

imprecor

international press correspondence

fortnightly, N° 30, july 3, 1975 \$.75, £.30





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SUMMER PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Two more issues of INPRECOR (July 17 and July 31) will appear before we take our summer vacation. No issues of INPRECOR will be published during August. We will resume our regular fortnightly schedule beginning with the issue of September 11. One of the remaining issues of July will be a special issue entirely devoted to the Indochinese revolution and its regional and international implications.

INPRECOR 76 rue Antoine Dansoert Brussels-1000 Belgium
INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORRESPONDENCE
Fortnightly information organ of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International
published in English, French, Spanish, and German.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of INPRECOR.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1 year (25 issues) — US\$17; Can\$17; £7
AIR MAIL TO U.S. & Canada: \$24. TO AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND: US\$30.
SPECIAL SIX-ISSUE AIR MAIL INTRODUCTORY SUB: U.S. & Canada \$5.50;
AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND US\$6.50.
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ITALY AFTER JUNE 15:

prepare for the autumn struggles

by LIVIO MAITAN



1. THE MEANING OF THE VOTE

The comments on the Italian elections made by the international bourgeois press are interesting more for the general state of mind they reveal than for the specific interpretations of the Italian scene they offer. Apart from a few self-consoling phrases about the peculiar character of the Italian Communist party (PCI — Partito Comunista Italiano), these comments betray deep concern; on occasion they even border on dismay. This is not surprising. During the past several months articles have been appearing abroad, based on worse than one-sided readings of the economic situation, presenting Italy as a country that has recovered after a long illness.

Further, the limits of the workers struggles of last autumn and the insufficiency, if not nonexistence, of any response by the workers organizations to the blows dealt the workers by the recession gave the bourgeoisie additional grounds for confidence. But now there is burning disappointment. Capitalist Europe, already troubled by the eruption of the volcano of the Iberian peninsula, now fears that new leaks will be sprung in Italy. In any case, it is certain that June 15 further aggravated the continental crisis of leadership of the ruling class.

Casting about for straws of hope, the Milan daily *Corriere della Sera* wrote that June 15 was a victory for reformism. There is no denying that this assertion is partly true. The electoral revolt against the Christian Democracy has its roots in the incapacity of succeeding governments to undertake any sort of reform. The success

of the PCI represents a reward for the strongest force in the reformist lineup. But a big, and in our view fundamental, question remains: What meaning do the masses attach to the massive vote for the PCI and for the left more generally? What repercussions will the resounding results of June 15 have on the state of mind and political maturity of the masses?

For the less politicized and radicalized sectors of the PCI's electorate, the vote most likely represents a generic protest and expression of a will to change things. As we have pointed out on many occasions, this sort of state of mind is also at the root of certain hopes placed in the historic compromise, which is regarded as a way out of an intolerable situation and as a guarantee, even if only relative, that things will change. Nevertheless, the massive vote for the PCI has a more precise class significance, and there are good reasons why such a vote was registered in June 1975, but not in 1972, at the time of the preceding regional elections.

Why the vote?

There are two major reasons, on different levels, for the vote this time. The first relates to peripheral layers of the working masses and layers of the petty bourgeoisie more than to the working class in industry. The politicization and radicalization occurred later among these layers than among the working class in big indus-



More than 11 million voters cast ballots for the PCI on June 15. The PCI won 33.4% of the vote in the regional elections and 32.7% in the provincial elections. The map, taken from the Paris daily *Le Monde*, indicates the PCI's electoral strength by region. The PCI today claims 1,683,740 members (compared with 1,719,000 in 1945 and 2,145,000 in 1964).

the far left vote

The PDUP (Partito di Unità Proletaria — Party of Proletarian Unity) ran candidates in ten of the fifteen administrative regions in which elections were held on June 15. In some of these regions — Lombardy, Campania, Latium, Venetia, Umbria — the PDUP participated in a bloc with *Avanguardia Operaia* (AO — Workers Vanguard), the bloc calling itself *Democrazia Proletaria* (Proletarian Democracy). In Turin there was only one list, that of *Avanguardia Operaia*. In some areas, the far-left list won more than 2 percent of the vote. But it was in Milan especially that success was achieved: 3.7 percent of the vote was won and three delegates were elected to the eighty-member municipal council in this most important political center of the country. It is noteworthy that in some regions in which the electoral bloc was not established, *Avanguardia Operaia* called for a vote for the Communist party (PCI — Partito Comunista Italiano); the PDUP did the same in Turin, declining to support the candidates of AO. The *Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari* (GCR—Revolutionary Communist Groups), Italian section of the Fourth International, called for votes for the PCI or PDUP-AO candidates.

italian election results

Parties	Regional Elections 1970		Legislative Elections 1972	Regional Elections 1975		
	Vote (%)	Seats*	Vote (%)	Number of votes	Vote (%)	Seats
DC	37.9	287	38.4	10,707,682	35.3	277
PCI	27.9	200	28.3	10,149,135	33.4	247
PSI	10.4	67	9.8	3,636,647	12.0	82
PSDI	7.0	41	5.2	1,700,983	5.6	36
PRI	2.9	18	2.9	961,016	3.2	19
PLI	4.7	27	3.9	748,749	2.5	11
MSI/DN	5.9	34	8.1	1,951,011	6.4	40
PDUP	—	—	—	146,451	0.5	4
Misc. left	3.3	16	3.4	326,232	1.1	4

DC: Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy); PCI: Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist party); PSI: Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist party); PSDI: Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano (Italian Democratic Socialist party); PRI: Partito Repubblicano Italiano (Italian Republican party); PLI: Partito Liberale Italiano (Italian Liberal party); MSI/DN: Movimento Sociale Italiano/Destra Nazionale (Italian Social Movement/National Right); PDUP: Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism).

*In 1970 there were a total of 690 seats in all the regional assemblies; in 1975 there were 720.

try or among the students; for this reason, they were not expressed in the elections of 1972; but they were expressed, and strikingly, this time. The second relates to the working class more directly. In face of the attack on living standards and jobs — which was the central axis of the employers' offensive throughout last autumn — the workers increasingly understood that economic struggles and sectoral battles are not enough, that comprehensive political solutions are needed. This understanding, combined with the passivity of the bureaucratic leaderships, has acted as an impediment to mobilizations of the 1968-69 type. Consequently, as we have seen already, the mobilizations have not been very broad and combative, apart from some "general strikes" that have increasingly assumed the character of sterile rituals. This fact was at the root of the analyses of those who claimed that the combativity potential of the working class had been seriously reduced, if not actually exhausted, by the demoralizing blows of the crisis. In reality, however, the working class was more cautious in its mobilizations precisely because it had gained a better understanding of the stakes involved; what could have appeared to be a retreat was actually a manifestation of widespread political maturity. The June 15 vote was also an expression of this reality.

The emergence of a spectacular change in the relationship of forces between the classes and of the political maturation of very broad proletarian masses will in turn constitute a very strong stimulus in two directions, both of them positive. The working class will acquire even

greater confidence in its own strength and will thus be more determined than before to take concrete advantage of its increased political and social specific weight. At the same time, there will be an intensification of the process of political maturation in the sense that all problems will tend to be reflected in general political terms, in terms of comprehensive political choices, and thus, implicitly, in terms of power. In this area the ties between the reformist organizations and the most dynamic layers of the masses are much less solid and more precarious in that the responses that these masses need (and of which they are beginning to become increasingly conscious) cannot be provided by the policies of the bureaucratic leaderships. Moreover, it must not be forgotten that this contradiction is already perceived among substantial sectors. Hence, a part of the PCI vote must be interpreted not as a vote of positive adherence, but rather as a vote for the strongest organization, in the absence of a solid alternative further left; this is also why the far left was able to make its presence felt electorally, a presence that was not at all irrelevant if considered not on a national scale but rather in a few crucial political centers.

Toward the contract battles

The conclusion that flows from all these analytical considerations is that the battles shaping up for the next few months — especially the big battles around the renegotiation of contracts for the main industrial categories — will take place in a context favorable in many respects, with a confident working class conscious of

its own strength and of the weakness of its adversary and inclined neither to continue to bear the costs of the crisis nor to be content with crumbs. The difficulty will lie precisely in the factor that embodies the greater maturity of the situation: in the necessity of assuring a political outlet for the struggles and in the impediment to this goal that the minimalist and compromising perspective of the reformists will continue to represent. This will be the crucial point, and it is on this level that the contradictions between the reformists and growing sectors of the masses will be able to emerge most sharply.

Thus, it is also for this reason that the autumn struggles will be very important, for they could constitute an im-

portant step in the process of demystifying reformism in the eyes of the masses. This demystification, the imposition of a platform and line that correspond to the requirements of the working class and are adequate to the maturity of the situation in the overall political sense, will be important not only for the battle within the working class for a revolutionary leadership, but also and more directly for the development and positive outcome of the new wave of struggles. In large measure, this outcome will depend on whether June 15 leads to an even more advanced phase of the crisis of the system in which the question of power is posed in more concrete terms or whether things will simply mark time, with all the dangers that marking time implies in a situation of extreme tension such as exists in Italy today.

2. THE BOURGEOISIE IN A VICIOUS CIRCLE

To the question of whether the Italian bourgeoisie can set in motion a solution to its crisis of leadership and lay the basis for a restabilization, the June 15 elections gave a more resoundingly negative answer than anyone had anticipated. The Christian Democracy, far from recovering from the blow it was dealt by the referendum on divorce last year (see INPRECOR, No. 0, May 9, 1974, and No. 1, June 6, 1974), suffered an even sharper blow. It only barely maintained its position as the largest party and was surpassed by the PCI in almost all the important cities and in all the most dynamic sections of the country. The percentage decline missed taking on squarely catastrophic proportions only because the DC was partially successful in picking up some votes on its right. In any case, the results were such that any further maneuvering in this direction is precluded. The Partito Liberale Italiano (PLI — Italian Liberal party) was reduced to minimal size, and the MSI-destra nazionale (Movimento Sociale Italiano-national right, the largest fascist party) also suffered losses. Overall, the right represents less than 10 percent of the electorate.

Political maturation

June 15 marked the most radical shift in the relationship of forces to occur since the founding of the republic. It demonstrated that the great processes that have taken place in the country during the past seven years, far from having receded, have achieved a higher level of maturity and are now reflected unequivocally even in the deformed mirror of electoral politics. It confirmed that the working class has preserved its combative spirit and remains determined to take advantage of its increased social specific weight, that the radicalization of the petty bourgeoisie has spread further, and that

significant movement is going on even among the traditionally more backward peasant layers. The fact that 18-21 year olds were allowed to vote for the first time probably accentuated the dimensions of these phenomena, but this was not the major cause of the shift.

After the great struggles of 1972-73 had wrecked Andreotti's restorationist attempts, the persistent combativity exhibited by the workers in recent months and the political maturation of the working class and of other exploited layers of the laboring population created the preconditions for June 15, which marked the resounding failure of the project that was initiated two years ago with the return of Amintore Fanfani to the DC leadership and with the umpteenth edition of the center-left government.

Fanfani fooled himself and perhaps also fooled some groups in the ruling class about the possibilities of strengthening his own position through an aggressive electoral campaign and of thus putting himself in position to develop with greater organic unity and authority the policy that had been sketched out during the past year, which had incontestably produced some results for the bourgeoisie (the imposition of a successful economic policy for the Bank of Italy, the launching of the Reale laws, the relative success of the educational reform).

But these successes were only partial, completely insufficient to restabilize the situation or assure the crystallization of a new leadership. June 15 blew away all these illusions like a hurricane, and the bourgeoisie and its most representative political groups now find themselves in an enormously more difficult situation characterized by a further shift in the relationship of forces to the advantage of the working class. There is

scarcely any need to stress the importance of the fact that all the parties and groups engaged in the vote contributed to this shift, although to various degrees. While the PCI was far and away the major beneficiary of the massive electoral shift, the PSI (Partito Socialista Italiano — Italian Socialist party) also made significant gains, and the results of the far left — Democrazia Proletaria and other allied lists — were not at all insignificant, especially if one considers their score in important political centers (Milan, for example).

