

international press correspondence

INPRECOR

SPAIN: TOWARD THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL STRIKE!



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JAMES P. CANNON

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FOUNDER OF AMERICAN TROTSKYISM

James P. Cannon, founder of American Trotskyism and leader for three decades of the Socialist Workers party, the American Trotskyist organization, died in Los Angeles on August 21 at the age of eighty-four. He had spent sixty-four of those years in the struggle for the socialist revolution. That in itself would be an achievement of no mean value. But Cannon was also a leader -- one who worked in circumstances that were far from the most favorable and who remained ever confident in the ultimate power of the ideas of Marxism.

Cannon came from the middle of the United States, the town of Rosedale, Kansas. He was born in 1890. His father had been an activist in the earliest American socialist movement, and Cannon remained true to his father's tradition. In 1911 he joined the Industrial Workers of the World, the most militant class-struggle organization then existing in America and the training ground for many of the future leaders of American Communism. He worked as a traveling organizer for the IWW

and later, under the impact of the October Revolution, became a member of the Left Wing of the Socialist party. In the spring of 1919 he attended the National Conference of the SP Left Wing faction and was later a founding member of the Communist Labor party -- one of the two Third Internationalist groups to emerge out of the SP Left Wing. He became a member of the National Committee of the party in 1920 and was one of the central leaders who helped guide the fledgling organization through its years of underground existence during the Palmer raid witch-hunt after the first world imperialist war. In 1922 he was a delegate to the Fourth Congress of the Communist International, where he met with many of the leaders of the Russian revolution and obtained their support in the fight to have the American party move to a legal existence as the political situation began to change. He remained in the leadership of the Communist party until his expulsion in 1928. During that time he was instrumental in building the

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TOWARD THE REVOLUTIONARY GENERAL STRIKE!

In our editorial on the fall of the Castano regime and the Athens junta, we wrote: "The Francoist regime, last remaining far-right dictatorship in Europe, has been dealt a powerful blow. The impatient hopes of the Spanish working masses will be accentuated. There too some surprises may be in the offing in the near future." (INPRECOR, No. 5-6.)

Through their fight against the Burgos trials and their strikes in Pamplona, Vigo, Ferrol, and elsewhere, the Spanish masses have proven their will to oppose capitalist oppression and the dictatorship by direct action. It will not be easy for the Communist party and its allies to channel this combativity toward class collaboration. Decisive confrontations are on the agenda on

the Iberian Peninsula, and revolutionaries throughout the world must prepare to extend militant solidarity to the Spanish workers.

In this issue we are publishing three items on the situation in Spain: an interview with a leading member of the LCR-ETA(VI) (Liga Comunista Revolucionaria-Euzkadi ta Askatasuna VI--Revolutionary Communist League-Basque Nation and Freedom, Sixth Congress), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Spain; an account of the strike wave in Baix Llobregat; and an important document issued this summer by the LCR-ETA(VI) outlining the situation in the country and the tasks of revolutionaries.

INPRECOR

THE "JUNTA DEMOCRATICA"

Question. The policy of the Spanish Communist party has been to try to bring down the Francoist dictatorship by making an alliance with the liberal wing of the Spanish bourgeoisie. At his recent press conference in Paris, Santiago Carrillo, a leader of the CP, tried to make this policy a reality by announcing the creation of the Junta Democratica (Democratic Council). This new version of the earlier "Pact for Freedom" is an attempted response to the enormous impact the fall of the Portuguese fascist dictatorship has had in Spain. What does the Junta Democratica represent? Is a substantial fraction of the Spanish bourgeoisie today prepared to enter into an alliance with the CP?

Answer. We think that the Junta Democratica, constituted in Madrid at the end of July, falls within the continuity of the policy of the Pact for Freedom that has been developed by the CP for many years. As you say, it is a question of trying to channel the deep impact that the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship has had on all of Spanish society to the benefit

of the CP's policy of class collaboration. For the bourgeoisie, these events have further exacerbated the already deep political crisis and have deepened the internal contradictions. The clearest manifestation of these divisions has been the growth of the so-called centrist currents of the bourgeoisie, whose political program is to "institutionalize" the regime, which means to create vehicles for the expression of the various bourgeois tendencies so as to fill the vacuum that will quickly be created by the disappearance of the Bonaparte, Franco. Concurrently, the right wing of the regime is becoming stronger. This right wing, with the support of the Opus Dei organization, wants to impose itself as the guarantor of real continuity of the regime. In addition, we have seen the first demonstrations of the "liberal" wing of the bourgeoisie, notably in Catalonia. But it represents only a very marginal sector. And it is not even this tendency as such that is represented in the Junta Democratica or in the "democratic assemblies" that may come along today in the image of the Catalonia Assembly. Today, only a few bourgeois political personalities are going along with the CP policy.

Nevertheless, it must be recognized that the events of April 25 in Portugal have lent the CP's policy of trying to put an end to the Francoist dictatorship through class collaboration much more credibility in the eyes of the masses -- and in the eyes of a section of the vanguard as well.

* * *

Q. The Workers Commissions have raised the slogan of a general strike for this autumn. What is behind this? Is it a tactical turn by the CP aimed at taking an initiative to back up its political maneuvers through a controlled mobilization of the masses?

A. The "general coordination" of the Workers Commissions, which is essentially controlled by the CP, has launched a call for a general strike for the end of September or the beginning of October, but has not yet set a definite date. It's intended to be a twenty-four-hour general strike for limited objectives. There is no question of taking over the work places on that day. The demands advanced have to do with the struggle against the high cost of living, for amnesty, and against the dictatorship. This initiative by the CP is a response to the real combativity of the workers and an attempt to canalize that combativity as a means of pressure not so much on the dictatorship as on the "centrist" sectors in order to force them into a political agreement. But in any case, we can expect a real mass mobilization around the strike, one that the reformists will have trouble controlling completely. A lot depends on the ability of the revolutionary organizations to mobilize the workers vanguard around militant positions. I think it could be the biggest political mobilization against the dictatorship since the struggles against the Burgos trials in December 1970.

* * *

Q. What will be the LCR-ETA(VI) response to this exacerbation of the crisis of the dictatorship, to this beginning of decomposition that has arisen after the Portuguese events, to the sickness and impending death of Franco, and to the political offensive of the CP?

A. Our organization still has limited forces, in spite of the strengthening we have experienced not only through the fusion of the LCR and the ETA(VI) about a year ago, but also

through the integration a few weeks ago of two small, local organizations: the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction of Barcelona and the Leninist Faction of the ETA in Guipuzcoa. But in the current situation, our political influence and our capacity for intervention are not at all negligible. Obviously, we support the calling of the general strike. We are going to try to convince the workers to organize general assemblies and elected committees in their work places in order to coordinate with the Workers Commissions and the organs of struggle that have emerged among other sectors (students, teachers, high schoolers) and with the workers organizations so as to construct a representative leadership capable of making the general strike as powerful as possible and of carrying out street demonstrations in all the big cities.

We will propose a platform of struggle including demands like:

- across the board wage increases of 5,000 pesetas for all,
- forty-hour workweek,
- reintegration of fired workers,
- freedom for political prisoners,
- freedom of assembly, strikes, and organization,
- self-determination in Euzkadi (the Basque country) and Catalonia,
- dissolution of the specialized repressive corps.

Moreover, we are waging a campaign around the organization of self-defense of struggles and demonstrations, for the overthrow of the dictatorship through a revolutionary general strike, and for the establishment of a workers government.

With the impending general strike, a united policy is more than ever necessary, in the first place within the Workers Commissions, but also among the revolutionary organizations. We can reach an agreement to defend a class struggle position against the reformists with the Liga Comunista (Communist League, another Spanish sympathizing organization of the Fourth International), the ORT (Organización Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores -- Revolutionary Workers Organization, a formation of Christian origin), the MCE (Movimiento Comunista de España -- Spanish Communist Movement, a Maoist organization), and the COC. This certainly means fighting for the unity of all the workers organizations against the dictatorship.

In this way we will move toward an acceleration of the rhythm of class struggle in Spain and an acceleration of the major confrontations that are on the way. As in the past, we are sure we can count on the active solidarity not only of the sections of the Fourth International but of the whole European and world workers movement as well. ■

THE STRIKES IN BAIX LLOBREGAT

After the struggle of the Seda workers during the past three months and the repeated general mobilizations throughout the Baix Llobregat region, the workers struggles now under way in the region constitute clear proof of the will of the workers to respond in struggle to the consequences of capitalist inflation and to fight to defend the jobs of militant workers who have been fired. (Since the beginning of the year, more than 500 have been fired in the province of Barcelona.)

Causes of the struggle

The struggle was launched last May 21 by the 750 workers of the Elsa glass factory in Cornellà. The initial demands, which were discussed in the course of several general assemblies of the workers, were these: immediate, equal wage increases of 5,000 pesetas a month for all; refusal to work on three successive Sundays a month; and negotiation of a new contract.

The employers responded to the work stoppages by clearing out the factory on May 24 with the aid of the repressive forces, with the usual consequences of unemployment and ending of wages for the workers, and by firing two workers, one of whom was the secretary of the legal committee of the CNS.

From that very moment, solidarity -- in many cases combined with the demand for a regional collective contract for the metal industry, which was rejected by the employers -- began to spread throughout the region. At the Siemens plant the workers pooled their overtime wages to support the Elsa workers. Work stoppages, while they were of uneven duration, broke out repeatedly in succeeding days. Fergat, Faura, Pirelli, Clausor, Fenixbron, Soler Almiral, Guma, Serra, Tubos Bonna, Bardina, Dumper, Josala, Laforsa, Hules de Gava, Enaxa, Drim, Metalarte, Stok, Tperin, Nerwick, Eromsa, Natacas, Germa, Plasmica, Brin, and so on for fifty factories!

On June 1, during this wave of solidarity actions, the 350 workers of Solvay, a chemical company in Martorell who last January had won an equal annual wage increase for all of 52,000 pesetas, entered into struggle anew, demanding both an additional 3,000 pesetas a month increase in order to keep up with the high cost of living and the reintegration of fired workers. Here, as at Elsa, the employers responded with a lockout and, with the support of the government, concurrently forced sixty-three workers to keep working, under the pretext that they had to keep the ovens functioning to avoid the threat of an explosion.

The workers of the Harry Walker factory in Sant Andreu de la Barca, who last January won an annual raise of 36,000 pesetas, also entered into struggle, first by organizing assemblies, then by stopping work in solidarity with Elsa and Solvay. They demanded a 4,000 peseta increase for all, a forty-hour work week, integration of the highest-level bonuses into the base pay, and reintegration of three fired workers.

As we affirmed June 8 in a common declaration of the Barcelona Provincial Committee of the LCR-ETA(VI) and the Political Committee of the Bolshevik-Leninist Faction (a local organization that has since fused with the LCR-ETA(VI) -- INPRECOR): "The struggle of the workers of Baix Llobregat, which has only just begun, has already obtained its first results: reintegration of all fired workers except one at Elsa and a 2,400 peseta a month wage increase. But this time the workers of Elsa and of all Baix Llobregat want no layoffs. They have become conscious of their strength and want full satisfaction of all their demands." And, as of this writing, the struggle is continuing.

Organization and weaknesses

Since the relationship of forces in Baix Llobregat is much less favorable to the workers than it is in the rest of Barcelona province, it could appear paradoxical at first glance that such a hard struggle as the one going on at Elsa should be led by the legal "trade-union" representatives, that the greater part of material solidarity should be channeled through the local section of the CNS in the Cornellà area, that many meetings should be held in the CNS headquarters and should also get the de facto agreement of a section of the bureaucracy of the verticle trade-union, that the legal representatives should have played a not negligible role in the struggle at Solvay, that a series of solidarity strikes should be decided on during assemblies of legal representatives, that these representatives should also go along with the demand for a regional collective contract in the metal industry. All this could appear paradoxical, but in fact it is not so paradoxical for those who know the composition of the Workers Commissions of the region, for those who are aware of the orientation they uphold. The predominant forces in the region are the "Workers Commissions of sectors," also known as Prensa Obrera (Workers Press), the name of the paper they publish. The dominant tendency in Prensa Obrera is the Bandera Roja (Red Flag) group, a socialist organization of Christian origin.

Side by side with Bandera Roja, with less but by no means negligible influence, we also find the Workers Commissions that follow the orientation of the Communist party. In spite of the fact that Bandera Roja includes the most combative sectors of the workers vanguard of the region, the perspective that the group presents differs little from that upheld by the CP in workers struggles, namely, utilization of legal representatives, negotiation of contracts, respect of "legal channels."

This, in addition to the weak implantation in the region of organizations defending a class-struggle line, explains the fact that the majority of the workers still regard these methods as useful weapons for their struggles, as a valuable instrument in defending their demands, despite the fact that, at the beginning of the year when the Seda struggle was going on, militants of the Workers Commissions began to question the line being put forward by Bandera Roja and the CP, a line that

was proving incapable of stimulating a generalization of the struggle.

It is these same combative elements, both in the "Workers Commissions of sectors" and in the Workers Commissions of the CP orientation, who have been the advocates of forming broader and broader pickets to extend the strike, who have managed to draw the majority of the Elsa workers into the struggle one way or another, who are in process of pressing for setting up an independent coordination of workers to organize a general strike in the region to support the Elsa and Solvay workers, to defend their common demands, and to reintegrate all the fired workers. This is shown by the general strike slogan that has now been raised by the leadership of the Workers Commissions. It is these militants who forced the administration of the legal representatives to be discussed in assemblies; it was these militants who have pushed for the election of committees by general assemblies to draw up the lists of demands, which was done at Harry Walker.

Nevertheless, despite the strengthening of this most conscious current in the course of the struggle itself, the majority of the workers of Baix Llobregat continue to have confidence in the negotiation of a regional contract, continue to believe that partial work stoppages will be sufficient to force the Elsa and Solvay managements to give in, and that combative legal representatives will be useful in the struggle, despite the anti-worker character of the CNS. Precisely in that lies the main weakness of the struggle, a weakness that is increasing the difficulty of generalizing the struggle not only in the region, but also in Barcelona, where struggles like those at AFA, Foessa, and so on, testify to a growing climate of agitation in most of the factories. This climate is also reflected in the

negotiations around the metalworkers' contract, in which the reformists have placed all their hopes.

The outlook

The struggle of the Elsa and Solvay workers has already lasted for a month. Partial work stoppages in solidarity with them in Baix Llobregat and the struggle against the high cost of living and against firings is going on and continuing to develop throughout the region, especially since the employers have refused to negotiate a regional contract. The situation is even more explosive in Barcelona, and the workers' sensitivity to the Baix Llobregat struggle is increasing every day. There are already many workers who are not prepared to wait for the still very hypothetical results of the metalworkers negotiations before launching their own struggle for an immediate wage increase, a sliding scale of wages, a forty-hour workweek, the defense of fired militants, and against the infernal speedups. The situation is similar at Sabadell, Terrassa, Cerdanyola, and Badalona. There are considerable possibilities for a generalized struggle throughout the province.

That is the alternative revolutionaries are fighting for within the various Workers Commissions, making unity proposals to the other organizations (like the Anti-capitalist Platforms) and developing their own work in the factories and neighborhoods, pushing for a conscious outflanking of the CNS and the contracts by raising the struggle for a unified platform of demands, self-organization of the workers struggles, and organization of self-defense. As was affirmed in a leaflet put out by militants and sympathizers of the LCR-ETA(VI) and the Baix Llobregat Bolshevik-Leninist Faction: "All in struggle for the demands of all!" That is the road to victory. ■

RAISE THE BANNER OF THE WORKING CLASS!

The Chilean and Portuguese events have had an important influence on the class struggle in Spain at a particularly grave moment. There are three reasons for this:

- (1) The evaporation after the execution of Carrero Blanco of any possibility of Franco's succession taking the form of a "personal Bonapartism."
- (2) The approach of an economic recession accompanied by a very high rate of inflation, which everybody except the government expects to begin next autumn.
- (3) The maintenance of the combativity of the mass movement, which is prepared to defend itself against attacks on its standard of living and against firings. On this subject we have only to stress the emergence of regularized struggles in the countryside and their indirect effects on small merchants.

Under these conditions, the question of the Francoist dictator-

ship -- its maintenance, transformation, alteration, or overthrow -- has been placed in the center of the strategic debate and has aggravated the contradictions within the bourgeoisie, contradictions that provoked an important reorientation of the government of Arias Navarro and triggered a process of political regroupments within the workers movement. In their turn, the totality of these actions and reactions, in spite of the embryonic character of many of them, are allowing for the clarification of the perspectives of the overthrow of Francoism and the definition of the orientation that revolutionaries must give to present struggles.

"Classic" and "radical" centrism

The centrist current, which only a few months ago constituted the ideological base and pillar of unconditional support for

the Arias team, some of whose most significant figures were members of it, began to take its distance from the government from the moment that a "radical" wing began to develop within it. The reason for this lies in the two varying interpretations of the centrist political dogma: "The necessary survival of the dictatorship is linked to its ability to regroup within it political organizations representative of all the principal factions of the bourgeoisie."

One interpretation, whose advocates directed their activity toward changes that could be made while Franco is still alive, considers the relationship of forces within the apparatus of the dictatorship to be a decisive factor and concludes, after the striking reappearance of the far right, that Arias represents the maximum limit of the "opening" that can be made today.

The other interpretation, whose advocates are already orienting their activity with a view toward post-Francoism, judges that the possibilities opened up by Arias are extremely narrow and prevent the realization of the dogma referred to above. That is why the advocates of this interpretation have raised the banner of institutional reforms opening a gradual and controlled process of "Europeanization" of the dictatorship, that is, of direct control by the big bourgeoisie of its state apparatus and of recomposition of its social base. While it is true that "radical centrism" today has only an embryonic existence around the personality of Fraga, it has broad possibilities of strengthening itself based on the defeat it expects Arias to suffer on the level of the Associations and of constituting after the death of Franco the alternative pole to the far right within the framework of the dictatorship. That is exactly what it hopes to achieve.

