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Djibouti: A TURBULENT FUTURE



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Fourth International Theses
on the Portuguese Revolution



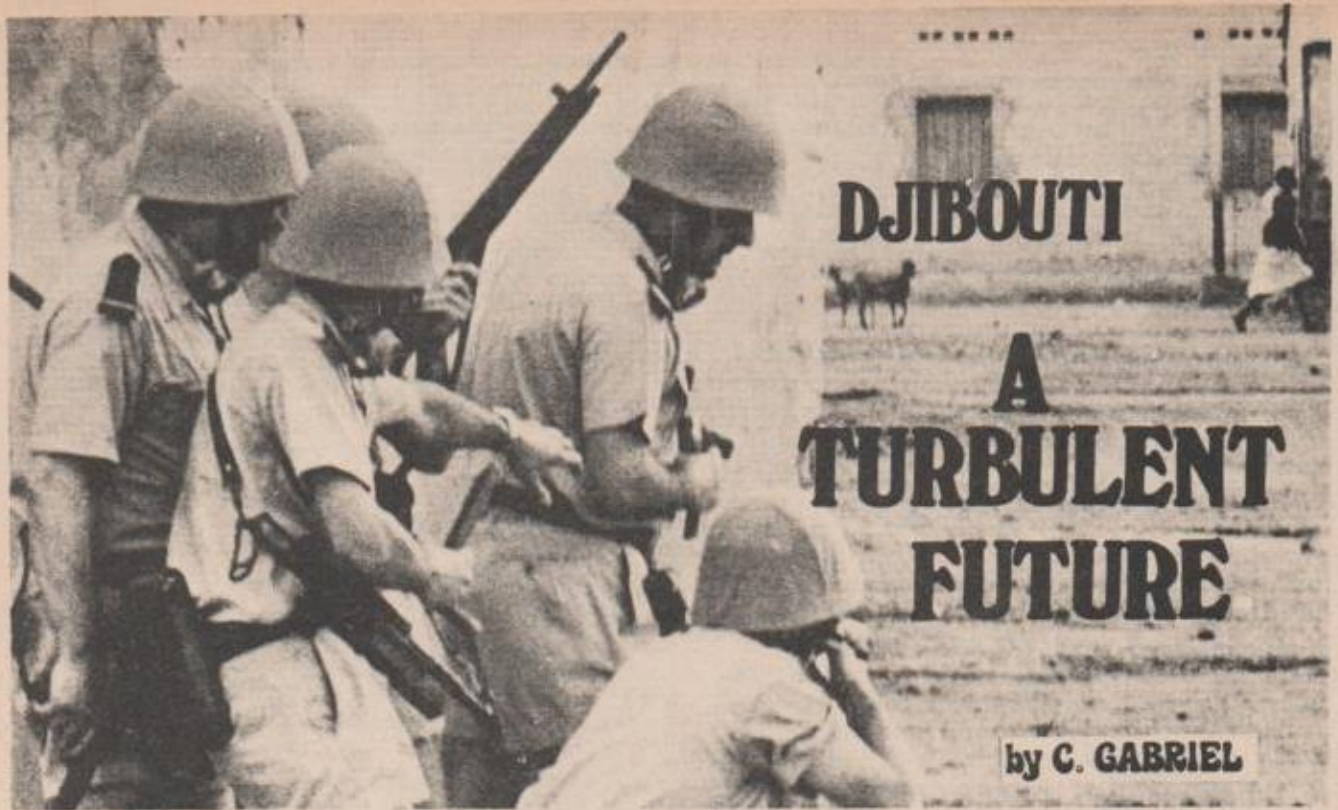
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DJIBOUTI

A TURBULENT FUTURE

by C. GABRIEL

There is an Issa proverb that says: Even the jackal makes out his will before traveling across this country.

As the last place in Africa still ruled by French colonialism, the French Territory of Afars and Issas (FTAI) may look like a shocking anachronism in 1976.(1) A hopelessly arid land of 23,000 square kilometers with 130,000 inhabitants, 85,000 of whom live in the city of Djibouti — that is the primary and decisive feature of this French colony. In reality, this demographic concentration in the main city constitutes one of the particular features that determine the social and political questions of the territory. Apart from its function as a port, Djibouti also has an international airport and is the terminal of a railway that links Addis Ababa, the Ethiopian capital, to the sea; the railway is the decisive axis of the Ethiopian economy. In addition to this economic dimension, Djibouti and the FTAI represent a linchpin for French imperialism in its strategic aims in the region relating to the Indian Ocean, the Arabian peninsula, the route of the oil tankers from the Arabian Gulf, and the Red Sea. In spite of its desire to oversee half the planet from Djibouti, French colonialism has nonetheless managed to survive here only by dint of the most sordid tricks, the most important of which remain border rivalries and the ethnic fragmentation of this region of East Africa.

During the nineteenth century, taking advantage of the opening of the Suez Canal, France hoped to make the port of Djibouti a rival of Aden. But this remained a pretentious ambition. At the time of the arrival of the French, there were two ethnic groups in this region: the Afars, or Danakil, in the North and West (about three-fourths of the territory) and the Issas (a group related to Somali ethnic groups) in the South. The Afars and Issas had long been Muslims. Both groups are essentially nomadic and are assembled in "tribes" that are

sorts of family clans. Nevertheless, the social organization and the relations among "tribes" varied among the two ethnic groups.(2) Almost exclusively engaged in pastoral activities, these populations did not satisfy French colonialism's need for a work force, particularly for the construction of the railway (1897-1917) and the port. This work was done partly by Arab workers from Yemen and Aden and above all by Somalis of the Issaq group, which originates from what was then British Somaliland. This situation was quite favorable to French colonialism's policy of division.

Moreover, the Afars and Issas were not restricted to the lands of the FTAI. There are about 250,000 Afars in all, four-fifths of whom live in Ethiopia. All the Afar people, whether they live in Ethiopia or the FTAI, have their own internal structures, among which are the nineteen "great sultanates." The FTAI includes the sultanates of Tadjoura and Gobard, as well as part of the sultanates of Aoussa and Raheita. Afar society is very rigorously stratified into "age classes" within which certain tribes and notables are dominant.

The Issas, on the other hand, belong to the larger, Somali group. The political unification of the great majority of this group was not realized until 1960, when the Republic of Somalia was created. Superficially, it can be admitted that the cohesion of the Somali group is weaker than that of the Afars.

The Somali portion of the Issas tend their flocks in the FTAI as well as in Ethiopia and Somalia. When the borders were drawn between Ethiopia and the French and British colonies during the nineteenth century, the real interests of these populations were not at all taken into account. Neither the areas of human travel nor the limits of the sultanates were respected. Hence was born a profound resentment among the populations and a terrible confusion of ethnic and political questions.

The presence in Djibouti of a strong contingent of Arabs stimulated discontent among those people on the fringes of Afar or Issa nomadism who aspired to live on the resources of the port. Issa petitions were addressed to the governor demanding the withdrawal of foreigners, mainly Arabs. Before the second world war, the Arabs controlled a good part of port real estate.

In 1946 the first representative council was "elected." Four Afars, three Arabs, and three Somalis, only one of whom was Issa, were members of the indigenous body. That same year, a Somali of the Gadaboursi group, which originates from then British Somaliland, was sent to the Council of the Republic as a representative of the territory. This situation fostered conflict between the Issas and other Somalis, while also creating the illusion that there was a community of interests of Afars and Issas against "foreigners." Thus, a Club of Somali and Danakil Youth was formed in 1946; its slogan was "land to the Issas and Danakil (Afar)." Its leader was Mahmoud Harbi, along with Hassan Gouled, the present head of the opposition, and Ali Aref Bourhan (an Afar), the present president of the council and a stooge of France.

In 1950 an election was held; beforehand, the Issas had convinced Paris to redraw the electoral lines in such a way as to definitively weaken the representation of Arabs and non-Issa Somalis. Issa notables were then able to dominate the whole of indigenous political life. In 1953 Hassan Gouled (an Issa) was elected councillor of the republic, and in 1957 Mahmoud Harbi became first vice-president of the government council. Nevertheless, in 1958 when de Gaulle proposed his famous referendum on the French Community, Harbi campaigned for a "no" vote and waged a battle for independence. His appeal won only about 25 percent of the vote in a country in which electoral trickery is a permanent institution and a good part of the tribal notables cast votes for their entire family and clans. Moreover, (and this was a result of this very factor), a majority of Afars voted "yes."

The French government later dissolved the territorial assembly and promulgated a new election law reducing the weight of the Issas. The administration threw itself into a campaign to attract the Afars, who were still not very numerous in the city of Djibouti, and in 1959 it was an Afar, Ahmed Dini, who acceded to the post of vice president of the council; in 1960, another Afar, Ali Aref, took over the post. In 1963 yet another new electoral law further strengthened the representation of the Afars in the territorial assembly. The colonial administration reigned as master in close liaison with the Afar chiefs and notables.

French identity cards were denied to some Issas on the most miserable pretexts of administrative processing. This situation, aggravated by nomadism, led to an absurd imbroglio in which brother and sister had different nationalities and thus not the same rights. Young Issas who had always lived in the FTAI were refused French nationality and were thus denied any jobs in the administration, the essential sector of salaried labor. This

mass of unemployed youth constituted the turbulent sector of a poverty-stricken urban population.

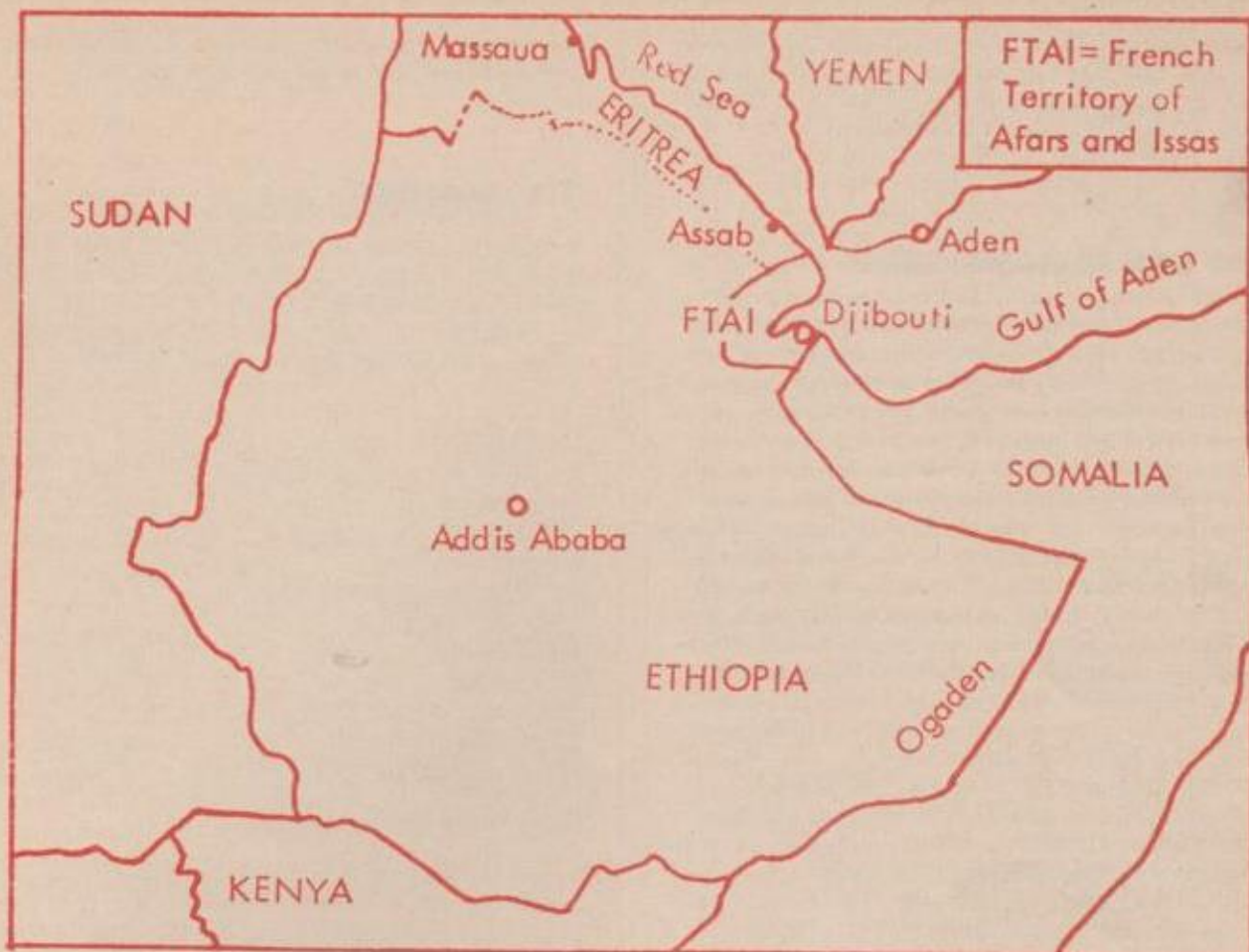
Discontent was generally diverted by the fact that the French administration on the whole accorded French nationality and electoral rights to the great mass of Afars, even those who had lived in Ethiopia. Thus, conflict between the two ethnic groups, a genuine diversion of the masses, was liable to break out at any moment. This was topped off by the effects of the closing of the Suez Canal in 1967, the widespread corruption of indigenous leaders, and so on.

When it was announced that de Gaulle would visit the territory in August 1966, a secret opposition committee including both Issas and some oppositional Afars was founded. While en route to Phnom Penh, where he was preparing to give the United States some lessons in decolonization, de Gaulle stopped in Djibouti, where he witnessed a murderous riot during which the demonstrating population was machine-gunned by colonial troops.

One month later, the French government decided to propose a "referendum" on the future of the territory. The usual trading in influence, trickery, and the policy of attracting the Afar chiefs produced the usual results: The referendum came down to a simple arithmetical operation, the manipulated Afar group giving a victory to the "yes" vote. One figure sheds a good deal of light on these assertions: between 1958 and 1965 the Somali electorate increased 55 percent, while the Afar electorate increased 197 percent!

Following the referendum, the indigenous political team led by Ali Aref stabilized its power to some extent. It went so far as to publicly call for the expulsion of all Somalis from public and private employment. Thus, the 1,200 Somali dockers were replaced by Afar workers. Somalis who had not immediately returned to their jobs in the administration after the referendum were laid off. And, in the supreme note of irony, the territory changed its name: It was no longer called "French Somaliland," but instead "the Territory of Afars and Issas." The council elected in July 1967 included two Issa ministers.

Nevertheless, this terrible ethnic antagonism could not be maintained unflinchingly as sedentarization and urbanization grew in Djibouti, as Somalia and Ethiopia bolstered the centralizing power of their state apparatuses, as poverty and repression remained the common lot of the populations. The opposition between the two groups must be interpreted in the light of objective facts. The French presence, which created a centralizing administration, halted the clan wars and placed all clans under the same tutelage, while still basing itself on the subjective rivalries and interests of the notables. French favors were successively bestowed upon the Arab and Somali outsiders at the time of the construction of the railway, on the Issas from the end of the second world war until 1958, and on the Afars since that time. The period is now favorable to the emergence on the political scene of new generations of Afars and Issas, anti-



colonialist and ready to merge themselves into a common crucible of struggle.

An agitated region

The ethnic questions that partially fueled political life in the French Territory of Afars and Issas constitute but a sample of the incredible national and ethnic imbroglio of this whole region of Africa, and especially Ethiopia and Somalia. Obviously, the problem of borders relates above all to the battle over the division of economic resources.

In 1952 the United Nations granted Ethiopia permission to attach Eritrea to its territory in the form of a federation, a decision that in 1962 was converted into a colonial and purely and simply repressive annexation. The ports of Massaua and Assab (in Eritrea) represent not unimportant props for Ethiopian trade. Nonetheless, for various reasons these ports are not at all prepared for significant investment. That is why Djibouti, linked to Addis Ababa since 1917, remains the essential outlet to the sea for the Ethiopian economy. Since the railway was completed, the future of the French Territory of Afars and Issas has virtually constituted an element of internal politics in Ethiopia. The railway became an Ethiopian company in 1959 and its headquarters was transferred to Addis Ababa. In the last analysis, Ethiopia can consider the French presence as a guarantee for its own interests.

Things are of the same order from the Somali standpoint. In 1941 British Minister Lord Bevin raised the idea of a "Greater Somalia" assembling all the Somali ethnic groups scattered among Kenya, Italian Somaliland, Ethiopian Ogaden, British Somaliland, and Djibouti into a British protectorate. This idea was later taken up by Somali nationalist circles. In 1960, after the creation of the Republic of Somalia, which unified the Italian and British ex-colonies, these aspirations were used by the new state to bolster its credibility among the populations. Tension in the region increased rapidly. In 1963 and 1964 there were sharp clashes between the Ethiopian and Somali armies. An intervention by the Organization of African Unity in 1967 rendered the conflict more discreet. Somalia, a country of three million inhabitants, has only a small army and could not oppose the Ethiopian army, which is aided and trained by the United States and Israel.

This situation later evolved. The Mogadiscio regime (Somalia) made a diplomatic turn toward the Soviet Union, obtaining enough military aid so that before the outbreak of the Angolan crisis, Somalia was the second largest customer for Soviet arms in Africa, after Egypt. With the announcement of a possible change in status for the French Territory of Afars and Issas, the conflict between Somalia and Ethiopia heated up again. Ethiopia, which insists on denying the existence of the Eritrean nation and which is clinging to Ogaden, the

subsoil of which contains oil, now stands very close to French policy. For its part, Somalia is exhibiting firmness, relying on African diplomacy, which in its majority favors independence for the FTAI.

The time of decolonization

Portuguese decolonization and the departure of the Spanish from West Sahara makes France the last colonial power in Africa. Since the announcement of the independence of the Portuguese colonies, it has become obvious that Paris cannot remain silent about the status of the FTAI. Most of the African states, even those that are closely linked to French imperialism, have turned toward support for the project of independence for Djibouti. At this time, the Ligue Populaire Africaine pour l'Indépendance (LPAI — African People's League for Independence), led by Hassan Gouled, came forward in the opposition. Ali Aref, a corrupt small-time politician who sees himself as a genuine feudal potentate, began suggesting that the LPAI represented nothing and was only a den of dangerous agitators funded by foreigners (presumably Somalis). The French government, essentially seeking to preserve its own interests, initially put pressure on Ali Aref to at least hold out the possibility of a dialogue with the LPAI. A real weathervane, Ali Aref was the warmest advocate of remaining in the French Republic until the French government itself began to speak of a "process leading to independence." On May 22, 1975, Olivier Stirn, French colonial minister, received some representatives of the LPAI, thus recognizing the representativity of the group. On September 12, 1975, reporting on an interview he had had with French President Giscard d'Estaing, Ali Aref stated: "In the future, our ambition is to peacefully integrate ourselves into the concert of nations which form our environment and with which we feel the need to cooperate fraternally and loyally. We are going to make new contacts abroad, in particular with the Organization of African Unity, with a view toward preparing the final stage in our political evolution."

Nevertheless, this outward appearance on the part of the French government and Ali Aref does not represent an abandoning of imperialist claims. The French army and police lose no opportunity to harass and imprison the militants of the LPAI or to repress the populations. On December 29, 1976, Ali Aref affirmed that Djibouti's accession to independence was irreversible. "The majority of the population, 90 percent of them," he said, "want this independence, but not at any price. . . . We want a military and economic guarantee from France as well as a guarantee from the OAU that our borders will be respected." He further asked for the maintenance of a French military base, stressing that this military presence would not only guarantee the integrity of Djibouti but would also preserve equilibrium and peace in the region.

Ethiopia and Somalia have since recognized the territory and have renounced any annexation, but Somalia

has protested vigorously against a "neocolonial project" that would maintain an imperialist military threat on its borders.

The opposition

In February 1972 the Union Populaire Africaine (African People's Union), an organization with a large Issa majority, led by Hassan Gouled, fused with the Ligue pour l'Avenir et l'Ordre (League for the Future and Order), which included Afars around Ahmed Dini Ahmed who opposed Ali Aref. The new group took the name Ligue Populaire Africaine (African People's League). Until 1973, this organization concentrated essentially on making electoral gains. But on the occasion of a decree of the Constitutional Council on November 28, 1973, sanctioning a policy of electoral fraud, it decided to give up any electoral competition. In February 1975 the group Action pour la Justice et le Progrès (Action for Justice and Progress), a pro-Giscard formation (!), joined the League. After that, the African People's League adopted the name Ligue Populaire Africaine pour l'Indépendance (African People's League for Independence). Since November 1974, Hassan Gouled had been waging a campaign for negotiated independence. The LPAI has won recognition from both the OAU and the Arab League.

In France, the LPAI is supported and aided by the reformist opposition, mainly the Socialist party, to which the LPAI seems closely linked. The LPAI constitutes a peculiar political formation. Although led by a team certain of whose members (such as Hassan Gouled) are dubious old politicians, it now rests on a genuine inter-ethnic mass base, which lends it the role of a quasi-mass organization in the suburbs of Djibouti. Neither of the two armed groups, both of which are based abroad, can claim such a base.