A crisis of the regime

As immediately became apparent in the comments of the most representative organs of the bourgeois press (even before the various political leaders took positions), the bourgeoisie finds itself facing difficulties that are considerably more serious than those of any other time during the past thirty years, contradictions that seem insuperable under the present state of affairs. The major contradiction lies in the fact that the most influential groups of the ruling class are convinced that the Christian Democracy is an increasingly worn out instrument, that its effectiveness is in inverse ratio to its costs, that it is increasingly less able to conserve or reconquer hegemony over the broad popular layers that it had succeeded in influencing just after the end of the second world war. But at the same time, these groups are compelled to acknowledge that they command no other instrument of even minimum credibility, nor is there any prospect for a radical change in the situation in the near future. Further, the editorialists of the big bourgeois dailies — from *Il Messaggero* to *Corriere della Sera* — are hurrying to speak of the necessity for "change" and "renovation." But when the time comes to move from good intentions to concrete statements and precise recommendations, the most absolute vacuum emerges — or else the brilliant conclusion that the center-left government should remain in power.

A situation in which the leading party of the ruling class is in such deep crisis and in which no real alternative presents itself is potentially one in which the parliament can be dissolved and new elections called. But the relationship of forces and the tendencies currently at work deprive the bourgeoisie of even this outlet during the present phase. Naturally, now more than ever there will be far-right tendencies, putschist candidates, terrorist conspiracies, and the organization of goon squads against workers and students. But it is excluded that substantial sectors of the ruling class would now opt for the dangerous road of putschist and dictatorial attempts, which would be extremely likely to end in miserable failures and further disintegration of the apparatus of the system, or, if they took on greater importance, could precipitate a civil war whose repercussions throughout capitalist Europe would be enormous.

It is thus probable that after all the lamenting about short-lived maneuvers, big and small, and after the denunciations of the sterility of the policy followed up to

now and of the ruinous character of the methods that have been used, the same old spectacle will occur for the umpteenth time and the status quo will be prolonged by force of inertia, with the danger of the situation becoming completely rotten. Moreover, it does not seem probable that the bourgeoisie will translate the proposal for a serious change into the only concrete choice that is theoretically still open: acceptance of the reformist offer of the historic compromise.

The historic compromise compromised

From a general objective standpoint, June 15 should have improved the conditions for the realization of the historic compromise, given the aggravation of the political crisis, the absence of a credible alternative, and the increased weight of the PCI. But judging by the statements made during the days immediately following the elections, no important sector of the bourgeoisie is inclined to cross the Rubicon.

The weakened Christian Democracy will be perhaps even more sensitive to its right-wing electoral base, to the exigencies of defending the vested interests that have always been the most concrete basis of its strength. The Christian Democracy and the leading bourgeois groups fear above all that in the context of politicization and radicalization out of which June 15 emerged (and which June 15 will contribute to intensifying) not only would the historic compromise be unable to slow down and channel mass movements, but on the contrary could open even wider breaches in the political structures of the system and aggravate the social equilibrium, making it explosive.

Thus, more than at any time since the beginning of the great crisis in 1968, the bourgeoisie finds itself caught in a vicious circle. It understands that major initiatives and radical turns are necessary. But it is unable to take these initiatives or carry out these turns, not for lack of clarity but because of the risks that would be involved, risks that are not at all imaginary. The contradictory character of its present situation is not a result of subjective deficiencies but is intrinsic and objective.

The workers movement, which has emerged strengthened from the electoral test, must not allow its adversary to obtain the truce it needs to reorganize its forces. Time is of the essence. The workers movement must operate not in the framework of a reformist logic, in the final analysis illusory, but with the perspective of mobilizations with an anticapitalist dynamic. The workers movement must struggle not only to bury the center-left. It must also reject any solution involving new forms of collaboration with the ruling class, such as the historic compromise. It must be the bearer of an overall anticapitalist alternative. The basic perspective must be that of a workers government capable of imposing the workers solutions to the crisis generated by the growing contradictions of capitalist society. ■

italian economy:



THE MYTH OF THE UPTURN

by **ETTORE SALVINI**

Less than a year ago, the American magazine *Time* described Italy, to which it had accorded the honor of a cover story, as a country in its death agony. A few weeks ago, David Rockefeller, the president of the Chase Manhattan Bank, joined the chorus of local big industrialists and government functionaries, speaking of a "new Italian miracle," a reference to the rapidity with which Italy has allegedly extracted itself from a most difficult situation. This latter assertion — apart from being equally as exaggerated as the former, if not more so — was clearly a reflection of the atmosphere of the electoral campaign going on in Italy at the time. In a word, the uncle from America was doing a little advertising for his Christian Democratic nephews in difficulty.

Nevertheless, beyond the conjunctural variations, it seems useful to analyze on the basis of objective criteria the economy of a country that has been the subject of such contradictory judgments within such a brief span of time. Especially since it is the country that has had the longest "May '68" in the world, a country in which the mass movement has pressed on for years, showing no signs of lasting exhaustion and experiencing no important period of retreat.

To understand the origins, development, and prospects of the present economic crisis, it is necessary to review the stages of the preceding economic development, even if only briefly.

Features of postwar development

During the postwar period Italy experienced an intense process of industrialization that transformed it into one of the major economic powers of the capitalist world and considerably increased the structural strength of the working class. This industrialization process had peculiar features, which we will try to outline synthetically. First, it was based primarily on "labor intensive" industrial sectors that were able to use cheap labor (automobiles, electrical appliances, cloth and clothing, etc.). Nevertheless, there was also notable expansion, due in large measure to state intervention, in the steel and basic chemical industries. In addition, the industrial sectors that led the way were those linked to export. The expansion of the domestic market was much less important, and it continues to remain limited. In practically all industrial sectors, development occurred

through the adoption of technology imported from abroad. There was no independent research effort. In fact, precisely the sectors that would have required such an effort were left to their fate (electronics, nuclear power).

After the agrarian reform at the beginning of the 1950s, agriculture became oriented more toward electoral operations than toward investment and now finds itself in a totally deplorable condition. The EEC agricultural system has made a significant contribution to creating this situation.

In conclusion, Italy, an importer of raw materials and technology, is an exporter of labor power and capital, in addition to manufactured goods. Between 1950 and 1970 some 2 million Italian workers emigrated. "Clandestine" capital exports from Italy during the past ten years amount to some 10 million million lire (about \$15,000 million). Italy is extremely sensitive to variations in the world market, which immediately affect the balance of payments. The Italian economy exhibits greater structural weakness than the economies of the other advanced capitalist countries.

The 1964 crisis and the upturn

At the beginning of the 1960s, the increased structural strength of the Italian working class asserted itself in a series of struggles that resulted in positive gains on the wage front. This was added to a certain overheating of the economy, which was in a boom phase. The inevitable results were inflation and balance of payments deficits. Monetary authorities strongly tightened credit, thus precipitating the conjunctural crisis that had been building up.

In terms of overall industrial production, the effects of this crisis were minimal; there was simply a slowdown in growth, which did not exceed 2% in 1964. An upturn began in 1965 and continued until the hot autumn of 1969. The consequences on investment and employment were greater, although varied. Investment in absolute terms diminished in 1964 and 1965 and increased only slowly during succeeding years. By 1969 expenditures on plant and equipment (in constant prices) had barely reached their 1963 levels. Employment continued to decline until the first quarter of 1966; then there was a faint upturn. But on the eve of the hot autumn of 1969 total employment in industry was only slightly higher than it had been at the beginning of 1964.

What all this means is that the ascending phase of the cycle was realized thanks to a brutal intensification of the exploitation of the workers, while on the other hand, when the long postwar boom ended in the late 1960s, Italy entered this new phase for world capitalism structurally weak and with an industrial apparatus that was rapidly becoming obsolete.

The hot autumn and the 1970-72 crisis

The heavy increase in exploitation was one of the factors that created the objective conditions for the prerevolutionary situation that erupted in Italy during autumn 1969. Of course, it was not the only factor; in general, for reasons of space and of choice of theme, in this article we will have to neglect the social and political elements without which the overall framework remains largely incomplete. But it is perhaps opportune to recall that the crisis that racked Italian society in 1969 was not exclusively economic; it was an overall crisis — political, ideological, and social, as well as economic — the various aspects actively meshing.

It is obvious that the results of the hot autumn on wages and work rules made inroads on the rate of profit; this requires no particular demonstration. Rather, it must be noted that the above-mentioned decrease in unemployment acted in the same direction, unemployment having resulted in a strong drop in real wages under the contracts signed before the autumn struggles.* In a period of this kind, a phenomenon like clandestine export of capital receives an added impetus of a political character (in addition to the economic impetus, which we have already mentioned).

After a brief "physiological" recovery at the beginning of 1970, industrial production practically stagnated during the whole year. In 1971 there was a general decline, which was reflected in overall production figures (-0.5% in comparison with the preceding year); an upturn began only at the end of 1972.

The monetary authorities followed substantially the same policy as in 1964. But the effects on employment were different; in fact, the rate of unemployment did not worsen, except for a brief period at the end of 1972, when the upturn that was to reabsorb the new unemployed was about to begin.

The effects on wages were also different. Wage increases had been very much slowed down during the 1964 crisis and had not been especially strong in the succeeding period, because of the influence of unemployment. The basic reasons for the differences in the effects of the 1964 and 1970-72 crises on both wages and employment must be sought in the persistent workers combativity of the 1970s.

The "drugged" upturn of 1973-74

At the end of 1972 the general lines of the upturn that was to be consolidated (after some uncertainty) at the beginning of 1973 began to emerge. The worldwide upturn had already been under way for some time, at least a year. Thus, for a whole period Italy found itself out

*In reality, the demand for labor was centered on the so-called strong layers: men between the ages of 20 and 40, of which there was a shortage. On the other hand, unemployment persisted for women and older men — the "weak layers."

of phase with the cycle. When it finally joined the upturn that had been going on in the rest of the industrialized countries, inflation had already become rampant on a world scale and the spectacular increase in the prices of raw materials had begun, the increase that culminated one year later in the leap in the price of oil. Thus, when the upturn came, Italy imported not only raw materials and investment goods, but inflation as well. But the upturn itself was in very large measure due to a consciously inflationary policy that boosted expenditures on public administration, fostered price increases, and stimulated exports through easing credit. A crucial point was the February 1973 decision to float the lira, a decision that amounted to a devaluation of about 20% and permitted the unbridled rise of domestic prices and thus the reconstitution of profit margins without endangering the competitiveness of Italian products abroad. It is precisely in this sense that there was talk, and still is, of a "drugged" upturn. Without the drug of inflation, solely on the strength of the market, even the belated upturn that did occur would very likely not have taken place.

But the effects on the balance of payments were disastrous — a result of the so-called "bad effects" of the devaluation, which were especially serious for the structure of Italian foreign trade (the rigidity of imports is much greater than that of exports).

All this was added to the inflationary impulses long since present in the Italian economy because of structural factors (the backwardness of the trade sector, which is extremely dispersed, and the backwardness of construction, which is linked to land speculation). The result was that the inflation rate hit double figures (10.2%) as early as 1973. But gross domestic product at constant prices increased 6.3% (3.2% in 1972) and industrial activity jumped 8.9%.

Compelled to grant rather substantial wage increases because of the vigorous workers struggles of the first several months of 1973, the bourgeoisie tried to nullify these increases through inflation. In addition, the upturn in industrial production, which permitted more efficient utilization of plant and equipment, led to productivity increases that reconstituted profit margins.

These same tendencies continued in exacerbated form during the first half of 1974, by which time the major capitalist economies had already gone into crisis. The first and most obvious result of this (immediately attributed by bourgeois propaganda solely to the increases in oil prices, which were, however, only one component factor) was a frightful deterioration in the trade balance and an even more serious deterioration of the current balance of payments. Monetary authorities looked abroad for large loans, which by March 1974 began to become difficult to obtain. The International Monetary Fund demanded political conditions (wage freezes) before granting loans to Italy.

The government inaugurated a policy of draconian credit restrictions. The trade unions granted a de facto truce that lasted nearly until the end of September.