The new far right

The Spanish far right has gone through a transformation because of the convergence within it, along with the fascist bands, of organizations of civil war veterans, the remains of the "historic" phalange, and a considerable fringe of the armed forces and the police from the sector that was "displaced" after the Carrero government. Thus, the far right forms a bloc, an alliance that is not based on ideological identity among its various components -- on this level, the divergences among Iniesta, Giron, and Fernández are very clear -- but rather on political accords among these most important components in the present situation.

They are all in agreement that the survival of Francoism can be based only on an intensification of its dictatorial character, an intensification in turn based on a "political army" -- the army of July 18 -- and a homogeneous state apparatus. It is this army that appears as the legitimate heir to Francoist bonapartism. Consequently, their solution to the crisis of Spanish capitalism, which, according to them, will take on a life or death character immediately after the disappearance of Franco is an open military dictatorship accompanied by a brutal mass repression, a dictatorship tightly integrated with the big international capitalist groups that have proven their effectiveness in promoting capitalist development, as in the case of Brazil. Otherwise, they hold, the alternative is Portugal, which showed the risks involved in a policy of concessions, evolution, and weakness that finally contaminated the sacred rampart, the army, thus leaving a "power vacuum" and opening the door to revolution.

Thus, the alternative that the far right is pushing is not exactly fascist. Although they unite, utilize, and draw support from the fascist bands, the most important sectors of this far

right, namely the "technocrats" and the officers, have not the slightest intention or possibility of constructing a classical mass fascist movement. Under their plans, the task of destroying the mass movement devolves fundamentally on the official repressive forces in collaboration with the fascist bands. Nor is it putschist, for there is no need to change a single one of the basic laws, even the one naming the successor of the dictator, in order to legitimize an open military dictatorship in the country. The trump card of the far right is not that of "coup," but precisely that of "continuity."

It is important to stress the fundamental role played in this bloc by the "nouveaux." Effectively, the "technocrats" represent the bridgeheads of important financial and industrial interests, the "material base" of the dominant sector of Opus Dei within the political fraction as such, control over which was and still is just as difficult as it is necessary for the Spanish bourgeoisie. And in turn, the whole far right is not unaware of the fact that it is exactly these "experts" who make the far right a credible alternative regime for big capital. They can only think of their "brothers" in Bolivia, Chile, and Brazil.

The "democratic" bourgeoisie

At the same time, and at the other end of the political spectrum, a wing of the bourgeoisie that no longer believes in the dictatorship has appeared. This wing is still limited to a series of spokesmen who lack great cohesion on the fundamental problems, like what attitude to take toward the traditional workers organizations, what the role of the army should be, and what attitude to take toward the Arias government (pressure, opposition, etc.). But two observations must be made:

-- Many of these spokesmen are absolutely not "political phantoms" marginal to the real interests of their own class, but are significant personalities of big capital responding to the objectives and ambitions of a faction of the bourgeoisie that is so far a minority but nevertheless an important one. (This is most easily seen in Catalonia.)

-- The emergence of this group represents the most solid political appearance since 1939 of a sector of the bourgeoisie explicitly situating itself outside of Francoism.

Beginning with these two facts and the international situation -- particularly the Portuguese experience -- we can conclude that this is the first time since the war that a "democratic" bourgeoisie has acquired a certain plausibility, a certain capacity for political intervention.

But the adjective "democratic" must be qualified in four ways:

1. Without the masses. Apart from a few individual exceptions, who are in fact political phantoms, the "democratic" bourgeoisie poses the problem of changing the regime absolutely apart from the action of the masses. In this sense, they want to hear no talk under the present conditions of "general strikes," no matter how peaceful they may be, above all because the "democratic" bourgeoisie correctly doubts that a peaceful character could be preserved. It could not be otherwise with the Catalan employers who experienced the Besos general strike a few months ago or with Huarte, who experienced the Pamplona strike.

2. With Don Juan. Thus, for the "democratic" bourgeoisie, one of the fundamental conditions is that the change of the regime must be legitimized. That is the role it intends to be played by the count of Barcelona (Don Juan, Conde of Barcelona and father of Juan Carlos, the successor designated

by Franco himself -- INPRECOR), for no "liberating" sector of the army has come forward. This condition is fundamental at this point, for the refusal of this fantastic personality to place himself at the head of a "provisional government" was sufficient to create a real impasse with no short-term solution.

3. A conditioned choice. The "democratic" choice of a sector of the Spanish bourgeoisie is far from being an irreversible profession of faith. All sorts of turns and even complete reversals are left open. This is because the three elements that have determined the choice are the following:

(a) The most satisfactory type of Spanish development after the death of Franco will involve and necessitate direct control by the bourgeoisie over the state -- and especially over the army -- and a total integration into the Common Market.

(b) Given the particular form of the dictatorship, there is scant possibility -- and what possibility exists is difficult to realize -- of attaining these objectives through an evolution beginning from the dictatorship itself.

(c) In the long run, it seems less risky to establish a relationship with a workers movement controlled by the reformists than a workers movement with its present characteristics.

It is clear that these three elements could change, especially in function of the state of the mass movement, but also in function of the international situation, the relationship of forces within the bourgeoisie, etc.

4. The "strong state." Furthermore, as we have already pointed out, parliamentary democracy admits of many variants. It is obvious that the variant that most corresponds to the interests of this sector of the bourgeoisie is the model of the "strong state," involving serious restrictions on trade-union and political rights, a parliament controlled by the executive, a strong repression against the revolutionary left and the uncontrolled mass movements -- the so-called wildcat strikes. This is a model that definitely constitutes a real political tendency on a world scale in the present epoch of the decline of imperialism. In any case, and independently of the desires of any sector or organization, the only nondictatorial system Spanish capitalism could endow itself with given the structural crisis and the confrontation with an extremely combative working class would be based on that type of model. The recent events in Portugal are significant in this regard.

In face of this breadth of varying bourgeois factions, the compelling conclusion is that the dominant sector of Spanish capitalism is covering all bets, lending privilege to none and excluding none. This is the logical manner in which it is approaching the uncertainties of post-Francoism and the rapid evolution and shifts that are going on and will continue to go on among the different variants.

Arias Navaro: a really provisional government

But the current situation of the government is precarious. After six months of promises, declarations of principles, and crises small and great, it can be asserted that the government's authority within the state devolves exclusively from that which Franco decides to accord it from one day to the next. It will disappear after Franco's death. As time goes by, the bourgeoisie becomes ever more conscious of the security and tranquility it lost with Carrero Blanco, the irreplaceable historic successor of the dictator.

In this sense, it is important to reaffirm the provisional and transitory character of the Arias government. For the following reasons:

(a) Arias's only means of acquiring the minimum authority needed to pass the test of succession was to recompose the dictatorship politically. Only then would he have been able to compensate for his total incapacity to be the successor to Francoist bonapartism even in a partial sense. Any idea that his government could have succeeded in what was beyond the scope of Carrero Blanco's -- breaking the rise of the mass movement -- must be discarded.

(b) But this political recomposition presupposed a modification of the relationship of forces within the dictatorship, at the expense, for example, of the sectors that have been dominant up to now, in particular at the expense of the Francoist bureaucracy that is ideologically identified with the far right. But this sector is one of the most faithful supporters of the dictatorship, and therefore anything reducing its power undermines Francoism itself. And furthermore, it constitutes an unconditional support to the repression, especially in its most brutal manifestations, which is normally regarded with a certain reserve by other political factions. And a government that commands no other weapon than repression in holding back the mass movement cannot neglect such support.

(c) This problem broke out after the military coup in Portugal. Its clearest expression is the so-called gironazo. In his speech June 15 in Barcelona Arias showed how he had bottled up the coup. As on other occasions, the far right of the dictatorship played its role of "shock absorber" against any changes, capable of contracting for a time in order to expand later and allow Francoism to recuperate its previous positions in their fundamental aspects.

June 15

Thus, the political content of June 15 was a self-defense reaction of the bureaucratic apparatus of the dictatorship, which saw its own existence threatened by the possible appearance of groups outside the "Movement" and supported by a very important nucleus of army leaders, who had just blown up Diez Alegria, one of Franco and Carrero's trusted men who had been maintained in his position against the General Staff during years of winds and storms.

It was also a confession of impotence before the aspirations of the sectors on which it had based itself previously. And, what is more important, it was an expression of powerlessness in face of the necessity felt by the majority of Spanish capitalists to begin what we have called the political recomposition of the dictatorship. From that point on, the bourgeoisie has had to pose the problems of succession in terms of a "power vacuum" in its strictest sense, namely the non-existence of personalities or political institutions capable of immediately carrying out the change in the dictatorship and of making key sectors of the army, the state apparatus, and the various factions of the bourgeoisie respect the key political decisions.

Margins for maneuver

Consequently, Arias commands only a very narrow margin for maneuver in trying to resolve the problems of Spanish capitalism, both in the long-term and the short-term. But he will utilize what little margin he has, and it is necessary to determine how his action will influence the unstable Spanish polit-

ical situation.

1. The Associations will finally be authorized, not as instruments for participating in power, which is what the bourgeoisie needs, but as instruments of pressure on the regime, narrowly controlled by the Francoist bureaucracy. It is therefore predictable that the meager and useless proposal Arias will make to the political factions will be to legalize a new type of pressure group, a new showcase through which they can display their merchandise. While there may be no doubt that the proposal will be broadly accepted in a more or less critical manner, there is also no doubt that it will not allow for the resolution of the problem of the bourgeoisie's participation in the regime and that it will contribute in a decisive fashion to sweeping away illusions in the dictatorship's capacity for self-reform.

2. The political status of the armed forces -- which is already clearly defined in the Organic Law of the State as the "army of the civil war" -- is now tending to be concretized in preparation for the succession. The Draft Law of National Defense that Diez Alegria is working out claims to assign to the army the role now played by the Generalissimo of the Government in order that the so-called professional and apolitical army may in fact be a pillar of governmental policy. Consequently, the intent is to limit as much as possible not the politicization of the army but rather its political independence from the concrete interests of the bourgeoisie. That is the second impossible mission of Arias's proposals. More than thirty years of Francoist dictatorship have forged an army whose command closely identifies with a "pure and hard" conception of Francoism and of the historic role that devolves on the army in maintaining this conception. Furthermore, it is obvious that the continuity of the dictatorship, both in its "reformist" version and in its "immovable" version, depends on the active support of the army. From these two facts derive both the profound identification of a considerable sector of the officers -- among them, to be sure, the chiefs of police who more and more come from the army's General Staff -- with the far right and the open struggle among the various sectors of the bourgeoisie for control over the armed forces. While this struggle may have only just begun, it seems predictable that the government will meet strong resistance to any attempt to reduce the independence of the military. For, in the final analysis, the army's control of the government is greater than the government's control of the army.

The suspension of Diez Alegria, like the attack launched against the draft law by General Cano Jerjes, the military theoretician of the far right, reflects the current relationship of forces. Arias can do nothing but put strong but controllable men in certain important posts in the Civil Guard, the General Staff, and the ministries. And this he can only do through a series of compromises and concessions to the "generals of the July 18."

3. Relations with the church constitute Arias's third field of battle, and here, as in the other cases, all he can do is try to obtain a truce. The ideological and political role that the Spanish church and the Vatican have played for many years in strengthening and supporting the dictatorship is finished, even though a considerable wing of the hierarchy and the clergy remain fully faithful to the "crusade."

The dominant sector of the ecclesiastical hierarchy has no desire to link its fate to a regime in crisis and it needs to find a margin of independence that can allow it to continue to play a role as moral guardian of the bourgeois order and can grant it a certain authority in relation to the political radicaliza-

tion of the confessional movements, in particular the Catholic worker youth. The 1953 Concordat represented one of the dictatorship's major diplomatic successes. The one that is soon going to be signed will mean nothing more than a redistribution of privileges and will in any case be unable to strengthen the moral authority of the church or to put the brakes on the process of radicalization or to limit all the other effects of the crisis of the dictatorship and of capitalism.

4. But it is in the decisive field of relations with the mass movement that Arias's impotence has appeared most clearly. Apart from the spectacular reinforcement of the repressive apparatus -- the only "solution" that the current government can present -- there is not the slightest proposal nor the slightest prospect of a truce. A government that is incapable of conceding the slightest particle of participation to its own class can still less make any concessions to its class enemy. The new regulations being prepared to apply to what are called "collective conflicts" can be nothing but an administrative patchwork in the absence of class trade-unions. And the CNS (National Union Council) can aspire to no other role than that of instrument of the employers with greater or less flexibility depending on the strength of the workers movement it confronts, that is, depending on the flexibility the employers are able to demonstrate.

The dictatorship has not the slightest ability to integrate the working class, and it has no illusions on this score. It is a question neither of integrating nor destroying the movement. It is simply a question of keeping it divided. That is the maneuvering room with which Arias is preparing to confront a critical year like 1975 -- trade-union elections, associations, economic crisis, social crisis throughout the imperialist world -- a situation the workers and popular movement has already shown how to respond to in Pamplona and Baix Llobregat.

Combativity and level of consciousness

All revolutionary intervention in the class struggle of our country must be oriented around this profound crisis of the regime and the Spanish bourgeoisie, a crisis whose explosion could be precipitated by a factor unpredictable by and foreign to the action of the masses: the disappearance of the dictator. Putting aside all speculation, the important thing is to stimulate this mass dynamic, beginning from the current state of the movement, and prepare it to take up the new tasks it will be confronted with during an open prerevolutionary crisis.

Consequently, we must begin with an analysis of this "current level of consciousness" within which the vanguard must root itself in order to be able to effectively win the leadership of the mass mobilizations. Beginning with the observation that we find ourselves in a phase of the rise of the mass movement, we must concretize the contradictory characteristics of the present situation.

(a) A movement that is spreading.

Since the beginning of the year, mass mobilizations have continued to spread at accelerated rhythms, both geographically and by sector. This extension seems to be the product of two factors:

1. The capitalist economic crisis, which has provoked an important attack on the standard of living of the masses and has raised the specter of massive unemployment as an imminent threat.
2. The offensive attitude adopted by the mass movement for several years, which has succeeded in establishing a rela-

tionship of forces with the bourgeoisie allowing the questions of winning demands through action and solidarity and of going beyond the Francoist legal channels to be posed, even in sectors or cities that lack a tradition of struggle.

(b) The peasantry.

The incorporation of the peasantry into the struggle is extremely important. This incorporation is not of a temporary character. In fact, from the standpoint of both the internal and external market, the structure of the Spanish countryside is ruined. This explains why:

*Every harvest of various crops touches off a "war" whose main effect is to shake the bureaucratic hierarchy of the "Brotherhood of Farmers and Breeders";

*Second, important differentiations do not appear between large and small peasant proprietors;

*An important secondary effect of the situation is seen in the struggles of small merchants who have been forced to pay the costs of the concessions won by the peasants and have been demagogically presented as being responsible for the price rises on the market.

*Finally, we must stress the emergence of regularized struggles of the agricultural proletariat, less spectacular and more limited on the local level than in the past, but taking on an enormous importance even in the short-term, given the predictable situation of unemployment in the countryside and the brake on emigration.

The whole situation in the countryside expresses on the one hand a step forward in the decomposition of the social base of the dictatorship and the aggravation of the internal contradictions of the bourgeoisie (within which the necessity of taking the road of "capitalist rationalization of the countryside" is beginning to attract a certain audience) -- and, on the other hand, the incorporation into combat of a sector that contains an important part of the working class (the agricultural proletariat) and a fundamental ally in the working-class struggle (the poor peasantry). In order to forge the revolutionary alliance of the working class and this sector of the peasantry, it is necessary as rapidly as possible to close the enormous gap in the intervention of revolutionaries in the countryside by having the proletariat appear as the best defender of the interests of the poor peasantry against the large agricultural proprietors and the dictatorship.

(c) The movement in the popular neighborhoods.

In the popular neighborhoods, struggles around living conditions and high prices are beginning to develop and become generalized. Until very recently this sort of struggle had appeared only in the form of isolated explosions. Given that the objective causes of the emergence of a specific movement of a mass character in the popular neighborhoods (consequences of the economic crisis and the degradation of public services like health, schools, transport, urbanization, protection of the environment, and so on) can only grow in coming months, the neighborhoods should play an important role in future struggles, not only as a sector struggling around its own problems -- although that is obviously where the possibility of developing a real mass movement comes from -- but also in three other aspects:

1. As centers of organization for a totality of struggles, whether the origin of these struggles lies with specific problems of the neighborhood or with factory struggles, struggles on construction sites, or directly political struggles.

2. As the most appropriate place to immediately confront the demobilization tactics used by the employers (like lock-outs), facilitating close contact among suspended workers, the organization of the assemblies, and so on, and allowing for the occupation of factories that are closed down.

3. As the natural place for the assembly of unemployed workers and for the preparation for struggles to win jobs.

Finally, the important thing is to work so that the neighborhood movement becomes integrated into the mass movement in a conscious and concrete form and is thus integrated as a new base of support and as an experiment of particular importance for the present and future struggles: the organization of a territorial base capable of centralizing the struggles of the workers of different occupations, the small merchants, the apprentices, the students, and so on.

Apart from a few exceptions, the vanguard organizations that now exist in the popular neighborhoods are extremely weak and have a very limited audience inferior to that of the various sorts of legal associations. This is a result of their limited effectiveness and, more especially, of their limited range of action. That is why it seems necessary for all the political workers organizations to commit themselves to reinforcing in the neighborhoods where they exist and creating in those where they do not exist broad, open, democratic vanguard organizations coordinating with the workers organizations and the Workers Commissions.