The Front de Libération de la Côte des Somalis (FLCS — Somali Coast Liberation Front), which was responsible for the kidnapping of about thirty French children from a schoolbus, is generally under the influence of the Somali government. This influence may intensify if we are to believe the current rumors that the group's former leader is now in prison in Mogadiscio and that he has been replaced by a successor who is closer to Somali positions.

As for the Mouvement de Libération de Djibouti (Djibouti Liberation Movement), which is supported and aided by Ethiopia, it has now been reduced to issuing appeals that conform to the pro-French policy of Addis Ababa. For the immediate future one thing is certain: The French government will not be able to avoid a dialogue, even if indirect, with the LPAI. This organization, reformist, would most likely be satisfied with a liberal program.

In addition, generally speaking, the geographical and social configuration of the French Territory of Afars and Issas broadly limits the possibilities for a guerrilla campaign waged through infiltration. The overall situa-

tion is determined by what happens in Djibouti, and only an organization deeply implanted among the urban population will be able to assert itself against the colonial power.

The crisis of French imperialism

In spite of the current concessions and operations, the French government's attitude toward Djibouti more generally goes back to imperialist policy throughout this region and particularly in the islands of the Indian Ocean. The repression is as important as the strategic interests involved.

Djibouti is a military garrison of about 7,000 men since the latest events. In "normal times" about 6,000 soldiers are stationed there, along with a squadron of F-100 combat aircraft, some troop transport forces and helicopters, and a naval force. This apparatus is integrated into the French military array in the Indian Ocean, along with the island of Réunion (2,000 men) and the island of Mayotte. Since the situation in the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar) has resulted in the withdrawal of French troops from that country, Djibouti has become the decisive nub of this whole apparatus. Because of this and because of the independence of the Comoro Islands, the French government has relied on the bourgeoisie of the island of Mayotte to provoke a spontaneous "self-determination" of the populations of this island in favor of remaining French.

All this represents one aspect of imperialist repression. The other aspect is even more sordid. After the riots of 1966, an electrified barbed-wire barricade, reinforced by a minefield and watched from above by observation towers, was constructed around the city. This barricade isolates the capital from the rest of the territory. The aim is to prevent thousands of Issas who were expelled from the city in 1966 from returning. To get through the barricade you have to be white or else be able to prove French nationality. The troops regularly open fire on people trying to pass through. Legally, these deaths are identified as "accidental." In June 1968 Omar Osman Mabehe, head of the opposition, was sentenced to death on charges of having committed an attack.⁽³⁾ More than half of the jury designated to try him were Europeans, and not just any old Europeans. Included were the director of the industrial credit national bank, the director of Shell, a large importer, the director of maritime shipping, and the head of general affairs for the colonial administration.

Up to now, Ali Aref has been able to maneuver. He has received implicit support from Ethiopia in exchange for strangling the rebellion of Sultan Ali Mirah, an Afar chief, against the authority of the Ethiopian state. In addition, he has been content to reject the LPAI as "nothing but foreign agents" linked to Somalia. But the crisis of French colonialism is not limited to the small territory of Djibouti, and the French bourgeoisie consequently finds itself compelled to make compromises in order to dam up a process that would eventually threaten the island of Réunion and the Antilles.

Although the economic crisis has been extremely tragic for the French Territory of Afars and Issas, Ali Aref has been content to assert that the economic situation is rather healthy and to add, "My chauffeur makes more than a Somali general." (Agence France-Presse, January 20.) Can such a puppet serve for very long as the main political tool of the French government? On February 23 Ethiopia let it be known that it would favor an agreement between Ali Aref and the LPAI.

Effectively, the new Ethiopian regime is confronted by a centrifugal process throughout its entire territory. The armed struggle in Eritrea has enabled the People's Liberation Forces and the Eritrean Liberation Front to gain control of the countryside and penetrate the cities. The government's "agrarian reform" has driven the feudalists to rebel against the regime and galvanized the peasant masses to struggle for deeper reforms. The Afars led by Ali Mirah are in rebellion, Somalia has laid claim to Ogaden, and so on. Since Ethiopia is a basic axis of imperialist strategy in eastern Africa and since the Djibouti affair constitutes a credibility test for the local regimes, it is understandable that French colonialism should assume an important task in maintaining the equilibrium of the imperialist system as a whole.

The demand for the immediate independence of the French Territory of Afars and Issas, with the complete and unconditional withdrawal of French troops, must be a central slogan for the French workers movement. On February 10, 1976, in an action revealing of both the crisis in the army and the crisis of imperialism, a soldiers' committee at a French air base published a communiqué denouncing the sending of draftees to Djibouti. This communiqué declared, among other things, "We are not destined to serve French imperialism and to repress a people struggling for their independence. . . . The soldiers' committee calls for support to the struggle of the Afar and Issa peoples for their independence." That is an example that should be followed.

February 25, 1976

FOOTNOTES:

1. As far as off-continent Africa is concerned, France also maintains its domination over the island of Réunion and the island of Mayotte in the Comoro archipelago.

2. Of the 130,000 inhabitants of the FTAI today, there are about 11,000 Europeans, 8,000 Arabs, 50,000 Afars, and 60,000 Somalis, of which 45,000 belong to the Issa groups, and 15,000 to the Gadabouri, Issaq, and Darod groups. But not all these people benefit from "French nationality." Thus, there are 3,000 "French citizens" among the Arabs, 47,000 among the Afars, 24,000 among the Issas, and 6,000 among the other Somali groups.

3. Pardoned, he was released in March 1975 under the pressure of a FLCS commando group that had taken the French ambassador to Somalia as a hostage.



France is no exception among the various capitalist countries that have entered the long period of recession that has been analyzed in several issues of INPRECOR.

Thus, in spite of a recession and an exceptional volume of unemployment, inflation has continued at a high rate and, even though the upturn has barely begun, prices are soaring again and the balance of payments is worsening. Although the upturn will inevitably be a weak one, the workers will insist on making up what they have lost during two years of recession.

The resolution of the contradictions accumulated during thirty years of capitalist expansion does not lie behind us but well ahead of us. It implies notably intensified inter-imperialist competition and above all increasingly severe confrontations between capital and labor.

In spite of the significant development of industrial restructuring and investment that occurred under de Gaulle and Pompidou, the French apparatus of production and distribution remains relatively less concentrated than that of the major competitors of France. This is a severe handicap in French capitalism's asserting itself in the new international division of labor. Big capital ought to have every interest in transforming as rapidly as possible through regroupments and eliminations the large contingent of small shops, companies, and commercial establishments that are incapable of functioning at competitive costs and that stimulate inflation significantly. But this sector weighed too heavily in the dangerously low 51 percent of the vote received by Giscard d'Estaing in the 1974 presidential elections to be attacked too sharply.

Moreover, the most conservative wing of the large employers hopes to utilize the Poujadist mobilization traditions of these layers in order to exert pressure against the reformist inclinations of some employers and the government. Thus, combat employers like F. Michelin, Joly (Babcock), Pinet (Industries Mécaniques of the Parisian region) have joined the political-professional movement of PME (small and middle-sized enterprises), the UNICER formed by Léon Gingembre, president of the PME. The employers and the government have to confront a workers movement seasoned by May 1968 and the exemplary struggles of recent years. They have little hope of winning a German-style contract for "social peace" from the workers and their major organizations. Moreover, the workers are that much less inclined to accept any "sacred union" during this crisis, since the Union de la Gauche (Union of the Left, an electoral bloc of the Communist and Socialist parties) seems to them to be prepared, despite its difficulties, to take over from a policy that has been discredited.

At the same time, a wind of liberalization, if not dissent, is blowing in all the institutions that have remained particularly ossified in France. In the army, in the legal system, and among physicians important currents are challenging their particularly reactionary



The French Working Class... READY BUT WAITING

by J. RENAUD

functioning. In a different social and political situation, big capital and the government would have an interest in lending support to these movements in order to integrate them into a program aimed at modernizing these institutions. But the class polarization is too strong; to accept dissent over their functioning would be to open the road to a dangerous questioning of their functions. In large part, then, the government is compelled to base itself on the most reactionary currents, mired in their obsession for order, which oppose any adaptations and accumulate the risks of explosion.

Rapid erosion of the regime

Giscard commands a most narrow social base and margin for political maneuver in defending the anti-working-class policy of big capital. This contradiction accounts for the incoherent aspects and gradual erosion of his method of governing. Conscious that he is a sub-Bonaparte without influence in the working class, Giscard tried to make some reform moves in order to win over at least the labor aristocracy, which is sensitive to a liberalization of institutions, morals, and political behavior. He very quickly knocked himself out making overly spectacular promises about overly fabulous projects. Up to now, he has been able to carry through only a few reforms (divorce, contraception, right to vote for youth, addition of some women to the government). Although welcome in themselves, these reforms have not won the support of the labor aristocracy, which is much more affected by the slowdown in wages, the increase in social security taxes, and tax concerns. As for the mass of toilers, they were frankly exasperated by the provocative speech of this pretty-boy president, who pretended to forget the 1,500,000 unemployed, the deterioration of the living standards of the workers, and the brutality of the repression of the employers and the police and instead gave a fireside chat about easing social relations.

To judge by the results of legislative by-elections (in Chatellerault, for example) and from polls, there is no doubt about the balance-sheet. The presidential majority has lost ground to the Union de la Gauche, and especially to the Socialist party. Giscard, on the other hand, has admirably succeeded in lending weight to the most conservative currents of his voters. This is probably why he is making many maneuvers of opening toward the Socialist party, perhaps hoping to coopt a possible centro-socialist shift to the present parliamentary majority. The initial results of this maneuver are not very promising. While Mitterrand has already met with Kissinger, he has declined to meet with Giscard. And he asked Gaston Deferre and Mauroy (the Socialist mayors of Lille and Marseille) to get rid of their municipal allies who are part of Giscard's parliamentary majority. Mitterrand has long since understood and explained that for the entire coming period only a coalition with the CP can win the support of the popular masses, expand the audience of the SP among the working class, and, in the final analysis, offer the bour-

geoisie throughout this period of crisis a democratic alternative that imposes respect for the capitalist system and its institutions on the workers movement. Moreover, the revisions in doctrine effected by the CP have now comforted Mitterrand in his analysis.

Giscard probably thinks that he can still maneuver on a European scale. Through the question of the election of a European parliament he hopes to bring the UDR (the Gaullist party) under his thumb, get rid of the die-hard Gaullists, and above all counterpose Mitterrand's fidelity to NATO to the chauvinism of the CP.

But Mitterrand seems to be preparing to parry this. He would abstain on European elections unless they were based on proportional representation, thus driving Giscard to the wall and making gains at the expense of the Communist party, which is mired in its own chauvinism along with a few of the Gaullist old guard.

Hardening of anti-worker policy

The parliamentary majority and the employers are beginning to have doubts about the effectiveness of Giscard's political maneuvers.

The November 29, 1975, issue of *Le Monde* asked: "Why was it not clearly stated that it was not possible to do everything at the same time and that the government, faced with the choice of a grand policy of reforms or the reestablishment of the financial health of the enterprises, opted for the latter?" In fact, there is not much point in ceaselessly chattering about reforms without being able to carry them out; this results in discrediting the regime and strengthening the Union de la Gauche, which claims to be for a real change. It is inept to flatter a Socialist party that is in the process of making big advances, for this amounts to an admission of weakness on the part of the parliamentary majority, which comforts the adversary. As Prime Minister Jacques Chirac said when thinking aloud, it would be better to confront the workers and their organizations with the austerity required by the economic situation and to cynically compel them either to submit to the exigencies of capital or to opt for a test of strength.

In 1975, for the first time since the end of the second world war, the buying power of the great majority of workers stagnated; for those workers affected by unemployment or short-time, buying power was considerably reduced. Price increases during 1975 stood at 9.9% according to the state statistical organization, 14.2% according to the CGT (Confédération Générale du Travail — General Confederation of Labor), and 12.4% according to the CFDT (Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail — French Democratic Confederation of Labor). (We may note in passing that in the confrontation with the employers it would be much more effective if the two trade-union federations agreed on a common index, which would be known by the workers and discussed on a rank-and-file level.) At the same

time, according to J. Graphin in *Le Monde*, the total wage bill in the public and nationalized sector increased 14-15% (if account is taken of the slight increase in the number employed in this sector, nominal wages increased 12-13%).

In its balance-sheet for 1975, *Le Monde* estimated that the buying power of the workers advanced 1.7%, that of the agents of the nationalized sector 2-4%, and that of functionaries 4.8%. These estimates are made on the basis of the state statistics. According to the calculations of the CGT, the buying power of the various categories of employees in the Paris region declined as follows during 1975: functionaries -3.2%, truck drivers -1.2%, skilled and professional workers -2.5%, unskilled workers -2.3%, working-class families with two children -3.2%.

Moreover, let us note in passing that in spite of the long period of expansion that preceded the crisis, and in spite of the wage increases won mainly since 1968, according to the annual inquiry of the state statistical organization into incomes in trade and industry (which involves 13 million workers), 44.4% of wage-earners make less than 1,935 francs a month (US\$435) and 68.9% make less than 2,500 francs a month (US\$562). Up to now we have been speaking of employed workers. But since October 1975 there have been more than one million officially unemployed workers in France. The official figure for January 1976 is 1,017,000 unemployed; the figure of the CGT is 1,400,000. Now, we must be clear about the myth that unemployed workers in France are better off than unemployed workers anywhere else in the world. A recent study of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development indicates that, on the contrary, France has one of the least adequate unemployment compensation programs of the advanced capitalist countries. On the average, unemployed workers in France receive 40% of their normal gross income for a one year period; the figure is 51% for fourteen months in the United States and 68% for one year in West Germany. As for short-time work, lost hours are covered only if the workweek falls below forty hours. In most industries, however, the workweek is forty-three hours or more. Now, above forty hours, the hourly wage is increased 25%. This explains why a skilled worker can lose more than 1,000 francs a month (US\$224) during a period of short-time work. Finally, 50% of those seeking work (that is, 61% of actual unemployed workers) get nothing; 10% get only 297 francs a month, and 10% get only 35% of their wages, that is, 86 francs a day for a wage-earning couple with two children.

With the rise of unemployment, the situation of the unemployment compensation fund has deteriorated constantly (2,000 million francs were paid out in 1974 and 6,000 million in 1975). To correct this employer contributions to the fund would have to be increased. But the regime has preferred to administratively eliminate a whole contingent of workers from unemployment coverage. In addition, a November 29, 1975, circular of the Ministry of Labor instructed health insurance

funds to step up checks on workers who receive payments for more than three months and asked the family allowance funds to cut off payments to workers who have been unemployed for more than six months if they failed to respond to a questionnaire within a certain time limit.

The government will once again be forced to seek a solution to the social security deficit. The brutality of the initial statements of Minister of Finance Fourcade expressed the objectives of this regime very well: "There is no question of further aggravating the burdens of the companies." While the resistance of the workers compelled the regime to divide the charge between the contribution of the employers and the minimum fee paid by the patient, the unofficial plan is to move toward a guarantee of minimum care for all and to compel each social category to cover its own risks and health requirements through complementary insurance according to its financial means.

Concurrently, the essential part of supplementary public expenditures is devoted to supporting the treasuries of companies or to the formation of French, European, or Franco-American groups of companies on an international scale (Citroën-Peugeot, Renault-Berliet, CII-Honeywell-Bull, etc.). The breakdown of the support and pump-priming plans worked out in 1975 could not be clearer:

February 25: 3,600 million francs in aid to the most needy.

March 17: 4,000 million for construction, exports, and investments.

April 22: 15,000 million for credit facilities and reimbursing of exceptional tax increases.

Finally, the September plan: 5,000 million for consumption; 13,000 million for equipment orders; 3,000 million in tax breaks on corporate investment; 9,000 million in postponement of 1975 taxes to 1976.

In order to wage such an economic attack on the working class, the employers and the regime had to erect an increasingly massive repressive barricade against the demands and struggles of the workers and against the workers organizations. Toward the end of 1974 and throughout 1975 this repression became more precise, systematic, and intense. Here is the report of a colloquium on repression held by the two regional unions of the CGT and CFDT in Lyon, cited in the December 4, 1975, issue of the CFDT weekly *Syndicalisme*: "Repression is not a new phenomenon, but it is taking on a greater scope these days. . . . In any event, it is better organized than it was in the past, for the employers are more and more frequently resorting to private militias and strong-arm gangs. In cases of conflict, they systematically call upon the police and seek to oppose strikers to non-strikers or to the public." Repression is developing simultaneously on all fields:

1. Breaking exemplary struggles through the intervention of employer commandos, cops, and, if necessary, the removal of machinery, which is designed to

demoralize the workers and to avoid only too-educational experiences of workers' re-starting production in the service of the strikes. The fact that Vernier-Palliez, the new boss of Renault, has used this anti-strike weapon even at the key Billancourt factory testifies to the determination of the employers and the regime: They will respect no taboo bastion.

2. Intimidation of combative elements: The Renault strike ended with the layoff of seventeen union delegates; three of them were rehired, but fourteen were not. The Paris-Rhône struggle failed, with twenty-two workers laid off, nine of them delegates. Setbacks that result in the elimination of combative workers weigh heavily on the ability to remobilize a factory or a sector.

3. Challenging of trade-union gains:

*The time allotted to trade-union delegates for doing trade-union work is more tightly controlled and the tolerances have been tightened up (for example, at Crédit Lyonnais and Dassault/Argenteuil). Trade-union delegates are now regularly laid off, with or without the agreement of the state labor inspection board. The CFDT estimates that as of September 1975 there were 70% more such layoffs than in September 1974.

*Trade-union representatives are now being prosecuted through indictments and searches after difficult struggles (for example, the CFDT representatives in Caen after the strike at Blaupunkt, the two departmental secretaries of the CGT and CFDT in Drôme).

*In 1975 the employers and the government brandished a new disuasive weapon against the trade-union organizations: fines against trade unions to cover employers' losses during strikes; there have been trials with requests for reparations at Renault, Air France, Naphta-Chimie, Goboriau, Venot, and Pic.

*Finally, at the time of the operations against the movement of soldiers the government directly took on the trade-union apparatus: searches of headquarters and imprisonment of high trade-union leaders.

4. Moreover, a whole current among the employers and the government is pursuing a project of breaking the recognized and acknowledged representative character of the large trade-union organizations. These ideas were taken up by A. Roux, president of the national employers' organization, in his January 1976 report on the Factory Reform: "Notably because of the process by which they are elected, the factory committees have become organs of dissent much more than organs of cooperation. . . . It is necessary to modify the electoral system so that any wage-earner, whether he belongs to the trade union or not, has the right to be a candidate." This wing of the employers and the government dreams of strengthening the "independent" trade unions in the direction of "integrating" them.

The deployment of this whole repressive arsenal is not the result of the fact that the employers and the government happen to be irritated by temporary difficulties. The economic exigencies of this period of crisis, the political fragility of the regime, and Giscard's need

to make liberal maneuvers constrain the employers and the government to make this hardening of repression (even against workers organizations as such) an increasingly important element in their method of government.

The employers and the government do not at all expect the workers to resign themselves to the attempts to make the working class bear the burden of the crisis. They must therefore resort to repressive exhibitions aimed at dissuading the workers and their organizations from struggle because of the price that would have to be paid. But the aim is also to prepare public opinion for a certain "quality of repression" in case the working class becomes exasperated and risks a test of strength.

At the Ghent workers conference of the European sections of the Fourth International in 1973 Ernest Mandel made a prediction that did not seem relevant to France at the time. Now, however, it is gradually coming to pass: "The survival of capitalism and the survival of trade-union freedom are increasingly mutually exclusive. That is the first conclusion that must be drawn. This is a particular application of a much more general rule: The survival of capitalist systems in full structural crisis ever more sharply threatens all the partial democratic rights won by the masses during the rising phase and height of this system."

The workers' response

In face of these attacks and in spite of the obvious weakness of the regime, in no sector have the workers launched movements of any real scope during the past six months. First, we must look at the objective obstacles. In the public sector, relatively spared by unemployment, the workers, traumatized by the failure of the great struggles in the postal system and in public services during autumn 1974, resigned themselves to the wage "adjustments" assured by the contracts signed by the FO and FEN trade unions (Force Ouvrière — Workers Power; Fédération d'Education Nationale — National Education Federation). In the private sector, threats of layoffs and the development of significant partial unemployment largely neutralized struggles. In any event, it was necessary to find methods of action other than simple production halts, which are completely ineffective in the present slump situation.



To these objective difficulties we must above all add a series of particularly powerful subjective brakes:

*The sharp repression and determined resistance of the employers and government to all struggles in all sectors generally acted to ward off many "spontaneous" mobilizations.