Chronicle of the crisis

Throughout this period, the indices of productivity continued to improve as a result of both inventory speculation and the implementation of investment decisions that had been made earlier, in short, as a result of the classic features of the final phase of a boom. In June 1974 industrial production was still 6.5% higher than in June 1973, and even in September it was 2.6% higher than in September of the preceding year. But the break occurred between June and September: bankruptcies mounted, a series of small and medium-sized factories taking advantage of the August holidays to close down. In October the indices of industrial production began to turn negative and have continued to remain so until today. (See table.)

The crisis has struck all industrial branches, even those that had seemed set for indefinite expansion, like the chemical industry. But the branches most seriously hit were textiles (-17.4% compared with the first quarter of 1974), means of transport (-15.8%), mechanics (-11.3%), and metallurgy (-8.4%).

The Italian trade balance during the final months of 1974 had clearly improved since the catastrophic situation of the first half of the year. The improvement was achieved by a slump in imports provoked by the slump in industrial production and by a slight decrease in consumption as a result of price increases, tax increases on the workers, and increases in utility rates (electricity, telephones, etc.).

Nevertheless, the 1974 trade deficit, which amounted to 6,920 thousand million lire (about US\$2,000 million), was the highest ever in absolute figures, more than double that of 1973, which had already been high. It only need be added that in mid-1974 the debt was expected to be 50% higher than what it actually was.

In any case, the tendency toward improvement of the trade balance was consolidated during the first several months of 1975. The deficit for the first quarter stood at 606,000 million lire, compared with 1,955,000 million during the corresponding period of 1974. Imports declined 3.8% compared with the first quarter of 1974, while the value of exports increased 27.9%, which, taking account of inflation, represents a slight increase in exports and a very severe decline in imports. The figures for April 1975 (the latest ones available) confirm this tendency: a trade deficit of 109,000 million lire, compared with 815,000 million for April 1974. These figures, which permitted bankers throughout the world to take Italy off the blacklist of "dangerous risks," are what permitted the top representatives of the Italian bourgeoisie to heave a sigh of relief and enabled Rockefeller to speak, with remarkable superficiality, of a new Italian miracle. Very simply, what this means is that one year ago they thought Italy was going bankrupt, but now they think the country will squeak by this time. But no more than that.

Industrial Production

	1974					1975		
	June	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Variation in %	+6.5	+2.6	-4.5	-12.1	-8.5	-14.8	-7.3	-14.3
Seasonally adjusted index (1970=100)	125.2	123.3	116.6	110.3	105.3	109.3	111.6	107.6

Short-term prospects

"The year 1975 will be the worst year since the end of the war." That was the conclusion of a study conducted by ISPE and recently presented to the Technical-Scientific Committee for Planning. All predictions agree in estimating that for the first time since the end of the war there will be a decline in gross domestic product, the expected decrease being variously set between 1 and 4%. Investment declines are expected to be especially serious: between 15 and 20% in the industrial sector and between 4 and 7% in construction, while agricultural investment is expected to register a moderate expansion and a 4-5% increase in investment in the tertiary sector is anticipated.

The balance of payments (excluding capital movements) should close out the year with a deficit of 1,500-2,000 thousand million lire, which, all things considered, remains rather substantial. Given the stagnation of world demand, the volume of exports will probably not increase more than 3%, while imports will fall by about 10%.

The most optimistic economic observers consider it possible that there will be an upturn in production toward the end of the year, but such forecasts are closely linked to prospects for a worldwide upturn, which, like a mirage, seems to move further away every day. Furthermore, the depth of the Italian crisis is such that it is probable that Italy will enter the upturn later than most capitalist countries. At present, the most likely variant seems to be a purely technical upturn during the next several months based on the need to renew inventories. The elements capable of transforming this technical upturn into a real upturn are not yet in sight.

If and when such an upturn takes place (and sooner or later it will take place because of the intrinsic laws of the capitalist economy), it is expected that it will rapidly lead to a new explosion of inflation, in part owing to the insufficient investment made over the past ten years or more. In fact, we are now witnessing the first, still timid attempts to stimulate an upturn through injections of inflation. In the absence of any coherent government economic policy, this seems especially to be the direction of the measures taken in recent months (eased credit terms for exports, financing of agriculture

and public works, etc.). The narrowing of supply will only increase inflation, which will be the cause and not the effect of the upturn. In addition, it must not be forgotten that today, in the midst of an economic crisis, consumer price increases are running at an annual rate of about 15%. But it is precisely in this situation that the dose of inflation needed to stimulate an upturn not only goes beyond "decent" levels — surpassed by now in any case — but also beyond the bourgeoisie's ability to control it and thus to take advantage of it.

Conjunctural crisis and structural crisis

As during the crisis of 1970-72, it is now being debated in Italy whether the current crisis should be defined as structural or conjunctural. The love of eclecticism that culturally characterizes Italians has led them to find a formula that satisfies everybody: The crisis is simultaneously conjunctural and structural. But this is not sufficient for defining the precise character and features of the crisis or for drawing out the elements needed to predict future developments.

The crisis is structural in that what has come to the surface are the accumulated contradictions — in the economic, social, and state structures — of twenty-five years of tumultuous capitalist development, contradictions that have characterized the specific mode of being of Italian capitalism ever since its origin. The conjunctural crisis (and now, the conjunctural crises) falls within this framework of structural crisis. All this is true enough, but it does not explain why the structural crisis has broken out precisely now. Some semi-Marxist theoreticians of the far left attribute this solely to workers struggles. And this does approach a solution to the problem; but it is not sufficient.

The fact is that the structural character of the crisis must be seen in the context of the more general inversion of the tendency of the international capitalist economy, in which, moreover, an important element (although not the only element) has been workers struggles (and not only Italian workers struggles). The inversion of the tendency has been the acid test that has brought to light the basic structural contradictions of the Italian capitalist economy.

In addition, the weakness of Italian capitalism has resulted in the inversion of the tendency being manifested in Italy earlier and in a much deeper way than in other countries. In this framework, the conjunctural crises are longer, more serious, and more frequent than they were during the period of the long postwar boom. The 1970-72 crisis and the present crisis have demonstrated the correctness of this prediction, made by the Fourth International.

The shift from the so-called economic miracle to the structural crisis has resulted in the emergence of a series of modifications in the internal balance of Italian capitalism that had been established during the preceding phase. Such modifications are still far from having assumed a clear and defined character. It is nevertheless useful to try to sketch out some of the main lines of the tendency.

First, finance capital is being strengthened to the detriment of industrial capital. The historic tendency of imperialism, defined by Lenin as the dominance of finance capital (a tendency that seemed to have been contradicted by postwar developments), is being strongly reaffirmed during this phase of crisis. Corporate debt was already rising sharply during the 1960s and has become extremely heavy in recent years. The debt level is so high that the banks have become *de facto* (even if they cannot be so by Italian law) the "employers" of the majority of companies. This explains the proposal of Guido Carli, governor of the Bank of Italy, to reform Italian bank laws to allow the banks to actually control and direct industry and to become employers. Although there is not much chance of this proposal being adopted in full, there is no doubt that the importance of the banks in the Italian economic system will continue to increase.

It is also significant that the role of most Italian financial corporations (Edison, Bastogi, etc.), which at the beginning of the 1960s seemed to have received a very hard blow with the nationalization of the electrical energy industry, has turned out to be considerable in recent years. This is an important aspect of the obscure power struggle that went on around Montedison, whose actual management today is in the hands of the purest representatives of Italian finance capital.

State capitalism is expanding its role qualitatively and quantitatively. This has been true especially during periods of conjunctural crises with anticyclical functions: public (state) investment rose from 40% of total investment in 1970 to 48% in 1972. But while in 1973 (with the upturn in private investment) the share of public investment fell to 38%, the many factories that had come under state control during these years were not returned to private capitalists. Further, during the past decade the financial market in Italy has passed almost completely under the control of state capitalism. Naturally, this does not mean that private capitalism is dying out, and still less that its profits are disappearing. It does mean that state capitalism is ever more extensively taking on the function of a basic prop of pri-

vate profits. But this is not without consequences for the internal line up of the bourgeoisie.

Finally, Italy's dependence on the world market has increased. This phenomenon has had two quite distinct manifestations. On the one side, Italy's dependence on foreign trade has increased. Today Italy imports not only industrial raw materials and advanced technological goods (machinery), but is also largely dependent on foreign supplies of food products (especially, but not solely, meat and milk). Some important industrial sectors, like machine tools, in which Italy occupies one of the leading positions in the world, have been based largely on export during the past ten years, particularly because of a scarcity of domestic demand owing to the slow progress of investment. The rate of increase of exports in 1973 was 8%, while national income grew only 4%. On the other hand, in most recent years, especially during the 1970-72 crisis, a significant number of companies were taken over by foreign corporations. According to some estimates, one-fourth of all large and medium-sized Italian companies are owned by foreign companies.

Naturally, this is not to say that both tendencies are developing concurrently, as was the case until the very recent past. A deepening of the crisis could lead to a weakening of the first aspect and a strengthening of the second. It is estimated that the increase in the volume of exports this year will not exceed 2.5% (according to the OECD); exports will thus suffer a notable decline, in harmony with the situation of the world economy. It is certain that national income will also go down.

The industries that have led the way in Italian industrial development (electrical appliances, automobiles, chemicals) and even industries like shoes, are tending to move to countries with lower labor costs or more abundant raw materials. In addition, Italy has not made sufficient investment in research to allow for the development of technologically advanced sectors; moreover, the development of these sectors, where it has been possible, has not been sufficient to absorb all the workers expelled from sectors that are in crisis. Thus, Italy's situation will become exceptionally difficult in the medium term: with labor costs too high to continue expansion of the sectors that have supported overall development up to now, but with a technological capital insufficient to fully break into the specialized division of labor that might be established among the advanced capitalist countries, although not without hard struggles.

For the moment, the Italian bourgeoisie does not seem to have confronted this problem in the slightest, or rather, it seems to be trying to resolve it in practice through a reduction in wages that would allow for a return to the "fabulous" years of the 1950s. But this objective seems difficult to achieve and in any case would require big conflicts with the working class.

For their part, the reformist organizations are discussing "new models of development" under which it is not known how to reconcile what are irreconcilable — at

least in the present phase of Italian society — namely, the expansion of advanced technological sectors and the development of employment.

Consequences for the working class

In 1974, for the first time in recent years, official figures indicated a decline in living standards for the working class, although a limited one. In fact, while there was a 27.4% increase in consumer prices, wages increased only 23.2% in industry, 22.7% in trade, and 24.8% in transport. (If the salaries of white-collar employees are included, there was an increase in wages of 28.1%, that is, slightly more than the rise in the cost of living.) As for unemployment, despite the confusion and imprecision of Italian statistics, which vary as much as 100% according to what criteria are used, the following dynamic can be outlined: During the first half of 1974 there was a slight decrease in unemployment in consonance with the last phase of the boom. Between July and August 1974 a series of small and middle-sized factories began to close down or lay off workers. Since then the number of unemployed has risen continuously and is still rising today. Nevertheless, the increase in the number unemployed (which is difficult to establish exactly, for the reasons mentioned above) has not been completely proportional to the decrease in production during the same period. And this is not simply a question of a pure and simple time gap. The fact is that instead of layoffs, which would have been "justified" by the situation according to the viewpoint of capitalist logic, there has been wide recourse to the "Cassa Integrazione" (the partial-unemployment compensation system), that is, to a system that allows Italian capitalism to strongly reduce production (to thirty-six, twenty-four, twelve, or even zero hours) with a wage compensation from 60 to 90% of normal wages, according to the given case. The funds for the Cassa Integrazione are furnished by compulsory contributions from the workers and employers. In 1974 recourse to the Cassa Integrazione was already 23% higher than it had been in 1973. But during the first quarter of 1975, according to trade union statistics, there was an increase of 800% in the number of hours covered by the Cassa Integrazione compared with the same period of the preceding year.

The Cassa Integrazione was used especially by the big corporations, while in the smaller firms, where the working class is weaker, layoffs were more numerous. For the bourgeoisie, the Cassa Integrazione is a means of avoiding a head-on clash with the working class, which would be very probable in the event of massive layoffs by the big companies. In fact, it is clear that

the reaction of the workers to a reduction of the work-week under which they retain 90% of their wages is rather different from their reaction to layoffs.