The effectiveness these organizations are able to acquire -- both from the standpoint of specific demands and from the standpoint of their participation in the totality of the movement -- will depend in large measure on constructing within them a revolutionary tendency of all militants ready to press for a line of direct mass action and an anti-capitalist program that responds to the most burning interests of the inhabitants of the popular neighborhoods, particularly, in the current situation, a program capable of offering a class alternative for the struggle against the high cost of living, a coherent program with slogans and demands of the whole movement.

(d) The liberal professions.

As regards the sectors of liberal professions, four points must be stressed:

1. The important participation of groups of the liberal professions -- going beyond the limits of their professional associations -- in the struggles that followed the assassination of Puig.

2. In general, the repeated experience of important layers of doctors, lawyers, engineers, and professors with the ineffectiveness of their associations (Colegios Profesionales) in defending their interests, especially after the application of the new law.

3. The continuity of the struggle of doctors along with joint actions of doctors, other public health workers, and nurses in various cases.

4. Finally, and this is the most important, the participation in workers struggles and in the factory Workers Commissions of an important sector of engineers, who, of course, have been publicly denounced by their professional associations. (The best example is that of Standard of Madrid.)

Although experiences like the one at Standard of Madrid may unfortunately be exceptions, they confirm the tendency of significant fringes of technicians to abandon the side of the employers (which a growing sector of them have not the slightest interest in defending) and to assume their condition as workers following the leadership of the working class. Clearly, it is an extremely important task to push this determined tendency in an anticapitalist direction, beginning both from the Workers Commissions and from the bodies that regroup the vanguard of these sectors. This means to organize the common struggle of the workers and technicians against the hierarchization of labor in the factories, against the enormous wage differentials, against all the weapons the employers utilize to

perpetuate the division and opposition between the technicians and the workers. In the end, it is a matter of opposing the reformist conception that winds up by destroying any possibility of common action by asking that the proletariat defend not the real interests of all the workers but the privileges of the technicians.

(e) The movement in the educational system.

By forming the essential base of the mass actions against the assassination of Salvador Puig Antich the student movement once again showed its capacity to respond immediately to the repression unleashed by the dictatorship. But the student movement has suffered from three serious insufficiencies that are at the origin of the oscillations and difficulties it has experienced to a greater or lesser extent in all areas:

1. The broad spontaneous resistance of the student movement to the application of the General Education Law and its various consequences ran into organizational difficulties in regard to the building of bodies of the broad student vanguard and political difficulties -- stemming from the hegemony of the "corporatist" current -- in transforming itself into a conscious resistance and, as such, into the permanent backbone of the student movement.

2. The objective convergence of the struggles of various sectors of the educational system -- professors, instructors, university students -- was concretized in practice only in a very limited way, well inferior to the possibilities offered by the struggle against selection.

3. The structuring of the student movement on a national scale, a necessity deeply felt by broad layers of the student vanguard, received only the ineffective and reformist response of the RGU (Reunion General de Universidades -- General Assembly of University Students).

The basis of the struggle of revolutionary students and professors against the "participationist" maneuver that has been promised for the next year at the university, through whose framework the corporatist current will try to channel the demands, combativity, and revolutionary political role of this sector, must be to try to overcome these three basic insufficiencies.

(f) The workers movement.

The workers movement has newly confirmed its role as the driving lance of the entire mass movement, which advances only through the breaches opened up by the workers. These have been the fundamental characteristics of the workers movement during recent months:

1. Although the most important regions of workers mobilization have continued to be Catalonia and the Basque country, a process of recomposition has begun in Madrid -- probably the most important such process since 1967 -- which seems to have put an end to the long crisis of the workers movement in one of the most important industrial regions in the country, a region whose role was fundamental during the 1960s. Further, to show the entry of new cities into struggle, we could cite the examples of the strike of Citesa in Malaga, of Dragados y Construcciones in Huelva.

2. The virtually unique axis of the workers mobilizations has been struggles for economic demands and against firings. The participation of the workers movement in political struggles -- whether around the 1001 trials*, the assassination of Puig Antich, or May 1 -- has been very limited, especially

when compared to the high level of combativity that has been manifested in the factories or to the response to the Burgos trials in 1970.

3. The important experience of the Platforms of Unitary Demands worked out on the scale of an industrial branch or a region has extended rapidly and been transformed into a weapon of combat that has been taken up on many occasions by the masses. They will play a central role in immediate struggles.

4. Solidarity in the form of work stoppages in the factories and collections for striking workers has developed around the most important struggles, reflecting the firm determination of the proletariat to defend everybody's jobs, especially if the reason for the firing has been participation in the struggle. Moreover, in the cases of Authi and Baix Llobregat we have seen workers demanding not only the reintegration of militants fired during a struggle that was in progress, but also of militants fired several months earlier. Among many other examples, the workers of the metal industry in Madrid incorporated this demand -- readmission of all those fired from this branch during the past few years (a total of about 2,000) -- into the unitary platform.

5. Certain of these struggles initially developed outside the legal channels. But these were exceptional cases. The most frequent development was the outflanking of Francoist legality with contradictory features between the ranks of the movement -- who were seeking the road of direct action -- and certain leaders who in several cases turned the struggle toward the offices of the CNS, the bishop, and the government functionaries. In this way, a minuscule "bureaucracy of the CNS in favor of an opening" emerged, representatives of a cheap demagoguery that has no future at all. It can be said that if this bureaucracy commands a certain room for intervention, this is exactly a result of the oscillations or the legalism of some of the leaders of the struggles. In any case, this room for intervention is extremely reduced and cannot grow in coming months. In the present situation of the movement, the dictatorship can tolerate the CNS only as a repressive bureaucratic structure. At the present time, even such a weak maneuver as the one carried out by Solis in 1966 during the "vote for the best" campaign, has no chance of coming off.

6. These contradictions in the field of direct action explain why the various embryonic local general strikes that have appeared -- including the most developed, that of Baix Llobregat -- have not deepened. The reason for the very weak importance of the street actions (demonstrations from the factories, central demonstrations, etc.), which were rather easily broken up by the cops, is closely related to this. Thus, once again the delay in the organization of self-defense of the movement cost very dearly in each of the struggles, all the more dearly in that "preventive" repressive action is becoming more effective (police occupations, encirclement of factories, police patrols, permanent coordination with the management, etc.). If self-defense continues to be left to improvisation ("if we are attacked, we will defend ourselves") and if the police are permitted to be masters of the streets, it will be very difficult to create the relationship of forces that will allow for real total struggles. All revolutionary workers must consider it a task of vital importance to wage a basic battle in the Workers Commissions to make them assure the organization of self-defense of struggles in a regular manner.

7. The situation is also contradictory on the level of the organization of the movement. The assemblies have played a central role in the great majority of struggles, and they have

*The trials of militants of the Workers Commissions, among whom was the Communist leader Camacho, which opened in Madrid on the day of the execution of Carrero Blanco. They were called the 1001 trials because the sentences demanded against the militants totalled 1001 years in jail. -- INPRECOR.

been recognized as the leadership organs of the mobilizations. It would be absurd to neglect the importance of this fact, which has taken years of struggle to put across. But the assemblies have an indispensable complement, which considerably augments their effectiveness and educational function: elected and recallable committees. These committees have appeared in certain cases, but most of the time they have been replaced by bastardized formations that tried to combine defense of the interests of the workers as expressed in the assemblies and respect for a legal framework of negotiation. Very often these "committees responsible to the assembly" -- which in certain cases were purely and simply the legal committee of the factory -- wound up by placing the legality of the negotiation before the demands of the workers in struggle, as could have been predicted. Revolutionaries who defend the direct action of the masses do not do so out of simple "educational" necessities posed in function of the historic interests of the proletariat, nor out of purist and infantile "leftism." They defend this line because the whole experience of the Spanish workers movement since 1967 proves that the struggle for demands can go forward only through direct action, because the minimum conditions in the CNS that would allow it to be used in the workers' favor simply do not exist, and because it is absolutely unnecessary to try to so utilize it in a period of outright rise of the workers struggles when bodies like the Workers Commissions exist, which are instruments capable of placing themselves at the head of the struggles in the field and in all circumstances. And finally, because the collective bargaining contracts have shown in every case that they are nothing but weapons of the dictatorship -- loyal collaborators with the two other weapons of Francoism, the illegality of the workers organizations and the repression in all its forms -- in its fight to continue to carry out what has always been its political justification for the bourgeoisie: maintaining the workers movement as divided as possible.

There is no revolutionary Marxist principle that says that we may never utilize the legal channels of the dictatorship, nor, naturally, that we must always utilize them. It is for the reasons stated above -- and not out of any question of principle -- that we are opposed to utilization of the present legal structures of the dictatorship and that we are in favor of systematically going beyond them through strikes, demonstrations, pickets to extend the strikes, self-defense pickets, assemblies, and elected and recallable committees that discuss directly with the management about the demands of the workers in struggle without the intervention of the state or the CNS.

8. Finally, as regards the situation of the Workers Commissions, two very important facts have emerged:

*In the first place, the reformist and centrist organizations -- above all the Communist party -- continue to maintain broad hegemony over these bodies, with only very rare exceptions. The relationship of forces that the advocates of "class independence" have been able to establish within the Workers Commissions is very weak. This is the reason for the persistence of the division of the Commissions and the slowness with which their recomposition is progressing, as well as their very weak attractive power for new militants and the inexistence of a coordination of the Commissions on a national scale.

It is not difficult to find the explanation for such a phenomenon, which has been repeated many times in the history of the workers movement: A mass dynamic that is objectively opposed to the reformist orientation -- or, to take the phrase of Trotsky, that "cuts through it at a certain angle" -- but which nevertheless remains under reformist leadership, while the revolutionary orientation, which is in accord with the dynamic of the movement, remains on the fringes of it. The key to the

apparent contradiction resides in the errors committed by the revolutionary left, which is seeking to break its isolation through various forms of opportunist adaptation to the leaderships that hold hegemony or else is accepting in theory or practice its isolation and its marginal character and is renouncing the inch-by-inch battle on all fields against these leaderships, thus eliminating any possibility of appearing as a concrete alternative to the present leaderships in the struggles of the movement. Thus, even when the facts clearly prove the revolutionary line correct, the indispensable conscious link between this isolated concrete proof and the daily struggle of the working class does not exist. Thus, the hegemony of the reformists is not at all affected.

*In the second place, the combination of the reformist hegemony and the marginality of the revolutionaries -- and consequently, the virtual nonexistence of conclusive concrete proof of the effectiveness for the interests of the working class of working within the Workers Commissions -- have stimulated the reappearance of a significant fringe of the vanguard structured outside the Commissions in the "platforms" that are taking on a growing importance and have already led a few radical struggles, like that of the construction workers in Valladolid. It is clear that it will be difficult to build an effective alternative of class independence without taking these bodies into account and, in general, without taking into account all the sectors of revolutionary workers, even if they are not organized in the Commissions. But it is also clear that such an alternative can be effective only if it is developed within the organized workers movement, replacing its present leadership after a prolonged battle and integrating itself into the totality of experiences of the class and not simply at the culminating points of the struggle.

Finally, while the emergence of a new revolutionary workers current should be saluted, it is necessary to establish solid political links between this current and the workers organized in the Commissions. We cannot approve the external ground on which it has chosen to fight the reformist leaderships, thus repeating an experiment that has failed on several occasions in the most recent history of the Spanish workers movement.

Conclusion

The mass movement in our country has suffered two important partial defeats since the beginning of the year: the sentences at the 1001 trials and the assassination of Salvador Puig Antich. Both cases were tests of strength that ended in favor of the dictatorship. In spite of that, if the events of the past several months are considered as a whole, it is obvious that the movement is not conscious of a defeat and that it is moving into a phase of rising struggle. The partial defeats are not demoralizing the movement of the masses. On the contrary, they are being integrated into its experience so as to better prepare the next battles. Without drawing such a conclusion it is impossible to explain not only the proliferation of struggles throughout the country but also the recourse to direct action that has emerged in the great majority of cases. But there is no doubt that the 1001 trials and the assassination of Puig constituted lost opportunities of enormous potential value for the political and organizational strengthening of the movement. These lost opportunities are not unrelated to the present difficulties being met in concretizing the struggles in order to pass from generalized work stoppages to local general strikes.

Likewise, these two defeats have had a negative influence on the vanguard, more seriously than in the past, because in this case one can speak of consciousness of the defeats among broad

sections of the militants of the Commissions and the political groups, although in the case of the 1001 trials the reformist and centrist organizations succeeded in concealing their responsibilities behind the disturbances created by the execution of Carrero Blanco.

The effects of this demoralization have not been nonexistent, as can be seen in the organizations that have theorized their incapacities and have abandoned the field of directly political struggle even more than in the past. But these effects have been limited because of the fact that the working class has not ceased its struggle for a single day and because the response to the assassination of Puig reached an important level in certain cities, particularly Barcelona, a level sufficient to prevent the dictatorship from executing other revolutionary militants who had been condemned to death.

Thus, a difficult test concerning the combativity of the movement has generally been passed. But the same cannot be said about the movement's political consciousness. The leap forward that objective events have made possible and that the aggravation of the social and political crisis of Spanish capitalism has made indispensable has not been taken. And the class struggle cannot indefinitely postpone its time for action until better conditions for the struggle of the proletariat exist. The prerevolutionary crisis can break out at any moment, and no vanguard organization will have the right to be taken by surprise. For precisely one of the determining factors for developing this crisis in favor of the interests of the working class -- and if this does not happen, it will develop against these interests, for there is no such thing as a "neutral" prerevolutionary crisis -- is the vanguard's capacity to foresee it and to use the current struggles to prepare the masses politically and organizationally to confront it.

In this sense, two inseparable tasks must be developed by the intervention of the vanguard:

*Press forward and extend the general battles for demands with the perspective of transforming them into local general strikes.

*Organize responses of the movement on the strictly political plane -- against the attacks of the repression and the diversionary maneuvers of the dictatorship -- so as to directly prepare the masses and their vanguard for the revolutionary general strike.

Although either of these tasks could take priority at any given moment, the general orientation should be always to combine them: never neglect one in favor of the other.

This is the only way to give a revolutionary solution to the contradiction between the combativity and the level of consciousness of the mass movement, which in the conditions of our country fundamentally means modifying the relationship of forces between reformists and revolutionaries within the broad vanguard. In this sense, the process of political regroupment that is now affecting the political workers organizations after the events in Portugal takes on its full import.

The "pactist" bloc

Within the political workers organizations the most important effect of the Portuguese events is undoubtedly the strengthening of the line of class collaboration and the role of the Communist party.

This involves a growth of confidence in the Pact for Freedom among the broad vanguard. It can be said that the utopian character of the "Pact" is still not an obvious fact and that

an important layer of militants are developing, or redeveloping, confidence in it. Consequently, the relationship of forces within the broad vanguard initially shifted in favor of the reformists. This is undoubtedly an essential fact whose extent and consequences have to be determined.

(a) The Spanish CP and Portugal. "In fact, the Salazar dictatorship in Portugal fell under the blows of an action that very much resembles the Pact for Freedom that we have called for to liquidate the fascist dictatorship in Spain: the convergence at a given moment of the workers and popular movement with the neocapitalist groups that were disturbed by the colonial war and the fascist structures (groups represented by Spínola) -- a convergence that in this case received the support of the army. That can only confirm the correctness of our position."

These words were spoken by the general secretary of the Spanish CP immediately after the military coup in Portugal. As always, Carrillo found himself obliged to manipulate reality to the very limits of imagination -- presenting, for example, the role of the Portuguese army on April 25 as a "support" to a "convergence" -- in order to show the "resemblance in this case" between the Pact and the events that brought down the dictatorship in Portugal. On other occasions, the manipulation has been aimed at showing the "lack of resemblance." Let us remember the CP's version of the September 11, 1973, coup in Chile. But that is not the most important thing, although it does indicate the analytical enormities the reformists have to perpetrate to "confirm the correctness" of their position. What is really important is to deduce from this exposition the image that the CP tries to give of Portugal:

*The fall of the dictatorship is the fruit of the "convergence" of the workers and popular movement and the neocapitalist antidictatorial groups.

*The "convergence" was realized through a program similar to that of the Pact.

*The role of the army was secondary -- limited "in this case" to "support" -- but it supported the "convergence" and isolated the "gorillas."

(b) The CP offensive. This image is at the origin of a political offensive the CP has launched aimed at four targets:

-- The dictatorship itself, to which the CP holds up the examples of the extraordinary isolation in which the Portuguese dictatorial apparatus found itself and the spontaneous offensive of the masses against its most characteristic representatives. The CP calls on the Francoist functionaries, including those of the political police, to engage in "civil disobedience" and in return offers them amnesty, total amnesty.

-- The "neocapitalist" groups, which in this case is simply a form of saying "big capital," to whom Carrillo holds out the possibility of replacing the dictatorship without risk, which would open a new situation in which the mass movement would be controlled by the CP itself, thereby eliminating the "revolutionary danger" that now exists only because of the dictatorship.

-- The broad vanguard, to whom the CP presents April 25 as the strategic confirmation of its line, a demonstration of the "realism" of the Pact, of the effectiveness of class collaboration.

-- The mass movement, which obviously constitutes the decisive front. The CP presents itself to the mass movement as the leadership that will lead it to freedom in the immediate

*Pacta por la Libertad: a strategy of alliance with "democratic" sectors of the bourgeoisie that has been proposed by the Spanish CP -- INPRECOR.

future. The fall of Francoism is presented as an imminent fact that justifies all the concessions, all the compromises qualified as "tactical," all the limitations of struggles. All this has to be done to take advantage of the present "great opportunity" of getting rid of the dictatorship.

(c) A knot of contradictions. But the absolute necessity of the CP "making a mad dash" to place its line and its organization at the head of the movement is the weak link of the political operation it has initiated.