*But above all, never have the trade-union leaderships so crudely explained that in the absence of early political electoral outlets, it was useless to become committed to national slogans aimed at centralizing struggles. They were content with two ill-prepared days of action, and in any case December 2, 1975, was a rather disturbing fiasco: The interprofessional and inter-trade-union demonstration in the Paris region attracted no more than 20,000 or 30,000 people, while the traditional mobilizations generally turn out between 80,000 and 100,000 people.

The leaderships of the trade-union federations tried to soften this rejection of any centralized offensive by calling the demonstrations of October 3 and 4, 1975 (which were only half-successes), and above all by an ideological and organizational rivalry that had until then remained the game of the SP and CP.

In preparation for its congress of May 1976 the CFDT leadership wanted to dispense with the tailendism it had been exhibiting toward the CGT since the CGT-CFDT accord of June 26, 1974. The CGT was trying not to suffer too heavily from the sectarian and substitutionist activism of the Communist party in the factories, but above all to limit the progress of the CFDT, which is generally profiting from the social and political recomposition of the working class. On the whole, the CGT is stagnating and even losing ground in a number of sectors. The decline of the membership of CGT unions in the metal industry in the Paris area is well known. The CFDT estimates that it now has 800,000 dues-paying members and 1,040,000 adherents, that is, 80% more than in 1968. Between 1971 and 1974 it grew by 10.76%, that is, by 74,959 adherents. It claims to have won 25,000 new dues-paying members in 1975. These figures have been partially verified by regional polls. Thus, in Upper Normandy, an old region of strong industrial concentration, the CFDT grew from 15,000-20,000 members in 1968 to 30,000-40,000 members in 1975, while the CGT leveled off at 80,000.

These trends are confirmed by Ministry of Labor statistics on the results of elections to factory committees, which concern the major enterprises of the private sector:

| | <u>CFDT</u> | <u>CGT</u> | <u>FO</u> |
|------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| 1972 | 18.9% | 44.1% | 7.6% |
| 1973 | 19.6% | 40.8% | 7.7% |

This little ideological and organizational war, which in any event has not led to any official break, has developed apart from any debate with the workers about the perspectives of the day. This was completely incomprehensible to the working masses and acted mainly to

demobilize them. Nevertheless, the CFDT did gain a capacity for appearing independently, which it had not possessed previously and which has begun to alter the central relations between the two confederations.

In spite of the demobilizing orientation of the leaderships of the union federations, there have been a considerable number of sectoral, local struggles. Various quantitative estimations of these may be made. Extrapolating from figures of the Ministry of Labor, the January 1976 issue of the employers' magazine *Entreprise* reported that 3.7 million work days had been lost through strikes in 1975. That is as high as the total for the three preceding years. During the period of the July-August vacations, the CGT estimated that 210 factories were on strike, seventy of them under occupation. The November 12, 1975, issue of *Vie Ouvrière*, the weekly of the CGT, reported 100 struggles during the first two weeks of October, fifty-eight of them with occupations.

These quantitative figures give a small idea of the potential of struggle that has been maintained despite unemployment and the blows of the regime.

But the types of slogans, forms of actions, and experiences that are now found systematically in hundreds of isolated struggles shed much more light on the features that are ripening in the depths of the working class and that will shape the future intense mobilizations that the upturn and the coming economic difficulties threaten to stimulate.

Le Monde's balance-sheet for 1975 testified to this in its own way: "There was not just one Lip affair; there were a hundred. From *Manvest* in the Vosges to *Teppaz* near Lyon; from *Griffet* in Marseille to *Grandin* or *Triton* in the Parisian region, not to forget *Ideal-Standard* or *COMSIP*." Occupation, sale of inventories, and restarting of production to aid the struggle are becoming usual methods of struggle, even in the workers bastions dominated by the CP and the CGT. Thus are developing the experiences that are preparing thousands of workers to rapidly advance toward a generalization of workers control and dual power during the coming central confrontations.

As for the most immediate targets: the struggles of the Rhône-Progil factory in Grenoble and the Rhône-Poulenc factory in Pont de Claix have popularized the demand for thirty-six hours work for forty hours' pay as a response to the spread of total and partial unemployment. At the same time, entire federations have integrated the demand for a thirty-five hour week into their platforms (the CFDT federation in the postal system and banks; the CGT federation in the banks). The November 29, 1975, issue of *Rouge* reported on the experiences in Department 54 of Renault and in the *Laudin* and *Gyr* factory in Montluçon. In these two cases, the employed workers rejected layoffs and reintegrated laid-off workers themselves.

These are the demands and forms of struggle that can



carry the central battle against the high level of unemployment (1 million) envisaged in the seventh plan of the government.

And paradoxically, the tactic of fragmentation of struggles practiced by the CGT and CFDT leaderships, as well as the sectarian initiatives taken by CP factory cells over the head of the CGT, compel the reformist leaderships to soften their rejection of a central workers offensive by appealing to the local experiences that permit these isolated struggles to be fueled despite everything. Thus, at Ideal-Standard there was discreet talk of producing some gadget; the Triton workers, who are still on strike, decided to deliver a machine that had been ordered by the USSR for its truck factory under construction in Kama. Likewise, the Griffet strikers sold one of their machines to Libya. These are the sorts of experiences that have been undergone in the fiefs of the CP, experiences that will be remembered by thousands of workers.

Finally, we must take note of the trend toward the link-up of the struggles of youth in training with the local organizations of the workers movement. In Paris, for example, seventy-five of the representatives of the departmental unions of the CFDT and CGT participated in a meeting of six striking Paris technical institutes held in a room at the labor exchange. The CGT officials were unable to ward off this proposal from the coordinating body, in which they knew revolutionary militants were active and recognized.

Likewise, during the recent struggle of the students of Nantes, a demonstration was supported by the departmental unions of the CGT, CFDT, and FO. The delegation of workers representatives (in which the CGT was absent) accompanied student representatives to the president of the university to show him that they were supporting the movement. This trend allows for the transformation of the nature of the struggles of youth and for their integration into the general battle to go beyond reformist obstacles in the workers movement, within the framework of a correct united-front tactic.

Conditions of the revolutionary Marxist intervention

Our intervention is shaped by three particular elements. First of all the state of mind of the masses and the workers vanguard in the current political situation: Unemployment, inflation, the repression of struggles, and the failure of Giscard's promises have widely spread the idea that "if things are going to change, we have to get rid of this regime." In spite of its internal polemics, which are not very comprehensible, the Union de la Gauche increasingly appears as a possible and necessary alternative. The by-elections and polls are rather significant indications of this. But in the absence of any important trade-union campaign and of any struggle of significant weight in the political situation, this political change does not seem to the masses to be related to their direct intervention and the development of their struggles. The workers are waiting, attentive and concerned, but very passive, for the battle of the political apparatuses and their preparation for the elections.

A broad workers vanguard has been considerably politicized.

*The behavior of the reformist leaderships in struggles like those in the postal system or at Chausson, their scandalous passivity during the period following summer vacations, and their groveling during Prime Minister Chirac's offensive against the movement of soldiers are all experiences that have very concretely educated the vanguard about what electoralism means.

*The Portuguese revolution has provided illustrations for revolutionary Marxist propaganda on workers control, the independent organization of the workers, the seizure of power, the transition, the socialism of workers councils.

*These militants are increasingly convinced that the electoralism of the reformist leaderships delivers the workers to the crisis plan of the employers. These militants are convinced of the validity of our alternative proposals (the urgency of a workers counteroffensive based on unifying slogans; the coordination, generalization, and centralization of struggles leading to a test of strength with the regime in action). But they ask us: On what "spontaneous" movement of workers and on what organized forces can all this be based? In the meantime, they increasingly refuse to give an impetus to broad movements for which they have difficulty seeing any outlet.

Neither voluntarism nor exemplarism will enable us to deal with this complex situation and to offer satisfactory responses to the workers vanguard: "Let's drive ahead, that will knock down or expose the traitorous leaderships."

But any foot-dragging limited to making systematic sniping criticisms of these leaderships would not be credible either. We have to hammer away regularly and pedagogically along the axes of our action program, systematically confronting the trade-union leaderships with our proposals.



The second element, of course, is the influence of an economic upturn, even a limited one, on removing obstacles to struggles. The government is going to hail this upturn. The employers will take advantage of it to make up the ground they have lost during two years' of difficulties. Hiring will not be increased, but workweeks and production speeds will be. Prices will rise, but wages will be held down. These are factors that will stimulate wage demands and the struggle against the deterioration of working conditions. The strikes of Val-lourec and Solmer are harbingers of this. We must be attentive to a possible turn in the cycle of struggles and must prepare it through systematic and hard-hitting agitation around the central slogans of our action program.

The third element is the rapid recomposition of the workers movement that is occurring, which tends to modify the conditions of our intervention. After six years of beating around the bush, the Communist party, under the pressure of a Socialist party in the process of becoming the largest workers party on the electoral field, upset by the imminence of a probable victory of the Union de la Gauche prepared by the permanence of the economic and political crisis of the bourgeoisie and the radicalization of the workers, and confronted by the development of the crisis of the Stalinist movement, has suddenly decided to make its choice. In its doctrinal revisions it is speeding up its evolution toward a more consistently Social Democratic orientation: abandoning of reference to the dictatorship of the proletariat, the theory of the march to socialism through continuous democratization of bourgeois economic and social structures and institutions, submission to the verdict of parliamentary elections, broadening of the electoral coalition to include the entire people. In its relations with the international Stalinist movement and the Communist party of the Soviet Union, priority is clearly given to its national party interests within the framework of privileged relations with the Communist parties of southern Europe. This is the meaning of the French Communist

party's rapprochement with the Italian and Spanish Communist parties and the distance it has taken from bureaucratic repression in the USSR. The French CP is thus asserting its claim to be considered as and to rapidly become the primary reformist government party.

But the ideological rapprochement between the two workers parties (the SP and the CP) will only intensify their rivalries. Moreover, the SP is uneasy about a Communist party that may manage to alter not only its doctrinal references and its model of socialism, but also its public image and its Stalinist behavior (which is far from having happened up to now). Such an evolution would intensify the fascination already felt by many SP and CFDT members for the great effective force represented by the Communist party.

The doctrinal revisions of the CP and the debate on basic questions between the CP and the SP reintroduce a strategic debate on the problem "reform or revolution" into the entire workers movement.

The ideological evolution of the CP compels it to redouble sectarian and substitutionist activism in the factories in an attempt to gain credibility for its claim that the Communist party is the "only party of the working class." This orientation will intensify the difficulties of the CGT leadership, which is already distressed about the progress of the CFDT.

In principle, the evolution of the Communist party clears the way for the growth of the organization of revolutionary Marxists. The CP and all the reformist leaderships are conscious of this. With the complete unanimity illustrated by the campaign for normalization Mairé has unleashed in the CFDT, they will redouble their virulence in trying to limit our influence, particularly in the trade-union bodies, and this just at the moment when they are preparing themselves to govern. We must understand that while political debate is more than ever indispensable, only our ability to develop a genuine mass base can really neutralize bureaucratic repression. □

FEBRUARY 1976 PLENUM OF THE International Executive Committee OF THE FOURTH INTERNA- TIONAL

A plenary session of the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International was held in Europe in mid-February 1976. Members of the IEC and observers from sympathizing sections from some 30 countries were present.

The political discussion at the IEC centered around the problems of the Portuguese revolution and the civil war in Angola. Three tendencies emerged on the first question, two on the second. Theses on an intermediary balance-sheet of the Portuguese revolution and a resolution supporting the MPLA military camp against its opponents in the civil war were adopted by large majorities. These documents are in the process of being published in the press of the Fourth International (the text of the Theses on the Portuguese Revolution follows in this issue of INPRECOR; the resolution on Angola will be published in the March 18 issue of INPRECOR).

The IEC Plenum also heard informational reports on current developments in Spain as well as on the civil war in Lebanon. It commemorated the death of Comrade George Jungclas, a founding member of the Fourth International and its German section who had been a member of the IEC for 25 years. The Plenum voted motions honoring two Angolan comrades killed in the civil war, an Arab comrade killed in the Qarantina massacre in Beirut, and the Argentine comrades killed by reactionary murderers.

The IEC Plenum resolved some organizational disputes that had arisen in the ranks of the Fourth International in various countries; a new and larger United Secretariat was elected; a call was issued convening the Eleventh World Congress of the Fourth International (Fifth Congress since reunification), and a provisional agenda for that Congress and the modalities of the pre-congress written discussion were set.

All these questions were decided by unanimous votes. Once again the Fourth International has shown that it has learned to combine lively and frank political debate, even when conducted in public, with the maintenance of organizational unity and the strengthening of the common organizational framework of the movement.

The proposed provisional agenda for the Eleventh World Congress is as follows:

1. World political situation
2. Intermediary balance-sheet of the Portuguese revolution
3. European perspectives document
4. Theses on the Arab revolution
5. Balance-sheet of the Indochinese revolution
6. Theses on women's oppression and the women's liberation movement
7. Organizational norms of the Fourth International
8. The outgoing international leadership's activity report
9. Election of the International Executive Committee

If a revolutionary situation breaks out in Spain before the Eleventh World Congress, Spain will be a special point on the agenda. Likewise, any other important change in the world situation may lead the United Secretariat or the World Congress delegates themselves to add additional points to the agenda.

THESES ON THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

November 25, 1975, opened a new stage in the "revolutionary process" in Portugal. For broad sectors of workers, it is more evident that any new progress of the Portuguese revolution now depends on the capacity of the working class to increase its degree of self-organization and to take a step forward in the extension and centralization of the workers commissions and in the generalization of workers control in order to push through working-class solutions in the economic and political realms, independent of the relations among the various factions of the army.

The defeat of the officers of the so-called "military left" and of a part of the vanguard of soldiers, in spite of its demoralizing effects on a layer of workers, cannot be considered a defeat of the toiling masses. An important recomposition is going on in the workers movement. The "revolutionary process" is going through a limited retreat, but the working class has not suffered a setback in a frontal and open battle against the employers and their state.

After attaining the highest peak of mobilization during the preceding weeks, the working class has not lost its capacity to resist the attacks of the bourgeois state, nor has it lost its potential of combativity. The factors that have determined the outlines of the Portuguese revolution since December 1974 have not disappeared, even though the dialectical relationships among these factors have changed; these factors are radically revealing the limits of the semi-spontaneous and semi-conscious movement of the masses that was dominant during this first phase. Confronted by a profound social and economic crisis, the Portuguese working class remains in position to recover its strength, to reorganize its ranks after an inevitable pause, and to relaunch its attacks against the capitalist system. But the bourgeoisie, with the aid of imperialism, now commands increased political, economic, and repressive means with which to attempt to drive back the revolutionary process and then drown it in blood.

Thus, tests of strength are inherent in the dynamic of the present situation. Revolutionary Marxists must prepare both themselves and the toiling masses for these tests of strength. The experience of November 25 must serve as an aid to the working class in concentrating its forces and organizing the preparation for these decisive battles.

I.

After December 1974, and more radically since March 1975, the revolutionary rise has increasingly taken on the features characteristic of all revolutions in the imperialist countries. The main outlines of this revolutionary rise were shaped by the combination of four factors whose reciprocal relations and respective weight were modified by November 25, but which will once again exert their effects during the next stage of the Portuguese revolution.

1 The proliferation of wildcat strikes during the period following April 25, 1974, the purge actions (saneamentos) in response to economic sabotage, and the initiatives of "popular vigilance" (September 1974 and March 1975) reflected the emergence of a broad workers vanguard prepared to act independently of the Stalinist and Social Democratic reformist apparatuses. The ranks of this vanguard were made up of a unification of seasoned cadres of the working class and a new generation of workers who joined the ranks of the proletariat during the years of decline and crisis of the Salazarist regime. The openly antistrike policy of the Portuguese CP during the first few months after April 25, 1974, and the quantitative and qualitative weakness of the CP's cadres made it easier for this broad vanguard to play an important role in the strategic factories of the Lisbon industrial region and, although less massively, in the Porto region as well. This vanguard was to absorb, at a higher

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level and in a more generalized manner, the gains of the latest phase of workers struggles in capitalist Europe — workers commissions, experiments in workers control, linkup with the soldiers, and so on. This vanguard initiated a process that was to expand and spread with the end of 1974 and the beginning of 1975.

2 The impact of this workers vanguard — in spite of its relatively limited size, its divisions, and its political confusion — must be seen in relation to the objective dynamic of workers struggles determined by the very weakness of Portuguese imperialism, by the deep structural crisis of entire sectors of industry, sharpened by the international capitalist recession. The upsurge of the movement for workers demands, initially centered around demands for wage increases and reductions in hours, led to a sharp attack on the rate of profit of a capitalism whose development had been based on low wages and very long hours and whose production was oriented toward exports. The resulting imbalances, strongly accentuated by deliberate economic sabotage, placed initiatives of factory occupations, workers control, and demands for nationalization on the agenda. With layoffs and unemployment on the rise since the beginning of 1975, the cumulative process of strikes-occupations-workers control went beyond the limits of the largest factories of the Lisbon region and extended to branches in which small and middle-sized companies predominated, the sector of distribution as well as the banks and insurance companies. The conjunction between this effervescence of struggles and the mobilization of March 1975 led to a wave of nationalizations that in turn stimulated the emergence of more advanced demands and bolstered the weight of the workers vanguard.

The interaction between the advance of the "revolutionary process" and the structural and conjunctural crisis of the Portuguese economy produced a situation in which normal capitalist functioning became impossible,

while the dominant features of the market economy were not eliminated. It is here that the overall demands put forward by the advanced wing of the Portuguese proletariat — reconversion of the production of entire branches, socialist planning, generalized workers control — have their roots. In addition, this situation impelled many workers commissions (for example, Setnave, Lisnave, Sacor) to initiate discussions on the nature of the socialist economy, the function of workers control, and the possibility and necessity of a centralization of the embryonic organs of dual power.

3 The rapid succession of political events, cabinet crises, and more or less violent clashes among the fundamental political forces and social classes propelled the mass movement onto the political scene and assured its growing politicization, even though the effects of forty-eight years of rule by a corporatist regime and the lack of any experiences in national mobilization were not rapidly dissipated. The sharpness of the economic and social crisis and the very nature of the successive political difficulties (debate over the Intersindical), the República affair, the various MFA documents, the role of the organs of "popular power" when the SP and PPD left the government, etc.) resulted in the process of politicization beginning to become rooted in the organs that the workers themselves created in the course of their struggle: workers commissions, moradores (tenants) commissions, peasant leagues. During the demonstrations of August 20 and November 16, 1975, this phenomenon came to the fore with undeniable clarity; its repercussions within the CP in large part account for the maneuvering of the CP leadership. This phenomenon constitutes one of the elements that could facilitate the transformation of these instruments into effective structures of dual power.

Under the impact of these forces, the pace of development of workers struggles was very rapid. Now, for the

first time in four decades, the working class was able to come forward as a class and constitute an independent workers movement. The dialectic that developed among the structure of the working class, its history, and the sudden effervescence of struggles — occurring in a context in which the old regime's apparatus of social control was crumbling without being replaced — was expressed in a very deep uneven development of class consciousness, a combined process of construction of traditional organs of the workers movement (unions and parties) and of instruments of the workers themselves (workers commissions, moradores commissions), a fluidity of political influences among the toiling masses.

An erroneous comprehension of these dominant features of the revolutionary upsurge leads to two errors. The first consists of overlooking the decisive importance of this workers vanguard (strongly rooted in the strategic factories), the modification in the relationship of forces between the Stalinist and Social Democratic reformist apparatuses and this workers vanguard and the consequent possibilities of initiatives, and the growing and increasingly decisive role of the organs of proletarian democracy. The second consists of big underestimation of the still broadly majority influence of the reformist apparatuses within the working class, of the necessity of winning the majority of the working class, of the importance of a correct united-front policy toward the reformist organizations, of the necessity of a systematic political battle around these themes within the broad vanguard itself and the far left, and of the capacity for maneuver and cooptation still commanded by the reformist parties, a capacity that is increased by the political confusion of this vanguard and the weakness of the revolutionary Marxist organization.

4 The interaction between the dynamic of workers struggles and the crisis of the army — a product of the army's function of dominating political and social life, which accorded it its role in April 25, and the weakness of the structures of political domination commanded by the bourgeoisie — facilitated the penetration into the ranks of the soldiers of the process of self-organization that was being consolidated within the working class.

The two attempted coups (September 1974 and March 1975) introduced an initial element of breakup of the hierarchical relations between soldiers and officers. Military discipline began to be challenged. In the eyes of the soldiers, acceptance or rejection of an order was justified according to the political options of the commanders. Little by little, political debate came to coexist with the system of military authority. The splits in the hierarchy and the confrontations that occurred within the MFA under the effects of social polarization stimulated centrifugal tendencies. In the Lisbon military region, the integration bodies set up by the MFA beginning in October 1974, especially the Assemblies of Unit Delegates, were able to fulfill their functions

only partially, because of the radicalization of the rank-and-file soldiers. Thus, for the soldiers, the way was open for the search for their own channels of expression both for their material demands and for the determination of their political options in face of the choices made by the hierarchy. After September 1975, the independent movement of soldiers became a new and decisive element in the deep crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus.