But the number of unemployed seems to have increased more as a result of the de facto freeze on hiring than as a result of layoffs. In addition, as always, the poorest and least developed regions have been hardest hit by the crisis, the South especially. This is another reason why the crisis has been especially severe in sectors like construction, which are especially widespread and important in the South. Nevertheless, in spite of this difficult situation, which threatens to divide the working class by striking at one sector after another beginning with the weakest, workers struggles have been intense ever since autumn 1974. The number of hours lost in strikes through the whole of 1974 was 18.3% less than in 1973, because, as we have already mentioned, the trade unions had declared a de facto truce throughout the first half of the year. But during the last quarter of 1974 the number of strike hours stood at 66.3 million, as compared with 19.3 million during the corresponding period of 1973; for the first two months of 1975 the figure was about 49 million hours, as compared with 18.4 million during the same period of 1974. This shows that workers combativity has risen even higher.

The use of the Cassa Integrazione has enabled the bourgeoisie to attenuate the intensity of social conflict. But the Cassa Integrazione is only a palliative, a short-term remedy workable only if the crisis is a passing phenomenon and if an upturn occurs rapidly.

We have seen that the upturn is not at all just around the corner. The most likely variant, then, is that the deep crisis will persist at least throughout 1975. Furthermore, this crisis means not only a fall in the levels of production but above all a slump in investment. Which means that even during a phase of upturn new job positions will not be available, because the preconditions will not have been created. It is thus likely that the job situation will become critical beginning in autumn.

If at that time the struggles of the working class do not succeed in blocking the wave of layoffs that the capitalists will in all probability demand, the working class will not only suffer a serious political defeat, its structural strength will also be weakened. On the other hand, a workers victory would provide the basis for a massive new rise of struggle. It is clear, however, as we have pointed out above, that in a situation like the Italian one, in which the economic crisis is closely linked to a deep political crisis, the political situation in coming months will exert an influence on the outcome of the autumn struggles that may be decisive. ■

an open letter



Left Oppositionists at exile colony in Siberia demonstrate on anniversary of Bolshevik revolution. The year is apparently 1928. Banner at right, with portraits of Lenin and Trotsky, proclaims, 'Long Live the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.'

from soviet
communist
political prisoners

With the capitalist mass media widely propagating the views of Solzhenitsyn, Maximov, and others inside and outside the Soviet Union who share their views, many militants have begun to wonder whether any left oppositional current exists in the Soviet Union. The document below, drafted several years ago but available only recently, answers that question in the affirmative. One of the important aspects of the document is that it provides a partial list of Marxist groups in the USSR and mentions some of their members who have been discovered by the secret police and are now languishing in concentration camps.

Of course, even before this text came into our hands, we knew that there were Marxist groups in the Soviet Union. We knew because the secret police announced their existence to us by arresting their members. Some examples of such groups not mentioned in the document below are: the Russian Socialist party, the Party of non-Party (i.e., non-CP) Workers Struggling for the Restoration of Socialism, the Democratic Union of Socialists, the Party of Real Communists, and the Union of Workers and Peasants (in the Ukraine). Because of the strict secrecy that surrounds their activities, we know little about these groups. Unlike other opposition currents, Marxist groups shun contact with foreign journalists and embassy officials — for political and security reasons. Consequently, samizdat, much of which comes out of the Soviet Union through such channels, does not reflect the full panorama of active groups.

While it is difficult to ascertain the present relative weight of the Marxist opposition in the Soviet Union, it is certain that its influence will increase. The economic, social, and ideological crisis of the regime has created an atmosphere in which Marxist ideas can begin to find a ready response. Moreover, there are now signs that the Soviet working class is slowly reentering the political arena through strikes and other forms of protest. The fact that Marxist groups have been formed in factories, as is mentioned by the document below, testifies to the growing politicization of the working class.

One factor of great importance in strengthening the Marxist current is the visible crisis of capitalism. The present crisis, with its inflation and unemployment, has forced those in the USSR who saw an alternative in capitalism to rethink their attitude toward the West. The growing disillusionment with the West of many Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union is especially important here. Unable to find jobs and living in difficult material conditions, they have begun to write back to the USSR that the West is no paradise and that it is preferable to remain at home. This sort of "unofficial" confirmation of the crisis of capitalism is a thousand times more effective than all the articles and editorials in Pravda, which nobody believes anyway.

The authors of the document have chosen to direct their appeal to the Communist parties of the West. There is a widespread belief in the Soviet Union that "their" CPs, that is, the Western CPs, cannot be like "ours." While the authors' faith in the Communist parties of the West may be naive, their forthright appeal to the opinion of the rank-and-file militants of those parties can have significant potential effect.

The Soviet bureaucracy and the Western bourgeoisie have one common interest as regards the Soviet opposition: to suppress the news of the existence of left-wing currents. Our task is therefore clear. Readers of INPRECOR are urged to distribute this document at trade-union, student, and other meetings and to vote resolutions of solidarity wherever possible.

The document appears here for the first time in print; it has been translated from the Russian.



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On March 18, 1971, the newspaper Izvestia published an article entitled "The Falsifiers." It mentioned the fact that the International Committee of Amnesty* had published a "protest" in the Scandinavian countries against prosecutions in the USSR. This "protest" bore the signatures of well-known public figures from Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Further on in the article it mentioned the fact that your newspaper, Land og Folk, had decided to verify the authenticity of the signatures, and it was allegedly revealed that the signatures to the Amnesty Committee's declaration were "without any foundation." It may well be that the initiators of the declaration were not wholly accurate and that they had not thoroughly coordinated their activities with the people whose signatures were attached to the declaration. Of course, this is an annoying misunderstanding. But it is something else that surprises us. It is incomprehensible to us why the central organ of the Danish Communists should have decided to verify the signatures to the above-mentioned protest. Could

this possibly have been prompted by any particular partiality for accuracy? Or could it possibly be that Danish Communists find the very idea of possible prosecutions against dissenters in the USSR monstrous and unbelievable? You may possibly not even suspect that in the USSR people are being held in the labor camps of Mordovia and in Vladimir prison not merely for dissenting, but even for holding Marxist communist beliefs. We feel that most Communists in Denmark and in Land og Folk can know nothing of this, otherwise we are quite convinced that the newspaper of the Danish Communists would not merely have confined itself to verifying the authenticity of the signatures on the protest published by the Amnesty Committee, but would itself have protested, in the name of Danish Communists, against prosecutions in the USSR. In connection with this, we Soviet communist political prisoners consider it necessary to bring the following facts to the attention of our comrades, the Danish Communists, to the central organ of the Communist party of Denmark, and also to the public figures in Denmark, Sweden, and Norway whose signatures were attached to the protest.

*Amnesty International — INPRECOR.



COMMUNISTS OF EUROPE AND THE USA,
 EDITORIAL BOARDS OF CENTRAL OR-
 GANS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES OF EU-
 ROPE AND THE USA. TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD
 OF THE CENTRAL ORGAN OF THE CENTRAL
 COMMITTEE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF
 THE SOVIET UNION. LAND OG FOLK. COPY TO THE
 NATIONAL COMMITTEE OF AMNESTY.

In 1964 in Moldavia KGB* agents arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment a group of Marxist Komsomol (All-Union Communist Youth League, the Communist party youth organization — INPRECOR) members called All Power to the Soviets, which was organized by N. Dragosh, director of a secondary school and deputy to the regional soviet, and by two teachers, P. Tarnavsky and Cherdyntsev.

In 1965 KGB agents arrested and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment a Leningrad group of Marxist Komsomol members called Union of Communards, which had been producing by photocopy a journal-cum-newspaper called Kolokol (The Bell). The Union of Communards was organized by S. Khakhaev, former secretary of the Komsomol organization at the Technological Institute, and by V. Ronkin, a party activist. S. Khakhaev and V. Ronkin were sentenced to seven years imprisonment followed by three years exile.

*KGB — initials stand for State Security Committee, that is, the Soviet secret police.

In 1967 in Alma Ata KGB agents arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment some communists and Komsomol members called the Young Worker group, organized by B. Bykov, a Komsomol member working for the Alma Ata MVD (the Ministry of Internal Affairs; as opposed to the KGB, the MVD carries out the normal functions of a police force, and supervises certain "sensitive" industries, e.g. nuclear industry — INPRECOR), and by G. Deonisadi, a secretary of the committee of the Komsomol at one of the major enterprises in Alma Ata and a candidate for membership to the CPSU (Communist party of the Soviet Union).

In 1968 Leningrad agents of the KGB arrested the Marxist group of L. Kvachevsky and Yu. Gendler. The members of this group, which advocated the extension of democratic liberties in the USSR, were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

In 1969 in Tallin the Marxist "Union of Struggle for Political Freedom" group was arrested. The organizer

of this group, G. Gavrilov, a VMS (navy) officer, was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

In 1969 in Ryazan, Saratov and Petrozavodsk KGB agents arrested a young Marxist group called Communard. The organizers of this group, O. Senin, a state attorney, Yu. Budka, S. Grilyus, O. Frolov, and A. Uchitel, were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

In 1970 in Sverdlovsk KGB agents arrested the Marxist "Urals Worker" group. Five people from this group were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

In 1970 in the town of Voroshilovgrad agents of the KGB arrested the Marxist group Leninist Ideas in Practice. Its organizer, A. Chekhovskikh, who edited a section of the newspaper Kerch Worker, was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

In 1970 in the town of Bendery agents of the KGB arrested the Marxist group of Meshirer and Ya. Suslinsky. I. Meshirer was sentenced to six years imprisonment.

Unfortunately, we could continue this list at great length. But we are not aiming to list all the communists who are languishing in prisons and labor camps. For is the important point really to establish how many of them there are? The most important point is that in all their activities these men were working for a more successful construction of a socialist and communist society, the construction of this society by the best path and without tragic mistakes. The most important point is that if these people were at fault in any way, the faults were made by friends of communism.

"I was, I am, and I shall always be a communist. It is only my passionate love for my country, for Soviet authority, and for socialism that has led me to the dock," said Fedorov in 1969 at his trial, where he was sentenced to six years hard regime for attempting to organize the Union of Communists group. "And even if I am sentenced ten more times, I shall continue, as long as I have the strength, to defend the ideals of communism which are so dear to me from attempts to disgrace them before the whole world, turn them into a scarecrow and a laughing stock, whoever may carry out these attempts and whatever these people may call themselves."

"Communism is the destiny of all humanity. In all my activities I have been guided by this thought alone and have done everything in my power to attempt to promote this destiny," said O. Frolov from Ryazan, a member of the Communard group. "I can conceive no purpose in my life other than fighting for the victory of communism," said the Komsomol member V. Uzlov, one of the Urals Worker group.

In their own countries the Communists of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden enjoy political liberty. They can form parties and publish party newspapers, journals, and books; they have their own presses, shops, premises, and all the equipment they need; they are offered the chance of playing some active part in the political life

of their country. Now just imagine for a second that you are forbidden to form your own party, to have a press, to publish party newspapers, to have premises and all the equipment you need to carry out your activities properly. Your part in the political life of your country will be confined simply to reading government newspapers and eulogizing official circulars put out by government functionaries. Obviously in such a situation the defenders of communism will gather somewhere on the street, in private flats, in the universities, in factories, in small groups, and discuss the situation in the country, and criticize the regime that deprived them of their elementary democratic and personal liberties, whatever this regime may call itself. In a situation like this the boldest members of your newspaper's editorial board would be forced to meet unofficially somewhere in a private flat to inform each other about the manuscripts of their articles, and then their wives will retype these manuscripts wearing rubber gloves so as not to leave any fingerprints on the paper. Then the members of the Land og Folk editorial board might decide to duplicate the manuscripts of their articles by photocopying them, and might even start mailing these photocopies to Danish citizens. After that, the boldest editors of this secret newspaper might even decide to appropriate certain . . ." from some government press so as to make a printing press — which, even if it was only a small one, would nevertheless be their own — to print their own manuscripts on. And for all these activities they will be arrested and sent to labor camps. Arrested for meeting in groups, for discussing and criticizing, for producing articles, for reading these articles to each other, for duplicating their manuscripts by typing or photocopying them, and for trying to set up a home-made press in the cellar of some *dacha*, in order to duplicate their own manuscripts. Remember the occupation!