-- The reformist leadership has to "make a mad dash" because the political and social conditions that allowed it to launch an initial offensive can deteriorate very rapidly, both in terms of the situation in Portugal (as an example of the role the CP plays after the fall of the dictatorship and its medium-term consequences) and in terms of the Spanish situation (the political impasse and fragility of the recently born "democratic" bourgeoisie, the aggravation of the capitalist crisis and the type of response that is expected from the movement).

-- This is why it is not enough for the CP to appear as the leadership of daily struggles. It has to place the struggle on a directly political level. That means that it is sketching out at least the general features of the "peaceful general strike" (huelga general pacífica) in order to show the bourgeoisie its capacity to control the movement.

-- This presupposes that the mass movement, and especially the working class, will in practice agree to the necessity of limiting its forms of struggle, demands, and objectives to the framework of the Pact with the big bourgeoisie.

-- But the objective dynamic of the struggles, the experiences of past years, and the economic and political crisis of the bourgeoisie work against these limitations. The movement will continue to orient itself toward direct mass action, because its class instinct -- fashioned through hundreds of struggles, both defeats and successes -- convinces the movement that this is the only way to succeed in winning its demands and preventing the bourgeoisie from resolving the crisis at the workers' expense, and because there is a new vanguard within the mass movement that has broken with the politics of reformism and is systematically struggling for the movement to utilize the forms and methods of struggle of the proletariat. Consequently, the reformist leadership will be steadily outflanked as soon as the struggles attain a minimum level of development.

-- Of course, this outflanking is not uncooptable by the CP, and in that lies one of the CP's most important trump cards. In the absence of a revolutionary alternative embedded in the struggles from the beginning and capable of directing the outflanking process and raising the level of consciousness, the CP will not regain control of the mobilization but will turn the lessons of the struggle in its favor: The favorable relationship of forces obtained by direct action will provoke important concessions that the reformists will present as a victory of the "regaining" phase they have initiated (pressures on the government, on the CNS, and so on, which accompany any compromise signed by the reformists).

In the final analysis, all the possibilities for maneuver that the CP can command in the present conditions flow from the weakness of the revolutionary left. For Carrillo, isolating the line of class independence is a priority task, for he commands neither the objective conditions nor the organizational instruments that would guarantee him stable control over the mass mobilizations. It is only on condition that he succeeds in this task that the CP will threaten to play the card of "coopting the outflanking."

(d) The two currents within the "Pactist" bloc. The best way

the reformist leadership has of achieving this isolation is to strengthen the pactist bloc of workers organizations, thus contributing to strengthening simultaneously their ability to control the movement and their capacity to exert pressure on the bourgeoisie. It must be noted that the CP apparently does not hold many illusions on the possibility of getting some significant sector of the bourgeoisie to enter the Pact formally. In fact, the versions of their strategy recently offered by the reformists tend to show that the interclass Pact is not supposed to be concretized in practice until the actual moment of the fall of the dictatorship. (This is exactly what Carrillo meant with his theory of the "convergence" at "a given moment" in Portugal.)

Consequently, the workers bloc constitutes the essential part of the Pact. And two principal currents with very different political characteristics must be distinguished within it: the current made up of Bandera Roja and the PCI (Partido Comunista Internacionalista -- Internationalist Communist party, a Maoist organization) on the one hand, and the Social Democratic current on the other.

Both Bandera Roja and the PCI seem to be going through a significant process of political differentiation between a pro-CP wing and another wing that remains within the organizations and in any event does not seem to question the organizations' presence in the Assembly of Catalonia.

Bandera Roja and the PCI represent the "far right of the far left" and are characterized on the one hand by a very weak independent strategy in relation to the CP (in fact, on this level, the most important differences boil down to the types of alliances that are possible with the bourgeoisie, the breadth of the sectors with which one can enter into antidictatorial accords, etc.) and, on the other hand, by a leftist recruitment among a sector of the new vanguard. They educate their militants to be suspicious of the CP (although in a deformed way). As far as workers struggles are concerned, they betray a will to adapt to the level of the movement, which in many cases leads them to very right-wing positions but in other cases to oppose the most brazen maneuvers of the reformists.

Consequently, the two groups suffer from a serious contradiction between the elements that are moving back to the CP and the ones that are moving away. A sector of these organizations seems to have resolved this contradiction in favor of class collaboration at the first invitation of those whom they characterized as "revisionist" not so long ago. The evolution of the other sector remains to be decided. The revolutionary left has an important battle to wage here in order to draw this layer of militants, who have up to now shown their resistance to the attractive power of the reformist current, toward positions of class independence.

The political reappearance of the Social Democracy, in particular of the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español -- Spanish Socialist Workers party) represents another important factor in the constitution of the pactist bloc.

But it is clear that this importance lies not in the present strength of the Social Democracy within the broad vanguard, nor for that matter in its capacity for mobilization or the audience it commands within the mass movement.

As for the PSOE, we can say that it has lost any possibility of playing a new role similar to the one it played before 1936. The years of clandestinity have gravely damaged this organization, whose political and organizational life was based precisely on the public functioning of its trade-union and electoral machine. After the second world war, the future of the

PSOE, like all of European Social Democracy, was linked to its ability to assert itself as the determined defender of bourgeois "social peace," to be the guarantor of social peace within the working class through the framework of parliamentary democracy. But the dictatorship prevented it from playing this role. At the same time, its lack of integration into the bourgeois state allowed the PSOE, unlike the English or German Social Democracy, to maintain a certain Marxist ideological reference and to continue to put forward the "maximum program" that its European comrades had abandoned several years earlier. In this way the PSOE has been able to maintain undeniable, though weak and localized, links with the present mass movement. A section of its militants, grouped together in the Young Socialists, can be considered as part of the new vanguard, in some respects closer to the revolutionary left than to their own leadership.

In any case, the importance of the PSOE must be measured not in terms of the present situation but in terms of the situation that will open up after the overthrow of the dictatorship. That will be the time when both the CP and the bourgeoisie, functioning in the framework of parliamentary democracy, will need a Social Democratic organization to share control of the working class with the Stalinists to a certain extent. For historical reasons, that Social Democratic organization can be only the PSOE. That is the reason for Carrillo's present efforts to get the PSOE into the Pact, with the complementary aim of expanding his maneuvering room and his national and international "respectability."

This is the meaning of the political reappearance of the PSOE, which is taking advantage of the prestige personalities like Soares and Mitterrand are lending the Social Democracy. This is particularly a result of the CP-SP electoral alliance in France. The new PSOE leadership -- which has replaced the ferociously anticommunist group led by Llopis -- has manifested an inclination to "collaborate with all the anti-Franco forces." It could not be otherwise, and it is equally certain that the Young Socialists will maintain considerable independence and a very critical attitude toward their leadership. The revolutionary left must try to stimulate this attitude by strengthening the elements that are already fighting for an independent class line.

The Pact: a mirage Class independence: the solution

In the final analysis, the "new rise" of reformism in Spain is the product of its greater strategic credibility among the broad vanguard. It is consequently the product of a myth, for the line of the CP is not only maintaining its traditional contradictions (and the essentially utopian character deriving from them), but is incorporating new ones:

-- Our country is experiencing not only a political crisis, but a general social crisis as well. The dictatorship is in crisis, but so is capitalism. For forty years the dictatorship has held a tight grip on the country, on its whole productive structure, on the alliances among various sectors that have now given birth to present-day Spanish monopoly capital. The dictatorship is already a difficulty, an "obstacle" to the development of some of these sectors. But for the bourgeois class as a whole -- whose interests are expressed by the dominant faction of big capital -- as long as the present dynamic of the mass movement continues, that is, as long as the threat persists that any recognition of democratic political rights might unleash an uncontrollable process of anticapitalist mobilization, the dictatorship will remain the best solution, the one that offers

the best guarantees for the defense of the bourgeoisie's global interests, once the possibility of undertaking a serious capitalist reform of the present structure of production is eliminated. In the present international conjuncture, this solution is not without difficulties, in particular in terms of integration into the Common Market and the political "isolation" of Francoism. But the present situation of Spanish capitalism within the imperialist system forces any idea of "isolation" to be relativized. The very crisis of imperialism in its turn considerably reduces the external pressure for any change in the dictatorship that does not offer the necessary guarantees of control. The international difficulties should not be neglected, but they must be considered as secondary.

Moreover, the dictatorship is not "hindering" all bourgeois groups. There are some groups, identified with the "backward productive sectors," that are not only not annoyed by the dictatorship, but are prepared to struggle to maintain it in power. Standing at the side of these groups are a significant number of military chiefs and the majority of the Francoist apparatus. Vultures, yes, but numerically significant vultures, armed and organized, whose political survival is linked to the maintenance of the present regime. It is clear that the general contradictions of the bourgeoisie will be reflected within this sector, and they will intensify after the death of the dictator. But these contradictions will not lead this sector to be neutral, even temporarily. In all probability, the dictatorship will break up before the atomization and isolation of the far right occurs. It is for that very reason that only the action of the masses will be able to break the far right's capacity for resistance.

This is especially the case with the Francoist army. The caste of military chiefs is not completely homogeneous as such or in its relations with the other officer corps. The homogeneity is not being strengthened but is weakening, as a by-product of the decrepitude of Francoism. But the fall of the dictatorship will require more than lack of homogeneity. It will require paralysis of the reactionary potential of the armed forces. Appeals to an alleged national-popular sentiment among the higher officers are completely useless in attaining this. What must be done is to undertake revolutionary work in the barracks, to foment distrust among the troops toward their officers, to denounce the "army of civil war" among the youth, and to prepare the movement to confront the attacks of armed military repression. These tasks are the real catalysts for exploiting the contradictions within the army so as to defend the interests of the working class during the overthrow of the dictatorship and the period that will open up after that.

But there are other serious errors in the reformist line. The only social force active in the confrontation with the dictatorship is the mass movement. No one can deny the determining role of the mass movement in bringing down the dictatorship. But it is clear that this role can be assumed only on the basis of the most advanced experiences gone through by the movement itself. The first outlines of the overthrow of the dictatorship were seen in the struggles of Burgos, Ferrol, Vigo, Pamplona, and S. Andrian del Besos. And none of these great struggles had anything in common with what the CP calls "peaceful general strikes." None of these key experiences was possible without the outflanking of the CP. The real face of the apparent "realism" of the reformists is shown in their marching against the dynamic of struggle to try to coopt the movements outflanking them. In fact, the most profound contradiction of the CP line lies in the fact that only a serious decline in the activity of the masses would make it seem viable.

-- The CP is banking on the obvious power vacuum that will follow the disappearance of the dictator. It claims that

beginning from that vacuum a controlled pressure of the movement will allow for a "democratic" regroupment of the majority of bourgeois sectors. But it is clear that it is also at that moment that the far right will make its bid for power. The CP is advancing onto the ground of utopia and suicide. Because the greatest possibilities for reactionary action are created by a movement that is capable of paralyzing the normal functioning of Spanish capitalism but whose leadership is holding it back from launching an assault on the dictatorship.

The verbal threats of the reformists will not suffice to deter those who will defend Francoism with violence. The history of the workers movement is replete with defeated strikes, but the bureaucrats repeat the same refrain: "If the enemy loses his head and attacks us, then . . ." But then it is already too late! It is not words but the actual class struggle that changes the relationship of forces.

What, then, is the road of seeking bourgeois "concessions" worth? Under what conditions will the leading sectors of big capital launch their "democratic" alternative? In face of the independent action of a movement that has in general escaped from reformist control, that is developing all the possibilities of its own class activity, struggling for its own objectives with its own methods without stopping to effect the slightest "convergence" with any sector of the exploiters, confronting the armed resistance that it will meet on the way, launching the assault on the dictatorship and thus paralyzing the army: That is the strategic perspective that we propose under the formula of the revolutionary general strike.

The Spanish bourgeoisie will abandon the dictatorship only when it begins to hear the rumbling of its collapse. And the revolutionary old mole of the Spanish proletariat and people will have to continue to dig the tunnels that will erode the foundations of Francoism. Their "democratic allies" will come to "fraternize" with them in the streets when the edifice of the dictatorship is on the point of falling on their heads.

Thus, we maintain the entirety of our strategic orientation. But it is nevertheless certain that the revolutionary general strike has appeared to the vanguard in an excessively rigid form that places it practically on the level of an armed insurrection. There should be no equivocation on this subject. The most probable variant is that the overthrow of the dictatorship will not require the generalized arming of the masses and will not immediately open up the prospect of civil war.

The gravity of the crisis of the dictatorship allows of the possibility that a series of chain reaction general strikes on local and regional scales in the most important industrial sections of the country, with periods of ebb and flow in a short period of time, will be enough to induce the bourgeoisie to implement its democratic notions in order to avoid the explosion of a simultaneous revolutionary general strike throughout the entire country. In any case, the simultaneity is secondary, not only in the sense indicated in the preceding sentence, but in the opposite sense as well. In fact, a simultaneous mass action throughout the country would not necessarily mean the fall of the dictatorship, although it would objectively raise this perspective. If the action remains under firm reformist control, it will initially represent no more than a demonstration of force that the dictatorship may be in position to tolerate. From the standpoint of the overthrow of the dictatorship, the main factor is for the mass strikes to prove capable of responding to the repressive violence they will certainly meet, to begin the dismantling of Francoism, to surmount all the dictatorship's possibilities for maneuver and compromise, and to challenge the foundations of capitalist rule.

Then, and only then, will talk of "convergences" begin, and not right then, but over the long-term. As we have affirmed on many other occasions, the period that will be opened by the fall of Francoism will be characterized by a strong polit-

ical and social instability in which the bourgeoisie will seek to establish a favorable relationship of forces and thus obtain the possibility of imposing its conditions on the masses. If the proletariat and the people do not utilize the favorable situation to prepare the final assault on bourgeois power, democracy will be but a brief interlude bracketed by periods of oppression. And the second oppression could be more brutal than the first.

Within the broad vanguard there are already thousands of militants who have had experience with reformist betrayal, who refuse to follow the road of democratic mirages and who are seeking a credible option effective in defending the interests of their class. None of the revolutionary organizations is yet capable of offering this alternative.

There are also organizations that are hesitant in face of the relationship of forces that the CP has imposed, organizations whose leaders are probably preparing some "tactical" capitulation to "go through the experience with the masses." There is no doubt that there are many militants within these organizations who are inclined to confront their leaders and who can succeed in preventing the turn toward class collaboration in all its forms if they are stimulated by a revolutionary current that offers an alternative to any capitulation.

There are also organizations that retain an enormous potential of combativity but that express it in a sectarian manner, deciding not to launch what they consider a hopeless battle against the CP on its own territory: the organized workers movement. It is necessary to show them that the battle can and must be won. And finally, there are thousands of militants who today follow the reformist leadership because they believe it is the best and only instrument with which to defend the interests of the proletariat and the people. To any interclass pact that aims at placing the working class at the service of the exploiters the revolutionaries counterpose the unity of the proletarian front.

But in order to put this concept forward, to put across its coincidence with the immense unitary aspiration that is latent in the workers movement, to denounce the systematic breaking of this unity by the reformist leaders, we will have to try to concretize the concept, to make it live in the present struggles.

It is necessary to create a relationship of forces that allows the line of class independence to appear as a concrete alternative capable of systematically going beyond the limits of legalism and conciliation by creating in action the conditions that will force the CP and its allies to enter the workers united front or risk a break with their rank-and-file membership.

It is with this aim in mind that accords must be established to:

- Constitute revolutionary tendencies in the organs of the broad vanguard of the various sectors of intervention,
- Struggle for a unified coordination of these organs at all levels, and especially at the national level,
- Press forward general struggles as the most favorable ground on which to force the dictatorship and the employers to retreat,
- Stimulate the organization by the movement of its own self-defense and, in particular, the creation within the organizations of the broad vanguard of permanent self-defense detachments,
- Build a united front against repression in all its forms,
- Begin antimilitarist activity among the youth and coordinate the revolutionary work in the barracks.

In short, to take on all the tasks that can permit us to offer to all those struggling against the dictatorship and capitalism a proletarian banner cleansed of all compromise and submission to the enemy and capable of contending for the leadership of the movement and tearing it from the hands of the reformists.

From this point on, the LCR-ETA(VI) unconditionally and unreservedly commits itself to this task. ■

WHY DID "THE "SYSTEM" nixon bows out



The American ruling class and its formidable public relations apparatus are pulling out all the stops in their efforts to spin a web of mystification around the resignation of Richard Nixon. This is not altogether inappropriate. If Nixon had any particular distinction, it was that his lies were more crude and his methods of operation more gross than most of his predecessors and contemporaries. So there is some justice in the end of his reign being marked by a massive wave of lie-telling, myth-spreading, and insincerity. A good part of the storm of inanities centers on the personality of Gerald Ford, whose intellectual capacities, remarkably, seem inferior to those of his predecessor. The U.S. capitalist press is doing its best to see to it that every citizen of the land of the free is properly educated about such crucial matters as Ford's achievements on the college football field, what he eats for breakfast, and how much he loves his wife and children.

But if one digs through the garbage, one comes upon the rational heart of the irrational shell of the nut being served up by the rulers of America. The masses are being told to draw three great lessons from the demise of Tricky Dick. First, that the fall of Nixon proves that the "system" of "American democracy" works after all, that while it may be true that vast powers are vested in the American president, the system itself provides for what have now been shown to be effective measures for removing a president who has overstepped those powers. This allegedly provides evidence of the system's great vitality. The second myth, one that is related to the first and is a generalization of it, is that the removal of Nixon, that is, the "exercise" of the "system," has resulted in an important step being taken toward arresting the development of the American version of the "strong state": the all-powerful executive leader who operates outside the control of the Congress. Nixon's downfall, this myth claims, will initiate a period in American politics during which the power of the legislative body will expand at the expense of the executive. This is portrayed as representing an increase in democracy, since the Congress, having more members and being subject to more frequent elections, is held to be more responsive to the popular will than the president is. The third myth, a derivative of the first two, is that Gerald Ford has a historic opportunity to restore the credibility and confidence of the American population in "their" government. According to this myth, Ford is called upon to assemble out of the ashes of the Nixon administration a new "open and honest" government.