The relative disintegration and paralysis of the army in turn allowed the mass movement to take many initiatives without clashing with any formidable and effective repressive apparatus. The available space for the proliferation of extremely advanced experiences (factory occupations, land occupations, initial experiments in the creation of self-defense organs, utilization of the radio by the organization of wounded war veterans (ADFA), siege of the Ministry of Labor by the metalworkers, encirclement of São Bento by the construction workers) was broadened by this decomposition of the instruments of repression. But, concurrently, there was a consequent illusion about the degree of paralysis of this army and about the capacities of military initiative still commanded by the hierarchy. Consequently, the objective elements that would have compelled maximum development of self-defense were weakened. Finally, this crisis favored the grip of the orientation of the reformists and centrists who falsely locate the center of gravity of the "revolutionary process" in the army itself, thus sacrificing the independence and autonomy of the movement of the toiling masses.

II.

5 In July-August 1975, in face of the deepening of the revolutionary upsurge that was expressed in the strengthening of the workers commissions, the moradores commissions, etc., in the deep shaking of an army that was being transformed into a political battle ground, and in the acute crisis of bourgeois political leadership, the bourgeois camp devoted itself essentially to the restoration of a coherent instrument of political authority and of a repressive apparatus with some degree of effectiveness.

The growing polarization of social forces brought the crisis of the MFA to a head. Under the hammer blows of the workers, the MFA could no longer fully carry out its Bonapartist function; its unity was openly broken, and it was therefore incapable of initiating a policy of repression. Then, the majority of the officers of the MFA got together and launched an offensive leading to a recomposition of forces within the military hierarchy in order to permit the creation of a repressive striking force and in order to stabilize the institutions of the bourgeois state.



The ruling class did not command a state apparatus and political structures capable of breaking the revolutionary upsurge; simultaneously, however, the level of self-organization and mass consciousness was still by far insufficient for a qualitative leap in the "revolutionary process." Hence, the primary objective of the bourgeoisie became an offensive to reconstitute the bourgeois order through the legal and parliamentary road.

The campaign launched by the Soares leadership of the SP fit in perfectly with this project of reasserting the authority of the Constituent Assembly and the institutions of the bourgeois state against the workers commissions, moradores commissions, etc., all of which, as the SP itself put it, constituted a "parallel power" to the bourgeois state apparatus. On the field of struggle against "anarcho-populism," the PPD dogged the steps of the SP, as did the "group of nine."

The division of the working class, provoked by the SP leadership and fed by the orientation and methods of the Stalinist leadership of the CP, impeded a new leap forward of the revolution. It facilitated the open re-emergence of the right and the far right, without any determined response by the working class. The attacks on the headquarters of the CP, the Intersindical, and the far left, combined with the organization of terrorist initiatives by the far right, showed what the dynamic of this inversion of the "revolutionary process," an inversion initiated by the leadership of the SP, would have led to if it had continued and succeeded.

At first, the great maneuvers of Costa Gomes, Soares, and the group of nine seemed to be making gains. A process of recomposition of forces was going on in the bourgeois camp. Militarily, the appeals for discipline were getting a favorable response within a hierarchy that was regaining its self-confidence and was seeking to bolster its positions from the bases it commanded in the North. The petty bourgeoisie, more particularly the smallholding peasantry of the North, offered a social fulcrum for the defenders of "order" against "anarchy." Indeed, this peasantry, which had been promised wondrous miracles by the MFA "dynamization" campaigns, was hard hit by the economic crisis and by the government's inability to respond to their most immediate problems (prices of fertilizers, seed prices, credits, purchase prices of products in comparison to sales prices, etc.). In addition, the overlapping links between the smallholding peasantry and the working class in the North created favorable ground for expanding the audience for the themes being developed by the SP leadership among politically backward layers of workers integrated into branches of industry in profound crisis. This was one of the most negative features of the serious political division of the proletariat, for the uneven development of class consciousness took the form of a division between the various regions of the country.

6 At the moment when the bourgeois counteroffensive seemed to be achieving an initial success with the resignation of the fifth government and the establishment of the Pinheiro de Azevedo government, a new upsurge developed in the proletarian camp, an upsurge which combined the affirmation of the broad workers vanguard on the political scene, the development of the autonomous movement of soldiers independent of any reference to the MFA and even against the MFA, and the initiation of a wave of demands by entire sectors of the working class (metals, construction, textiles, agricultural workers). In this context, the crisis of the fifth government of Vasco Gonçalves, which advocated a program combining reforms and austerity measures, must not be analyzed solely as a function of the offensive of the bourgeoisie toward the restoration of the authority of the institutions of the bourgeois state, but also in relation to the instinctive push of significant sectors of the mass movement toward workers democracy, toward the strengthening of the workers commissions and moradores commissions, and of soldiers toward soldiers commissions.

The conjunction of these various movements illuminated the fundamental relationship of social forces that had previously been obscured by the division within the workers movement, the sudden shakeups in the government, and the realignment of forces in the military hierarchy. The period that opened in August 1975 was thus characterized by the highest level of confluence of the factors molding the dynamic of the Portuguese revolution:

a) The autonomous movement of soldiers broke out in the North, stimulated by the initiatives of the SUV, a united vanguard grouping struggling for the emergence of soldiers commissions and their linkup with the workers and moradores commissions. The SUV conjuncturally played a unifying role within the working class to some extent and facilitated a new upsurge of mobilizations. In Lisbon in September it also functioned as a mediating force between the workers vanguard and broader ranks of the class. But most important, it disintegrated the keystone of the project of all those represented by Pinheiro de Azevedo: an army capable of making sure that the decisions of the government of "order and discipline" would be carried out. It even defeated the attempt to reconstitute a military striking force: the AMI (Military Intervention Group).

b) The instinctive push of the masses toward the creation of organs of proletarian democracy was strengthened. Coordinating bodies of workers commissions at branch levels arose in some cases. Regionally, the first steps were taken toward the formation of inter-commissions of moradores and Popular Assemblies. Of course, because of the lack of existence of a revolutionary party, the lack of tradition of the workers movement, and the social and political heterogeneity of the working class, this movement was very uneven. The degree of representativeness of the moradores commissions and the tasks they assumed were uneven (this was even true of the workers commissions).

The divisions within the workers movement were reproduced within these bodies and often led to a multiplication of moradores commissions in the neighborhoods, thus transforming these commissions into simple appendages of political organizations, integrating them into sectarian maneuvers and thus placing a question mark over their capacity to become centralized and carry out genuine initiatives of "social control."

The development of the moradores commissions reached its limits rather rapidly. After drawing their spirit from housing occupations, the moradores commissions proved incapable of providing solutions to other social problems: transport, health, supplies, structural crisis of housing. A qualitatively higher level of centralization would have been necessary to begin to resolve such questions. Here, the semi-spontaneous mass movement was exhausted. Only a policy of the broadest unity in action could have enabled the first steps toward centralization to be taken; the sectarianism of the centrist and reformist organizations made this impossible. But in the more specific realm of the workers commissions, the basic trend was toward a growing homogenization, toward an increase in the degree to which they represented the workers, and an expansion of their functions. In fact, the workers commissions were much more able to provide partial solutions, even at the branch level, and the framework in which they developed limited the effects of political division and made their initial centralization easier (CUF, textiles, etc.).

c) The upturn of the movement for workers demands was intermeshed with these two processes. First, the conjunction between the level of self-organization and the depth of the economic crisis strengthened the strategic position of the workers commissions in the process of working out and concretizing the demands for reconversion and socialist planning and the initiatives of workers control. Second, more radical demands were raised and more radical forms of action were taken by the more backward sections of the working class. Finally, for the first time, the movement for demands clashed frontally with the government and assimilated this new dimension.

The paralysis of the sixth government in face of these mobilizations indicated the depth of the crisis in the army and the consequent impossibility of using the army for a direct attack on the mass movement. The "capture" of São Bento Palace and the "strike" of the Pinheiro government symbolized the depth of the crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus and the political leadership of the bourgeoisie.

The dominant features of the general situation were then as follows: The disintegration of the state apparatus attained a very high level under the blows dealt by the autonomous movement of soldiers, which was "infecting" even troops considered "reliable." The revolutionary upsurge was not meeting any repressive force capable of containing it. But at the same time, this upsurge did not give rise to sufficiently generalized and, above all, centralized bodies of workers power. The specific char-

acter of the period lay in this desynchronization, the extreme form of which could only be transitory. This lack of generalization and centralization of the organs of the toiling masses themselves sharpened the difficulties in overcoming the uneven development of consciousness and forms of organization of the working class, in merging the various components of the working class with the backbone of the revolution represented by the workers of the industrial belt around Lisbon and the agricultural proletariat of the Alentejo, and in responding to the political divisions of the toiling masses.

Inasmuch as the unity in action exhibited on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975, was not able to be institutionalized in effective organs of proletarian democracy, this division created favorable ground for reaction to make use of the petty bourgeoisie — which had taken a wait-and-see attitude on March 11, 1975 — and allowed reaction to consolidate a real social base as a bridgehead of counterrevolution in some regions.

7 After March 1975 the SP openly revealed its counterrevolutionary function, as soon as the question, Which class shall rule? was clearly posed. The form and import of the SP counteroffensive were determined by the very characteristics of the revolutionary upsurge: the level attained by the spontaneous anticapitalist actions of the masses; the unquestionable manifestation of the embryonic organs of workers power; the weakness of the bourgeois state apparatus, incapable of breaking the mass movement; the fragility of the bourgeoisie's instruments of political rule.

Under the cover of respect for and defense of the "popular will," the SP threw itself into deliberate support of the institutions and authority of the bourgeois state against the forms of self-organization and direct expression of the workers in the factories, in the agricultural enterprises, the neighborhoods, and the army. At that time, the SP put itself forward as the advance point of the counterrevolution; it aimed at guaranteeing the difficult transition from the fall of the corporatist state to the establishment of a bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Trotsky characterized an analogous process this way: "As for the German revolution of 1918, it was not at all the democratic completion of a bourgeois revolution, but a proletarian revolution decapitated by the Social Democracy; more exactly, it was a bourgeois counterrevolution which, after its victory over the proletariat, was compelled to conserve fallacious democratic appearances."

In the tradition of the German Social Democracy in 1919, the Soares leadership made itself the agent of what could be called the "democratic counterrevolution": the defense and consolidation of a bourgeois state through the elimination of the organs of the workers themselves while nevertheless maintaining the possibilities of action and freedom of expression for the reformist parties of the workers movement. A parliamentary framework would then assure the SP, which

was strong electorally, a role as an intermediary between the bourgeoisie and the working class. Whatever the chances of success for such an operation, which historically has always been followed by a rapid advance of reaction, this was nonetheless the basic project of Soares, Rego, Zenha. For this reason, Portuguese capital and European imperialism unanimously supported the counterattack launched by the SP leadership. It is true that during June and July 1975 some sectors of workers participated in the demonstrations of the SP for motives that cannot be assimilated to the actual and coherent project of the SP leadership. In the minds of these workers, an anticapitalist will was combined with a reaction against the bureaucratic and antidemocratic methods of the CP in the trade unions and municipal governments, which the Social Democratic leadership was able to make use of. Thus, from this angle, these demonstrations had a contradictory character expressing both the profoundly uneven development of class consciousness and the consequences of the CP's orientation and sectarianism.

The Soares offensive took on broad scope just at the time when the effects of social polarization on the MFA revealed the MFA's inability to play a pivot role in constructing a state apparatus after April 25. The assembly of the MFA in June 1975 reflected the social and political confrontations that were racking society and the army, confrontations that had repercussions on the MFA. The assembly's adoption of the document on "popular power" — a "popular power" that was to be integrated into the institutions of the bourgeois state apparatus and was not intended to replace that apparatus — expressed the MFA's inability to effectively counter a mass movement that it even seemed to sanction.

This campaign against "anarcho-populism" logically led the SP to support the interventions of the sixth government, from the occupation of the radio and television stations to the destruction of the Radio Renascença broadcasting tower to the purge of radicalized officers. Moreover, the SP frontally opposed the movement for workers demands which, beginning in September 1975, drew sectors of the working class into action on a national scale (metals, construction).

The conjunction between the dynamic unleashed by the mobilizations of the SP and the divisions within the working class created favorable conditions for a strong reemergence of the bourgeois parties. By making use of some sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, the CDS and particularly the PPD made significant appearances on the political scene and presented themselves as the most consistent defenders of the capitalist order.

In the North, this was reflected in the key role played by these parties in the assemblies for "order and discipline." Beginning in November 1975, these mobilizations of reaction moved from the political field to the organization of a massive battle against the agrarian reform (first concentration of small, middle-sized, and large landowners of Rio Maior), in which the far right assumed an increasingly active role.

On the eve of November 25 the SP began to find itself in a state of disequilibrium under the pressure of the growing polarization between the two fundamental social classes. On the one hand, in the North the PPD and the CDS were seizing the initiative and transforming the mobilizations in support of the sixth government into demonstrations of reaction, while the SP was increasingly less capable of mobilizing its working-class base to support Pinheiro de Azevedo. On the other hand, in the industrial and agricultural South, where the SP faced massive mobilizations, its links with the working class, the agricultural workers, and the smallholding peasants became increasingly tense.

There were many reasons why the potential in October-November 1975 for a break between the policy of the Soares leadership and the rank-and-file organized or influenced by the SP was still not concretized in an open crisis, in the emergence of opposition tendencies of rather precise outlines, or in significant splits.

First, the sectarian policy of the CP, which reached its peak when "barricades" were built against the SP demonstration in July, reunited the Social Democratic rank and file around the leadership. Second, the CP's bureaucratic grip on the Intersindical, its manipulation of the press and the other mass media, and its crude monopolization of municipal governments lent credibility to the democratic proclamations of the SP leadership. In addition, the ultraleft course followed by most of the organizations of the so-called revolutionary left was an impediment to chipping away SP workers who were critical of the leadership's policy and hostile to the bureaucratic methods of the CP. Finally, the very history of the SP, its lack of tradition as an organized party in the working class, and the low political level of its membership limited the expression of the party's internal contradictions in the form of an alternative orientation and favored the anticommunist maneuvers of the leadership.

8 The overall reformist project of the CP consists of getting into the bourgeois state apparatus so as to subject it to a process of "democratization," which objectively implies the survival of that apparatus. Whatever the tactical turns, the overall project of the CP remains the establishment of "advanced democracy." The MFA is only an element that can be used to try to concretize this project, even if it acquired a major importance for a whole period. Within this perspective, the mass movement is thus deprived of all autonomy and must serve solely to prop up this plan.

The decisive role of the MFA in the overthrow of the corporatist state and the nature of the crisis of the institutions of the old regime provoked by April 25 determine the concrete forms of the CP strategy and shed light on its tactic of penetrating the institutions of the bourgeois state. The main points of this tactic are the attempt to monopolize the municipal administrations and the mass media, the control of the trade-union structure inherited from the previous period (law on trade-

union unity), and, above all, the winning of influence in the MFA, essentially in its leadership bodies: the MFA assembly and the Council of the Revolution.

Hence, the CP was to systematically put the emphasis on the unity of the MFA, which is presented as the motive force and guarantor of the process of "democratization" of the state apparatus and the channeler of the mass movement. The class independence of the workers movement is sacrificed and the relationship of forces within the military becomes the determining factor in all initiatives to mobilize the workers. In the context of the deepening of a prerevolutionary situation, the oscillations in the application of this orientation must inevitably be numerous; the ways in which these oscillations are carried out will be determined by various factors.

The crisis of the MFA, symbolized by the Tancos assembly and the emergence of the autonomous soldiers movement, forced the CP to hastily revise the formulation of its orientation. It sought to utilize the soldiers movement to push for a realignment of forces within the MFA and to aim at a recomposition of the MFA. At the same time, the rise of the mass movement and its growing degree of self-organization, combined with the partial challenging of the CP's control of the Intersindical, forced the CP to readjust its tactics and hook up with this radicalization. The CP created the provisional secretariat of the workers commissions of the Lisbon industrial belt, which was intended to enable the CP to contain the push toward strengthening of the autonomous bodies and direct it toward the objective of reshuffling the civilian and military bodies of power. In this perspective, the workers commissions are intended to be, in reality, comanagement councils in nationalized industry; the moradores commissions are supposed to be bodies that complement the bourgeois state apparatus on the local level, in the sense in which they were "legalized" by the MFA document of June 1975.

These tactical adaptations are not simply the product of a policy of maneuver, but are also expressions of pressure from the CP ranks themselves for the development of democratic forms of direct representation and initiatives of workers control. This pressure can be reflected all the more easily within the CP since there are very few party cadres capable of defending the fundamental orientation of the leadership and of politically training the young militant rank and file, which has many links with the workers vanguard and the militants of the far left and is undergoing many experiences of struggle.

In addition, the absence of a long practice of class collaboration in the framework of bourgeois parliamentary democracy, the lack of legalist traditions among the party ranks, and the consequences of the struggle against the corporatist dictatorship result in a certain adaptation on the part of the CP cadres to the spirit of the toiling masses, which has given rise to more than one illusion among the centrist currents about the real nature of the CP's strategic orientation.

The development of the class struggle during this period was to undermine the project of the CP; the beginning of the crisis of the CP — at the end of August and during September — was the product of the dynamic of class confrontation. On the one hand, the CP's links with the Soviet bureaucracy, its structural independence of the bourgeoisie, and its relations with the working class do not make the CP, unlike the SP, a viable instrument for initiating a counteroffensive to assert the authority of the bourgeois state. On the other hand, the CP's program of "democratization of the state apparatus," its opposition to the independence of the mass movement, and its hostility to workers democracy place it in contradiction to the activity and aspirations of the advanced wing of the mass movement.

The possibilities for the exacerbation of the contradictions within the CP, of the CP being bypassed, and even of partial breakups could not be realized in practice because of the ultraleftism and triumphalism of the centrist current and because of the sectarianism of the Maoist current. Hence, the CP was able to take advantage of its capacities of intervention and its organizational strength to maximally limit its loss of control over sectors of the working class.

9 The influence of the far left — linked to its quantitative importance, the place it occupies in some key sectors of industry, and the ability of the workers vanguard to take initiatives — increased significantly during this period. The rapid pace of the radicalization of layers of young workers, the atmosphere of permanent political debate, amplified by the mass media, the willingness to engage in political discussion among significant sectors of the masses, the emergence of the autonomous movement of soldiers, and the space created by the disintegration of the repressive apparatus all created propitious conditions for an expansion of the audience of the organizations of the "revolutionary left." Nevertheless, this influence found no direct correspondence in the capacity of these organizations to educate and organize those layers of workers prepared to join in the mobilizations they were stimulating.

The coincidence of the crisis of the CP, still reeling under the shocks of the breakup of the MFA, and the emergence of a broad workers vanguard onto the political scene gave the far left (the organizations of the FUR and the UDP) an opportunity to independently stimulate demonstrations of some breadth (July-August-September 1975). Nevertheless, the division of the far left and especially its political confusion constituted major obstacles both to undertaking a process of unification and centralization of the embryonic organs of dual power and to breaking down the grip of the reformist parties. The weakness of the revolutionary Marxists did not permit the elements of political clarification and action proposals capable of responding to these two exigencies to be provided. It even made the revolutionary Marxists susceptible to centrist pressures:

a) The signing on August 25, 1975, of the agreement among the CP, MDP, FSP, LUAR, LCI, MES, and PRP-BR reflected this double phenomenon. On the one side, in order to dam up and take advantage of the combativity and initiative capacity of the workers vanguard, the CP signed an accord with these organizations, the content of which conformed to the political conceptions of the CP. On the other side, these organizations were politically incapable of taking advantage of the CP's need to make this maneuver in order to launch an offensive of unity in action around precise objectives corresponding to the needs of the toiling masses, to their aspirations for unity and for developing, unifying, coordinating, and centralizing the independent organs of the workers. On the contrary, whatever their reserves, the organizations that signed the agreement sanctioned a conception denying all autonomy to the workers commissions, moradores commissions, and the popular assemblies, which were placed on the same level as the MFA or the political parties in a front. In addition, the accord called for support to the fifth government of class collaboration, which, in the name of the "battle for production" was calling for an austerity policy and an integration of the independent organs into the state apparatus at the very moment when the objective possibilities for these organs' growing over into organs of dual power were maturing. Finally, at a time when the MFA was splitting at the seams and the autonomous movement of soldiers was surging forward, the accord sanctioned the MFA. In a distorted way, the August 25 accord reflected the new relationship of forces between the broad workers vanguard and the reformist apparatuses, between the revolutionaries and the traditional leaderships; nevertheless, the signing of the accord led to sanctioning an orientation divergent from the dynamic of the mass movement, which had created the conditions for the execution of the accord in the first place.

b) After the expulsion-resignation of the CP on August 29, 1975, the question of the relations among the organizations that had signed the August 25 accord was posed in a new way. Insisting on the necessity for unity in action could have contributed to partially overcoming the limits of the intervention of the far left: the scattering of initiatives, the inability to bring the full weight of the broad workers vanguard to bear in strengthening the autonomous organs and the development of the soldiers movement, the weakness of political action proposals that could get a response among the ranks of the reformist workers organizations.

