would have been more favorable to the latter two organizations, including as regards the content of the electoral platform.

The above does not take account of the analysis of the current relationship of forces within the organized left in Mexico. In the process of recomposition that has been going on within the left during the past two years three currents may be highlighted as hegemonic: the PCM, the PMT, and the Fourth International. Because of a total lack of understanding of what is involved in this reshuffling of the forces of the left, the LCI futilely attempted to link up with centrism at a time when it could have conducted a more audacious participation in relation to the *Coalición* and especially toward the PCM.

The results of the July 4 elections, even if this was not recognized officially, reflected the rise of Mexican mass struggle. More than a million votes went to Campa! That is, more than the number of votes the PPS and the PARM (Partido Auténtico de la Revolución Mexicana — Authentic Party of the Mexican Revolution) contributed to López Portillo, who got a total of 15 million votes. The importance of this result is all the greater if account is taken of the fact that these were votes for a left candidate, for a declared communist candidate, which means a lot in Mexico after decades of control by the PRI. In their own way, the election results reflect not only the rise of struggles, especially workers struggles, but also the influence the left is beginning to hold within these struggles. This influence broadened considerably during the electoral campaign. Of course, it was the PCM that drew the greatest profit from the experience, basically because of its larger apparatus. But the PCM was not the only one to profit. Certainly since, as has been shown in the present conjuncture, the PCM will not be the sole viable option on the left during the ever greater struggles that are on the agenda for the immediate future in Mexico. Slowly but surely, the revolutionary Marxist alternative is also gaining in strength. The great leap forward in this direction will occur soon with the founding of the Mexican section of the Fourth International with the unification of the *Liga Comunista Internacionalista* and the *Liga Socialista*.

MARIO ROBERTO SANTUCHO



DECLARATION OF THE UNITED SECRETARIAT OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The Fourth International denounces the murder of comrade Mario Roberto Santucho, a leader of the Revolutionary Workers party and the People's Revolutionary Army of Argentina, by the brutal military dictatorship, which has arrested thousands of worker militants and killed dozens of them since the coup of March 24, 1976.

Comrade Santucho was a symbol of a whole generation of political fighters in Argentina who joined the revolutionary movement under the influence of the Cuban revolution and sacrificed their lives for what they considered to be the correct revolutionary orientation. He shared with them a limitless devotion to the cause of national and social liberation of the exploited and oppressed, the conviction that this liberation could only be achieved through a socialist revolution, the belief that prolonged armed struggle was the only way to bring about such a victorious revolution, and the single-minded personal involvement in all the political and organizational implications of such an orientation.

As the leader of a revolutionary populist group in his native Argentine province (FRIP — Indo-American and Popular Revolutionary Front), in 1967 Santucho accepted fusion with the Palabra Obrera group, Argentine section of the Fourth International. This implied his acceptance of the adherence of the fused organization (PRT — Revolutionary Workers party) to the Fourth International. He did this without conviction of the correctness of the revolutionary Marxist program, but out of a deep adherence to internationalism. He felt the need for an international revolutionary organization, but favored a more "ecumenical" regroupment, involving the Vietnamese, Chinese, and North Korean CPs, some Maoist parties, the Cuban CP, the main guerrilla forces in Latin America, and the Fourth International.

Practice showed that the unification of such divergent political forces was impossible. Political differences erupted quickly inside the PRT and led to a split in the beginning of 1969. One wing of the PRT formed the PRT-La Verdad, which later fused with a section of the Socialist party to form the PST, which remains in the Fourth International. The other wing, under the leadership of Santucho, formed the PRT-Combatiente, which initially maintained its willingness to remain in the Fourth International and demanded recognition as the Argentine section at the Ninth World Congress. The Congress accepted this claim, given the statutory circumstances of the split. However, the political dynamics of the split proved to be decisive in the long run. The logic of the PRT's orientation of "prolonged people's war" brought the political and programmatic differences to the fore. Comrade Santucho publicly broke with the Fourth International in 1973.

As leader of the PRT and the ERP (People's Revolutionary Army), Mario Roberto Santucho tried with iron resolution to inflict blows against the Argentine bourgeois army through actions of small armed groups in the hope that, following the Chinese and Vietnamese examples, masses of workers and peasants would rally around this first nucleus and a mass revolutionary party would be built in the course of the struggle. He hoped to constitute real "liberated zones" in the North of the country, devoting big resources and sacrificing many militants to assemble the necessary military infrastructure for this purpose. The Fourth International has irreconcilable differences with this strategy, which obscures the central role of the independent organization and class action of the proletariat in the process of permanent revolution and the need to build a party on that programmatic basis. But we mourn the death of this impressive revolutionary leader, who gave his life for the liberation of the masses of his country and his continent. The Argentine proletariat will avenge Mario Roberto Santucho, as it will avenge all the fighters for the socialist revolution killed by the bourgeoisie and its butchers in Argentina, by overthrowing the dictatorship and capitalist rule in that country.

Readers,

WE NEED \$5,000 BY THE END OF SEPTEMBER TO ASSURE THE CONTINUING PUBLICATION OF INPRECOR

The first issue of INPRECOR was published in May 1974 in three languages, English, French, and Spanish; soon it was possible to begin an edition in German. INPRECOR was launched to provide a forum for the revolutionary Marxist analysis of the Fourth International on crucial events throughout the world. In this it has been a success; more than 10,000 readers on all five continents have come to rely on this important instrument of political information and discussion. At a time when we are experiencing a rising revolutionary upsurge on a world scale, INPRECOR should be expanded and improved. But we are now facing extreme difficulties due to a serious liquidity crisis which has built up over past months and has been exacerbated by the recent rise in postal rates and the summer shutdown during August. This liquidity crisis now poses an immediate threat to our ability to continue regular publication of INPRECOR, especially if we are to go ahead with plans to soon bring out the fourth of our special, 64-page issues on the world economic situation.

We need financial help from our readers to solve this problem; without it we cannot meet all our outstanding obligations. We hope that readers can contribute a total of \$5,000 before the end of September. Your help is urgently needed and every response to this appeal, no matter how small, will be helpful and welcome.

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