By the "system working" the bourgeois ideologues mean that the constitutional process provides for the removal of a president who loses the confidence of the people through acts of

perfidy and personal aggrandizement. But the fact of the matter is that in getting rid of Nixon the ruling class worked around even its own system. The system calls for the removal of a president through impeachment. Nixon was ousted without any impeachment trial. There is no doubt that this manner of removing Nixon was far more advantageous to the ruling class than a trial in the Senate would have been.

An impeachment trial would have further demystified the allegedly democratic political process by focusing public attention on those crimes committed by Nixon that have already been exposed. Members of Congress would have acted as prosecutors and would have had to marshal evidence against Nixon. Nixon would have had to explain what elements of "national security" were involved in his spy plans, burglaries, graft-taking, and so on.

Additionally, there is little doubt that a trial in the Senate would have led to further disclosures about the illegal activities of the Nixon gang, for once the House of Representatives had committed itself to bringing Nixon to trial, it would have been under heavy pressure to prove its case. The entire process would have been televised, bringing the case against Nixon to broader layers of the population in a more dramatic way than previously. The cumulative effect of such a trial would undoubtedly have been to stimulate popular demands for a genuinely full disclosure of Nixon's operations and to vastly intensify feelings among the population that the exercise of the government is in reality carried on wholly behind their backs. All this would have been inherent in an impeachment trial. It was totally avoided through Nixon's resignation. The result is that the ruling class obtains an "end" to the Watergate affair without the public ever finding out even a small percentage of the crimes committed by the Nixon administration. With Nixon gone through the "honorable" mechanism of resignation, the ruling class is free to use the argument that everyone should forget the past and that anyone who still insists on exposing Nixon's crimes is an antipatriotic, vindictive element. The case is now to be closed. The "cover-up" is ended by clamping on a new cover-up.

The truth of this observation is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that it is still unknown what was really behind the Watergate affair. It can be taken for granted that the extent of the government's spying, disruption, and sabotage of the Black movement, the antiwar movement, and the political organizations of the American vanguard has not been exposed. The ruling class is united in its desire to keep such matters hidden. But more than that. It is clear that the changes in the consciousness of the American public stimulated by the antiwar



"hail to the chief"

movement, the Black liberation struggle, and the radicalization of the 1960s played a major role in extending the Watergate scandal and preventing the ruling class from halting the various revelations of Nixon's crimes. It is also clear that Nixon, in addition to everything else, is a very stupid man. His crudity and tactical mistakes played a certain role in his own exposure.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to believe that the ruling class, which in general has no interest in seeing its president thoroughly discredited, could not have halted the Watergate revelations with a well-timed and unified offensive at various points during the first five or six months of the scandals. It follows, then, that some section of the ruling class decided very early on to dump Nixon, or at least to let the scandal run its course. The root of that decision remains a mystery. No evidence has been produced indicating that any substantial part of the American capitalist class opposed Nixon's basic policies. The relatively common theory that the Eastern Establishment section of the ruling class (the "Yankees") opposed Nixon while the section of the capitalist class in the South and Southwest that made its fortune during the postwar boom, especially in the aerospace industry (the "cowboys") supported him, while it may well have some merit in terms of the personal inclinations of the individual members of the ruling class, is completely unproved and supported only by superficial observations about friendship ties.

A possible alternative explanation is that Nixon committed some act or acts that so overstepped the bounds of normal capitalist deceit that a decision was made in some quarters to drive him from office without bringing those acts to light. It is quite possible that the crimes committed by the Nixon gang -- and not only against the left -- were many times more serious than the ones that have been exposed so far. The removal of Nixon would itself be an important part of the cover-up of those crimes.

The notion that the removal of Nixon through resignation will arrest the development of a strong state is refuted by even the most cursory glance at the facts. Not a single one of the powers vested in the American president has been eliminated by the disappearance of Nixon. According to laws that are now on the books, the president has the power to "seize property, organize and control the means of production, seize commodities, assign military forces abroad, call reserve forces amounting to 2.5 million men to duty, institute martial law, seize and control all means of transportation, regulate all private enterprise, restrict travel, and, in a plethora of particular ways, control the lives of all Americans." The quotation comes from a Congressional committee that did a study in 1973 on the "emergency" laws now in effect in the United States. The use of such measures -- as well as the more "normal" presidential prerogatives such as decreeing freezes on wages -- are historic necessities dictated by the requirements of administering the imperialist system, whose rulers must make

quick decisions without bothering to go through slow parliamentary procedures.

Indeed, even the impeachment charges that had been drafted against Nixon did not suggest that any of these powers should be limited. He was charged by the Congressional committee assigned to investigating the possibility of impeachment with obstructing justice in the Watergate investigation, misusing governmental bodies to spy on political opponents, and refusing to yield subpoenaed evidence to the Congress. A motion that the charge of illegally bombing Cambodia and lying about it to the public be added to the list was voted down. No proposal was even made to add any of Nixon's other activities in Indochina (such as the Christmas 1972 carpet-bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong) to the impeachment charges. Thus, even if Nixon had been tried and convicted by the Senate, no precedent would have been set forbidding a president to carry on such actions as waging imperialist war or repressing opposition domestically.

The powers of the presidency, then, are not the slightest bit affected by the removal of Nixon, nor would they have been if he had been removed by a Senate trial instead of by resigning. In fact, it is wholly possible that the trend toward strengthening the executive will be intensified by the disposition of the Watergate case. Exactly because the ruling class claims that the Nixon case has established rigid guidelines on presidential conduct without really challenging the powers of the presidency, Gerald Ford and succeeding presidents can be assured that their exercise of power on all the important questions has received a stamp of legitimacy.

Ford's "new and open" government appears to consist of holding more press conferences. It is also probable that Ford will learn the historic lessons of Watergate and end the practice of tape recording conversations held in the White House. Apart from that, no changes in policy are in the offing. If anything, Ford as an individual stands to the right of Nixon. During the Indochina war he led a campaign to denounce Lyndon Johnson for not doing enough bombing of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. He consistently voted against civil rights legislation in the Congress. He openly complains that American military spending is not high enough and that spending on things like education and social security is too high. He is considered an advocate of deliberately recessionary policies to "fight inflation." Of course, like all capitalist politicians, Ford lacks principles. There is no assurance, then, that he will actually institute such policies. The only sure thing is that he will do what is required of him by the ruling class.

If the manner of Nixon's removal was well designed to suit the requirements of the ruling class, the problems underlying his removal have not been resolved. Nixon had become so discredited that he would have been virtually incapable of implementing the unpopular policies that will become neces-

sary for American imperialism in coming months and years. According to the last opinion polls (which were taken before his public admission that he had been lying about Watergate for more than two years), Nixon had the support of only slightly more than one-fifth of the population. Further, the other four-fifths of the people were not just neutral. Nixon had become a detested figure. The continuation of such a regime would have exacerbated all the problems of the ruling class. The coming intensification of the attack on the standard of living of the working class, if it had been administered by Nixon, would have vastly accelerated the resistance of the class. In foreign policy, Nixon would have been unable to use the usual chauvinist patriotic arguments to garner support for his policies; for the simple reason that the majority of the population had become convinced that everything Nixon said was a bold-faced lie. In the Nixon administration, the U.S. ruling class had a regime that could not function. The hope is that the change in personalities will enable a new regime to implement precisely the policies that the old regime would have had great difficulty in carrying out.

But the popular mood that was in large part responsible for the state of Nixon's prestige has not disappeared with Nixon. Nor will it. The radicalization of the 1960s, focused around the movement against the Indochina war and the movement for Black liberation, was based not only on the moral outrage of certain sectors of the population at various ills. It was also a reflection of material reality. The war in Indochina and the

oppression of the Blacks were adversely affecting the lives of broad sections of the population. The radicalization that began in the 1960s significantly altered the consciousness of wide layers of the American population about their government. Broad sections of the antiwar movement were not simply objecting to a particular policy of the government, but were openly and consciously siding with the enemies of the American government, the Vietnamese revolutionaries. Broad sections of the Black liberation movement were not merely demanding the alteration of this or that particular policy of the government, but were consciously condemning the entire structure of American capitalism. These revolutionary feelings, while they have been restricted to a relatively small minority of the population, have had a generalized effect throughout the country.

The major weakness of the radicalization of the 1960s was that it failed to penetrate the masses of the American working class to any significant degree. Today, however, the material interests of the working class are being threatened and attacked by the international capitalist economic crisis and its effects in the United States. The next wave of radicalization will surely find its roots in that reality. The "era of good feeling" that the ruling class is attempting to construct around the administration of Gerald Ford will not be able to counteract that material reality any more than patriotism was able to save Lyndon Johnson or Richard Nixon. ■

AFRICA

guinea-bissau independent! mozambique, angola: lisbon tries to hold on

by C. GABRIEL

The "process of decolonization" was incontestably accelerated by the change in the Lisbon government in July. (See INPRECOR, No. 5-6.) The initial plan worked out by Foreign Minister Mario Soares, which we described as utopian, is hanging fire. Lisbon wanted to start fresh by proclaiming the imminent independence of Guinea-Bissau and the opening of a period of transition in the Cape Verde Islands, Angola, and Mozambique. This new initiative is not at all the result of a sudden moral effusion on the part of the men in power in Lisbon. It was a tactical turn imposed by the situation in the colonies and the internal situation in the metropolis itself, where the restart of economic functioning after the summer vacations promises to be difficult. Everybody has greeted the turn with applause: the imperialist governments that have been cheerfully arming the colonial troops for years, the African governments that are stepping up their intrigues, and the ever-present "observers" whose analyses are summed up in photographic film.

The plan of the Portuguese government is clear. It is based on a number of factors:

- Except for Guinea, the liberation movements have nowhere imposed their control over the greater part of the colonial territories.
- The present situation is deteriorating rapidly and the strengthening of the hard-line camp among the colons may very soon bury any hope of a neocolonial solution.

Under these conditions, Lisbon is preparing a general proposal

for the liberation movements opening a period of transition in order to break the hard-line danger and settle the question of the colons and at the same time maintain a Portuguese presence in the apparatus of production.

Thus, Lisbon is holding to its proposal for a referendum in the Cape Verde Islands and is planning on coalition governments in Angola and Mozambique. As for Mozambique, let's listen to Commander Seabra, who was sent from Lisbon to Lorenzo-Marquês: "For an agreement to be reached with FRELIMO, it would be necessary for this movement to accept a presence of Portuguese troops in Mozambique in order to prevent the formation of a reactionary right-wing force. . . . Of course, we hope that there will be some members of FRELIMO among the administrators who will soon be named, but we insist on the fact that FRELIMO must understand the necessity of our remaining in Mozambique in order to guarantee peace there." (August 7.) A similar opinion was expressed by Parádio Costa, the vice-governor for economic affairs in Mozambique, who observed on August 9 that FRELIMO's participation in a coalition government with the whites was necessary in order to "test its attitude and assure leadership for the future state."

For Angola, this is the plan:

- cease-fire;
- provisional coalition government including the MPLA, the ANLF (and possibly UNITA), organizations of the colons, and representatives of "ethnic groups";
- after two years (1) elections to a constituent assembly,

which will draw up a constitution and define the new state's relations with Portugal;

-- then, dissolution of this assembly, new elections, and a new government.

Can anyone believe for a minute in the stability of such a house of cards? Just when Angola is little by little reentering a civil war, Lisbon proposes a two-year transition! While clashes between Africans and whites are breaking out in Mozambique and while Luis Cabral has just declared that the PAIGC and the state of Guinea will henceforth become instruments for the struggle "for the liberation of the Cape Verde Islands"! The future of the new Portuguese plan is thus scarcely likely to be any brighter than that of the first plan. Even if FRELIMO accepts the principle of coalition government, and even if the MPLA and the ANLF sit together in Lucanda, these situations will not last very long in face of the growing mobilization of the African masses, the "radicalization" of the white colons, the economic crisis in Mozambique, and the policy of South Africa.

The Lisbon government is continuing little by little to lose control of the situation in southern Africa. A generalized crisis is no longer a matter of conjecture, and the bourgeois press is beginning to hark back to the Congo crisis of 1961. To be sure, as in the Congo, the political situation does not allow for the stabilization of African governments. As in the Congo, the enormous resources, the question of the colons, and the maintenance of colonial troops can facilitate secessions and regional conflicts. But the Congo had not been the scene of twelve years of armed struggle. The Congo was not embedded in a politico-economic context such as now prevails in southern Africa, where the interpenetration of imperialist interests will continue to spin a web that will generalize the crisis. An explosion would result in the confrontation of millions of Africans against Rhodesian, South African, and Portuguese armed bands. The continental, and even international, crisis that would break out then would determine the terms of the modification of the relationship of forces on the continent and the rhythms of the emergence of the African revolutionary vanguard. Such a situation would call for the mobilization of the whole international revolutionary movement. We must prepare for this.

In the immediate sense, the ball is in the camp of the liberation movements. Three elements will determine the character of the coming period: the crisis of the MPLA, the question of the colons, and the question of "African unity."

The MPLA

Four main factors determine the crisis of the MPLA: the political heterogeneity of the leadership; the partial bureaucratization of the movement, especially of the external apparatus, and a tendency toward "villagism"; the intrigues of the neo-colonial governments; and the question of the ANLF.

There are three declared tendencies in the MPLA: the Neto tendency, which presents a balance-sheet on the outgoing leadership accusing it of "presidentialism"; the Open Revolution tendency (Mario de Andrade), which is supported by Brazzaville (capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo); and the Chipenda tendency, which has protectors within the Zambian government.

The congress of the MPLA, which opened in Lusaka, Zambia, on August 8, reflects the depth of the crisis. While the Chipenda tendency has a concrete reality in sense that it "con-

trols" some liberated zones, the Andrade tendency symbolizes the bureaucratic way the congress was prepared through a call to elements that had stood outside the liberation movement for many years.

But that is not the main thing. The most disturbing thing is the growing loss of political independence in relation to the neocolonial governments. A few weeks ago a protocol agreement was reached in Lusaka among the three tendencies. But this accord was cosigned by Lopez, the prime minister of the Congo-Brazzaville, and the Zambian minister of foreign affairs. On July 26 a meeting was held in Bukuvu (in Zaïre) of the presidents of the Congo, Zambia, Zaïre, and Tanzania, as well as representatives of the MPLA and the ANLF. At this conference an agreement was reached between the two movements to take a common tactical line in the negotiations with the Portuguese government. Only imbeciles could greet the meetings of Lusaka and Bukuvu! In such a context, the "unity" of the MPLA means the strengthening of the neocolonial holy alliance. The strengthening of the Congolese and Zambian factions in the MPLA and the strengthening of Mobutuist diplomacy through the ANLF can only be events that will have extremely serious consequences for the direction of development of the struggle for the liberation of Angola.

The Portuguese government, moreover, is not kidding itself. Not so long ago Mario Soares refused to negotiate with the ANLF for fear of reinforcing the American intervention; but he now has agreed to negotiate with the ANLF in the framework of a coalition government. A bird in the hand . . . Holden, head of the ANLF and Mobutu's man, has just received a second contingent of Chinese instructors; he controls



a real border army prepared to intervene should Kinshasa's wishes not be respected. On August 9, the first "congress" of Angolan students linked to the ANLF was held in Zaite, and on August 7 the Union of Workers of Zaite and the Afro-American Center of Labor organized an international trade-union week in which, of course, "trade-union delegates of Angola" -- from the ANLF -- participated.

Given such a situation, there is no other road for the MPLA than to build an anticapitalist tendency opposed to any strategic compromise with the neocolonial regimes and the ANLF. The counterrevolution today holds a number of trump cards and it is essentially counting on the political appetites of the African puppets to build up the most right-wing tendencies in the MPLA. To be sure, such an initiative on the part of militants of the MPLA implies a new launching of struggle, a difficult battle in an urban setting, and a total isolation in the context of African diplomacy. But the analysis of the situation clearly proves that such a radicalization of the struggle cannot be put off if the path of neocolonialism is to be really blocked.

The colons

The question of the white colons (600,000 of them in Angola, 200,000 in Mozambique) is without doubt a decisive question in the transactions now under way. From a political point of view, this European population is the target of the South African intrigues. Its behavior in the coming period can liquidate Lisbon's tactics, can touch off chaos out of which will come either a radicalization of the national liberation struggle or a crushing of the Portuguese positions in favor of the Americans. It will thus be imperative for the liberation movements to formulate a political response -- all the more so in that racial incidents are on the rise in Angola and Mozambique. Are these actions the work of South African agitators, bandits, and uncontrolled elements? This may be the case in certain areas. But these clashes cannot be reduced to the racial level alone and condemned as such. They are the expression of social conflicts more than racial conflicts.

The colons cannot be analyzed as a classical social formation. It is not the big Portuguese industrialist but the taxi driver who is carrying on pogroms and murdering dozens of Africans in Luanda. However "poor" or "rich" they may be, the colons occupy a particular place in the social relations of the colonies. To assert that the fight is not against whites but against colonialism is certainly necessary, but it is by no means sufficient. Is it necessary to explain to the African masses that the current stage necessitates a tactical approach? Is it necessary to deny the social character of the vengeance of the slum dwellers against the Portuguese shopkeepers who extend credit at 20 percent interest and who run the black market? Is it necessary to get in the way when the workers kick out the Portuguese employer and take his place? Up till now the response of the liberation movements to these questions has been insufficient, and in trying to be "realistic" in order to block the path of the hard-liners, they are failing to offer the only response that can prepare for the inevitable confrontation: the military training of the urban masses and their mobilization around anticapitalist objectives. To be sure, it is necessary to struggle against tendencies toward genocide, but illusions about the support of the Portuguese army are equally irresponsible.