Now, the September 10 platform of the FUR did not provide the bases for such unity in action, but instead aimed at the constitution of a front. The grouping together of organizations that had the allegiance of only a minority of the working class, even within the broad workers vanguard, was identified with "the unification and organization of the class vanguard." This logically led to discarding any united-front orientation directed toward other political currents within the workers vanguard (like the UDP) or toward the reformist parties. And this even though a policy of the broadest possible unity in action, centered on the development of organs

of workers democracy and linked to the fight for concrete objectives felt by the masses, would have been able to strengthen the workers vanguard, to permit it to draw more backward layers of the working class into mobilizations, and to respond to the division in the ranks of the workers.

This "frontist" conception, which impeded the concretization of an effective policy of united front, was topped off by the characterization the FUR made of the SP. The SP is considered a bourgeois party, the real "advance guard of fascism" that must be defeated before reaction can be crushed!

Moreover, the FUR displayed a triumphalist vision of the relationship of forces, which fed a sectarianism and ultimatism toward the CP that was equalled only by the illusion that the CP would fall into line behind the FUR's initiatives, compelled to do so because of the supposed strength of the FUR and its military links.

This line was subtended by a total overestimation both of the degree of political consciousness that had been attained by the workers, even those of the most combative sectors, in the course of fragmented experiences and of the level of "development of organs of popular power," a formulation that in reality encompassed numerous ambiguities about the nature of dual power and the qualitative leap involved in the destruction of the bourgeois state apparatus. As time went on, the major components of the FUR abandoned the conscious and systematic search for direct support for the initiatives of the vanguard among the broad masses, the imperative necessity of winning over the majority of workers. In reality, the policy of the FUR led to isolating the vanguard and to consolidating the division of the working class, which in turn strengthened substitutionist and adventurist tendencies.

In the last instance, what predominated in the FUR was a spontanist conception of an automatic transition from the level of consciousness attained by the workers vanguard through the experiences of struggle over eighteen months to the level of consciousness required for the accomplishment of the tasks of the socialist revolution.

Finally, the conception of the relations between the independent organs and the parties, as well as the absence of a consistent defense of the principles of workers democracy, raised a supplementary obstacle to the possibility of counterposing the division and bringing about a united-front orientation. By denying organizations in the workers movement the right of expression as such in the organs of proletarian democracy, under the pretext of "nonpartyism," the FUR retarded the process of political maturation, which is linked to the free confrontation of the ideas of all the currents of the workers movement, and thus prevented the linkup between the more backward layers and the vanguard.

By not proclaiming the inalienable right of all tendencies of the workers movement to command adequate means of organization and expression, to have access

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to the mass media, and to be present in the embryos of workers power, the organizations of the FUR did not offer any alternative either to the democratic demagogy of the SP or to the bureaucratic methods of the Stalinists.

In this revolutionary upsurge, combining the coming into motion of backward sectors of the working class and an extension of self-organization in the factories and the army, the full tragic scope of the crisis of the subjective factor came to the fore. The nonexistence of a revolutionary party, even a small one, impeded a generalization and centralization of the experiences of struggle and thus also impeded a qualitative leap in the consciousness of the masses.

In addition, there was not even any politically credible reference pole that, through its analyses, proposals, and intervention, could have contributed to a political clarification within a vanguard dominated by centrist currents (MES, PRP, etc.) and Maoist ones (UDP). In this sense, the LCI's signing of the September 10 platform and its adaptation to the ideas dominant in the FUR (on the SP and the united front) represented a serious political error that could not fail to retard the construction and consolidation of the Trotskyist organization in Portugal. The events of November 25 were to give a sharp rebuff to this erroneous orientation.

III.

10 The desynchronization between the deepened crisis of the state apparatus and the lack of centralization of embryonic organs of dual power could not persist for very long. The following alternative is inherent in such a state of affairs:

— Either a centralization of the instruments of proletarian democracy takes place (essentially on the level of the workers commissions) and a situation of generalized dual power results;

— Or the bourgeoisie is able to more or less completely reconstitute tools of repression that offer it the possibility of driving back the advanced points of the proletarian upsurge.

This alternative does not mean that a radical change in one direction or the other must take place immediately, but rather that the means commanded by the two opposed camps will modify the terms of the coming test of strength.

This desynchronization had many implications:

*In spite of its extreme weakness and crisis of leadership, the bourgeoisie still commanded instruments with which to centralize its political will, which the working class lacked completely. The centrists' confusion of



the paralysis of the government (the "strike of the sixth government") with the total disintegration of the bourgeois state apparatus expressed their complete lack of comprehension of this phenomenon and accounts for their astonishment at the prepared, rapid, and relatively effective bourgeois response on November 25 and 26.

*Militarily, the many fissures in the hierarchical system were not accompanied by sufficient development of soldiers commissions and above all by the coordination and junction of such commissions with the organs of the workers. In addition, the spread of the self-organization of the soldiers was very different in the North and South, which facilitated the maneuvers of the military hierarchy. This was capped off by the gap between



the crisis of the army and the lack of any political outlet that would have provided for a centralization of the workers commissions, which induced some of the radicalized soldiers and officers to seek a political way out in a military solution.

Finally, the disintegration of the army gave rise to the illusion in the mass movement that the outcome of a possible test of strength was assured in advance inasmuch as the mass movement had already won over a large number of soldiers. Hence, the necessity both for the self-defense of the organs of the toiling masses themselves and for the arming of the proletariat was obscured for the majority of the workers, even the most advanced workers.

*The dispersion of the structures of self-organization did not permit the masses to go through the experiences that would have led to a qualitative rise in the level of class consciousness. By assuring the direct and broadest possible participation of the toiling masses in discussing their problems, in working out measures able to respond to those problems, and in beginning to enact these solutions on a general level, a centralization of the autonomous organs would create propitious conditions for overcoming democratic illusions among the active majority of the working class in order to win these workers over to the side of workers councils against bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Only then can the search for the forms through which to move to the proletarian revolution properly so called be broached. By obscuring the function of a situation of dual power in the development of class consciousness of the majority of the workers and by spreading the myth of a real "popular power" that had only to be extended a bit (when in fact what were involved were still only dispersed embryos of potential organs of workers power that had to be developed), the centrists (PRP-BR, MES) were led to present the insurrection as a precondition for a qualitative leap of the mass movement, which could then be won over to the socialist revolution. The march of the socialist revolution is turned the wrong way around!

11 The confrontations of November 25 and 26, 1975, must be grasped within this perspective. For the bourgeoisie, it was indispensable to quickly get out of the impasse into which it had been plunged by the failure of its interventions, the disintegration of the army, and the successes won by the metalworkers and the construction workers. The bourgeoisie set itself two priority objectives: put an end to the political turmoil in the army in order to neutralize a series of units and reconstitute a police-military force; and retake control of the mass media, which had been broadening the scope of the mobilizations of the workers, even the sectoral ones, inciting solidarity, and providing the workers with a partial element of coordination.

The bourgeoisie thus sought to provoke a test of strength on a very restricted field: the question of the commander of the Lisbon military region. The "strike" of the government created an atmosphere favorable to such an operation by casting responsibility for it onto the military officers alone and by concentrating decision-making power in a circle that commanded dominant positions in the General Staff and the Council of the Revolution. The nomination of Vasco Lourenço acted as a provocation that permitted the preparation of a plan of counterattack against any attempt by any sector of the army to prevent the application of this measure.

Instead of relying on the development of a network of soldiers commissions capable of neutralizing the initiative of the majority of the Council of the Revolution in practice, the so-called revolutionary officers and the Gonçalvesist current responded on the terrain chosen by their adversaries. On this level, there was an objec-

tive confluence of the "insurrectionist" conceptions of the centrists (MES, PRP) — which interpenetrated with the militarist positions of the "revolutionary officers" — and the desire of Gonçalvesist sectors of the army to undertake a coup de force to respond to the advances of the reactionary military hierarchy and to reshuffle the bodies of military power. The CP's campaign for a "return of revolutionary officers" to the Council of the Revolution and for support to Carvalho as commander of the Lisbon military region gave a de facto stamp of approval to these plans and suggested the organization of mass support for their implementation, which in turn strengthened centrist illusions in the options of the Cunhal leadership.

The sudden intervention of the Tancos paratroopers precipitated the implementation of elements of an unfinished plan on the part of the "military left." On the other hand, Costa Gomes's "response" had been carefully prepared and studied for weeks. It unfolded simultaneously on the military, political, and media levels: militarily thanks to the Amadora commandos, politically through the vote of the Constituent Assembly in favor of the state of emergency, in the mass media through the immediate transfer of radio and television to Porto, which guaranteed government control of telecommunications. The genuine coup of reaction was not improvised!

Within the logic of its campaign for "order and discipline," the SP openly supported the establishment of the state of siege and the police measures that accompanied it. The SP voted for them in the Constituent Assembly.

As for the CP, its aims fell within the narrow framework of a personnel shakeup within the Council of the Revolution and, later, within the government. At the most, the CP intended to utilize the modifications the Tancos paratroopers could have brought about in the relationship of forces within the reactionary bastion of the air force in order to make it easier to implement its plans. In no case was the Cunhal leadership inclined to commit itself to a "coup d'etat." The search for a compromise within the framework of a strategy of "democratic revolution" remained constant — before, during, and after November 25. The CP did not even mobilize against the state of siege, in spite of its official position during the debate in the Constituent Assembly. It immediately shifted the axis of its alliances a notch to the right. The essential point remained clinging to its positions in the state apparatus on the chance of altering its points of support.

The centrists, more particularly the PRP and the MES, while manifesting complete incompetence on the terrain on which they had chosen to fight, nonetheless declared that "the hour has come to give the bourgeoisie a definitive lesson." Their separation from the real movement of the masses was sharply brought to light. Their denunciation of the betrayal of the CP was in consonance with their illusions about the strategic orientation of the Stalinists and about the relationship of forces between their organizations and the reformist apparatuses.

At no time did the working class participate in this "stillborn coup"; at the most, the workers reacted to defend their gains by mobilizing in the factories. Both the form and the apparent objectives of the "rebellion" of November 25 inevitably made a mobilization of the broad masses almost impossible and gave rise to the greatest uncertainty and confusion among the masses. The soldiers took a wait-and-see attitude. Isolated from the mass movement, they were not prepared to throw themselves into a battle whose protagonists and results eluded them.

12 The victorious military "counteroffensive" gave the bourgeoisie the opportunity to initiate a process of reconsolidation of the state apparatus, a precondition for any possible partial reestablishment of order in the factories and the countryside and for implementation of the economic plan whose general lines were worked out at the beginning of November. Thus, the bourgeoisie primarily emphasized:

- taking control of arms stocks and constituting a repressive apparatus centered on the PSP and the GNR, which were transformed into operational forces (this was an implementation of the original intention of the sixth government, which has not yet taken the risk of sending the soldiers out against the workers);
- making changes in the officer corps in order to guarantee control over the wave of new conscripts and reducing the number of troops in an attempt to professionalize some strategic units;
- gaining control of the radio and television and restructuring the press in order to provide the government with means by which to manipulate public opinion, cut down on the audience of struggles, even partial ones, that had been reached by the press and the radio and put an end to the permanent political debate they had been fostering.

Utilizing its fulcrums within the army and the state apparatus in general, the bourgeoisie sought to bring its regained political initiative to bear in the social sphere. The government extended the period of suspension of labor contracts and thus challenged the gains of the mobilizations for workers demands that had occurred during October and November 1975. The CIP (Confederation of Portuguese Industry) resurfaced. It proposed an austerity plan, a wage freeze, and the reestablishment of the power of the employers in the factories. The right and the far right took advantage of the breach that had been opened to challenge not only land occupations, but also the very principle of agrarian reform; in this they were supported by the mobilization of the landowners. A process of restructuring of the bourgeois forces took shape and its center of gravity shifted clearly to the right: The Spínolists and representatives of similar currents took over key posts in the military command; the social bloc of reaction consolidated its positions in entire regions and is seeking to transform them into strongholds to serve as rear areas for a future test of strength; the far right reappeared on the political scene,



its links with the official parties of the bourgeoisie and a sector of the military hierarchy becoming visible. Thus, November 25, 1975, gave confidence to the bourgeoisie once again. The bourgeoisie reorganized its forces, tried to fashion a state apparatus capable of driving back the mass movement and breaking the most advanced struggles in the short term.

The first phase of this offensive took place precisely in the sphere in which the bourgeoisie's success was clearest. In the social domain, the bourgeoisie is seeking to maneuver, to postpone the date of a genuine frontal battle, while at the same time establishing the elements of an overall offensive. Since the working class was not a protagonist on November 25, the bourgeoisie is conscious that it still has to settle accounts with the workers. Because the test of November 25 provided no proof of the state of the respective forces, sectors of the bourgeoisie perceive the possibility of a discordance between the initial strengthening of the state apparatus and the capacity to impose anti-worker measures in a lasting manner. This is reflected in the differences within the PPD, the divisions within and among the bourgeois parties on the question of alliances with the reformist parties of the working class, and the cleavages, albeit limited, within the officer corps.

Nevertheless, the crisis of the functioning of the capitalist system, like the depth of the recession and the collapse of certain branches of industry, hardly enables the bourgeoisie to postpone application of its attacks on the gains of the toiling masses in order to rigorously restrict them. The government decrees of December 1975 and January 1976 herald this tendency.

Here lies the fundamental contradiction between the objective requirements from the standpoint of the bourgeoisie — requirements which determine the nature of the measures that must be taken to slow down the mass movement again and assure an upturn in investments — and the relationship that was not suddenly modified in a qualitative manner by the effects of the military defeat of a sector of the army.

Of course, imperialist aid could enable various investments to be made, in public works, for example, and the effects of such investments could provide some respite in unemployment. But this would not eliminate the question of the functioning of the capitalist system, that is, the reestablishment of capitalist and employer order (elimination of workers control, increase in productivity, halt to factory occupations and land seizures, lengthening of the workweek, reduction in real wages to permit an upturn in the rate of profit). On the contrary, the investments depend precisely on these factors being fulfilled; rather rapid confrontations at least in this realm are inevitable. All this indicates that a real stabilization is impossible unless a deep defeat is inflicted on the proletariat. Even in the rather unlikely event that some delay in sharp measures against the standard of living of the workers (because of imperialist aid and a broad mobilization of internal reserves) is combined with significant hesitation in the camp of the

workers, a test of strength in the social and political spheres will not be able to be put off for long.

13 The transfer of the defeat of a part of the soldiers and "revolutionary officers" to the sphere of the relationship of social forces has not had the effect of qualitatively modifying that relationship of forces. Nevertheless, this defeat did serve to reveal the political and organizational weaknesses of the semi-spontaneous and semi-conscious workers upsurge and exposed the uneven development of combativity and consciousness. This does not imply, a posteriori, that a different judgment of the nature of the relationship of forces before November 25 must be advanced. Over eighteen months it shifted in favor of the working class and against the ruling classes, to such an extent that during autumn 1975 the workers broke the major decisions of a government that wanted "order and discipline" (the occupation of the radios on the order of Pinheiro de Azevedo rebounded against the government's objective; the creation of the AMI was challenged almost from the moment the decision was made; defeats were inflicted on the Ministry of Labor). In fact, the very maturity of the objective situation made an overall anticapitalist strategy, an extension and centralization of the organs of the workers themselves, indispensable for any step forward. This maturity underscored the limits of the spontaneous and empirical upsurge of the mass movement. The weakness of the subjective factor was thus to be strikingly revealed and was to affect the evolution of the relationship of forces.

After November 25, 1975, the limited ebb in the "revolutionary process" was to express itself, among other ways, in a complex process of recomposition of the organized workers movement.

a) The more backward layers of workers who entered into struggle during the mobilizations for workers demands in autumn 1975 went through a rapid and superficial radicalization and politicization that made them vulnerable to the bourgeois counteroffensive. Their dependence on the reformist apparatuses increased, while the government attack was located precisely on the level at which these organizations play a decisive role in the organization of an overall response. Thus, the limited ebb in the workers movement has intensified the differences in the political maturity of the working class among different regions and branches of industry. The fissure between the proletariat of the Lisbon region and the Alentejo on the one hand and the rest of the toiling masses on the other hand threatens to deepen if there is a prolonged delay in the response on the economic level on the part of entire sectors of workers whose contracts have been suspended. The workers' delay in organizing a response could combine with mobilizations and a change in attitude among the petty bourgeoisie and thus generate a modification in the overall relationship of social forces.

b) The lack of centralization of the organs of the workers themselves — which, during a period of upsurge,

did not permit the uneven development of consciousness and of the degree of self-organization to be counter-balanced — sharply reveals the qualitative differences between the workers commissions and the moradores commissions as well as the varying degrees to which the workers commissions are representative. This process facilitates the reformists' operation aimed at coopting the workers commissions and integrating them into the trade-union structures; this is particularly the case since the reformists are the only ones who command coordinating bodies, means of effecting some centralization, and since they have decisive influence in the Intersindical.

Concurrently, the weight of the trade-union organizations increases in this period of recuperation of strength of the working class. A new stage is opening in the extension of unionization. It combines three aspects: deeper penetration of the trade-union organizations in sectors that had never been organized in the period before April 25, 1974 (teachers, public services); broadening of professional unions emerging from the old corporatist "trade-union" system; the birth and expansion of branch-based trade unions (metals, civil construction, postal system). After November 25, 1975, some unions led by the SP affiliated to the Intersindical. A new debate is opening both on the type of response to offer to the measures taken by the government and on democratic functioning in the unions. This process is shaking the bureaucratic control of the CP and tends to aggravate the contradictions in an SP that finds itself serving as the mainspring of the government.

c) The very nature of the workers upsurge, which proceeded through successive stages without encountering any major obstacles, fostered a capacity for initiatives and a real audience for the broad workers vanguard. Nevertheless, the semi-spontaneous and semi-conscious character of the movement reflected itself in a distortion between the level of political organization of this vanguard and its size. Within this same logic, the identification of the victories of the soldiers with those of the workers was a decisive feature of the vanguard's political perception and explains the impact the defeat of a part of the soldiers had on the vanguard.

Thus, during a period of retreat, the quantitative weakness of the organized fraction of this workers vanguard is revealed; its political confusion loosens its links with its periphery and thus facilitates a grip by the organized force of the reformists (especially the CP) over this periphery. The nonexistence of a credible revolutionary organization capable of drawing the lessons of November 25, of helping this broad vanguard assimilate this experience, and of using the educational aspects of the confrontations to increase class independence, heightens the disarray of the vanguard, slows down the pace of its recovery, and limits its ability to take the lead in a determined response to the government's economic offensive.

d) Since the strategy of the CP was essentially determined by a reformist project of "democratic revolution"

and by concern to maintain positions in the state apparatus and more particularly in the military apparatus, the conclusions the CP has drawn from November 25 have logically led it to a right turn. Once again, the CP is giving priority to the antifascist struggle, within the perspective of the construction of a democratic regime. Hence, the CP is insisting on an alliance with the SP, while also making overtures to the split from the PPD, in the context of seeking an alliance with the urban petty bourgeoisie and sectors of the middle classes.

The weakness and confusion of the "revolutionary left" — which did not manage to take advantage of the tensions within the CP after November 25 — can facilitate this utilization of the autonomous organs by the Stalinist current. It may even permit this current to back down on some conquests of the masses without taking too great a risk. But its links with the working class and the combativity of a good part of its worker militants will force the CP to respond on the economic terrain, trying to channel the movement into the framework of the trade unions in order to prevent a resurgence of the workers commissions as embryonic organs of dual power. Likewise, it will be difficult for the CP to remain silent about government repression without running the risk of stimulating internal tensions and of further limiting its influence among "leftist officers." Nevertheless, the CP will seek to avoid new clashes at all costs, and its statements opposing the government's economic and social policy will certainly not be followed up by precise indications on the form the response should take.

e) The SP has taken another step further in its counter-revolutionary course by supporting the repression and the government decrees. Now, the rightist regroupment in the military hierarchy, the offensive against the agrarian reform, and the reactionary proclamations of the PPD and the CDS indicate both who will benefit from the stabilization of the bourgeois state and the measures needed to set the market economy in order again and who the real artisans of a reestablishment of the capitalist order are. The character of the SP and its relations with the working class do not make it a functional instrument for assuring application of measures that frontally attack the living standard of the workers. The coming elections and the political situation are forcing the SP to strengthen its organized presence within the workers movement. Concurrently, in order to compete with the PPD among petty-bourgeois voters, the SP has to come forward as a factor supporting order. These two contradictory requirements, like the government's attacks on the gains of the workers, including those workers organized in SP trade-unions or influenced by the SP, may generate internal contradictions that have hitherto been covered over by the struggle against the CP and may enable opposition tendencies to arise. Finally, the confirmed danger of a strengthening of the far right is reactivating aspirations for unity among the workers movement, and this may throw the Soares leadership off balance.

f) The discrepancy between the real development of the class struggle and the perspectives that had been traced out by the centrist and ultraleftist currents is causing a deep crisis within these organizations. The turnabout in the position of the MES and the PRP has led them to develop an "antifascist line" whose dynamic is laden with opportunist adaptations to the CP and the sectors that follow the lead of the "left of the MFA." As for the UDP, it is intensifying its hypersectarian attitude toward the CP, characterizing it as social-fascist. The UDP calls for the formation of an "antifascist united front" based on the organs of "popular will." The crisis of the centrist organizations of the MES-PRP type, combined with the weakness of the Trotskyist pole, leaves some room for a current like the UDP in the immediate future.