"But as regards the Soviet Union this is rather a comical situation," you will say. And you may possibly even smile, comrades on the editorial board of Land og Folk. You will smile as you sit in your cozy flats, by your own firesides, or in your armchairs at party offices. But at this very moment we communists in the USSR are being arrested, tried, and confined in labor camps for five to seven years, under strict or special regime, separated from our mothers and fathers, our wives and children, our friends and acquaintances.

We are sure, comrades, that you will not feel like smiling when you read that in the birthplace of V.I. Lenin, Chekhovskiy, a Komsomol member who fully admitted his guilt in struggling to accomplish the ideas of Lenin, was sentenced to six years strict regime, and Dragosh, who had advocated extending the power of the Soviets, to seven years strict regime.

At a meeting in Yugoslavia Leonid Brezhnev, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of the Soviet Union, said: "We are opposed to

*There is a gap here. The word is possibly equipment — INPRECOR.

obstructing different countries in the task of building socialism, and all the more opposed to any one country thrusting its own concrete methods of development on another. The main concern for us Communists and Marxists-Leninists is that our countries should belong to one social and economic structure. And that, comrades, in the final analysis, is the most important point." It may be that in its international relations the Communist party of the Soviet Union abides by these principles, but in its own country it has monopolized the right to the truth. "And woe betide those whose ideas do not conform to the official circulars." While they are calling the Yugoslavs their "comrades," they are detaining numbers of us in labor camps just because we have spread propaganda about their path of development!

In no other country do they deal so harshly with dissenters as in ours. We can ascertain this even from the information in the Soviet press. The Soviet newspapers in August and September 1971 contained the following information: on August 8, 1971, *Izvestia* announced in an article entitled "The Verdict on the Patriots" that an Athens court had acquitted groups of nineteen and twenty-five prisoners, while the rest "were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, three years, ten months, five months, etc.," for publishing and distributing underground newspapers and leaflets. In September 1971 *Pravda* announced: "Two Spanish students, Filip Martines and Roman Sines, were sentenced by a Madrid court to one year and three months imprisonment respectively for distributing Marxist literature at underground stations in Madrid." In August 1971 *Pravda* announced in a paragraph under the headline "Verdict of the Izmir Tribunal" that the supreme Tribunal of Izmir had sentenced six men to terms of imprisonment ranging from six months to three years for "conducting communist propaganda." For these kinds of activities we are sentenced as a rule to five to seven years imprisonment under strict regime, sometimes with up to five years exile specified as an additional measure — three years in the case of Rankin and Khakhaev, organizers of the Union of Communards group, seven years imprisonment plus three years exile in the case of Senin, the organizer of the Saratov Communard group.

Fellow communists of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway! Imagine, for example, a situation like this: An assistant in the philosophy department of one of the universities made a speech at a departmental conference criticizing the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the government and also subjected the present situation in the country to his criticism. For this he was immediately dismissed from his job. For a while he made a living doing occasional jobs. Once he received a letter from his comrade and he wrote several letters in reply, in which he gave some news about himself as well as expressing some criticisms of the political leadership of the CPSU and the present government. On November 7, 1970, he joined some demonstrators holding a banner saying "shame on the present leadership of the CPSU," for which he was arrested and sentenced to seven years imprisonment.

We find it hard to suppose that anything like this could happen anywhere in your countries. But what if this happened in Spain or in Greece? All progressive public opinion, including you Scandinavian communists, would be incensed about this and would come out in protest against such an act of violence against an individual. But this dramatic situation, involving an assistant in the philosophy department, did happen, not in Greece and not in Spain; it happened in our country, in the USSR. Nikolai Vasilevich Bondar, an assistant in the philosophy department at Uzhgorod University and a consistent and convinced Marxist, who announced at his trial, "It was only my love of communism and my faith in it that forced me to do what I did," was sentenced by the Kiev district court to seven years imprisonment for criticizing the politics of the CPSU at a conference of the philosophy department, for permitting himself, in a number of private letters to a comrade, to make a series of critical remarks directed at the CPSU, and for holding a banner saying "shame on the leadership of the CPSU" in a demonstration on November 7, 1970. And just for this a man was sentenced to seven years imprisonment. But that is monstrous, that is scandalous! This is what we feel, and this, we are sure, is what you feel too. So complain! Don't keep quiet about it: Address the CPSU — after all, you are not Soviet citizens and your voice means something to them — demanding that they take steps for the immediate release of V. Bondar. We await your help, comrades.

Fellow communists of Scandinavia! You know from articles in the Soviet press that the American Communist party condemns the cruel medieval system operating in American prisons (see *Pravda*, August 30, 1970). Obviously, criticism and condemnation of medieval procedures in the prisons of any country deserve all possible attention and support, and if such conditions still exist anywhere we join our voices with those of our American comrades. But for us, who are deprived of almost all information, it is hard to assess the present situation in American prisons. Once there was an article in the Soviet press saying that in one American prison the inmates had gone on hunger strike in protest against being given broken chocolate for breakfast. And at the very same time at Vladimir prison an official directive was issued forbidding prisoners to receive, even in packets, any foodstuffs except rusks, biscuits, sugar, and sweets — excluding chocolates! And so prisoners in America get chocolate for breakfast, while in prison in the USSR they are not entitled to it even in packets from their relatives, of which they are only permitted two a year, weighing not more than one kilogram each.

Until November 1969, political prisoners at Vladimir prison were entitled to one parcel a year weighing up to five kilograms. After November 1969, they were deprived even of this pitiful means of sustaining their health. For a month the prisoners went on hunger strike; the administration created a situation of totally arbitrary rule and deliberately made it difficult to get hold of reading matter; the censors abused their official position; no sheets were issued; a razor became a machine

for shaving people's heads; most of the cells were unheated, and there was no water for washing.

As a rule, the lives of political prisoners in labor camps and in Vladimir prison are governed by secret and illegal directives that allow the administration to abuse their official position and create a situation of illegal and arbitrary rule. For example, there is a secret directive containing a list of subjects that are not to be mentioned in letters. Any letter to or from a political prisoner may be confiscated if the censor so desires. We, for instance, are forbidden to describe the conditions of our confinement, the health of our comrades in prison, etc. In practice this means only one topic is permitted, the weather, and even then a letter may be confiscated, under suspicion of "conventionality." Even a list of foodstuffs allowed (or forbidden) to be sold at the camp or prison foodstall (two to three rubles worth a month!) is checked by the Minister of the Interior. For example, the political prisoners in our labor camp, Zh.Kh.385/17, struggled for several years to get the foodstall to sell onions; but each time this was refused. The administration insisted that the foodstall was only allowed to sell onions in the case of a massive outbreak of influenza. Why is this so? Maybe the USSR has not enough onions? No, the USSR has a lot of onions. Is it not rather that onions are a highly vitaminized foodstuff? Does it not seem to you, comrades, that everything we have just related to you reeks strongly of the middle ages?

Because of embezzlement and theft at all levels in the distribution of foodstuffs, and because of the disgusting way the food is cooked, in the labor camps even the officially appointed government norms for feeding are disregarded, and on top of that the government regulations for prisoners on strict regime have reduced to the minimum their right to receive food parcels from relatives and friends. We are allowed only one parcel weighing 5 kilograms (after serving half our sentence), and two packets weighing 1 kilogram each. But in fact the administration can deprive us of even this minimal means of sustaining our health for any reason it chooses. Privileges and other kinds of material advantages are granted chiefly to people who perform various services for the labor camp administration in reporting rumors and informing on people. It may be incomprehensible to you, comrades, why we devote so much of our attention to parcels and packets. The fact is that in your countries a prisoner is adequately fed, he does not know hunger, and so a parcel from home comes as a pleasant surprise or, say, as a Christmas present from his friends. We political prisoners in Mordovian labor camps and in Vladimir prison often experience hunger. From one year to the next our organism is subjected to a latent — and sometimes, in the first month in prison for example, a direct — starvation process from a deficiency of albumin, vitamins, and minerals. And so for us a food packet or parcel is a way of sustaining our health and keeping up our strength. Another reason why we go hungry is because the food we are given is not always edible. It is disgustingly cooked, and often in cooking it they use food that is not only of low quality but actually maggotty. The fish they give us is usually rotten.

Comrades! It is widely known that the regime system for the labor camps was most thoroughly elaborated by the professional jailers of fascism. You are also probably very well aware that the fascist concentration camps were directly calculated to emaciate and destroy the prisoners. Later these principles were unfortunately adopted as the basis of the concentration camps in the Stalinist era. So it was that these principles were transferred from fascist Germany to our legal consciousness, and in 1960, on the basis of these same principles, the system of maintenance in Soviet prisons was organized. Examples of this system of maintenance are sometimes monstrously absurd. For instance, we are allowed to send only two letters a month, and in prison, one, or even one every two months! And one could cite many such examples. Fellow American communists! You protest against the medieval regulations in American prisons and you demand the release of Angela Davis. While expressing our sympathy with this American communist and joining with you in demanding her release, we nevertheless cannot compare her situation with the conditions under which we are held. We hear that while under interrogation Angela Davis was allowed to meet journalists and even her ally, Comrade H. Winston, national president of the Communist party of the United States. But we are restricted even in our meetings with our closest relatives. And in contravention of all the rules, we are almost always forbidden to meet our relatives and friends, even our distant relatives. We would like to be able to meet in person some communist journalists, for example, from the USA or Scandinavia, so as to tell them directly about the actual conditions under which we are held.

The Soviet newspapers tell us that Angela Davis receives many letters from the public in America and throughout the world. Here various pretexts are frequently used to hold and confiscate letters from our closest relatives and friends. We are not entitled to receive even one of your newspapers. The Soviet newspapers say that Angela Davis gave a letter to a visitor for the Committee of Soviet Women. We are not even allowed to pass over a simple everyday letter during visits. We ask our comrades from Land og Folk to forgive us for our eight-month delay in writing. But there is no chance of sending you even this "open letter" directly, through official channels. In sending it to you, our comrades, we are "violating the regime" and await harsh punishments.

The Soviet newspapers say that a mouse was found in Angela Davis's bed. Here in our barracks, mice are a commonplace sight, and in the therapy wing of the central hospital there are rats running around the wards! The patients are robbed. In the therapy building, for example, they have not been giving out the appointed rations of meat and sugar for many years, and they invent every conceivable excuse for stealing the meat and sugar. Visiting commissions do not notice these blatant thefts. The most elementary laws of dietology are not observed.

All the Soviet newspapers reported angrily that George Jackson was killed while escaping from prison. In any

situation this would be a tragic event, and we Soviet communist political prisoners join with you in protesting against such actions by jailers. But in Mordovian labor camps prisoners have more than once been killed from watchtowers, and not only in cases of attempted escape. In 1964, for instance, in one of the Mordovian labor camps they killed a political prisoner called Romashov who was deeply distressed because of some family trouble and had thrown himself in despair one morning against the wire fence. In 1967 they killed a Lithuanian named B. Utkevichius who was seriously unbalanced at the time. In May 1970 they shot with machine guns a deranged prisoner called Maranov who was a patient in the psychiatric wing of the hospital in labor camp Zh. Kh. 385/3. They actually riddled with their machine-gun bullets from two watchtowers a man of diminished mental responsibility. The political prisoners of this labor camp tried to protest against such a totally arbitrary act, but they were punished for breaking discipline and the political prisoners V. Aidov, N. Tarnavsky, L. Kvachevsky, S. Zatikyan, and Yurkevich were transferred to Vladimir prison. We believe you, fellow communists and Americans, when you say that some conditions in American prisons exist as vestiges of the middle ages, and once again we protest along with you, and demand of the American government their immediate abolition. But does it not disturb you, fellow communists and Americans, that in the USSR political prisoners are being held under the terrible conditions of the special and strict regime? We are sure that this will stir you to address the leaders of the CPSU demanding the abolition of the strict and special regimes for political prisoners in the USSR, as well as radical improvements in the conditions of their confinement in general. We are sure that you will act decisively and in good faith on this issue.