Nevertheless, Oscar Montero, a representative of FRELIMO, told the Paris daily *Le Monde*: "As for those (of the whites) who are wedded to Portuguese tradition and culture, we will obviously not force them to become Mozambique citizens. They can stay in Mozambique and their lives, their interests,

and the fruits of their labor will be guaranteed at the outset and without negotiations, for this flows from our political line." And on August 6, Commander Dalapa told the press: "It is not only FRELIMO that has won this war, but also the Portuguese officers who have rejected the discredited Lisbon dictatorship." Tactics? Maybe. But when will a strategy be formulated that offers a general response to the present urban strikes and mobilizations?

"African unity"

The construction of an economy independent of imperialist diktat is undoubtedly a central concern of the liberation movements. In previous articles we have explained the absence of a strategic response to this question and the economic and moralizing character of the antidotes that have been put forward to neocolonialism. What would happen to the immense imperialist interests in Angola and Mozambique under coalition governments? This remains one of the most important questions, for we know that from the economic point of view these countries are already more neocolonies of various imperialist factions than they are colonies of Portugal. In an article published in INPRECOR No.3 we criticized the liberation movements' lack of precision on the social objectives of the struggle. While we are obviously partisans of an anticapitalist answer to this question, we have no illusions about the possibility of a Guinean, or even Angolan, workers state. Too many factors make such a perspective a utopia. The level of productive forces, the economic resources, the ethnic questions within the states, and the existence of ethnic groups that straddle the borders of the puppet states, which are carefully nurtured by the African bourgeoisies -- all this implies and imposes a regional and internationalist dimension to the construction of an economy freed from the capitalist yoke.

The military question -- that is, the capacity to respond to the counterrevolution -- also constitutes an argument in favor of a regional strategy. The struggle for the Cape Verde Islands is thus no longer simply a question of unity of the Portuguese-speaking territories or even of the islands' historic ties with Guinea. It is also a question of breaking the isolation of the future Guinean state and of liquidating an important imperialist base in the region. At a time when Dakar and Conakry are putting out communiqués demanding an early cooperation agreement with the state of Guinea-Bissau, it is urgent for the PAIGC to define its attitude toward neocolonial Africa. There must be no illusion that there can be an economically independent Guinea-Bissau side by side with a neocolonial Senegal.

And likewise, what goes for Guinea-Bissau in relation to neocolonial central Africa goes for Angola and Mozambique in relation to white southern Africa. The case of Cabinda (an enclave of Angola surrounded by the Congo) is the clearest. If the American imperialists provoke a secession, the revolution will have to be waged throughout the Congolese ethnic area, for the N'Gouabis and the Mobutus are the pawns in a nationalist farce. The Cabinda national question is Washington's thing. There is certainly a Cabindese population that is not identical to the rest of the Angolan population. But a secessionist initiative would lead to a proliferation of micronationalisms that would be favorable to imperialism. The only response is the strengthening and defense of national rights within the framework of an uninterrupted and internationalist development of the revolution. Cabinda will not be saved by dickering with the governments of Brazzaville and Kinshasa. This question concerns the masses of all three countries -- Angola, the Congo, and Zaite -- and must be solved through their common mobilization.

The PAIGC has just recalled that after independence it will again take up its function as a party (and no longer as a movement) by reaffirming its maximum program. But that program contains no clarification on the question of "African unity." When the PAIGC is in power, what will happen when the Senegalese revolutionaries ask for aid or refuge? This far from trivial political question is on the lips of thousands of African militants. And when Pedro Peres declares in Dakar that his state favors "positive neutralism," we can only be surprised at this new resurgence of Nkrumah's old illusion. That the PAIGC would want to distinguish itself from Moscow is one thing, but one cannot be neutral, even "positively," if one hopes to build an "independent" economy. The alternative is to repeat the experiences of Guinea Conakry, Nkrumah's Ghana, Boumediene's Algeria, or Nasser's Egypt. But fifteen years of armed struggle do not dissolve so easily into

UN-type verbiage.

Spínola's plans are thus riddled with time bombs. The liberation movements must again define their perspectives before the possible effectiveness of the new Portuguese tactic can be judged. Even if they accept Soares's proposals, even if coalition government, referendum, and the maintenance of Portuguese troops are accepted on paper, it is probable that these solutions will be overturned by imperialist appetites on the one side and the mobilization of the African masses on the other.

The support of the international revolutionary movement must prepare for this eventuality, apart from expressing our elation on the day that the PAIGC moves into Bissau on the ruins of Portuguese colonialism. ■

PORTUGAL

FOR A UNITED FRONT AGAINST REPRESSION!

The comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League), Portuguese section of the Fourth International, have begun publishing a fortnightly newspaper, *Luta Proletária*. The following statement of the LCI Executive Committee, issued August 9, appeared in the August 16 issue of the new paper.



1. The recent arbitrary suspension by the Junta of National Salvation of *Luta Popular* (the journal of the MRPP, Movement for the Reconstruction of the party of the Proletariat), the banning of the MRPP demonstration in support of the newspaper, the furious repression carried out by the COPCON (the organ of military leadership) against the demonstration, a repression accompanied by a real "hunt for ultraleftists," and the arrest of some of the demonstrators -- all these events will have important repercussions on the national political scene. No political organization of the workers movement will be able to avoid taking a clear public position on them.

All this is very serious, for we are now witnessing a proliferation in Portugal of provocative acts of the right, which is attempting to win the support of layers of the middle classes by appealing to the old anticommunist theme and by trying to set up a real party of fear. There have been cries against the "communist threat," "coups d'état," "assaults on the regime," and "civil disobedience." The international press linked to circles of high finance has been spreading the most alarmist rumors with impunity. And now to all this have been added direct provocations (provocative defacing of churches) and physical violence (attacks in the Lares municipality). The recrudescence of activities of the far right appeared simultaneously with the institution of a strong government in which officers in the leadership of the Armed Forces Movement are participating.

The entry of these officers into the government was hailed by the government parties, particularly the Communist party and

the Socialist party, as a new victory for the progressive forces. A strange victory! Hardly a week later, the Junta of National Salvation suspended three dailies, a measure that triggered vigorous protests and unleashed active solidarity on the part of journalists who refused to let only two dailies be published. The draft law on strikes was the object of criticism even from the Trade Union Federation, which had called for a demonstration to support the provisional government only a few days earlier. And on August 7, there was the Lisbon "spectacle": police and military forces deployed around the Rossio (the central square in Lisbon), an operation that can have but one explanation -- to create a climate of disorder and "ideological aggression," to spread the idea of a "leftist" danger justifying all the repressive measures. This is a method common to all police forces: to create a climate to justify their intervention. For the rest, it is not accidental that the repression was directed against the MRPP! The bourgeoisie has been waging a campaign to isolate it for a long time, spreading the rumor that the MRPP was responsible for everything that has happened. This task was facilitated by the blind sectarianism of the MRPP itself.

The differences between the MRPP and the LCI are deep. But that does not prevent us from defending it today against capitalist repression, for we know that this is not just an attack on the MRPP, but is also aimed at creating a climate favorable to repressing the whole workers movement in general and the revolutionary left in particular. For the ones who are really responsible for the real disorders, those who have resorted to all forms of violence -- including physical aggression -- in order to help to set up a regime of terror against the working class and the laboring masses, continue to act freely.

2. The government, the Junta of National Salvation, and the General Staff of the armed forces are choosing a good moment to act. Spínola's declaration on the recognition of the right of independence for the colonies has created illusions about the character of the present government among the small and middle bourgeoisie, and even among sections of the work-

ing class. These illusions have bolstered the government's prestige and expanded its room for maneuver. To this must be added the long process of demobilization of the workers movement and the isolation of the most combative struggles, parallel to the recrudescence of the activities of the far-right groups.

The parties that call themselves communist and socialist have provided a cover for these government actions, dividing the working class and even pressing for mobilizations that legalize the repressive measures of the junta and the government in the eyes of the masses.

The CP and SP have thus given a blank check to the Armed Forces Movement, raising its prestige and glorifying it constantly, without making the slightest criticism of it. At a time of isolation and pressure on the workers struggles and isolation and repression against the far left, the SP leaders wash their hands of the matter with a communiqué (aimed at forestalling criticisms from their most combative, rank-and-file militants) and the CP blames the repression on the vanguard, inciting the population against the struggles of the workers and against the revolutionaries.

3. It is easy to understand what the government, the Junta of National Salvation, and the Armed Forces Movement are doing. It is easy to understand the firmness with which they are maintaining order at any price, that is, maintaining the conditions of capitalist exploitation just at the moment when the most loyal servants of that order -- the agents of the PIDE (the secret police) and the legionnaires -- are beginning to be released.

The autumn and winter will be difficult. For the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to break all the centers of workers resistance and revolutionary agitation. It is only on these conditions that it will be possible for the bourgeoisie to tame the working class by making it accept layoffs, speedups, and price-increases in the name of "order" and "peace." These are the only ways the bourgeoisie can respond to international competition, given the very vulnerable economy.

4. The working class can and must respond to the capitalist offensive, all the more so in that the first strike wave gave certain sectors some experience in struggle and organization.

The revolutionaries must throw all their efforts into pressing forward and structuring the organized and independent response of the working class, creating everywhere united bodies including the greatest possible number of militants around the demands most responsive to the proletariat and the laboring masses.

Thus, in face of the intensification of capitalist repression, which is the real face of bourgeois democracy, it is vital for the working class to intransigently defend its right of assembly, trade-union and political organization, demonstration, and freedom of the workers press with no limitation whatsoever.

The LCI calls on all workers and employees and all revolutionary organizations to organize the broadest possible front of struggle for the defense of the democratic rights of the workers against capitalist repression and against the attacks of the reactionary gangs. Workers self-defense must be organized in all struggles! Democratic rights must not be violated but must be applied in practice! They must be defended more than ever!

5. We issue a solemn warning to the leaders of the CP and SP, who are compromised by the most shameful class collaboration against the interests of the workers and employees. They should not think that they can maintain their comfortable positions and at the same time help to isolate the most combative sections of the working class and the revolutionary organizations. When they are no longer able to carry out the missions that have been assigned to them, the bourgeoisie will throw them out of the government, after having forced them to retreat in all areas, day after day and decree after decree.

*FOR THE RIGHT
OF ASSEMBLY,
OF TRADE-UNION AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION,
TO STRIKE,
TO DEMONSTRATE,
OF FREEDOM OF THE WORKERS PRESS WITHOUT ANY
RESTRICTION!

*ORGANIZE WORKERS SELF-DEFENSE OF ALL STRUGGLES!

*IMMEDIATE FREEDOM FOR ALL IMPRISONED REVOLUTIONARIES!

*LIFT THE BAN ON LUTA POPULAR!



BRITAIN'S NEW TURN

by JAMES CONWAY

The following article first appeared in the August issue of *The Plough*, paper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, Irish section of the Fourth International.



The collapse of Sunningdale(1) marks a new turning point for Britain's strategy in Ireland. Although Britain has charted a flexible course in the past and revised its policy on numerous occasions, it has nonetheless remained within a strategic framework created during the early sixties. As the crisis of British imperialism deepens and the contradictions inherent in the northern situation itself ripen, this framework is rapidly becoming a straitjacket. Increasingly, Britain is compelled to adopt a qualitatively different type of perspective.

Britain's changing role in Ireland

Britain's historic interest in Ireland was to enforce an artificial division of labor and manipulate the terms of trade between both countries. Political strategy was governed by a desire to transform Ireland into a source of cheap food and labor for industrial Britain.

But the prolonged decline of British imperialism has slowly modified this. These changes were rooted in Britain's difficulties, particularly since the last world war. A low level of investment and growth coupled with increased competition on the international market and a shrinking share of world exports has caused repeated crises in Britain's balance of payments. Any attempt to find an immediate solution to this problem by restricting home demand met with the stiff resistance of a well organized and self-confident British working class. Moreover, in the long term, a restriction of home demand could only add to the stagnation of industry, making the balance of payments situation worse.

The only alternative open was to stimulate overseas investments as a source of profits. The mid-fifties -- an important period for adjusting relations in Ireland -- saw a significant change in this respect with a steady annual increase in the figure for long-term private investment abroad. An important part of this overseas investment found its way into Ireland, where it began to take over and dominate the new industrial base which had been developed under native control during the protectionist period. In the South of Ireland only 20 percent of industrial capital in the sixties was raised locally and of the remainder over 40 percent came from Britain. In the North too there was a significant influx of capital and even

by the end of the fifties only about 30 percent of capital invested in heavy industry remained in local hands. Practically all the rest was owned by Britain.

This development demanded a more sophisticated political framework to deal with the changing relations between Britain and Ireland and between North and South. Instead of fostering artificial divisions it became necessary to maximize unity and integration.

It was recognized that such an abrupt change could not be introduced overnight. The profound social and political contradictions that had matured over centuries would take time to mellow. In the flush of growth and expansion this did not represent an insurmountable problem. A long-term strategy of rationalizing Ireland's political structures and drawing the whole country more tightly within Britain's orbit was projected.

Crisis of British imperialism: the Irish strategy

The renewed crisis of British capitalism starting in 1969 has dealt this perspective a severe blow. When Britain's balance of payments showed a surplus in 1969 it seemed that Britain was beginning to cope with the problems clogging it since the war. But the nature of the surplus indicated that this was not the case. It originated mainly in the fall of import prices and rise of export prices, as a result of devaluation. In other words, it did not reflect a strengthening of the economy but rather a weakening of it.

The change in Britain's prospects has had inevitable repercussions on its strategy in Ireland. As late as 1968, when the line it was pursuing became entangled by a genuine democratic upsurge among Catholic workers, Britain's response remained within the limits of the strategy of the earlier half of the decade. During the first phase of the struggle, from October 1968 to August 1971, the aim of the Labour party and the Tories was simply to restore the status quo so that the long march towards a gradual federal solution could be resumed.

But the contradictions in the North of Ireland sharpened so quickly that it was necessary to speed up the introduction of the federal solution in a gambling effort to forestall a premature confrontation. Thus, in the second phase of the struggle the Assembly(2) and the power-sharing executive were hastily established and the Sunningdale Agreement was drawn up as a first step in the direction of the federal solution.

Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this short-term initiative

was still viewed in the context of continued and expanding opportunities for British capitalism. Now that even this pre-condition can no longer be relied upon, the federal strategy has been made redundant. A whole new framework for getting the Irish situation under control once more is obviously needed. Britain has been reluctant to face this fact. Certainty about the depth of the economic and political problems facing it at home had first to be confirmed before bridges could be burned. But now that the bleak prospects for Britain are established without doubt the necessary adjustments are being made.

cial and political anomalies. The first White Paper (March 1973) projected a definite system of power-sharing between the chosen political representatives of the minority and the representatives of Unionism as the only way of democratizing Northern political relations -- a necessary pre-condition for the federal solution.

A measure of how much Britain's confidence has been shaken in the latest turn of events is illustrated by the second White Paper, where the rationale of power-sharing is seen simply as



Protestants block Belfast street during reactionary Loyalist strike in North of Ireland.

The White Paper turn

If the collapse of the Assembly and the power-sharing executive and the disappearance of Sunningdale indicates a change in Britain's attitude toward Ireland, then the July 4 White Paper indicates the direction of that change. It represents a decisive retreat from the federal strategy to a highly repressive solution in the present crisis.

In the new White Paper the so-called Irish Dimension is completely emasculated. From meaning that the Orange ruling class would have to subordinate its political autonomy to the dictates of the entire Irish ruling class in accordance with the requirements of British imperialism (as outlined in the Green Paper of October 1972 where the term "Irish Dimension" was first coined) it has been reduced to the plane of geography -- to the fact that the Free State and the six counties have "a common land frontier"! The political significance of the "Irish Dimension" is thereby rendered meaningless. As the Irish Times (July 5) notes in its front page coverage of the White Paper: "The 'Irish Dimension' is reduced to a shadow. . . . Acceptability (of any British solution in the North) to Dublin, previously a feature of British policy, is excised from the new policy."

Power-sharing, the other main pillar of Britain's strategy, is also emptied of all content. Previously the Green Paper had admitted that the Catholic population had become a permanent minority in the North and that alone created a number of so-

the need for political stability. Accordingly, the insistence that "there must be some form (!) of power-sharing" is more a poignant cry of despair than a political conviction. There is in fact only one form of power-sharing that might have co-opted the anti-imperialist minority. That has been tried and overthrown by the Loyalists.

The only other possible form of power-sharing is that advocated by the Loyalists themselves -- the inclusion of Castle Catholics and Taken Teighs(3) in an Orange-controlled cabinet. This appears to be the "some form" of power-sharing that the new White Paper has opted for. The British bourgeoisie is retreating to an acceptance of the old Stormont-type(4) regime with a few trimmings and trappings to save face.

Relying on the Loyalists

Once the above has been understood it is easy to comprehend the provisions of the White Paper vis-à-vis the setting up of interim political machinery. This machinery is not a fly wheel operating a transmission belt to a further installment of the federal solution, rather it operates a transmission belt back to the pre-1968 situation.

To extricate itself from the terrible mess it is in, Britain needs a breathing space. The establishment of a Constitutional Convention to discuss possible solutions to the Northern problem is designed specially to provide this. Can anyone seriously imagine that almost five years of intense struggle can suddenly

be followed by a whole period of mere chatter? That further discussion can produce some remedy that has not already been thought of and discarded? No, Britain is not so naive, nor is any solution expected. Britain is simply waiting for an opportune moment to implement the new strategy already outlined in the White Paper.