The adoption of this antifascist line by all these currents once again, whatever the motivation for it, increases the uncertainty in the working class and the demoralization of its vanguard and contributes to dissolving the slogans needed to respond to the economic attack of the bourgeoisie into a confused perspective of "antifascist struggle."

14 The new stage opened by November 25 is not characterized by a qualitative modification of the relationship of social forces between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Nevertheless, the period characterized by a deepened crisis of the state apparatus that was not rounded out by a centralization of organs of dual power is over. The dominant features remain those of a prerevolutionary situation. The bourgeoisie has regained a certain political initiative and has begun to restructure its state apparatus, but without having overcome its own crisis of political leadership. The divisions in the PPD and in the military hierarchy and the debates between the CDS and the PPD reflect this crisis. The CDS wants to appear as the sole consistent defender of the interests of the bourgeoisie and is seeking to put itself forward as an alternative leadership in the bourgeois camp. It is trying to make use of significant layers of the petty bourgeoisie to provide itself with a social base, a petty bourgeoisie that is also furnishing the troops for a rising far right.

The industrial and agricultural proletariat, whose combat potential is very significant, for the first time finds itself facing a challenge to its major gains. It commands important levers (trade unions, workers commissions, peasant leagues, parties) and has a rich experience of struggle, which permits it to respond to the bourgeois offensive and to initiate economic struggles in the short term. A new rise of the movement for demands against the attacks on the standard of living would allow new life to be breathed into the autonomous organs of the masses, the backbone of which would be the workers commissions. Once again, their centralization and transformation into organs of dual power would become an immediate objective.

An economic or political provocation by the bourgeoisie or by some sectors of the bourgeoisie blinded by excessive confidence might not only accelerate such a response but might also result in a massive and united form of mobilization that could beat back the effects of the consolidation of the state apparatus and once again objectively place the question of power on the agenda for the toiling masses.

A delay in the workers counteroffensive would foster consolidation of the instruments of the bourgeoisie for entering into a test of strength that could be postponed a bit but would be no less decisive.

The dynamic, rhythm, and crucial dates of the Portuguese political situation will also be determined by the deepening of the succession crisis of Francoism and the entry of the working masses of Spain onto the political scene. Thus, in the relative short term, an element of disequilibrium may be grafted onto the structural factors of instability in Portugal itself.

The tasks the Portuguese proletariat will have to confront in this new stage underline the urgent necessity of the construction of a revolutionary leadership capable of assuring a rise in class consciousness and of leading the proletariat and its allies to the conquest of power.

IV.

15 Whatever the fluctuations in the "revolutionary process," a decisive test of strength between the two fundamental classes is inevitable. Revolution or counterrevolution, victory of the working class and establishment of a workers state or political crushing of the struggles of the workers and the establishment of a "strong regime" (military dictatorship, fascist or semifascist dictatorship, etc.) — that is the real alternative facing the Portuguese working masses. The LCI must throw all its efforts into preparing the masses for such a conflict, basing itself on the many and rich experiences undergone by the workers before November 25, attempting to have the lessons of November 25 and 26 assimilated by the broadest possible layers of the working class, and putting forward an overall political program, credible in the eyes of the toiling masses, to transform the initial response to the attacks of the bourgeoisie on the conquests of the masses into a generalized offensive.

a) Taking advantage of the reformist policy of the leaderships of the workers movement, the bourgeoisie is now trying to extend the military and political victory it won on November 25 into the social sphere. In this context, the priority task of revolutionary Marxists is to stimulate — through propaganda, agitation, and prac-

tical initiatives — the most united and radical possible counterattack against the effects of the government austerity plan, against the challenging of workers control and all the manifestations of the contesting of the power of the employers in the factories as well as against the attacks on the agrarian reform.

The relationship of social forces, the potential of combativity, and the instruments commanded by the working class and the agricultural workers permit them to mount a stinging rebuff to the present offensive of the government and the employers. Any postponement of the response can accentuate the limited disorientation of the workers, strengthen the reformist grip, empty the structures of self-organization (the workers commissions) of their content, and broaden the space available for a regroupment of forces within the bourgeois camp and the consolidation of a leadership within that camp. Under these conditions, the elections in April could concretize, accelerate, and consolidate this process.

Revolutionary Marxists must therefore attach great importance to the organization of solidarity with and popularization of the partial and radical struggles that are now developing, since the policy of the reformist leaderships contributes to isolating these struggles. Demonstrating that victory is possible and permitting the most advanced forms of struggle of the previous phase to be placed on the agenda again can constitute a factor favoring broader mobilizations.

In the present conjuncture, the key battle will unfold against the measures suspending the trade-union contracts, that is, the negation of the gains made by the workers mobilizations of autumn 1975. In suspending the contracts the government is testing the reactions of the bulk of the working class. At the same time, it is directing the attack toward an area in which the responses of the workers are heavily determined by the policy of the trade-union organizations and thus of the reformist apparatuses. Given the conjunction between the scope of the attack on the standard of living and the potential of struggle that still exists among the ranks of the workers, it is quite improbable that the government will succeed in implementing the totality of these measures, even by taking advantage of the orientation of the reformist organizations. But a very fragmented response might allow the government to concentrate its efforts on the sectors that are most backward politically and weakest organizationally, even if it is unable to advance all along the line. Thus, the division in the working class among the various sectors and regions could deepen. That is why revolutionary Marxists, on the basis of the mobilizations that will develop in one branch or another, will insist on the necessity of coordinating and generalizing the response in order to defeat the attacks, which are in reality hitting the entire working class. Nevertheless, a mobilization of broad scope to block the austerity measures acutely poses the question of the overall functioning of a capitalist economy facing a sharp conjunctural and structural crisis. Any overall response and above all any persistence of a high level of struggle requires clear general perspec-

tives and a solution worked out from the standpoint of the working class. Hence, it is imperative for revolutionary Marxists to work out a body of demands and a plan of struggle constituting a concrete response to the social and economic problems of the country and standing as an alternative to reformist solutions of all stripes. Such a project must be the framework of the intervention of the LCI. Agitation for immediate demands in partial struggles must be combined with propaganda for overall solutions in order to increase all the possibilities of translating them into mass initiatives.

b) The application of the government austerity plan implies the challenging of the freedom of organization and expression won by the workers in the course of eighteen months of struggle.

For the moment, the government is still not in position to unleash a broad repressive offensive. It is limiting itself to selective measures aimed at laying the groundwork for hitting the vanguard harder. These measures come more sharply into political relief given that the soldiers and officers arrested on November 25 are now in prison, while the plotters of March 11, 1975, and the police personnel of the Salazarist regime are free.

For the entire workers movement, the organization of a broad campaign for the immediate release of the political prisoners must make the bourgeoisie and its government back down and prevent them from damaging the rights of expression and organization of the workers movement. Concurrently, the purge of the many ex-agents of the corporatist state who are getting their jobs back must be demanded; initiatives must be taken in this direction wherever this is possible and can receive popular support.

The reactivation of the GNR and the PSP, striking forces of the old regime, and the increase in their personnel and resources place on the agenda the necessity of launching intense agitation for the disarming and dissolution of these repressive bodies.

In the present conjuncture, the government may try to rely on anti-working-class legislation (law on the press and on the right to strike) that has not been applied up to now because of the rise of the mass movement. Thus, the struggle for the abrogation of these decree-laws becomes primordial, along with the struggle for the unconditional defense of the workers' right to strike and demonstrate, of the right of expression and organization for all currents and parties of the workers movement and for the structures of the working masses themselves. It is within this perspective that one must situate a campaign against the Pact proposed by the Council of the Revolution, which is trying to consolidate its positions, including through a presidentialist operation, in order to develop an anti-worker policy and to challenge the conquests of the toilers.

c) The main instruments for a mass response to the attacks of the employers and the government on the conquests of the workers and people remain the workers com-

missions and the trade unions. The orientation upheld by revolutionary Marxists in the workers commissions and trade unions must avoid any counterposition of these bodies and must stress their complementary character. Against the reformist project of integrating the workers commissions into the trade-union structures, of negating their autonomy and their specific function, it is necessary to emphasize the preservation of this autonomy and the mass representativeness of the commissions. This can be done only through the workers commissions' demonstrating that they can take on tasks that fall within the general framework of workers control, conceived as a genuine means of defending the interests of the class, and can begin to realize the aspirations of the class. The decisions of the government and the process of re-composition of the workers movement lend the trade unions an increased role and underline the importance of developing systematic work within the unions to construct a revolutionary tendency. This trade-union activity must enable a series of transitional demands and a discussion around themes linked to workers control to penetrate into the most backward sectors. In addition, the presence of revolutionary militants in the trade unions on a national scale and their active work within the unions can prevent the isolation of the workers commissions in certain branches.

On the trade-union level, the strategic objective remains that of constructing a united, independent, central trade union organized by branches of industry and functioning according to the norms of the greatest workers democracy. The battle for this democratic functioning and for the liquidation of the corporatist structures can be combined with the development and strengthening of the workers commissions and can even facilitate branch-level centralization of these commissions.

In face of the economic crisis and the government decrees, the definition of overall options to consolidate the trade-union counterattack requires the freest discussion of the various orientations and highlights the importance of a democratic trade-union congress. The expression of needs, the formulation of demands, and the definition of a strategy of struggle require the right to form tendencies, that is, the possibility of an unhindered debate in which each current of the workers movement can put forward its solutions before all the workers. This confrontation of ideas constitutes a real precondition for the respect for and implementation of the decisions taken by the majority. This concept must be constantly presented as an alternative to the manipulative practice of the reformist leaderships in the trade unions and particularly of the CP in the national apparatus of the Intersindical.

d) Revolutionary Marxists reaffirm the decisive role of the workers commissions in the future of the Portuguese revolution; these commissions are the fruit of the movement of the masses themselves and have permitted the overcoming of the trade-union division by profession, the assumption of permanent tasks of workers control and embryonically of self-defense, the guaranteeing

of the linkup with the popular masses, and the taking of radically anticapitalist initiatives (beginning of reconversions, links between industrial and agricultural workers, etc.).

The central place of the workers commissions is a necessity because of:

- the deeply felt need in the factories for the required unity in struggle;
- the need to generalize workers control, especially in the nationalized sector;
- the need, already expressed in the platforms of demands in certain branches, for an overall plan of struggle against unemployment, for the reconversion of entire branches, for the establishment of direct links between the various sectors of industrial production and between these sectors and agriculture, for the definition of production priorities in the nationalized sector.

The strategic objective thus remains the development, coordination, and centralization of the workers commissions as the central axis of the development of organs of dual power.

In this perspective, branch-level coordination can constitute an intermediary step leading to a national congress of workers commissions and the emergence of a situation of dual power.

Propaganda and agitation for centralization takes root in the concrete struggles and needs of the workers; its revolutionary dynamic lies in attributing to the workers commissions functions that are those of workers councils and that lead the commissions into direct conflict with the coalition government and the bourgeois state machine.

A national congress of the workers commissions must be presented as the most adequate organizational framework for the bringing together of widespread experiences and the gathering of the information needed to elaborate a workers plan for the reorganization of the Portuguese economy and to guarantee the preconditions for carrying out the decisions made. The elaboration of this plan must go hand in hand with the development of workers control. In fact, this plan rests on the balance-sheet of the productive capacities of the agricultural and industrial enterprises, on the state of the means of communication and transport, and on a verification of the workers' needs in the realm of private and social consumption as well as the need for producer goods. Hence, a national congress of the workers commissions emerges as a central element in an autonomous response of the working class to the social, economic, and political crisis and can permit the workers' allies among the urban and rural masses to be cemented around the proletariat.

The defense by revolutionary Marxists of the full exercise of workers democracy in the constitution and functioning of the workers commissions becomes a decisive

task in attaining these objectives, which requires a unification of the working class and a growing over of the organs of the workers themselves into genuine united-front bodies at the highest level.

The following points flow from this:

- the free and democratic election of the workers commission delegates and their revocability by the ranks and not their designation by parties according to arbitrary and fixed proportions;
- the right of delegates to group themselves together into political tendencies and the strictest right of discussion on all problems according to the ideology of the delegates.

Only the scope and results of such a campaign of explanation can expunge from the minds of the workers the false polarization provoked by the SP leaders and fostered by the orientation and bureaucratic methods of the CP between a "democratic" state in fact located within the framework of the capitalist system and a "Communist dictatorship" destroying democratic rights. The massive experience with workers democracy within the workers commissions at the level of a branch or national congress is the only thing that can pave the way for the recomposition of the unity of the proletarian front and can convince the workers that a workers state based on councils will guarantee democratic liberties qualitatively superior to those conceded by traditional bourgeois democracy.

Finally, an expansion of the activity of the workers commissions in this direction can provide a reference point that would facilitate a reemergence of the moradores commissions as organs of the working masses themselves in the neighborhoods and localities and could break down the reformist-inspired tendency to make these commissions appendages of the state apparatus (the municipal governments). The bourgeoisie's attempts to recover the occupied housing during the post-March 11 period and the attacks on the living conditions of the masses offered, at the time, an opportunity to revivify and extend the moradores commissions. One of the centers of gravity of their intervention must be to take initiatives to control prices, to forge links with the agricultural cooperatives for the sale of products and for the struggle against the capitalist distribution networks and against stockpiling speculation in consumer goods.

d) After organizing support for the attempted coup of September 28, 1974, the large landed proprietors met the progress of the agrarian reform with dispersed resistance without being capable of organizing a mass mobilization.

The preferred weapons of the latifundia proprietors remained refusal to apply the agrarian reform law, hijacking of livestock and agricultural matériel, failing to repair machinery, burning harvests, and carrying out individual attacks. In face of the exacerbation of the

class struggle in the countryside (land occupations under the fifth and sixth governments, linkup between the metalworkers in the South, the agricultural wage-earners, and the small poor peasants), the second "assembly of farmers" of Rio Maior, held in November 1975, marked an important advance for capitalist reaction. Apart from land occupations, it was the agrarian reform itself that came under violent attack. On this occasion, the expropriated latifundistas succeeded in reuniting the small and middle-sized merchants (whose speculation operations are threatened by the rationalization of the trade circuits linked to the agrarian reform), the rich peasants, and the small and middle peasants of the North and the West.

Reaction's attempt to crystallize a social bloc, especially in the North and the Center, represents a weighty threat to the Portuguese revolution. The workers movement can envisage a victorious outcome of a test of strength with the bourgeoisie only if this bloc is disintegrated at least partially and if the social base of support for the workers is expanded.

For this, stress must be placed on all the measures the trade unions and the workers commissions in the industrial and banking sectors can take to provide a response to the immediate needs of the agricultural workers and smallholding peasants (fertilizer, credits, machinery, etc.). Further, proof must be offered of the community of interests that links them together to the progress of the revolution, by demonstrating as concretely as possible that only central planning, under workers control, of fertilizer production and production of machinery and agricultural implements, as well as central utilization of credit and a planned reconversion of cultivation and agricultural production can permit aid to the cooperatives and to the expropriated land that has become collective state property.

A modification of the relationship of forces in the countryside requires a strengthening of the agricultural trade unions, the leagues of poor peasants, and the commissions of agricultural workers and a growth of the weight of the poor peasants, as well as of the tenant farmers and sharecroppers, in the village councils throughout the areas where small property predominates.

This consolidation of the organization of the land workers themselves must strengthen the linkup between these organs and those of the workers in industry, banking, and trade in order to assure the application and deepening of the agrarian reform, independent of the structures of the bourgeois state. Finally, the instruments of self-defense must be strengthened in order to counter the operations of re-seizure of land and of intimidation now being mounted by the latifundistas and their armed militias.

16 a) Revolutionary Marxists will take advantage of the main lessons of November 25 and 26 to combat adventurist and minority conceptions and to develop propaganda for mass self-defense in the



extension of the embryonic organs of proletarian power and for the protection of all the political and trade-union organizations of the workers movement. This is the only way to prepare broad sectors of workers to respond to any reactionary attempts.

In the immediate future, the campaigns of the far right, like the utilization of the GNR-PSP or the possible utilization of specialized military units, lends particular importance to the organization of self-defense pickets.

Moreover, in light of the importance the hierarchy itself attaches to regaining control of the arsenals, the experiences of the pre-November 25 period in controlling arms stocks and all the initiatives taken in the realm of arms manufacture must be exploited to develop concrete propaganda around the theme of control of arms stocks and use of weapons by the workers and by committees of soldiers.

b) The counteroffensive of the military hierarchy, while it has profoundly modified the conditions under which the soldiers can mobilize, has nonetheless not eliminated all possibilities of struggle in the barracks, possibilities that are bolstered by the experiences through which many soldiers have lived. The audience of the past movements among the new conscripts can favor resistance to military discipline.

The objective of the activity of revolutionary militants in the army is the defense of democratic rights, the right of organization, and the right of expression of the soldiers. The structures of the soldiers themselves which can lead to the resurgence of an autonomous movement can take shape around this axis.

Such a movement remains the greatest guarantee that the government will not be able to use the soldiers against the workers. Revolutionaries must do everything possible for the perpetuation of what constituted one of the most important gains of the movement of soldiers: their massive refusal to ever be turned against the workers. On this basis, revolutionaries can insist on the necessary linkup between the organs of the soldiers and those of the working class as well as on the prior discussion of orders, which can further facilitate agitation in favor of the election of officers by the soldiers themselves.

Antimilitarist propaganda must be integrated with the various aspects of mass work (in the unions, the workers commissions, the moradores commissions). The antimilitarism of revolutionary Marxists must differ radically from the pacifism of the reformists and must seek to free the workers of any hope that clemency will be forthcoming from the "democratic" bourgeoisie once that bourgeoisie opts for moving from political maneuvers to a determined attack on the working class and its allies. The principle of the disarming of the bourgeoisie and the arming of the proletariat must be the thread that runs through all our antimilitarist work, both inside and outside the barracks.

c) The attack on the living standard of the workers and the bolstering of the reactionary measures, along with the dangers they entail for the working class, not only create objective conditions that demand the solid unity of the proletarian front, but also sharpen the aspiration for unity. Unifying slogans corresponding to the most pressing needs of the proletariat must serve as instruments for the realization in struggle of a united front against economic and political reaction. The tactic of the workers united front is the keystone of any real attempt to initiate mass actions and thus to start down the road to winning over the majority of the working class. This does not mean that any initiative must be subordinated to the prior agreement of the reformist leaderships of the workers movement. Indeed, unity in action must be sought with all political forces prepared to engage in struggle, without delay, both in defense of the conquests of the masses against repression by the government and the employers and in favor of the development and coordination of the workers commissions and, in some cases, of the moradores commissions. Concurrently, unifying demands must be emphasized in the trade unions; the formation of groupings (for common trade-union lists, for example) can become an important lever in bringing forward alternative solutions to those advanced by the reformists who lead the unions.

Such a step — which can reinvigorate the activity of the broad workers vanguard and find a response in the reformist ranks (especially in the CP) — must be constantly articulated along with unitary propaganda directed toward the reformist leaderships and the multiplication of proposals aimed at involving the workers influenced by the SP and the CP in action.

This permanent propaganda and agitation for the united front, the assertion of a will for unity, even at cross current with the immediate sensibility of certain layers of the vanguard influenced by ultraleftism, can pave the way for a united response to any political, military, or economic provocation by reaction. By creating actual unity in action, such a response could in turn result in a new step forward in the construction of organs of proletarian democracy. Concrete successes in this area are preconditions for a perspective of dual power opening up once again.

17 The dominant features of the social and political situation remain those of deep instability. In this context, the test of the relationship of forces between the two fundamental classes of Portuguese society is yet to come; it will probably take place around the suspension of trade-union contracts, the major questions of the economy (inflation and unemployment), workers control, and the agrarian reform.

Hence, in their propaganda for a workers and peasants government, revolutionary Marxists will emphasize the program that this government should apply to defend the conquests of the working class and meet the needs and aspirations of the toiling masses. In addition, they

will indicate that it is only through the mobilization and self-organization of the proletariat that this government will find the strength to resist the sabotage of the bourgeoisie and to carry out its own decisions in practice.

The translation of the government formula into agitation depends essentially on the degree of mobilization and unity in action of the masses and the dynamic of development of a movement around initially defensive objectives. During this transitional phase, the aim of a government slogan remains to politically counterpose the working class as such to all other classes, that is, to all government combinations emanating from the bourgeois political system.