Fellow communists and Americans! You, and in particular comrade Hall, often talk about the benevolence of the Soviet system and compare the USSR to the capitalist countries. You cannot fail to understand that the situation of political prisoners in the Soviet Union does no credit to the CPSU and to the policies adopted by the Soviet leadership in our country. It does no credit either to the international communist movement. It is not only we Soviet communists who bear the moral responsibility for this or that aspect of the political leadership of the CPSU but you too, communists from other countries. Moreover the general secretary of the Communist party of the United States said in his article "The Chinese Dividend on American Imperialism," which was published in the Soviet Union in the weekly journal *Abroad*: "The argument that the international workers movement can be based on each country 'attending to its own business' is a false one." By putting up comrade Hall as a presidential candidate for the Communist party of the United States in the forthcoming presidential elections in the USA (and we Soviet communist political prisoners warmly congratulate him) we must suppose that you are presenting him to the American people as a man of principle who, if he criticizes the medieval regimes in American prisons, will not remain indifferent to the situation of political prisoners in the Soviet Union,

and may even tell voters and journalists during the electoral campaign what he himself has done as a communist and as a presidential candidate to improve the conditions of political prisoners in the Soviet Union, where there are people in power who call themselves communists. Fellow communists! There is considerable evidence that the legal position and the actual conditions of confinement of political prisoners in various countries are in blatant contradiction to the principles laid down as the basis of the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. And so we call on communists of different countries to appeal to the competent international organization with a request to create an international committee: 1) to examine the legal position and the actual conditions of confinement of political prisoners in various countries, including the Soviet Union; 2) to draw up unified international principles and standards for the legal position and conditions of confinement of political prisoners in various countries, including the Soviet Union.

There is no doubt that the process of reinforcing morality and social justice in the world involves contradictions and clashes of the most diverse social and political tendencies, each of which aspires to bring its own conception of morality and social justice to the lives of the people. This is why circumstances sometimes arise in the world such that when the representatives of one or another tendency sit in the offices of power, representatives of another tendency, or even representatives of the same tendency who are proposing somewhat different methods, are held in prison cells. But when circumstances change, the people in the offices of power change places with the people in prison. Obviously, the state powers of various countries recognize the dramatic effect of this process, and periodically carry out an amnesty, which means that in the course of history amnesty has been established as an institution. In 1971 there were amnesties for political prisoners in Bolivia, Peru, Pakistan, and Uruguay. Early in October 1971, Soviet radio reported that amnesty had been declared for political prisoners in Spain.

In the Soviet Union there has been no amnesty for political prisoners, as an act of law, since 1927, and we would like to know what this means and what communists of Europe and the USA think about this. We Soviet communist political prisoners find it hard to believe, despite our experiences, that the leaders of the Soviet Union who call themselves communists are less humane than the rulers of Spain! In 1971 President of the Council of Ministers A. Kosygin proposes to pay an official visit to Denmark and Norway. We hope, fellow Danish and Norwegian communists, that you will ask him this question, and perhaps the other questions too that we have raised in essence in this "open letter."

Fellow communists of Europe and the United States! We Soviet communist political prisoners ask you to publish this letter in your newspapers. We also make this appeal in person to our comrades on the editorial board of *Land og Folk*, to whom we apologize once again for the delay in replying. We Soviet communist political prisoners are sure that now that you communists of Europe and the

United States know the true situation in the Soviet Union you will do everything in your power to change it. We Soviet communist political prisoners are sure that you will come out in defense of the rights of political prisoners in the Soviet Union, and particularly those of communist political prisoners.

With Communist Greetings,

Political prisoners:

YURI IVANOVICH FEDOROV, before being arrested member of the CPSU, a lawyer and an official in the Ministry of the Interior

NIKOLAI VASILEVICH BONDAR, teacher in the philosophy department of Uzhgorod University

GENNADII VLADIMIROVICH GAVRILOV, before arrest a member of the CPSU, official of the Ministry of the Interior, engineer

ALEXANDR KONSTANTINOVICH CHEKHOVSKY, be-

fore arrest a member of the All-Union Young Communist League (Komsomol), secretary of a department in the trust company "Voroshilovgradzhilstroil"

We non-Communist political prisoners in the USSR, who are not adherents of Marxist doctrine and so in disagreement with a series of assumptions in the "Open Letter" sign this letter, with the agreement of our comrades in prison who are communists, as an authentic document, protesting against the violation of democratic standards in our country, and against the difficult conditions of political prisoners in the USSR.

Political prisoners:

NIKOLAI BITKOVICH IVANOV, before arrest a teacher at Leningrad State University

YURI TIMOFEEVICH GALANSKOV, editor of the anthology "Phoenix"

VLADIMIR KONSTANTINOVICH PAVLENKOV, historian

The struggle of the Marxist opposition for the regeneration of Soviet society is taking place under extremely difficult conditions. The Stalinist purges physically liquidated an entire generation of Marxists, striking a heavy blow at the continuity of the Marxist tradition. The bureaucracy has placed in vaults all important writings of the early Soviet period. Censorship blocks out news of world revolutionary developments, which could serve as a source of encouragement and support for the Marxist opposition. To complicate matters, the only news from "outside" that reaches the USSR with any regularity is the voice of imperialism: Radio Liberty, Radio America, etc.

The time is long overdue for Marxists in the West to attempt to break this conspiracy of silence. An important step in this direction is the appearance of *Na Levo* (To The Left), a series of brochures in the Russian language. The first issue of this series is out. It contains the first Russian translation of Kuron and Modzelewski's Open Letter to the Party, an important analysis and programmatic document on East Europe. This issue is in keeping with one of the basic aims of this series: to inform Soviet readers of revolutionary developments in other countries of the Soviet bloc.

Other issues of the brochure series will provide analyses of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist struggles, reproduce Marxist writings of the 1920s not available in the USSR, and print original contributions analyzing current developments in the USSR. It is hoped by the editors of *Na Levo* that this series can serve as a medium of dialogue between Marxists in the East and the West.

Readers of INPRECOR with a knowledge of Russian are urged to order copies of *Na Levo* by writing to:

Société Internationale d'Éditions
Département d'Europe orientale
10 Impasse Guéméné
Paris 75004, France.



THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ANTI-UNION LAWS

by CHARLES BEDART

In the month of May 1975 a new stage was opened in the struggle between the trade-union movement and the state of Québec, through conflicts that broke out in the construction industry. The National Assembly of Québec voted two anti-trade-union laws: The first placed under receivership four craft unions belonging to the construction sector of the Fédération des Travailleurs du Québec (FTQ — Federation of Workers of Québec); the second provides for removing militants who have police records from their posts in trade unions. As far as the second law is concerned, it is worth noting that since calling for an "illegal strike" is a punishable offense, this law sets the stage for removing the most combative elements from the trade unions under cover of a struggle against crime and thus for transforming the trade-union apparatus into an anti-strike police force within the workers movement. According to Jean Cournoyer, the minister of labor, this law, which so far applies only to the construction industry, ought to be extended to the entire Québécois trade-union movement.

In order to understand the meaning of the recent conflicts in the construction industry in Québec, certain aspects of the North American trade-union movement must be recalled.

This movement is characterized by two central features: First, great importance is lent to demands for monetary wage increases (a theme developed in a systematic manner by Samuel Gompers in the American Federation of Labor) and second, the form taken by conflicts with the employers is generally violent. The convergence of these two features — strictly economic struggle voluntarily limited to the framework of the capitalist system and apolitical violence as a means of putting pressure on the employers — has given rise in some sectors of the workers movement (construction, longshoremen, teamsters) to genuine fiefs based on very specific bureaucratic apparatuses. In fact, the members of these apparatuses not only consider that the unions must be administered like capitalist companies, but also that all means are valid in strengthening the apparatuses, including violence. These bureaucratic apparatuses rest essentially on the financial advantages that derive from the high salaries of the leaders and from the corruption instigated by the employers. In fact, when these bureaucracies practice class collaboration, it is not so much out of ideological conviction as because of the material advantages that go along with this collaboration. Corruption and violence quite naturally lead these trade-union leaders into close relations with organized crime.

This type of violently anticommunist bureaucracy does not tolerate even the physical presence of leftist militants in the professions they control. Brutal repression is a constant fact of life in these trades. Nevertheless, the bureaucracy sometimes demands a high payment from the employers for its services. Employers who are too greedy are rapidly brought to reason by means of sabotage and destruction of material. In addition, in order to assure their popularity among the union membership, from time to time the bureaucrats have to prove their effectiveness by winning significant wage increases. During the 1950s, the teamsters, led by Jimmy Hoffa, utilized these methods and became the most powerful trade union on the North American continent.

In periods during which the bourgeoisie wants to eliminate the influence of communist and socialist militants from the workers movement, it actively seeks an alliance with this bureaucracy, an alliance cemented through corruption. Thus, the anticommunist purge during the postwar period throughout the entire North American trade-union movement was the joint work of the bourgeois state and corrupt trade-union bureaucrats. Nevertheless, in the long run such an alliance is costly for the bourgeoisie, and when the demands of the corrupt bureaucrats go beyond the offers of the corrupting employers, a crisis breaks out. This occurs especially frequently during a capitalist economic recession, when profitability is the watchword of the employers.

This is what has happened with the leading apparatus of the FTQ's construction sector, which had become the most powerful trade union in Québec, grouping all the skilled workers of this industry together in a Provincial Council.

The leaders of FTQ-Construction have engaged in fruitful collaboration with the various governments in Québec, on occasion not even hesitating to organize the electoral campaign of this or that influential deputy. So long as social peace was not disturbed, so long as the anti-strike pacts were respected, the employers tolerated the presence of this powerful trade-union apparatus whether they liked it or not, since there was no better alternative. Moreover, the construction industry offered the employers the advantage of being the classic point of disunity in the Québec trade-union movement. The FTQ-Construction, with government support, has sought to obtain a trade-union monopoly at the expense of the other national trade-union federation, The Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux (CSN — Confederation of National Trade Unions). Violent clashes between members of the two trade-union federations were common occurrences on construction sites throughout Québec. This situation suited the employers quite well.

Nevertheless, in the spring of 1974, when the functionaries of FTQ-Construction organized the destruction of the big construction site LG2 of the Baie James hydroelectric dam in northern Québec (doing more than a million dollars worth of damage), the bourgeoisie found the bill too high. In addition, conscious of the fact that the context of political and social radicaliza-

tion now under way could soon affect determination of the targets of the violence of the FTQ-Construction apparatus, the bourgeoisie decided to get rid of this apparatus and proceeded to dismantle it. American multinational firms such as Goodyear and Firestone loudly proclaimed their intention to slow down or cut off their investments if order was not restored not only in the construction industry but throughout the Québécois trade-union movement. According to these firms, the capitalist economic recession compels the Québécois government to seek social peace at lower prices.

The Cliche commission

In Canada and Québec, as well as in the United States, it is a traditional part of bourgeois morals to establish commissions of inquiry whose aims are not to shed light on some aspect of social reality but rather to lend an appearance of objectivity and neutrality to the government legislation inspired by the final recommendations of the commissioners of inquiry.

In 1959 the Kennedy brothers, members of the Democratic party, led an inquiry into Hoffa's teamsters under the Republican Eisenhower administration. By lining up "public opinion" in favor of "civic duty" and "morality," this commission led to the enactment by Congress of the Landrum-Griffin Act, a genuine police instrument within the workers movement. This glorious tradition of bourgeois politicians was explicitly recalled in the report submitted by the Cliche commission, which was created by the Québécois government to investigate "organized crime" in the construction industry after the Baie James incidents. Composed of personalities passed off by the bourgeois mass media as men of "integrity," this commission was directed by Robert Cliche, a judge in Québec and also a former leader of the Nouveau Parti Démocratique (New Democratic party), Canadian offshoot of international Social Democracy. This judge was assisted by a member of the Conservative party and by a trade-unionist teacher who is a member of the Parti Québécois, another opposition party.