If Britain is to implement this strategy, then it must rely on a molecular process to which it supplies the energy but which it is not directly part of. In other words, Britain cannot afford a decisive blow against the minority at this moment. Such a move would unite the entire community, oust the SDLP (Social Democratic and Labour party) (5) and send tremors of revolt across the border into the South. Instead Britain is depending on the changing relationship of forces between the Catholic and Protestant communities. Within the framework of its previous approach Britain tried to keep the Loyalists (6) in check while dealing with the minority itself. Now it is releasing the damper and permitting a balance of forces more favorable to the Loyalists to emerge.

Thus the Irish Times (July 5) observed correctly that: "Although a veto is retained for Westminster the White Paper leaves little doubt of the desire of the British Government to withdraw (in a political sense) from the scene leaving the Northern Ireland representatives to arrange matters to the best of their own ability." And when the White Paper says that "Some time is required for political groupings to emerge and develop, to engage in discussion with other parties and interests and to clarify but not foreclose their positions," what it really means is that the developing trends since the Westminster election must reach maturity before a new decisive change can be introduced.

Building the backlash

In this light the White Paper's ambiguity on security is ominous. The SDLP was bitterly disappointed by the absence of a gesture towards creating a security force acceptable to the minority. More important is the snowballing demand among loyalist politicians for a 20,000-30,000-strong Protestant Home Guard. Although the British government has been approached officially by the Loyalists on this matter, although the demand has been coupled with renewed threats of civil war from John Laird (7) and Bill Craig (8), the British government remains silent.

This cannot be because the government considers the subject too trivial to deal with. The raising of the demand on the Orange 12th of July (9) commemorations by Taylor (10) was not frivolous holiday speechifying. The demand percolated through from the grassroots of loyalism. It originated in the Ulster Special Constabulary Association, a paramilitary group formed by ex-B-specials which has several thousand members and is represented on the Ulster Workers Council. (11) This organization in itself could easily constitute the backbone of either an official or unofficial loyalist militia. It has been reported that the USCA in fact intends to emerge at the end of August as an unnamed force to recruit on a wide scale before arming.

Added to this is the growing dissatisfaction with the role of the Ulster Defense Regiment (12) and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (13) both among loyalists in general and members of the security forces themselves. Numerous reports of para-military loyalist groups taking over units of the UDR and carrying out sectarian operations have appeared in the press. Dissatisfac-

tion with the RUC is also increasing. Proportionately the RUC has borne the brunt of the war against "terrorism." Figures released last month by the RUC show that since 1968 more than half the force has been injured in riots and street battles. By contrast its success against the Provos (14) has been minimal -- last year over a thousand bombs were planted despite the unprecedented security precautions. Even the success of the security forces shows how hopeless their task is. The capturing of 282 rocket launchers and mortars, 1,598 firearms, 187,399 rounds of ammunition, and 3,400 pounds of explosives reveals only the massive size of the iceberg that lies submerged and out of the grasp of the security forces. In face of this meager performance and the cost to the morale and prestige of the UDR and RUC, the Loyalists' demand for a more aggressive force is bound to meet with a wide response in the Protestant community.

Britain's apparent oblivion to the tendency towards loyalist militarism is not without explanation. This tendency is exactly what Britain wants to see enhanced, without for the time being soiling its own hands. It will have at once outflanked the Ulster Defence Association (15) and found an alternative and more reliable battering ram against the Catholic minority.

What perspective?

To date no important section of the revolutionary movement has been able to understand the dynamic and direction of the national struggle. After the establishment of the Assembly, the Officials (16) predicted a return to normality. The far left groups with the exception of the RMG (Revolutionary Marxist Group, Irish section of the Fourth International) and the PD (People's Democracy, a centrist formation at present supporting the military struggle of the Provos) simply condemned the Assembly and power-sharing as an empty gesture but ignored their implication for the future course of the struggle. The Provos forecast that the Assembly would fall, but as a direct result of their own campaign.

Following the fall of the Assembly and the overthrow of Sunningdale all these organizations and groups are once more indulging themselves in facile predictions based on assumed dogma. Some see the development of an autonomous working class movement among the Protestants which will inevitably embrace socialism. Others see the withdrawal of Britain and a deal between the Republicans and Loyalists being reached. And, of course, for the far left groups, blinded by their own dogma and self-importance, nothing has changed -- "the struggle goes on."

All of these assessments miss the mark by a wide margin.

Will there be an autonomous Protestant working class movement and will it embrace socialism? Those who answer this question in the affirmative are relying on the current divisions within the Loyalist camp to produce something. But they have thoroughly misunderstood the nature of these divisions. It is true that there is friction between the plebian elements of the UWC and the middle class representatives on the United Ulster Unionist Council. But this friction has not been created by any move on the part of the UWC towards socialism or even populism. What has happened is that the UWC strike brought the bourgeois leaders of Loyalism to the pinnacle of power after five years of fragmentation and frustration. Now that they are on top, the Wests, Craigs, and Paisleys are seizing the opportunity to sweep away all the intermediary forces of plebian (working class and petty bourgeois) origin in an effort to bring the movement firmly under their own control.

Those -- among them certain sections of the Provo leadership -- who imagine that Britain will withdraw from the North leaving it up to the Republicans and Loyalists to work out some federal compromise display an equal lack of understanding. Can these people seriously imagine that after such a long campaign to maintain its presence Britain is simply going to abandon the enormous assets it has accumulated in the North? Has British imperialism been increasing its direct share of Northern industrial and commercial capital in the last decade just to hand it over to some federal state that will be dominated by the Provos or any other group of Republicans? Not likely! Will the Loyalist bourgeoisie (or even their working class followers) who have excluded the Catholic population even from employment suddenly agree to share their spoils? What a hope!

Towards a decisive confrontation

Finally, does the "struggle" simply "go on" without any significant change? Only the myopic economic left which can't see past petty reformist issues could believe that it does. While these fossilized caricatures of social democracy ask themselves questions that have been answered clearly by the course of events (such "profound" questions as "will the Protestant workers unite with their Catholic brothers to fight imperialism") new and decisive questions are being posed.

The most important question in the next period is whether or not the Catholic working class will be able to wage a struggle against the emerging alliance between British imperialism and Loyalism and the return to the days of the old Stormont regime. If the answer to this question is a pessimistic one, then the recent White Paper is an epilogue to a series of imperialist maneuvers; if the answer is optimistic then it is only an introduction to a new chapter of struggle.

Although the Catholic minority appears demoralized and submissive, there is a process of recomposition at work in the community. In the last issue of *The Plough* we tried to evaluate this process. We noted that while the SDLP still maintains political hegemony over the Catholics, the revolutionary anti-imperialist forces were slowly growing. That growth could be estimated only in terms of the electoral support received in the Assembly and Westminster elections and the re-emergence on a touch-and-go basis of street politics. Neither of these could act as sure barometers of the process of revolutionary recomposition that is going on. But that this process does exist and is exerting a real pressure is lately confirmed by the splits that have periodically opened in the ranks of the SDLP since the Loyalist triumph. Moreover, the Devlin wing⁽¹⁷⁾ has apparently got the upper hand inside the party during these controversies. The SDLP as a whole is bending to the pressure of the militancy within the ghettos, and this portends a new and more favorable atmosphere for a revolutionary upsurge among the Catholics. If the mood in the Catholic community was one of despair, the SDLP would have softened its attitude towards power-sharing and the "Irish Dimension." Instead it was forced under pain of further weakening its already losing electoral base to project an intransigent and militant image.

It is possible to predict that as Britain's new plans become more obvious that there will be mounting opposition from the Catholic minority. Given the critical nature of Britain's economic and political situation and the flowering confidence of Loyalism, no serious attempt to co-opt this resistance will be attempted. The only possible outcome will be a major confrontation taking on the dimensions of civil war.

While it is obvious that the Catholic masses will not abandon their historic aspirations without a fight, a question mark still hangs over the role of the Irish revolutionary movement. As a whole it has shown a decided inability to understand the dynamic of the struggle or to give real leadership to the broad layers who have from time to time placed confidence in them.

The coming confrontation is the last chance for a long time. Only by uniting our forces and forging real links with the masses can we hope to meet the challenge. ■

Footnotes:

1. The Sunningdale Agreement (involving power-sharing and a "Council of Ireland") was established by the British government, the Northern Ireland Executive (composed of the SDLP, Faulkner Unionists, and the Alliance party) and the Southern government.
2. The Assembly is the governing body of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland set up by Sunningdale.
3. "Castle Catholic" is a term for collaborators with British imperialism, coined when Dublin Castle was the seat of British power in Ireland. Teigh (or Taig) is a historic term of abuse used against the Catholic minority in the North.
4. Stormont was the seat of government in the North until direct rule was introduced in March 1972. Its name is firmly identified with Protestant political supremacy.
5. Social Democratic and Labour party originally grew out of the Civil Rights struggle, and represents Catholic bourgeois and petty-bourgeois interests.
6. Protestants committed to re-establishing the pre-1968 status quo.
7. A right-wing Unionist.
8. An ex-Stormont minister, one of the foremost Loyalist leaders, who set up the Vanguard Unionist party and maintains close links with paramilitary organizations.
9. The 12th of July is a carnival of Protestant supremacy celebrating the victory of William of Orange over James II at the Battle of the Boyne.
10. A right-wing Loyalist politician and an ex-Stormont minister.
11. Coordinating body of the recent Loyalist strike.
12. A special regiment of the British Army, recruited exclusively in Northern Ireland and almost 100 percent Protestant.
13. The police force, almost entirely Protestant.
14. Provisional Irish Republican Army. One of two wings of the IRA, it still engages in armed struggle.
15. Loyalist paramilitary federation of plebeian local "defense" associations.
16. Official Irish Republican Army, the other of two wings of the IRA.
17. Refers to the populist element in the SDLP which believes that a more militant line is required to hold on to its electoral support. This position is exemplified by Paddy Devlin, a former Civil Rights leader and a member of the IRA in the 1950s.

after the elections & the spring offensive

Last July 7 elections were held for half the positions in the Upper House of the Japanese parliament. The Upper House is one of the two chambers of the parliament, roughly corresponding to the American Senate. Elections to it are held every three years. Two months earlier, the traditional "spring offensive" of the trade unions had touched off a strike wave whose breadth was remarkable. Generalized struggles are organized every spring, since all trade-union contracts are renewed during that season. In the following interview, taken by Pierre Rousset, Y. Sakai, a member of the Political Bureau of the Revolutionary Communist League, Japanese section of the Fourth International, explains the situation in the country, beginning with these two events, the Upper House elections and the trade-union spring offensive.



Question. In an interview you gave to *Quatrième Internationale* last February you asserted that the situation that prevailed then could give rise to "the biggest general strike in Japanese history." What actually happened?

Answer. A considerable number of workers -- about five or six million of them -- were effectively mobilized during the spring campaign. Japan was paralyzed by a general strike for about a week. That was unprecedented in the history of our workers movement. In that interview I predicted that the spring offensive would lead to a really serious confrontation between the employers and the workers. But as it turned out, this confrontation was postponed, probably for a year, or perhaps, even worse, for two years -- in spite of the breadth of the strike. We have to try to explain why. In our view, there are two basic reasons.

First of all, the Japanese bourgeoisie was able to make important economic concessions because of the profits it has made from inflation. These concessions were politically necessary. Popular discontent, fed by rising prices, was running high, and the bourgeoisie knew that the position of the government party was getting worse and worse as the elections to the Upper House approached. The bourgeoisie had to avoid a direct confrontation. That's why it granted such high wage increases -- on the order of 25-30 percent!

Next, the reformist trade-union leaders were seeking a national accord with the employers over the workers demands. Workers combativity had grown sharply and the position of the bureaucracy within the trade unions had seriously declined. The bureaucracy was often thrown on the defensive. It was therefore ready to seize on the first opportunity to compromise in order to defuse the situation. And it must be remembered that while combativity has risen significantly, there is still no alternative left pole of attraction capable of offering perspectives on a national scale.



Q. You say there is no national alternative pole of attraction. But could you give some examples of your local inter-

vention in these strikes?

A. We threw all our forces into the 1974 spring offensive. But our implantation remains uneven in the various regions. In Tokyo, in spite of a few cases of real trade-union implantation, our intervention was propagandistic, given the mass of workers concentrated in the capital. In the cities of the north-east we were able to carry out some real activity, but only in some unions and in certain factories. It was the same in Osaka and Kyoto (in the postal system and in the telephone and telegraphs). But in Sendai our more important implantation enabled us to organize real centralized regional activity. I think this example provides the best illustration of our orientation in this type of struggle.

We won our influence through work in the unions' "youth sectors," which are sectors grouping together young workers, generally the most militant elements, and have their own organizational life. In the middle of the 1960s an "internationalist tendency" was formed within the young socialists. Today the political situation in the union movement in Sendai (in the Miyagi prefecture) is a triangular one. Besides the socialists and the CP, we have our own influence, especially in the posts, telephone, and telegraphs, and among the railway workers. In 1970 the Internationalist Workers Committees, organizations of young workers of Trotskyist orientation, were formed. In 1973 a trade-union tendency was formed, the Roken (Society for the Study of the Workers Movement). Roken had two aims: to organize the workers on a regional basis (you have to understand that in Japan the weight of factory-based unionism is very strong) and to offer a political outlet for struggles around economic demands -- an outlet other than the class collaborationist one of the reformist leaderships.

During the latest strike we participated in the formation of strike committees controlled by daily general assemblies of workers. In liaison with these committees we set up a regional committee composed of "action groups," which were mobile groups made up of young workers, about 150-180 in each. These action groups carried on a twofold activity. First of all they hardened the strike, breaking with the pacifist instructions of the union leaders, who are now attacking us. We were able to organize some factory occupations, and there were some clashes, either with the employers' agents or with the police. Second, they strengthened weak points or points that were threatened, as in the postal system, where the police and the bureaucracy got together to try to isolate the strike. We, on the other hand, tried to make the strike the affair of the workers themselves. For its part, Roken put out twelve leaflets in the space of a week (about 100,000 copies all together) to give news on the struggles going on and to draw the political lessons. The SP and the CP did not produce a single leaflet.



Q. At the beginning, you said that the expected confrontation was put off for a year or two. Why a year or two?

A. The crisis of Japanese capitalism is not basically conjunctural. In fact, the very rapid expansion from the end of the 1950s to the end of the 1960s exhausted the reserves on which it had based itself. Japanese capitalism is short of labor; it is running up against big problems caused by pollution and the structure of the cities, which went through a development that was at the same time very rapid and anarchic; it is not capable of responding to new needs. And the Japanese bourgeoisie, threatened by the intensification of interimperialist competition, has to move to a deep rationalization of its economy and deal with a profound new rise of popular struggles at the same time. The Tanaka government has already been compelled to give up one rationalization program because of these struggles. And also because of the pressure of American imperialism.

And the wage increases I mentioned should not make for any illusions. Since last autumn, the rate of inflation has climbed to 30 or 35 percent! That is, the buying power of the workers is actually stagnating or declining. Conditions for the workers in small and medium-sized factories, where the level of unionization is low, are especially difficult. More and more, the government is speaking of the necessity of establishing an "incomes policy," that is, wage controls. So we can see that the problem of defending and increasing the buying power of the workers will continue to dominate social struggles.

It is symptomatic that Sohyo (the left trade union, dominated by the socialists, with the participation of the CP) has asked for a cost-of-living index for pensions granted retired workers and for social security benefits for old people, the handicapped, mothers of families, etc. And the government has had to give some concessions on this. We are advancing the demand for a sliding scale of wages, but this remains a minority demand within the unions.

It is for all these reasons that we think that the coming two years will see the outbreak of an important class confrontation in Japan.



Q. What problems do you see for yourselves given this outlook?

A. We have two problems to resolve. First, there is the question of getting a better grasp of what will be the nature of the next spring offensive in 1975. Will the bourgeoisie still be able to continue its policy of making economic concessions? Second, there is the problem of determining the best way to contribute to the building of a class struggle left opposition on a national scale capable of putting forward a political alternative to the union bureaucracies.

In the final analysis, the problem is political. Because of the crisis of the government party, the reformists, the CP and the SP, are more and more tending to advance a popular-front perspective. That strengthens the necessity for militants developing their own independent perspectives on this ground also, that is, the perspective of a workers government.



Q. Did the latest elections to the Upper House confirm this crisis of bourgeois leadership?

A. Yes. In fact, three general lessons can be drawn from the latest electoral results.

1. The government party, the Liberal Democratic party (LDP), suffered a defeat. It lost nine seats and now holds only 125 seats in a chamber of 250. Taking account of the five "independents" who will nearly always vote with the LDP, it has a majority, but a very slim one. In certain commissions, the opposition in fact holds a majority, or at least half of the seats. The situation is even more difficult for Tanaka and the LDP in that the LDP is the only solid bourgeois party in Japan, having held uncontested power for more than twenty years. Suddenly, factional struggles are breaking out in the LDP. Tanaka, the prime minister, is opposed by Fukuda, the former minister of finance and one of the leaders of the most right-wing faction of the LDP; it favors maintaining privileged relations with Taiwan and advocates a limited economic expansion. Obviously, this struggle is weakening the present government. The LDP does, however, maintain a strong majority in the Lower House.

2. The traditional left is stagnating. This is especially clear for the Socialist party, which gained only three seats. It is also true for the Communist party, despite its important gain in seats as compared to 1968 (nine seats). In comparison to the 1971 elections, the gain was only six seats, and in percentage terms, the vote increase was tiny. The SP and CP were disappointed. The CP particularly had advocated a very moderate, conservative line. During an important strike of teachers -- a sector in which the CP is especially influential -- it called on some of the professors to stay at work so as to "maintain order in the schools"! Needless to say, the teachers didn't take this very well. The CP also abandoned its slogan on child care (As many child-care centers as mailboxes!) out of fear of a dynamic of confrontation. Finally, both the SP and CP took an extremely conciliatory attitude during the spring strikes. The CP has seen the interruption of its electoral growth.