*In the event that the capitalist and reactionary offensive intensifies and the credibility of an SP-CP rapprochement gains ground among the masses, the government formula would immediately incorporate these facts and would express itself in the demand for an SP-CP government applying a program of defense and extension of the workers' conquests. In the present context, united front initiatives toward the SP and the CP must be articulated with the demand on the Social Democratic and Stalinist leaderships that they "break with the bourgeoisie," that is, that they break collaboration with the bourgeois parties and the bodies that preserve the interests of the bourgeoisie, particularly the Council of the Revolution.

*If a new upsurge of the movement and of self-organization of the masses expresses itself in the possibility or realization of a democratic congress of trade unions (going beyond the pure trade-union level) and of a national congress of workers commissions, then conditions would be present for the organization and expression of the working class itself against the projects of capital and the government. These facts would then have to be integrated into the government slogan in order to effectively allow the objectives of the masses to be translated into terms of power.

The general propaganda formula "workers and peasants government responsible to the mass organizations of the workers" corresponds to this orientation.

This formula will have to be concretized at each precise stage in light of the evolution of the relationship of forces, the turns in the political situation, and the resulting recomposition of the workers movement.

18 During the autumn of 1975 the desynchronization between the state of mind of the masses and the fact that they could not see any clear political outcome, in addition to their low level of political organization, reflected the tragic lack of a revolutionary leadership. The post-November 25 situation puts on the agenda a recomposition of the workers movement and of its political forces. Revolutionary Marxists can play an important role in this process if they are capable of creating a political reference pole basing themselves

on the limited forces they already command and carrying out a genuine process of political correction.

This necessitates systematic public intervention demonstrating the ability of Trotskyist militants to provide an analysis and perspectives for the development of struggles. Then they will be able to take part in and even stimulate debate and unity in action within the far left and wage a political offensive toward the workers of the SP and CP who are disoriented by the policy of their leadership.

This central political activity will be able to assert its full political impact only if it is based on a permanent and patient effort toward gaining an implantation in the broad workers vanguard by winning to the Trotskyist organization the advanced workers who command a capacity for initiative and audacity and are able to strengthen their influence and authority among the ranks of the workers.

In addition, the expansion of the striking force of the revolutionary Marxists requires the regroupment of all the Trotskyist forces into a single organization, Portuguese section of the Fourth International. This implies the attempt by the LCI to establish priority unity in action with the PRT with a view toward fusion.

19 The Portuguese Trotskyist militants will stand at the head of mobilizations in solidarity with the Angolan masses, who are fighting to defend the independence won through fifteen years of determined struggle. They chose the camp of the People's Republic of Angola against the holy alliance of imperialists, racists, and local reactionaries. Likewise, they will support the struggle of the FRETILIN against the invasion of East Timor by Indonesian troops.

The links between the struggles of the workers of Spain and Portugal confer special importance on a campaign of solidarity with the battles of the proletariat of the Spanish state against the Juan Carlos regime, given their objective repercussions on the development of the situation in Portugal. Moreover, this campaign provides precious support to the militants of the Spanish revolution. The close relations that must be established among the militants of the Iberian peninsula constitute stable support for this internationalist activity.

Whatever the limited ebb resulting from the events of November 25, for hundreds of thousands of workers the Portuguese revolution still incarnates the hope of socialist revolution in capitalist Europe. In light of the decisive dates now looming in the course of the Portuguese revolution, the militant international solidarity of the workers of Europe with their Portuguese brothers and sisters must exert its full weight in determining the outcome of the coming battles. The Fourth International will fully participate in the construction of this movement of solidarity, one of the central objectives of which is the release of all militants and soldiers hit by the repression that followed November 25. □

YANKI GO HOME



PANAMA: THE HOUR OF DEFINITION

by GERARDO SOLORZANO

Created in 1903 as a result of an armed intervention by the United States, the Republic of Panama is more dependent on U.S. imperialism than any other country in Latin America, if not in the entire world. Historically, the fate of Panama has always been tied to the existence of the canal, for the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which authorized the United States to construct the canal and control the canal zone, came only a few days after Panama's secession from Colombia. Even today, the entire economic activity of the country is tightly linked to the canal. In fact, of the nearly 2 million people who inhabit the country's 75,650 square kilometers, half are concentrated in the area of the canal, as is 80 percent of trade and 70 percent of industry.

The rate of U.S. investment per capita in Panama is the highest in Latin America: \$93 (the average rate throughout the continent is \$50). And this figure does not include investment in the "canal zone," where the per capita investment rate reaches \$5,680!

Although Panama has experienced the greatest economic growth of any Latin American country during the past ten years — 8 percent per year — this growth actually conceals increasing dependence, as is shown, among other things, by the fact that the debt of the public sector has reached \$1,000 million; if the debt of the private sector is taken into account, the national debt exceeds \$1,500 million. And this in a country whose

gross national product is \$1,000 million. The situation is thus extremely serious.

Imperialist military presence

Since its creation, Panama has played a decisive role in imperialist strategy throughout the Latin American continent. In fact, in the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty, which was signed on November 18, 1903, Panama ceded to the United States "in perpetuity" a ten-mile-wide strip for the maintenance, functioning, preservation, and protection of the canal. The United States rapidly moved to use the "canal zone" for other purposes and to control not only the canal but also the country itself. There have been many North American interventions into the political life of the country, particularly armed interventions: 1921, 1925, 1958, 1959, and 1964.

But the American presence in the canal zone not only allows the United States to control the country economically and militarily; it also allows Washington to exercise close surveillance over the entire Latin American continent. The troops that collaborated in the overthrow of various governments in Central America (Nicaragua, Guatemala) left from bases in Panama. The "special forces" that collaborated with the Bolivian army in hunting down Che Guevara's guerrillas in Bolivia in 1967 and who fomented the coup in Chile in 1973 left from Panama. For all these activities, the United States has stationed more than 15,000 soldiers

(and 30,000 civilians) in the territory under its control; they are divided among the fourteen military bases that line the canal. In fact, 70 percent of the territory controlled by the Americans is occupied by military bases, and total U.S. military investment since their installation in the "canal zone" exceeds \$5,000 million.

It is in the canal zone that we find, among other things, the United States Army School of the Americas (USARSA), better known under the name School of the Americas. As of 1973, this "school," established in the Fort Gulick base, had trained a total of 29,328 soldiers of Latin American armies (see table). As of the same year, more than 170 "graduates" of the School of the Americas were heads of state, ministers, generals, or chiefs of the secret services in their respective countries.

"School of the Americas" (USARSA) Aid*
to Latin American Armies
(from its foundation in 1946 to March 1973)

| Country | Number of Students |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| Argentina | 565 |
| Bolivia | 2,679 |
| Brazil | 340 |
| Chile | 1,261 |
| Colombia | 2,105 |
| Costa Rica | 1,193 |
| Cuba | 291 |
| Dominican Republic | 804 |
| Ecuador | 2,373 |
| El Salvador | 773 |
| Guatemala | 1,366 |
| Haiti | 50 |
| Honduras | 1,726 |
| Mexico | 240 |
| Nicaragua | 4,119 |
| Panama | 2,472 |
| Paraguay | 844 |
| Peru | 1,907 |
| Uruguay | 647 |
| Venezuela | 2,846 |
| TOTAL | 29,328 |

*Figures of the USARSA

The school is divided into four departments: Command Department (which trains military commanders and general staffs), Operations Department (civic action, counter-insurgency, jungle warfare), Logistics Department (secret services, military police, medical aid, and supplies), and Technical Department. Pinochet, Leigh and company, among others, were trained in this school.(1) Fort Gulick is also headquarters for more than 1,000 members of the Eighth Special Action Forces, better known under the name Green Berets.

Also located in the "canal zone," at Quarry Heights, is the headquarters of the United States Southern Command (Southcom), which is charged with coordinating

all military and secret service activity and with supervising all North American military aid programs in Latin America. The Inter-American Air Force Academy, established in 1943, is located at Albrook Air Base, the U.S. Army Jungle Warfare School is at Fort Sherman, and the Cartographic School of the Inter-American Geodetic Survey (LAGS), which trains specialists in cartography useful in counterinsurgency, is at Fort Clayton. These are only a few examples of what the American presence in Panamanian territory represents for the United States military.

Renegotiation of dependence

The problem of the canal has been decisive throughout the history of relations between the United States and Panama. The various bourgeois governments that have successively held power in Panama since 1903 have always utilized the struggle for Panamanian sovereignty over the "canal zone" as a means of maintaining their leadership in the country. Thus, the revisions of the 1903 treaty made by the Arias-Roosevelt Treaty (1936) and the Remon-Eisenhower Treaty (1955) represented nothing but means by which the Panamanian ruling classes diverted attention from the exploitation to which the working classes of the country are subject and obtained from imperialism greater participation in the exploitation of the canal, the only beneficiaries of which were the ruling classes of both countries. Through their popular organizations the Panamanian masses have always fought against the foreign military presence on their soil. These struggles have always been emptied of their content by the collaboration of the Panamanian ruling classes with imperialism.

The events of January 9-12, 1964, during which twenty-two Panamanians were killed by American bullets and more than 500 were wounded, were the product of the rise of popular struggles that had been brewing for many years and of the disappointed hopes of recovering the canal.

The only immediate result of these events was the opening of new negotiations with the United States over the problem of the canal. The outcome of these negotiations was the draft treaty of 1967, which was rejected by the Panamanian government under popular pressure, for it maintained the presence of the United States and its control over the canal in other forms.

The failure of the negotiations and the deterioration of the political situation within the Panamanian bourgeoisie led to the military government in 1968; this government took up where the previous bourgeois governments had left off on the subject of recovery of the canal. In fact, the military government had made the problem of the canal its hobby horse in maintaining power and winning support among the popular masses on the basis of the anti-Yankeeism that has always been deeply felt by the masses. Thus, the Torrijos regime lent a new spirit to the international policy of the Panamanian state, making the problem of the canal

its driving lance in international bodies and organizations. The aim: Make the United States concede greater Panamanian participation in all matters concerning the canal.

This nationalist position, typical of the military reformist regimes, allowed the Torrijos government to lend itself the image of a progressive regime among international public opinion, going so far as to call itself "revolutionary." Is there any need to demonstrate that it was in fact nothing of the kind, despite the sanction given it by Cuba?

U.S. INFANTRYMEN RETURN TO BARRACKS IN CANAL ZONE AFTER EXERCISES



Military "reformism"

Brought to power in 1968 through a coup that overthrew the government of Arnulfo Arias (representative of the interests of the traditional oligarchy), which had been installed only eleven days before (in October), the officers had taken advantage of the crisis of hegemony of the local bourgeoisie. The repression against the progressive popular groups was not long in coming: the student movement, the trade unions, and especially the entire class of toilers became targets of persecution. During the first year of the military government, arrests, deportations, and disappearances of leaders of left organizations reached their height. Then, during the period 1970-71, with the adoption of the strategy of the military reformist regimes, the National Guard (the armed forces of the country) tried to become an instrument of social and political reorganization. To do this the National Guard was compelled to alter its relations with the various political sectors of the country and felt the need to incorporate some of them into the government. At the end of 1970 the Military Junta established relatively close relations with the Partido del Pueblo Panameño (PPP — Party of the Panamanian People, the pro-Moscow Communist party) within the framework of a thought-out policy of neutralizing the popular masses, an organized and disciplined sector of which was represented by the PPP. And in fact, the accord between the officers and the PPP had the anticipated effect of demobilization. It practically, although temporarily, put an end to the popular resistance to the military regime that had been provoked by the government's policy during the first year after the coup. The

"guerrilla" movements were eliminated and the major cadres of the MLN-29-X1 were forced into exile.(2)

Thus, the National Guard tried to establish an economic and political program corresponding to the role the international division of labor accords Panama as a transit zone and as an economy that has historically developed on the basis of supply of services and financial circulation.

The ground was cleared for making Panama an international financial center(3), for "modernizing" the structures of national production within the framework of "developmentism" (desarrollismo). The most aggressive capitalist sector was favored to the detriment of the traditional sectors. This situation favored the sectors in which work is not very stable and simultaneously weakened the labor force used for temporary work.

Capital investments were oriented toward the most dynamic sectors, while at the same time a new labor code permitted an increase in the number of members of the trade unions, within which the state exercised a more direct control. The relationship of forces favorable to this operation was maintained by the influx of capital into the country.

The nationalist policy of the military regime led by General Omar Torrijos corresponds to the new relationship of forces structured around the crisis of hegemony of the ruling class. The realization of the reformist project requires a popular base; the government was to build its popular support on two pillars: First, a broad mass of peasants, dispersed, lacking in political organization, and without any class program. The organization was created by the government in 1972 with the formation of the Asamblea de Representantes de Corregimientos (Assembly of Corregimientos Representatives).(4) Second, a well-defined party organization (the PPP) that controls the leading workers cadres in work centers of relatively low productivity. The petty-bourgeois origin of the PPP leaders facilitated the party's relations with sectors such as the state bureaucracy or the intellectual and student milieu.

Role of the student movement

The student movement is one of the most active sectors on the political scene. In fact, there has been a tradition of student struggle in Panama for several years. This classic manifestation of the petty bourgeoisie is linked to the problems inherent in a society with an "underdeveloped" economy and a dependent political structure. At certain times, all the contradictions of society may be summed up in the mass of students.

During the years 1972-75 the student movement did not go through a strong development. This was due both to the repression it suffered during the early years of the regime and to the profound division caused by the dynamic stimulated by the most "modernist" sectors of the dependent bourgeoisie.

The bourgeoisie's project was implemented by the government by basing itself on the student sector grouped around the Federación de Estudiantes de Panamá (FEP — Student Federation of Panama), controlled by the PPP. The FEP was charged with mobilizing support for the class project of the bourgeoisie in accordance with the pact established at the end of 1970.

Nevertheless, in September 1974 the leadership of the FEP abandoned the PPP. Since then, it has increasingly become an organization in the service of the military regime and hence in the service of the interests of the bourgeoisie. Its unconditional support to the government led it to leave the contradiction that defines class relations under capitalist society out of its analysis. By rejecting this fundamental and classic contradiction, it sought to justify its new positions by identifying new enemies. These new enemies were not class enemies but rather enemies of the "revolutionary process directed by General Torrijos," an abstraction that seeks to establish a false relation between the real and the concrete. Their tactical alliance with one faction of the ruling class became an alliance with the strategic objectives of that faction.

Repression begins

With the first serious signs of political crisis — no treaty with the United States, 25 percent increase in the cost of living, international economic crisis — the reaction of the ruling sectors was directed against those sectors that appeared most critical of the regime: the class enemies of the bourgeoisie.

Nevertheless, the most coherently manifested expressions of critical sectors did not appear among the organizations of the working class itself. The organization of the proletariat is a permanent process and its contradictions are not resolved so long as class society is not liquidated. In the context of this process, what the groups with fascist tendencies (such as the leadership of the FEP) proposed was the destruction of groupings critical of the regime and capable of giving an impetus to the class organization that would counterpose socialist revolution to reactionary violence. They attacked the organizations that, despite many difficulties, were working with the exploited classes in their battle to organize themselves politically. Hence their repeated attacks on the organizations active at the university (especially in the law school) and certain high schools (Instituto Nacional, for example) in the struggle for a critical, combative, and independent student movement.⁽⁵⁾ Hence also their attacks on the communication media that identified with popular struggles and all those who were acting in defense of the interests of the working class in one form or another. And we must not overlook their armed attack against militants of the PPP last October.

But the real interests of the working class are not modified by the rightist deviations of the FEP and the PPP.

In spite of its relative weakness — a weakness that in the final analysis will not prevent it from being the motor force of the new society that will overcome the contradictions of class society — the working class gains strength in its struggle against the enemies it confronts in the course of its movement toward final emancipation. These enemies have been able to develop thanks to the interests of other classes that obscure the perspective of the working class and thanks to the absence of analyses of concrete situations, which leads to dogmatism and sectarianism and sometimes to the most aberrant opportunism.

The bourgeoisie has fortified its strategy through its policy of military reformism. Because of the Bonapartism of the regime, the class struggle is masked by a policy of anti-imperialist demagoguery, while at the same time capitalism increasingly penetrates into the very heart of Panamanian society. The historic struggle of the Panamanian people for the recovery of the canal is diverted from its final goal by the proposal for "national recovery." Under the slogan of national unity the Bonapartist regime, with the collaboration of the Communist party, tries at all costs to control the rise of struggles that in the final analysis result from an economic and social policy that increasingly strikes at the exploited classes and from the failure to reach a treaty with the United States on the question of the canal. On this subject it must be recalled that while the revolutionary organizations put forward the slogan of the total withdrawal of American military bases, the Bonapartist regime and the CP agree to the maintenance of three of these bases.

Among the revolutionary organizations that have emerged from the rise of struggles, the Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria (FSR — Revolutionary Socialist Faction), a Trotskyist organization that arose in May 1975, is struggling for the development of a revolutionary vanguard on the basis of anticapitalism and anti-imperialism with a view toward the construction of a revolutionary party as an instrument of struggle for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

The FSR, which came out of the student sector, has since developed its interventions among the workers, which has lent it an important role within the revolutionary vanguard in Panama. It recently held its first congress (in February), during which it adopted the name Liga Socialista Revolucionaria (LSR) and decided on the principle of affiliating to the Fourth International.

The analysis made by the comrades of the LSR during their congress draws attention to the rightist turn now being made by the Bonapartist regime under its guise of left nationalism and to the repression that threatens to fall on Panamanian revolutionaries during coming months. We call upon revolutionary Marxists throughout the world to support the struggle of the Panamanian people for national and social liberation and to respond with active solidarity to any attack against the democratic rights of the workers and revolutionary organizations in Panama.

FOOTNOTES:

1. Six of the officers who carried out the September 1973 coup in Chile had graduated from the School of the Americas with the highest grades: the director of intelligence services, and the commanders of the second infantry division, the logistical support division of Santiago, the third infantry division of Concepción, the engineering school of Tejas Verdes, and the school of troops and special forces of Santiago (see *New York Times*, October 23, 1973). In addition, the four leaders of the junta received military training both in the United States and in the canal zone (see *Newsweek*, November 24, 1973).

2. MLN-29-X1: Movimiento de Liberación Nacional-29 de Noviembre — National Liberation Movement-November 29, an organization that came out of the fusion of several groups that had left the PPP in 1962; it fought the military regime for two years, using both urban and rural guerrilla warfare.

3. It should be pointed out that the currency in Panama is the American dollar. In addition, let us note that there are eighty-two foreign banks in Panama today.

4. The Republic of Panama is divided into nine provinces and one *comarque* (an administrative unit including several islands). Each province is divided into districts (there are sixty-four of these in all) and these are divided into *corregimientos* (which are sorts of municipalities). There are a total of 505 *corregimientos* in the country, and each has a representative in the Assembly.

5. These organizations are: *Círculo Camilo Torres* (CCT — Camilo Torres Circle); *Guaykucho*; *Frente Estudiantil Revolucionario* (FER — Revolutionary Student Front); *Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria* (FSR — Revolutionary Socialist Faction).

TOWARD THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

The following article, announcing the founding of the *Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria*, appeared in the June 1975 issue of *Revolución Socialista*.

The *Fracción Socialista Revolucionaria* (FSR — Revolutionary Socialist Faction) is a recently formed revolutionary organization. It results from a split of three-fourths of the members of the *Círculo Camilo Torres* (CCT — Camilo Torres Circle), who found it difficult to carry out activity among the students, workers, and peasants within the CCT.

The FSR emerges at a time when the historical conditions of the period are marked by a rise of mass struggles nationally and internationally. Internationally, the class struggle is sharpening considerably. It is the hour of the Vietnamese revolutionaries, the situation in Portugal, the workers struggles in Europe, the economic crisis of capitalism, and the crisis of bourgeois leadership. In Panama all this is combined with the inability either of the revisionism and reformism of the Communist parties or of *foquismo* (the heritage of petty-bourgeois romanticism, which reduces the Cuban experience to its purely military aspect) to offer a response capable of giving leadership to the explosions of class struggle.

Nationally, bourgeois reformism, which has been governing since 1968, attempts to calm down the existing class struggle through Bonapartism and a policy of anti-imperialist demagoguery, while at the same time allowing capitalism to penetrate to the very depths of every pore of our society. The historic struggle of our people to recover their major natural resource, the canal, has been diverted from its real goal, with the regime proposing national and not social recovery.

The peasant movement has also been diverted from its major struggles, in the name of carrying out a fake agrarian reform. Through lending support to fascist sectors (the leadership of the national student federation), the government has tried to mire the student movement in confusion, thus preventing it from coming forward to carry out its most important political action in the history of our country.

As for the working class, although organizationally fragmented and subject to the iron ideological control of the bourgeoisie and reformism, it is now exerting pressure on the bureaucracy and is seeking to resist the deterioration of its material conditions and to preserve its rights.