Incapable of rejecting collaboration with these "impartial observers," the trade-union leaderships, of both the FTQ and the CSN, continued to entertain illusions about the so-called neutrality of the state apparatus and of its occasional commissions, in reality assigned to tie a knot around the neck of the workers movement. More, the leadership of the CSN, which holds a minority position in the construction industry, openly called for police intervention against the FTQ unions in this industry. The two trade-union bureaucracies naively tried to play one section of the provincial government against the other. The FTQ counted on Minister of Labor Jean Cournoyer to maintain their past alliance, while the CSN relied on Jérôme Choquette, the minister of justice and chief of police, to oust its rival. Believing that they detected antagonistic contradictions where actually there was only the mixture of integra-

tionism and repression characteristic of all bourgeois policy toward the workers movement, the trade-union leaderships led the workers movement onto a field on which the bourgeois politicians decide the rules of the game: the offices of the ministries and parliament members.

As the investigations of the Cliche commission progressed, accompanied by police searches of the trade-union offices, the FTQ leadership began to understand the extent of the danger and tried to mobilize its forces. On October 29, 1974, some 40,000 workers responded to the FTQ's call and demonstrated in the streets of Montréal. It was the largest workers demonstration of its kind in Québec's history. Nevertheless, the FTQ had mobilized in this way not within a perspective of broadening the struggles or of establishing trade-union unity. It was simply seeking to improve its bargaining position with the government.

In trying to use the methods of business trade unionism, of negotiations kept secret from the workers (but not from the bourgeois ministers) in order to settle a battle whose stakes were clearly political, the FTQ prevented the entire workers movement from responding to the scope of the government attack. Moreover, in proclaiming, against all evidence, its confidence in Minister of Labor Jean Cournoyer, the leadership of the FTQ could only foster cynicism and disgust among union members, since this minister was the very sponsor of the major anti-working-class bills.

At the beginning of May, in an atmosphere of complete discredit of the trade-union leaderships, the recommendations of the Cliche commission were made public: receivership for the four unions of FTQ-Construction, an "antiwrecker" law making trade-union leaders responsible for "illegal strikes," suppression of trade-union negotiating power through the creation of a sort of corporatist office for the construction industry, and state surveillance of trade-union life, with trade-union statutes to be subject to government approval. A few days after the publication of the report, the first two recommendations were made into laws.

To protest against this legislation, the FTQ called in an improvised manner for work stoppages on May 21, supposedly in solidarity with an ongoing strike at United Aircraft (an American company manufacturing airplane engines). More than 100,000 trade-unionists walked off the job. But the mobilization, confused in its objectives and not explained to the workers, was a partial failure: Although new layers of the working class mobilized on this occasion, the government did not at all yield to the demands of the FTQ.

The May 21 mobilization

When the recommendations of the Cliche commission were widely distributed, a protest assembly of 4,000 members of the FTQ-Construction was held on the Rive Sud in Montréal not far from the United Aircraft factories, where the workers have been on strike since

December 1973. A group of thirty-four workers got into the factory during the night with the aim of occupying the buildings and demanding a settlement of the conflict. Construction workers went to the gates of the factory to demonstrate their solidarity with the strikers; they clashed violently with police forces. Later, members of the antiriot brigade of the Québec security services arrived at the factory and tore into the strikers, clubbing workers who were negotiating their surrender.

A reporter on the spot described the scene live on the radio, and his testimony was widely reproduced in the press during succeeding days. The leadership of the FTQ then decided to use this event to call for a "general strike" on May 21 in solidarity with the victims of the repression. While the government offensive in construction was reaching its peak, the FTQ officially said nothing. Work stoppages in the industry were proliferating, but two days before this "general strike" Louis Laberge called on the workers to return to the construction sites; he did this so strongly that they stayed there on May 21. Even during the worst moments of the clashes, the FTQ leadership continued to follow its road of class collaboration.

The incredible incoherence of the FTQ leaders strongly put the brakes on the mobilization, thus facilitating the application of anti-working-class measures by the Liberal government. Only the militancy and perspicacity of some elements of the trade-union movement prevented all this from being transformed into a total rout.

The 1976 Olympics

During this period the government, which was seeking to use all possible arguments in pressing forward its anti-union offensive, tried to lay the blame for the lag in preparation of the installations for the 1976 Olympic games on strikes by construction workers.

In fact, since autumn 1974 preparations for the Montréal Olympic games have provided the basis for a reactionary ideological orgy on the part of various sections of the bourgeoisie and the state apparatus. Apart from the attempts to line up the youth behind celebration of the Olympic ritual, and apart from the prestige maneuvers by various government bodies — municipal, provincial, and federal — the Olympics are being used as a direct pretext for an offensive against the trade unions in construction. A vast purge of militants from the industry was undertaken during the first weeks of May (there were more than 500 dismissals). The Olympic construction site is now permanently guarded by private police of the Pinkerton Agency, infamous for many decades for their efficiency in anti-union repression in North America.

The prestige operation represented by the Olympic games must not be challenged by a construction strike, according to the powers that be, who thus justify their anti-union repression.

The Olympics are useful to the bourgeoisie on all levels — economic, ideological, and political. Thus, it is quite probable that the period during which the games will be held (summer 1976) will permit the bourgeois state to deploy an impressive military and police arsenal. The statements of Minister of Justice Choquette are significant. Upon returning from Munich, where the 1972 Olympics were held, he criticized the authorities of this city for not having sufficiently openly deployed the "antiterrorist" repressive forces at their disposal. Drawing the lessons of the summer of 1972, the Montréal organizers have already stated that they will spare no effort in defending the games. In addition to the powerful municipal police and the Québécois security services, Montréal will be tightly policed by the Canadian army, and the authorities have announced special "antiterrorist" measures that could well serve as a pretext for attacking the socialist and revolutionary organizations.

In spite of the anti-union laws and in spite of the sectoral defeats (construction, for example), the Québécois workers movement has not been crushed. The partial retreats have been compensated for by sectors of the workers movement that had been relatively passive coming into action. If the bourgeoisie now takes the initiative in confrontations, tensions between the classes will only be heightened and the elements will be set in place for future explosions. In spite of the total bankruptcy of its leaderships, the workers movement is resisting and is organizing its responses locally as best it can. Nevertheless, such a state of affairs cannot last long. It is clear that decisive confrontations are on the way, and the present leaders of the workers movement would lead the workers to massacres or capitulation.

At this point, confrontations between the state and the workers movement can be expected to take place around two issues:

1. Against draft law 24:

Presented to the Québec National Assembly in the form of amendments to the Labor Code, this bill calls for subjecting trade-union leadership elections, finances, and statutes, as well as strike votes, to the absolute control of functionaries of the bourgeois state. The passage of such measures would mean the direct integration of the trade-union movement into the state apparatus. In face of these projects, the workers movement must mobilize as a whole and force the government to back down; otherwise the passage of such a law will mean the crushing of the whole trade-union movement without a struggle.

2. The coming negotiations in the provincial public sector:

The previous negotiations (in April and May 1972) led to a vast movement of work stoppages and occupations of cities (apart from Montréal) after the arrest of the leaders of the three Québécois trade-union federations. Beginning next autumn the negotiations now going on will enter their active phase. The Liberal party, which controls the government, is carefully preparing for this confrontation by perfecting its judicial and police arsenal. The trade-union movement will be able to win only by preparing an unlimited general strike of all the workers, as was recommended in a resolution of the recent congress of the Montréal General Council of the Confédération des Syndicats Nationaux.

June 9, 1975

**weekly paper
of the
International
Marxist Group,
British section
of
the Fourth
International**

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for the generalization of workers councils

The economic situation is getting worse all the time. Last January, official statistics claimed that more than 200,000 were unemployed. Today the figure 300,000 is accepted in government circles. Portuguese industry, based around exports, has been hit full force by the international recession. The major industries, textiles and clothing, which employ about 200,000 workers and export 90 percent of their production, have been hard hit by a drastic reduction in orders.

Both the structural weaknesses of Portuguese industry and bourgeois economic sabotage compound the effects of the international recession. The deficit in the trade balance is growing; because of the agricultural crisis, food products are high on the list of imports. The repercussions of this trade deficit on the balance of payments are especially great because the traditional compensating factors are no longer operative: the income provided by money sent back by immigrant workers and by tourism.

In face of the aggravation of this crisis and of the political maturation of the working class, the tensions within the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) reflect in a deformed way the growing polarization between the two fundamental classes of Portuguese society. The resolution of June 21 published by the Council of the Revolution itself expresses the deep crisis of leadership racking the

MFA. The basic project seems to go in the direction of centralizing power even further and of consolidating the state apparatus, which implies more assertive control over the organs of self-organization of workers and soldiers (the reaction against the soldiers committees is indicative of this). Nevertheless, the formulations of the text leave the door open for initiatives that, under the cover of control over the instruments of self-organization, nonetheless move in the direction of links between soldiers and workers. All the ambiguity of the present situation is reflected in this phenomenon. Any new step forward in the revolutionary upsurge would put severe strains on the increasingly fragile unity of the MFA.

Workers struggles are continuing, although there has been some slowdown in their pace. Essentially, they are developing around demands related to employment guarantees and responses to layoffs, factory closings, and lockouts. Nevertheless, sentiment about the insufficiency of occupations, workers' restarting of production, and the demand for nationalizations is on the rise among the workers.

More and more, these initiatives and demands appear as insufficient in themselves to deal with the economic crisis. And the "battle for production," placed in the center of the propaganda of the Communist party, the

Intersindical (the trade-union federation), and the MFA since May 1, has only a limited grip on the working class, which is increasingly asking itself such questions as: Production for whom? Production of what and how? How are the nationalized companies (60 percent of all companies) to be managed? Who will decide on a central economic plan and how will the workers be able to define the objectives of the plan and control its application?

While the working class is exhibiting some hesitation in moving to a higher stage of struggle, at the same time these questions are being discussed among rank-and-file workers. They can be summed up in the formula: "battle for production" or "battle for power"?

Even more significant are the instances of initiatives of self-defense that have occurred during the past two weeks. First, many workers commissions are insisting on the necessity of dealing with fascist sabotage. In many communiqués the workers are putting the emphasis on the urgency of making military instruction available to all worker militants. Second, an effective linkup between the soldiers and the workers commissions and neighborhood committees is developing. Some workers commissions are receiving military instruction in some barracks. Some soldiers are training militants of the tenant commissions and workers commissions. These initiatives are not yet very extensive, but they nonetheless mark a change in the relations between the soldiers and the instruments of self-organization of the toiling masses.

This is particularly important in that reaction is now trying to take advantage of the crisis situation to launch harassment operations against the headquarters of workers organizations and against the militants of these organizations. In the North, for example, Communist party militants in Viseu were attacked by reactionary gangs. In Sao Joao de Madeira (near Porto) a demonstration of about 1,000 people was organized to demand the release of a fascist employer, a member of the far-right ELP (Portuguese Liberation Army). The church is trying to gather together a part of the forces of reaction and is organizing a big assembly in Lisbon for June 29. Reaction is increasingly preparing for a confrontation with the regime.

The leadership of the Socialist party, under the cover of a campaign for "socialism with freedom," is taking many initiatives to defend bourgeois parliamentary democracy (against workers democracy based on workers

and soldiers councils), to maintain private property and combat "anarchy" in the factories, and to support "order in the army" (against self-organization of the soldiers).

During the June 23 demonstration, which was presented as a demonstration in support of the Council of the Revolution, a reactionary tone was dominant, especially in that the demonstration was joined by the PPM (the monarchist party), the PPD (Popular Democratic party), the CDS (Social Democratic Center), and the Maoists of the Portuguese Communist party (Marxist-Leninist).