3. There has thus emerged a massive fringe of combative militants. The setback for the LDP combined with the stagnation of the CP and SP shows the gap that exists between the combativity of the masses and the policy of the reformist parties. But, once again, this combative fringe had no organization and no candidates able to fully represent them during the latest elections.



Q. You intervened in these elections, particularly by supporting the candidacy of Isamu Tomura, a leader of the Sanrizuka Peasants Association.* What sort of balance-sheet would you draw of this campaign?

A. We had two aims in this campaign. The first was to aid in continuing the struggle of the Sanrizuka Peasants Association. It is probable that the government will do everything possible this autumn to destroy the tower that is now blocking the extension of the airport runways. The first objective of the I. Tomura campaign was to develop the greatest possible solidarity to prepare for this possibility.

*For the past eight years, the Sanrizuka Peasants Association has been waging an exemplary struggle against the construction of the new Tokyo international airport. At the beginning, the peasants organized around the key question of defending their land. Then two further problems were added: the pollution generated by the airport and the integration of the airfield into the American military system in Asia. Peasant resistance to construction of the airport has given rise to some of the most violent demonstrations seen in decades in Japan. Today, most of the airport has been constructed, but the peasants have built a tower more than 200 feet high at the end of a runway, thus preventing utilization of the airport! The opening of the airport has already been deferred five years!

The second aim, for us, was to provide a focus for this left opposition on a national scale through the example of the struggle that Tomura represents and through our own intervention.

Electoralily, we suffered a defeat. Tomura got 230,356 votes; that is, 0.43 percent of the vote on a national scale. He would have needed at least twice that to be elected. I should point out that in the elections to the Upper House some of the candidates stand on a district basis and others as national candidates. Tomura was a national candidate. His 230,356 votes was a weak figure. It amounts to just about the support estimated he had at the beginning of the campaign. To understand why the influence of this candidacy did not expand during the campaign you have to take into account the state of the far left in Japan. That is the political defeat. We had hoped for more!

We formed a united front to direct the campaign. But we were the only national political organization to participate in it. There were also some Maoist formations, but their implantation was only local. Also participating were some militants of the left pacifist movements, the Beheiren, and a national coordination of left trade-union militants. And, of course, there was the Sanrizuka Peasants Association, as well as some left Christian militants. (Tomura himself is a Christian.)

The rest of the far left stayed out of it. Several groups have gone through a deep sectarian degeneration and have exhausted themselves in "internal wars." (In Japanese, there is even a special word for these wars: *uchigeba*.) The violence of these confrontations has been such that many militants have been killed! Such was the case with Chukaky, an organization with some characteristics similar to those of a "third period" Stalinist organization, but which rejects Stalin and considers the USSR a Stalinist state, and Kaiho, or "Liberation," a spontanéist formation that falsely describes itself as Luxemburgist and is moving back toward the SP. The Kakumaru, an economist current that defines the Soviet Union as state capitalist, apart from its internal wars, has taken a deep rightward course and called for a vote to an SP candidate, a bureaucrat in the railway union. (Some analogies could be drawn to the Lambertists in France.)

But the balance-sheet of the campaign obviously goes beyond that. For one thing, the Sanrizuka Peasants Association has at least 230,356 people in Japan who support its struggle. The electoral campaign will have been very useful for preparing the coming stages of the struggle. Further, in the course of the campaign we were able to establish contacts with currents and elements of the left with whom we had never been able to work previously. Finally, it opened an important battle within Sohyo over the bureaucratic control by the SP of the union and for the right of each union to choose the workers candidate that it desires.



Q. What program was the electoral campaign based on?

A. It was a unitary campaign, but its components were politically heterogeneous (Maoists and Trotskyists, left trade-union militants, pacifists and left Christians). As for I. Tomura, he has a very firm position on the SP and the CP (which refused to give active support to the struggle in Sanrizuka). He represents a striking example of radical struggle and illustrates the desire of combative militants to define a political position independent of the reformist leaderships. The unitary program of

the campaign was an elementary one. These were its slogans:

- All power to the working masses!
- For the occupation and expropriation of the factories by the workers!
- For the control by the peasants of the land and water now monopolized by the trusts and the government!
- For the control of the sea by the fishermen! Against pollution!
- For control of the distribution network by the consumers!
- Against all discrimination against women, the Buraku (Japanese "untouchable" castes), South Koreans, and the handicapped!
- For the overthrow of the lying, thieving LDP government!
- Against the invasion of Asia by Japanese imperialism!
- We will destroy Japanese imperialism in common with the peoples of Asia!
- Vote for Tomura, for "Yonaoshi" (change of society)! This latter slogan is in fact virtually untranslatable, because it utilizes a traditional Japanese word that means both "revolution" and "change the conditions of life"; it was used even during the feudal era.

Obviously, we distributed our own program within the framework of this unitary campaign. Our main slogans were these:

- Down with the Tanaka-LDP government, against any capitalist government!
- For an anti-imperialist, socialist, workers and peasants government! Against governments of the "popular front" or the "center-left"!
- Overthrow the rule of Japanese and U.S. imperialism in Asia!
- Let us march toward a socialist Asia with the peoples of Asia!
- Let us construct a proletarian front for the anti-imperialist struggle and the struggle for socialism! Vote for Tomura as a representative of the fighting masses!

To these general slogans we added specific slogans on workers struggles, the oppression of women, antimilitarist actions, international solidarity with the peoples of Asia, against the peaceful coexistence engaged in by China and North Korea, etc. As for the local candidates, we called for votes to the candidates of the workers parties, the SP and the CP.

Since we were the only national political organization involved in the Tomura campaign, we provided the bulk of the effort, both militant and financial. But because of the state of the far left and our own relative organizational weakness, we were not able to achieve a better electoral score.



Q. What lessons do you draw from the spring offensive and the latest elections?

A. There is a real continuity in the lessons that we can draw from the two events. First, a new stage was reached in the crisis of the LDP. We are seeing the opening of a real crisis of political leadership of the bourgeoisie in Japan. Then there was the affirmation of a real militant potential of the working class and the stagnation of the influence of the CP and SP and the weakening of their ability to control struggles. Finally, there is the decisive problem of the absence of a national class-struggle political pole of attraction able to oppose the reformist leaderships, including on the question of the government. It is to the construction of this pole that the leadership of our Japanese section, the Revolutionary Communist League, is now committed. ■

JAMES P. CANNON

Continued from p. 2.

International Labor Defense, the organization formed to fight for the freedom of class-struggle prisoners, notably Sacco and Vanzetti.

The two Third Internationalist groups that had emerged from the SP Left Wing were unified in 1921. The new united party soon became the hegemonic organization among the workers vanguard in the United States. It continued the traditions of militant class struggle established by the IWW and the Eugene Debs wing of the Socialist party and took big steps in combining that tradition with the new forms of struggle and organization that had been vindicated by the victory of the October Revolution.

As a member of the party's Political Committee, Cannon played a central role in this process of establishing the first solid roots of communism in the United States.

But the early American CP, subjected to the pressures of the economic boom of the 1920s and the ascendancy of American imperialism, and crippled by its lack of internationalist understanding and tradition, was racked by factionalism -- factionalism that was by no means always based on clear political differences. Cannon -- as he was the first to admit later on -- was a vigorous participant in these factional wars. Toward the end of the 1920s, he began to realize the threat they represented. But viewing the development of the party solely through the prism of the American situation, he was unable to see any way out of the increasingly less meaningful factional warfare. In 1928 Cannon went to Moscow as a delegate to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International. Each delegate was assigned to a commission set up to deal with a particular question. Cannon's factional opponents, angling for positions on the American commission, had him assigned to the program commission, the body charged with drafting the program for the International. That, they believed, was a harmless and rather uninteresting assignment.

Leon Trotsky had been expelled from the Russian Communist party the year before. But he was appealing that expulsion and had sent a document, the Criticism of the Draft Program of the Communist International, to the World Congress. By a slip up in the bureaucratic apparatus, the document was translated and distributed to the members of the program commission. When Cannon read Trotsky's document, he became convinced that the Left Opposition was correct on the points of division within the International, and he resolved to break out of the trap of dead-end factionalism and launch a principled struggle in the American CP for the program of the Left Opposition. He smuggled a copy of Trotsky's Criticism back to the United States.

By that time, the American CP was well on the road to becoming bureaucratized. Like most parties of the Third International, it had passed motions condemning Trotsky and the Left Opposition as counterrevolutionary. To openly declare for Trotsky's program would have meant immediate expulsion from the party. Cannon began showing Trotsky's document to selected party members. The first few recruits were thus won to what was to become the American section of the International Left Opposition. Within a few months, the other leaders of the CP discovered Cannon's activity. In October 1928 he, along with Max Shachtman and Martin Abern, was summarily expelled.

The small group of Trotskyists that had been assembled in the CP had prepared for the expulsion. Within a week, the first

issue of the Trotskyist newspaper, the Militant, appeared. It began publishing twice a month.

The conditions under which the first independent nucleus of American Trotskyists had to function were extremely difficult. The group had no money, no staff, no headquarters, not even a mimeograph machine. They numbered far less than 100. They were facing a Communist party that at the time had about 10,000 members and a formidable apparatus, including several daily newspapers. The Trotskyists were cut off from their milieu. Communist party members discovered to be even discussing with them were expelled from the CP.

But the group held together nonetheless. In May 1929 a conference of fifty participants representing about 100 members was held in Chicago. The conference founded the Communist League of America, Left Opposition of the Communist party. For the next four years the CLA concentrated on publishing propaganda materials aimed at the membership of the Communist party. The Stalinists responded with a huge slander campaign and often with violent attacks on the comrades selling the Trotskyist press. For the first several months, scarcely a meeting was held by the Trotskyists that was not assaulted by gangs organized by the CP. The Trotskyists had to defend not only their political position, but their physical safety as well.

It is a tribute to the political and organizational capacities of that small group -- and of Cannon in particular -- that it was able to hold itself together and successfully prepare to make a turn to mass work when the objective situation changed. In 1933, while the Nazis were consolidating their power in Germany, the comrades of the CLA waged a big campaign to popularize the program of the International Left Opposition among the vanguard. When the historic betrayal of the Comintern leaders produced no significant ripples of protest from the ranks of the International, the ILO raised the call for a new international and new Communist parties. The Communist League of America participated in that campaign and made a turn to mass work in the labor movement to build that party. In 1934 the Trotskyists in Minneapolis, Minnesota, led three massive strikes of teamsters. Cannon was sent to Minneapolis, where he played a major role in the political leadership of the strike, editing the Organizer, the first strike daily ever produced in the history of the American labor movement. The strikers had to face martial law; they organized themselves and battled the police and the national guard on the streets of Minneapolis. The strike was won, and the American Trotskyists had become a real factor in the labor movement. They had proved able to break out of the previous isolation.

At the end of 1934, the CLA fused with a leftward-moving centrist organization called the American Workers party. The AWP had played a leading role in a major strike in Toledo, Ohio. The Toledo strike, the Minneapolis strikes, and the San Francisco longshore strike were the high points of the first national strike wave of the depression years. In June 1936, the new organization, called the Workers party, entered the Socialist party to try to attract the newly growing left wing of the SP, whose members were militant workers and youth who had gone to the SP in reaction to the bureaucratism and conservatism of the Communist party.

While the American Trotskyists were in the SP, Cannon led the Trotskyist faction, editing Labor Action, a weekly agitational paper published on the West Coast. In 1936 the Trotskyists organized the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow frame-up trials. The Commission, headed by John Dewey, held hearings in Mexico City, Trotsky's place of exile, during 1937. The issuance of its report, Not Guilty, was instrumental in

exposing the Moscow trials throughout the world labor movement.

By early 1937, the bureaucrats of the Socialist party had decided that the Trotskyist faction had become too dangerous. Through its activities in the trade-union movement and its political offensive within the SP on questions like the Spanish civil war and the defense of Trotsky, the Trotskyist faction was winning over the best elements of the Socialist party youth. In June 1937 the Trotskyist faction was summarily expelled. The expelled members organized a National Committee of Expelled Branches and, over the New Year's weekend of 1937-38, held a national convention. In their one year of activity within the Socialist party, the Trotskyists had doubled their membership. Moreover, they had recruited virtually all the proletarian elements of the SP, leaving the American Social Democratic party a crippled organization that never recovered its influence in the working class. The New Year's convention of 1938 founded the Socialist Workers party, which was to become the American section of the Fourth International.

Within the first two years of its existence, the SWP had to fight a major battle for the integrity of the revolutionary Marxist program. A minority of the party, under the pressure of anti-Soviet public opinion in the United States generated by the signing of the Hitler-Stalin pact and the Soviet invasions of Poland and Finland, developed the notion that the Soviet Union could no longer be considered a workers state and that it should not be defended by revolutionaries in the event of war. The internal fight in the SWP broke out openly on the first day of the second world war. In the course of the fight, the minority challenged not only the Fourth International's position on the class character of the Soviet state, but the validity of dialectical materialism and the Bolshevik principles of organization as well. The fight against the SWP minority -- based almost wholly among the nonproletarian sections of the party -- occupied the last months of Trotsky's life. Cannon was the central leader of the proletarian majority. He collaborated closely with Trotsky during the fight, producing a document called *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* (later published as a book), a defense of the principles of Bolshevik organization.

The struggle in the SWP in defense of the revolutionary Marxist program was crucial on an international scale in ensuring the programmatic integrity of the Fourth International. It was also crucial in preparing the SWP for standing up to the repression it was to face during the war. In 1941, eighteen leaders of the SWP, Cannon among them, were indicted under the Smith Act, the witch-hunt legislation later extensively used during the McCarthy period. The trial of the SWP leaders was the first to be conducted under the act, which made it a crime to advocate the overthrow of the government. Cannon was the chief defendant in the trials. The transcript of his testimony, an explanation of the fundamental principles and politics of revolutionary Marxism, was later published as *Socialism on Trial*, a book that for many years served to introduce workers to the bases of Marxism. The SWP leaders were convicted under the Smith Act and, on December 8, 1941, the day of U.S. entry into the second world war, were sentenced to twelve to eighteen months in prison.

For the next three years, the SWP waged a fight against the verdict, a fight that was integrated into the party's opposition to the war and to the anti-strike legislation and other measures designed to force the working class into line behind the capi-

alist war program. In January 1945 Cannon and the other seventeen leaders entered prison, where they remained for more than a year. The American government hoped that the imprisonment of the SWP's top leadership would destroy the party. But the secondary leadership was able to rise to the leadership and guide the party, even expanding its influence, despite the war-imposed isolation and despite the absence of eighteen of the party's leaders.

Cannon's political activity was not halted while he was in prison. He was in constant correspondence with the party leadership, expressing his views on the content and style of the party's publications, the program of education of the party membership, the importance of re-establishing contact with European Trotskyists, which had been cut by the war, the probable evolution of the American political situation after the war, and the ways of carrying out a new turn to mass work in the labor movement. These letters have been collected and published as a book, *Letters From Prison*, by Pathfinder Press, New York.

The immediate postwar period in the United States saw the biggest strike wave in American history. The SWP was able to turn its attention to the strike wave and grew to a membership of several thousand, many party militants playing leading roles in the class battles. But the strike wave subsided after only a few years, as capitalism -- with the aid of the mass Stalinist parties -- was able to restabilize itself. In the United States, the witch-hunt accompanying the restabilization was especially severe. Leftists of every variety were driven out of the trade-union movement, sometimes violently. All the workers organizations were driven into the deepest isolation, which was to last throughout the 1950s and even into the beginning of the 1960s. Despite his age -- he was sixty years old in 1950 -- and despite the difficult conditions, Cannon remained active in the leadership of the party throughout those years. And, when the development of the civil rights movement and the victory of the Cuban revolution began to lead to a change in the situation, Cannon was again instrumental in leading the SWP in making a fresh turn to the new layers of radicalizing youth.

In early 1950 Cannon gave a speech at a dinner sponsored by the Los Angeles branch of the Socialist Workers party to celebrate his sixtieth birthday. In the course of his speech, he remarked that for most of his life he had been too busy to bother about celebrating birthdays. But it had occurred to him that at age sixty it was perhaps time to "make a sort of appraisal of the sixty years." He came to what he thought was the most important question in any self-examination: "Has your life been consistent with your youth? For me that has always been the decisive criterion, for one's youth is the gauge to measure by. Youth is the age of wisdom, when our ideals seem to be, as they really are in fact, more important than anything else in the world. Youth is the age of virtue, or more correctly, the age of courage, which is the first virtue. Every man's youth is his better self."

Cannon's life was consistent with his youth. His courage in defending his ideas was equal to anybody's. He leaves behind not only the revolutionary-socialist organization he worked so consistently to build, but also a large body of literary work to serve as instruction for the youth of today. The number of militants in the world today rallying to the building of the Fourth International is greater than it has ever been since the Stalinist bureaucracy usurped and destroyed the Third International. That must have been a source of great satisfaction for James P. Cannon. It was one that he richly deserved. ■

BECAUSE OF INCREASES IN PRINTING AND MAILING COSTS IMPOSED ON US BY THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITALIST ECONOMIC CRISIS, INPRECOR HAS BEEN FORCED TO RAISE ITS REGULAR-MAIL SUBSCRIPTION RATES, EFFECTIVE SEPT. 5, 1974. THE NEW RATES ARE: ONE YEAR (25 issues) - US & Canada \$10; Britain £4; Japan ¥3,000. AIR-MAIL SUB RATES AND SINGLE ISSUE PRICE WILL REMAIN THE SAME.

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