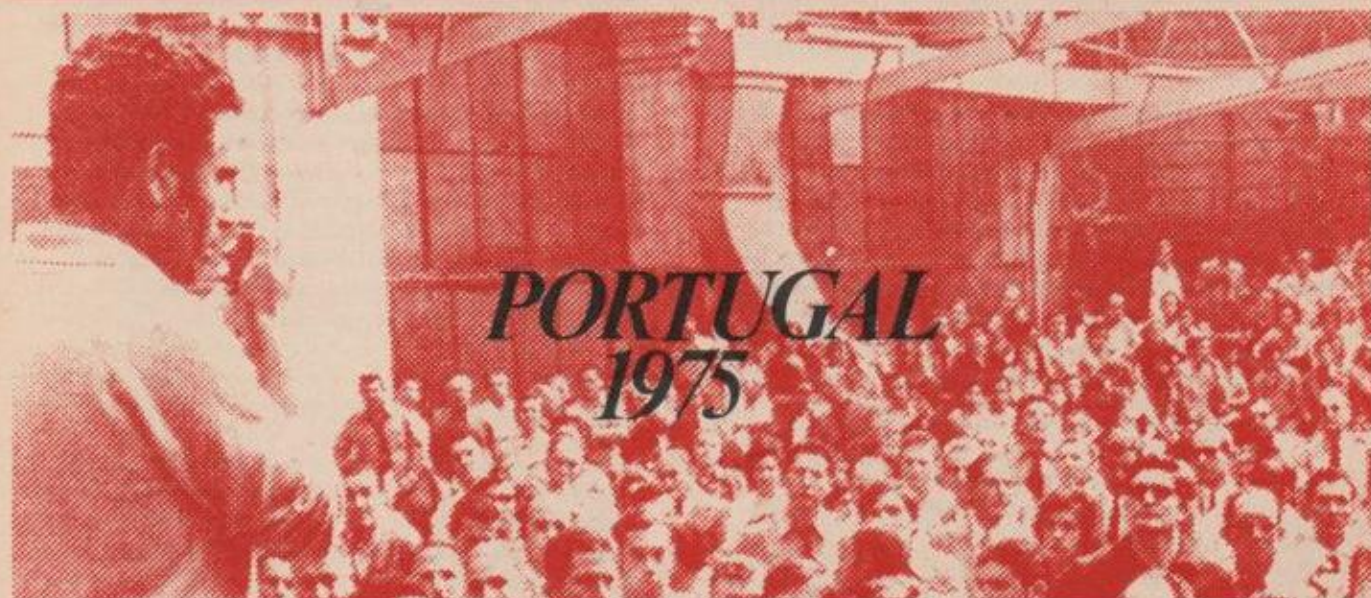
In face of these Social Democratic maneuvers, the Communist party, while proclaiming the necessity of unity, is setting the "battle for production" as the objective for which the workers should fight in order to attain this unity. A "battle" that involves challenging the mobilizations and demands of the workers!

There is a deep sentiment for unity within the working class, a result of the victory of March 11. This sentiment is expressed both in the emergence and strengthening of organs of workers self-organization (neighborhood commissions, tenants commissions, workers commissions, etc.) and in the trade unions, where the workers are manifesting their will to reach real agreement, after discussion, on the various problems that confront them.

In face of the division that the bureaucratic apparatuses can stimulate within the working class, in face of the necessity for taking a step forward to respond to the fundamental economic and social problems that are posed for the Portuguese toiling masses today, and in face of the reactionary conspiracy, our comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International) are waging a systematic campaign for the unity in action of all the organizations and representative organs of the workers and for the generalization and centralization of organs of democratic and proletarian power. The LCI is waging this campaign in a united front with other organizations, such as the Movimento Esquerda Socialista (Left Socialist Movement), LUAR, etc. We are publishing below a call for the "building and generalization of workers councils" issued by the LCI on June 17. A coming issue of INPRECOR will publish large excerpts from an LCI manifesto presenting the essential positions of revolutionaries on the way to combat the crisis and struggle for socialism.



RUSSIA
1917



PORTUGAL
1975

STATEMENT OF THE LCI

Forward to the building and generalization of workers councils! Create and unify armed self-defense pickets in the unions, neighborhoods, and factories!

1. The political situation is rapidly increasing in tension. Along with an offensive by the reactionary forces of the FLNA and UNITA, capitalist reaction is once again launching its attacks: bombs, explosives, attacks on the headquarters of workers organizations, especially in the interior of the country, reactionary demonstrations in the Azores and the Madeira Islands. The methods of reaction are provocation, terror, economic sabotage, massive layoffs, and systematic attacks on the buying power of the workers.

The theft of arms from the Santa Margarida barracks is

an important step in the offensive of reaction. Nevertheless, the workers are organizing their response with a determination even more assertive than that which permitted the crushing of the attempted coups of September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975: armed self-defense detachments and antifascist vigilance committees in contact with the workers and tenants commissions are springing up and becoming generalized.

But at the same time, the government and the MFA are not putting forward the fundamental means that would

enable reaction to be swept away: dissolution and disarming of the fascist gangs, arrest and public trial of counterrevolutionaries, arming of the unions and the Intersindical (the trade-union federation) and workers and tenants commissions.

2. The present impasse cannot go on for long. The workers, basing themselves on their mass organizations, can take their destiny into their own hands! The revolution will advance toward the power of the workers and their representative organs — councils of elected delegates in the factories, neighborhoods, and villages — only if the basic steps to beat reactionary resistance, put an end to unemployment and poverty, and crush reaction and its parties are taken right now.

We will advance down this road by struggling for:

*the generalization and unification of all the popular vigilance committees linked to armed self-defense pickets in the unions and factories and directed by local coordinating bodies of the workers and tenants commissions.

*the immediate convocation of zonal assemblies centralizing and pressing forward the creation of delegates councils in all factories, impelling forward the strengthening of workers commissions charged with exerting workers control over the work pace, orders, and stocks, with holding general assemblies for controlling all administrative activities (as at CUF, where the workers have demanded nationalization), and, finally, with proposing to the tenants commissions the setting of prices and controlling of prices of food, transport, and rent.

*the application of a radical agrarian reform giving the produce of the land to those who till it, unifying the common struggle of the workers of the countryside and the cities against capitalist exploitation, for the socialist revolution.

3. Those are the measures that must be applied immediately. In many factories the workers have already taken initiatives in this direction. That is the road of struggle against capitalist reaction and for socialism.

In order to go forward, today more than ever it is necessary to form a solid united front of all the workers organizations. All workers, all revolutionaries, all militants struggling for socialism, those of the Communist party, the Socialist party, and all the revolutionary organizations, must unite in representative bodies of workers against capital and reaction. To crush the gangs of the PPD and the CDS, to prevent new reactionary provocations, to defend the workers and their struggles, to defeat economic sabotage and imperialist pressure, it is not enough simply to assert the will for unity. We must participate massively in the workers and tenants commissions, in the zonal assemblies, in the village councils, in the popular vigilance committees.

4. But in order for these measures to be extended throughout the country and be really applied, it is necessary to go beyond the hesitations of this fourth provisional

government. Stumbling from crisis to crisis, it is ever more incapable of dealing with the unemployment (which now affects more than 200,000 workers), the reactionary offensive, or the imperialist pressure.

It is necessary to impose a government that breaks with the policy of class collaboration, nationalizes without compensation and under workers control the big commercial, industrial, and agricultural companies, establishes a monopoly of foreign trade and creates a single state bank, disarms the reactionaries, dissolves their organizations, and bans their activities, generalizes workers control throughout the system of production and exchange and throughout the whole economy on the basis of a central plan, and definitively guarantees the democratic rights of the workers and soldiers.

This government of workers organizations must be controlled by the workers and by trade-union, neighborhood, and factory assemblies and must be responsible to the workers councils elected in the work places and neighborhoods.

This government will have to be based on the workers, on their demands, decisions, and permanent mobilization. It will have to be based on representative committees of soldiers, sailors, and airmen that press the purge of fascists to its conclusion, organize general assemblies within which all officers are elected, and guarantee the right of propaganda and assembly to all political and trade-union currents.

5. From this point on, for the workers and popular movement the present crisis represents much more than a government crisis. It is thus urgent to elect workers commissions or delegates councils that can structure the workers offensive, prepare the zonal assemblies, organize self-defense, and coordinate the tenants commissions with the assemblies and elected committees of soldiers and sailors.

It will be around these bodies that the workers will have to gather in determined fashion in order to:

*apply workers democracy, decide the future, and choose representatives;

*prepare a real national workers assembly uniting all the organizations of workers and peasants, whether in or out of uniform, and struggling for socialism.

It is necessary to prepare for decisive struggles!

For the socialist revolution, for socialism based on workers and soldiers councils, on international solidarity with the struggle of the Spanish workers and revolutionaries and of the former Portuguese colonies. For the building of a revolutionary workers party, proletarian leadership of the anticapitalist mass movement!

FORWARD TO THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

FOR THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!

The June 11 General Strike in the Basque Country

In Navarra there were also many work stoppages. In Pamplona, capital of the province, there were mobilizations at eight factories, among them Super Ser, Onera, Union Carbide, Minicable, and Electrocomo.

In the city of Estella there were stoppages at about a dozen factories; at Varsalvai in this city a mass general assembly was held in the factory. That night a demonstration of about 600 people marched through the streets of downtown Pamplona.

This information, extremely scanty, gives an idea of the breadth of the movement and its degree of organization in confronting the genuine state of siege that grips all the cities and villages. The workers commissions played the role of united rallying point in this mobilization, and it was proven that the toughest repression no longer generates sufficient fear to paralyze mass initiatives. The strength of the Basque workers will be manifested once again when the trial against Garmendia and Ortaegui opens. In Barcelona a united demonstration (with the Communist party, the PT (ex-CP), the LCR/ETA-VI (sympathizing organization of the Fourth International), and the MCE) drew 3,000 people who thus asserted their solidarity with the struggle of their Basque comrades against the state of exception and for saving the lives of Garmendia and Ortaegui.

In Valencia, various organizations — among them the OICE (Organization of the Communist Left), the MCE, the Communist Union, and the LCR/ETA-VI — prepared a demonstration assembling 1,000 persons. This was the largest demonstration since the April 1973 demonstration in solidarity with the struggle of San Adrian.

Internationally, demonstrations were organized in France, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Sweden, and Britain, with the participation of the sections of the Fourth International, to assert international solidarity with the struggle of the workers of the Basque country and to oppose the repression.

The dictatorship is nonetheless continuing to prepare

trials against comrades Garmendia, Ortaegui, and Eva Forest. José Antonio Garmendia has been transferred to the prison of Burgos, which indicates that his trial should begin soon. And the Francoist dictatorship will soon open a new trial against the leaders of the El Ferrol general strike of March 1972.

More than ever, it is necessary to broaden the mobilizations to save Garmendia, Ortaegui, Eva Forest, and all the political prisoners held in the jails of the Spanish state.

The June 11 day of struggle throughout the Basque country demonstrated that the terrible Francoist repression was unable to block the development of the mass movement. This day had two objectives: to struggle against the state of exception and to struggle against the death penalties demanded by the state against two militants, Garmendia and Ortaegui.

In Vizcaya (Biscay) about 15,000 workers participated in the mobilization, despite the repression. Important strikes took place in many factories, such as Mecanica la Pena and Astra in Guernica, Precicontrol in Ermua, and in various workshops in Durango. There the shopkeepers closed their shops and a demonstration of 200 people was held in spite of the repressive forces. In the fishing villages of Ondarra and Lequeito the workers did not sail on June 11.

In Guipúzcoa the mobilization was very broad, although not as large as that of December 11, 1974. The strike was followed very broadly throughout the province. In some factories the strike was total: at Alfa, Lambreta, and Star in Eibar, at Sigma in Elgoibar, at Suchard in San Sebastian, at Nerezan, Vizcaino, Gozmeni, Mill, and Manterola in Herrera, at Bianchi, Tubos Estanos, Astilleros Luzuriaga in Pasajes, at Union Cerrajera de Mandragon and at the vocational school in Mondragon. In the furniture industry in Guipúzcoa the strike was also total. More than 70,000 workers of the province participated in the mobilization, that is, about 80 percent of the workers. ■

In the last issue of INPRECOR (No. 29, June 19, 1975) an ambiguous formulation that could create confusion slipped into the editorial on the June 11 general strike in the Basque country. It rests on a confusion between two names: José Antonio Garmendia, whose trial has not yet begun and against whom the dictatorship has demanded the death penalty, and Ignacio Garmendia, sentenced by the Burgos tribunal on June 5 to twenty-three years in prison. The conclusion that we drew (that the failure to condemn I. Garmendia to death represented an initial victory) was based on the confusion of the two names. In fact, the twenty-three-year sentence against I. Garmendia, a reflection of the new toughness of the dictatorship, shows that the struggle to save José Antonio Garmendia and his comrades is more crucial than ever!

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