The FSR emerges as a necessity posed by the class struggle for the construction of an organization capable of lending coherence to the socialist alternative. Ideologically, this means a realignment that breaks with the heritage of petty-bourgeois romanticism and differentiates itself from the revisionism of the Communist parties and their practices of reform and conciliation.

The FSR proposed the convergence of various advanced groups, militants, and cadres of the working class into the nucleus of a party.

There is a prevalent notion among some sectors that the formation of so many leftist organizations is bad, that this foments division, that there are not sufficient differences to justify such a situation. These views are widespread, especially among the petty bourgeoisie. These opinions are based on the failure to understand that the existence of different political organizations is a consequence of the division of society into classes and does not at all depend on the good or ill will of individuals.

Thus, the root of the differences on tactics, strategy, and programmatic conceptions lies in the class struggle.

Many differences that at first glance appear to be matters of nuance actually have deep implications. The experience of Chile offers a complete range of examples in this respect. How should the misnamed middle class be dealt with? How to struggle against the liberal revolution? These problems were resolved in a reformist and not revolutionary manner, from the standpoint of the petty bourgeoisie and not the proletariat. The result is well known: Imperialism and the bourgeoisie found propitious ground for preparing the massacre of the Chilean working class and revolutionary movement.

Those who say that what is needed in Panama is a democratic revolution and not a socialist revolution exhibit total ignorance of the reality of the country.

They assert that the problems facing the masses in Panama derive more from the deficiency of capitalist development and the obstacles erected by feudal and semifeudal structures than from the very effects of the bourgeois system of exploitation and domination that exists in our country.

Those who propose a bourgeois-democratic revolution suppose that imperialism is an external phenomenon against which all classes of the nation, all the people, must struggle. They fail to realize that imperialism is solidly linked to the internal structure of the country and is associated with the bourgeoisie. They ignore the fact that in Panama, as in any country in Latin America, the struggle against imperialism is inevitably linked to the struggle against the "national" bourgeoisie.

The FSR maintains that the class that is the decisive force in the process of revolutionary transformation is the working class. It is the struggle for the destruction of the capitalist economic system that is on the agenda.

What is serious about the positions of democratic revolution is that they reflect themselves in political attitudes within the workers movement and other sectors, attitudes which advocate conciliation with the bourgeoisie (national unity).

In order to resolve the economic and social problems and build socialism, it is first of all necessary to construct a political power that concretizes workers democracy.

That is what the bourgeoisie and imperialism oppose.

The FSR calls for a struggle against capitalism and imperialism and their objective allies, reformism and opportunism.

The people will crush the CIA, CONEP, CAPAC!
Military bases out!

Socialist revolution or caricature of revolution!

Panama, June 26, 1975

IRELAND

DUBLIN GOVERNMENT TO ADD TO REPRESSIVE ARSENAL

by **STEVE MacDONOGH**

In 1969, following pogroms against Catholic areas in Northern Ireland by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and pro-imperialist Protestant mobs, Jack Lynch, then Taoiseach (prime minister) of the Dublin government, moved troops to the border and announced: "We shall not stand idly by."

It was a gesture forced on him by overwhelming mass solidarity in the southern, twenty-six county state with the struggle in the North. But as a song of the time recorded:

Well, Jack Lynch came out from Dublin
And he had ten thousand men
He marched them up to the border
And he marched them home again. . . .

He sits on his ass in Dublin
And I hope he does enjoy
Selling out his country
For he's England's little boy.

In a sense, Jack Lynch and his Fianna Fail government did not stand idly by; they embarked on a campaign of arrests and harassment of the defender of the Catholic ghettos in the North, the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Not content with the wide-ranging powers of a revived war-time emergency law (which had been passed in 1939), the regime in the Irish Republic enacted further repressive legislation.

But because of the importance of Republican rhetoric in Fianna Fail's electoral base and because of the Republican sympathies not only of its supporters but also of elements among its public representatives, the comprador bourgeoisie did not regard Fianna Fail as the most reliable force in carrying out a policy of full col-



laboration with British imperialism. In the general election of 1973 Fianna Fail was defeated by a Fine-Gael/Labour coalition.

Since then, the use of non-jury courts to sentence Republicans to jail terms for alleged IRA membership has continued steadily, the budget and manpower of the armed forces have been increased massively, and the police force, especially the Special Branch, has been expanded. More and more, the Free State Army has been used to back up the Garda Síochána (police force), and regular collaboration between the "security forces" of the Irish Republic and those of British imperialism has been developed.

But one of the demands of the British government and in particular of its generals has proved difficult for the Dublin government to grant. Essentially, the demand is for the jailing of Republicans who are alleged to have escaped to the South after guerrilla actions in the North. At first, the answer was seen in the extradition of these militants to the North; but the laws of the twenty-six counties prohibit extradition for "crimes" of a political nature. In addition, any attempt to alter the extradition laws could have fallen afoul of the state's constitution, which claims jurisdiction over the northern, six-county state.

Thus, the British government launched a carefully orchestrated propaganda campaign around its demands and insisted that they be incorporated into the "Sunningdale Agreement." (The main provision of this agreement was a form of "power-sharing" between Protestants and Catholics in a northern executive.) Although all the other provisions of the Sunningdale Agreement were scrapped after the May 1974 reactionary "strike" of the loyalist Ulster Workers' Council, the Dublin govern-

ment nonetheless announced in November 1974 that it would press ahead with legislation against "fugitive offenders" (that is, Republicans). In January 1976 the Senate passed the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill. The bill has not yet been passed by the Dail (parliament), and in any case, if it does pass it is expected to be referred to the Supreme Court in view of the widespread contention that the bill is unconstitutional.

The provisions of the bill are remarkably extensive. Any persons who flee to the South after escaping from a prison camp in the North — including persons held on remand — can be charged in the South and sentenced by a non-jury Special Criminal Court to up to seven years' imprisonment. Under the bill's terms, all cases would be taken before the Special Criminal Court, but evidence from witnesses in the North (such as the RUC and the British army) could be taken in the North by similar non-jury courts.

The accused would have the right to be present in the North when evidence is given, but would remain in the custody of the RUC throughout the taking of evidence. Here it must be borne in mind that members of the minority ("Catholic") community in the North are heavily discriminated against in the judicial system in the North and that torture has been and still is regularly practiced in RUC detention centers. As the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) observed in a resolution calling for the scrapping of the bill passed at their Annual Delegate Conference last summer, "It is highly unlikely that the accused will go into the North to examine the witnesses against him and equally unlikely that the witnesses will come into the South to give evidence. In fact, therefore, written evidence would be produced at a trial which cannot be subjected to appropriate scrutiny."

The bill also authorizes any civilian in the South to arrest anyone believed to have committed an offense in the North. The effect of this provision would be to legalize actions by loyalist gangs aimed at kidnapping Republicans in the South. This possibility is not at all far-fetched. At the moment, three loyalists are in jail in the South on charges of trying to kidnap Seamus Frew, an Armagh man, in Monaghan last year. (Frew was later shot by the RUC in Armagh.) Under the bill (section 19), these loyalists could be congratulated for performing a public service.

Another sinister aspect of this vicious piece of legislation is that it drastically increases penalties for many offenses in the South, which does not even have anything to do with the declared purpose of the bill. Seven sections of the bill redefine existing laws and extend their application; in so doing they go well beyond the scope of "terrorist-type" offenses. Section 6 of the bill, for example, amends the definition of burglary to include, among other things, entering a building as a trespasser with intent to steal or do damage to the building. The bill provides for sentences of up to fourteen years' imprisonment for these offenses. Section 10 states that hijacking a vehicle is punishable by fifteen years'

imprisonment. The term "vehicle" includes everything from a bicycle to a hovercraft.

A recurring feature of the bill's provisions is its greater concern for property than for human rights. One example: precisely the same penalty is provided for doing "unlawful damage" to a building and for "raping a woman therein." Again, section 6 defines aggravated burglary as burglary with a firearm, an imitation of a firearm, or anything that could be used as a weapon and makes the offense punishable by life imprisonment, which is the penalty for most types of murder.

Opposition to the bill

Since the defeat of the campaign against the "forcible entry bill" in 1970 (a campaign that brought thousands of trade unionists into the streets), the trade-union movement has done little to fight repressive laws. True, most trade unions and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions have voted resolutions placing their opposition to repressive legislation on record. But little action has arisen from these resolutions. Further, ever since the rise of the struggle in the North, the Republican Movement has been reluctant to take on the Southern state. The opposition of the Provisionals to the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill has been almost exclusively restricted to articles in *An Phoblacht*, their newspaper. In particular, the Provos have never organized their base within the trade unions, which is considerable numerically. As one member of the Provos — a shop steward who led 150 men off a construction site in solidarity with Frank Stagg before his death in a British jail — remarked in an interview with the newspaper of the Revolutionary Marxist Group, Irish section of the Fourth International: "It's no good expecting an immediate response from people in a crisis situation unless you've worked for it before. I feel that this is something that the Republican Movement isn't really aware of. They were, for instance, impressed by the march and realised its worth, but only afterwards. And this hasn't pushed them, so far, to reconsider their attitude to work in the working class." Thus, the Provos have been unable to exploit the fact that many unions have formally come out against the bill to transform this formal opposition into positive action.

The Official Sinn Fein, on the other hand, does have a form of trade-union intervention, but it is geared to economic questions and the Official militants tend to avoid such questions as repression. Similarly, the Communist party of Ireland has never shown any inclination to fight on the question of repression.

The orientation of the Revolutionary Marxist Group is twofold. Since they regard the mobilization of trade unionists as the most important factor, the RMG militants tried to get trade-union bodies to sponsor a march against the CLJB. This was successful, despite the very strong tendency of the trade-union movement (shared by the Stalinist parties) to stick purely to economic questions. The Dublin District Council of the Irish Trans-

port and General Workers Union (by far the largest Irish trade union) passed a resolution calling for a demonstration at Leinster House (the parliament building), a mass lobby of the Dail on the day of the vote on the bill, and similar action by all unions affiliated to the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. This resolution was also passed by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions.

From the start, it has been clear that the trade-union bureaucrats had little enthusiasm for the march, and even up to the last minute it looked like they might call it off. But as it turned out, a sufficient number of people had been mobilized (not by the bureaucrats, of course) to make the demonstration a success of some significance.

Additional moves within the trade-union movement were made by the Socialist Workers Movement (which is linked to the International Socialists in Britain) and the League for a Workers Republic (Lambertists), each of which organized a separate petition calling upon Labour representatives to oppose the bill.

The second aspect of the RMG's orientation has been to try to forge unity in action between the Republican and Socialist organizations. The emergence of the Irish Republican Socialist party (IRSP) in December 1974 as a split from the Officials offered the potential of increasing the possibilities for united action both North and South. But the IRSP quickly retreated into a defensive attitude toward the far-left groups and rejected proposals for united action in favor of a series of very small street meetings of their own. Nonetheless, a United Campaign Against the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill has been formed; it includes the Irish Civil Rights Association, People's Democracy, the Revolutionary Marxist Group, the Socialist Workers Movement, the League for a Workers Republic, and others; a pamphlet has been produced and pickets and a public meeting have been held.

The fact that trade unionists have marched against the bill in Dublin provides a basis for building further opposition. Revolutionary Marxists will work to exert pressure on trades councils and other trade-union bodies to take action and to educate their memberships about the importance and dangers of repressive legislation. The wave of revulsion that has swept all of Ireland after the death of Frank Stagg in a British prison was yet another sharp demonstration of the continuing determination of the Irish masses to expel British imperialism from the island; one of the important aspects of this struggle is precisely the fight against the southern Irish bourgeoisie's collaboration with British imperialism, collaboration that extends to aiding the imperialists in the physical and political repression of the anti-imperialist movement. The southern state already has one of the toughest penal codes in Europe, and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill is an attempt to make it even tougher. International opposition to the Dublin government's violation of basic civil rights can provide valuable support to socialists and Republicans in their struggle in Ireland itself. □

KOREA



CRISIS OF THE PARK REGIME

by O. OZUKA

I.

The final liberation of Saigon and the victory of the three Indochinese revolutions in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos meant the total defeat of the U.S. counterrevolutionary intervention in Indochina. This defeat has deep and direct implications for the Pacific Asian region.

U.S. imperialism had build up its counterrevolutionary military structure in the region during and after the Korean War around three main axes: a) hostility toward the new Chinese workers state with a direct military threat against China in order to block the liberation of Taiwan; b) confrontation with the Indochinese revolution through propping up the openly counterrevolutionary Diem puppet regime; c) confrontation with the North Korean, Chinese, and Soviet workers states in the Korean peninsula through direct U.S. military presence in South Korea and the maintenance of the South Korean puppet regime as a military semicolonial state serving as a military outpost. The whole complex of military treaties between U.S. imperialism and other countries in the region was uniformly under U.S. hegemony. All the U.S. military bases and armed forces, as well as the U.S. Seventh Fleet, were deployed in keeping with this structure of the U.S. confrontation strategy in the Pacific Asian region.

In spite of the intense pressure of U.S. imperialism, the South Vietnamese liberation struggle made the first revolutionary breakthrough in the struggle for power since the Korean cease-fire and the Geneva accords. In the middle of the 1960s, the struggle between revolution and counterrevolution in South Vietnam became a decisive international confrontation between the Indochinese liberation struggle and U.S. imperialism, which mobilized its entire politico-military structure in the region for its direct intervention in Indochina and thus committed this structure to a real test of strength. By 1967-68 it became clear that U.S. imperialism was unable to halt the Vietnamese revolution and by 1972 it was clear that the Vietnamese liberation struggle had established a relationship of forces favoring the final victory of the Indochinese revolution.

With the crisis of the U.S. counterrevolutionary intervention in Indochina in 1972, the U.S. made a turn in its policy toward China, dropping its past policy of hostility and making an active approach to Peking. U.S. imperialism granted de facto recognition to the People's Republic of China, sealed by Nixon's trip to Peking in 1972. The Chinese bureaucracy thus sacrificed the support of the heroic struggle of the three Indochinese peoples to its own narrow national interests. But the U.S. recognition of the People's Republic of China was above all a by-product of the victorious struggle of the Indochinese peoples. The change in U.S. foreign policy toward China was a clear confession on the part of U.S. imperialism of the basic failure of the counterrevolutionary confrontationist policy it had been carrying out in the region since the outbreak of the Korean War. The policy of hostility toward China had in fact been broken by the advances of the Indochinese liberation struggle in 1972-73.

The smashing of the Indochinese axis of the U.S. counterrevolutionary structure in the Pacific Asian region by the victory of the three Indochinese peoples in 1975 has created an entirely new situation throughout Southeast Asia. The U.S. military forces have become a stra-

getic rearguard for the neocolonialist regimes of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which includes Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, and the Philippines). The retreat of the direct U.S. counterrevolutionary intervention has meant that the Southeast Asian neocolonial regimes are now the front line facing both the newly rising popular movements in the area and the victorious Indochinese revolution.

Thus, of the three axes of the traditional U.S. counterrevolutionary structure in the region, the anti-Chinese axis had been drastically altered and the Indochinese axis had been destroyed. Only the Korean axis remained as before. And now, with the deep crisis of the dictatorial Park regime in South Korea, this third axis of U.S. imperialist strategy is radically shaken.

II.

Since the Korean War, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has served U.S. imperialism as a military neocolonial state. Its neocolonial essence reflected in its lack of any real socioeconomic base, its total suppression of the population, and its complete sacrificing of the living conditions of the toiling masses in favor of its deadly anticommunist politico-military confrontation with the North Korean workers state; in this confrontation it is backed up by its 600,000-strong army and the U.S. military presence. U.S. imperialism has given substantial financial aid to the ROK to enable it to maintain its repressive apparatus and especially its army, while the South Korean economy is in full decay.

The dictatorial regime of Syngman Rhee was overthrown in 1960 by an uprising of the urban masses initiated by the students. Throughout 1960 and 1961 broad social mobilizations continued against the "liberal" government of Chon Myan that had come to power after new elections. The development of this broad social mobilization of the South Korean urban toilers, initiated and led by the student movement, threatened the very financial structure of the military neocolonialist state, which was completely dependent on the support of Washington. A strong process of political centralization occurred among the mobilized urban masses, expressed in the central slogan for a "peaceful unification of all Korea."

The campaign for unification on the part of the South Korean masses, although deeply pacifist and populist, was a clear and fundamental challenge to the very nature of the military neocolonialist state and its role in the U.S. anticommunist and counterrevolutionary structure in the Pacific Asian region. The unification of Korea is possible only through the breaking of the neocolonial subordination of South Korea to the U.S. imperialist military structure, the dissolution of the counterrevolutionary army of the ROK, and the destruction of the military neocolonial state itself.

In May 1961 a group of army officers around Park Chung Hee organized a preventive coup d'état aimed at defending the military neocolonialist nature of the ROK

and established a military dictatorship. One of the reasons for the downfall of the Syngman Rhee regime in 1960 had been the decrease in U.S. "free economic aid" to the ROK during the late 1950s. As a military neocolonialist state divided from the North, South Korea has no indigenous economic base. Despite this, the ROK army has to be maintained as the core of the state. This was the real objective basis of the crisis of the ROK in the early 1960s. The solution adopted by the Park dictatorship later in the 1960s was an attempt to transform the military neocolonial state into a genuinely neocolonial one, that is, to attempt to build up an industrial economy as a supplement to the military neocolonial aspect of the state, introducing foreign credits and capital into South Korea.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Japanese imperialism and its expanding economy played a vital role in the Park dictatorship's economic project. Under the Syngman Rhee regime in the 1950s, there had been no official relations between the ROK and Japan, and trade between them was minimal. In 1965, against the strong and persistent resistance of the South Korean students and urban masses, the Park regime and the Japanese government signed a treaty opening official relations. The ROK-Japan treaty was denounced by the opposition as an attempt to perpetuate the national division of Korea through a new neocolonial subordination of the ROK to Japanese imperialism. This is exactly what happened. The ROK economy realized significant initial industrialization, at least quantitatively, as a result of its position as a fringe-economy of the Japanese economy, which was rapidly expanding in the international capitalist market in the late 1960s and early 1970s. ROK exports of industrial products such as textiles, transistors, electrical appliances, plywood, etc., increased very rapidly from almost negligible amounts in the early 1960s. These exports went mainly to the United States and Japan. The development of the ROK export industries in those years covered the decrease in direct U.S. financial support, but with an accompanying increase of international debt and without contributing to improving the general living standard of the South Korean toiling masses. Thus, the rather extensive industrialization in the ROK has not produced any new popular social base for the regime, but has renewed a strong anti-Japanese consciousness among the South Korean masses. Finally, the economy of the ROK has become definitively dependent on the Japanese imperialist economy and extremely vulnerable to the ups and downs of the international capitalist economy.

III.

While the ROK developed its economic subordination to the Japanese imperialist economy in order to produce its "modern" export industry as a means of financing the army and the state, it remained dependent on the general confrontation policy of U.S. imperialism against "Asian Communism," which is the fundamental basis for the existence of the South Korean army.

The worldwide application of the new U.S. international policy initiated by the Kennedy administration reached its culmination in U.S. imperialism's direct military intervention in Indochina, which mobilized the entire politico-military structure established in Pacific Asia, including combat units of the South Korean army. The first result was the impasse of the U.S. military intervention in 1967-68, a reflection of the historic limits finally reached by U.S. imperialism in its counterrevolutionary capacity against the totality of anticapitalist forces in the world, including the workers states, led by the armed liberation struggle of the peoples of Indochina. This historic turn in U.S. counterrevolutionary capacity opened a new period in the basic crisis of the Park regime, signalled by the reappearance of the South Korean student movement in 1968-69, whose opposition to the Park regime received the sympathy of the urban masses.

The second stage of the crisis of U.S. military intervention in Indochina was the great spring offensive of the liberation forces in 1972, which forced Washington to drop its policy of hostility to China and to send Kissinger to Peking in search of the traitorous diplomatic support of the Chinese government. Kissinger's Peking trip was a shock to the anticommunist Park regime. Park immediately sent his top agent to the "enemy capital" of Pyongyang and a joint statement of the governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Republic of Korea was issued in which both governments



MAO & KIM

granted de facto recognition to each other and agreed to discuss the question of national reunification. This joint statement of 1972 was a clear indication that even the Park regime had recognized that the fundamental change in the relationship of forces between U.S. imperialism and the East Asian revolution meant that the U.S. counterrevolutionary structures in the Pacific Asian region were not strong enough to support the ROK indefinitely.

For the South Korean toiling masses, openly posing the question of national reunification in the joint statement inevitably raised the question of the military neocolonial nature of the ROK itself. The crisis of the South Korean regime entered a higher stage, and the Park dictatorship declared the "October Restoration" and the presidential emergency decrees, highly concentrating administrative executive powers in the hands of "President" Park and strengthening brutal secret police repression against all opposition movements and individuals, both inside and outside South Korea.

The total victory of the Indochinese revolution further deepened the crisis of the Park regime. Immediately after the liberation of Saigon last year the dictatorship unleashed a hysterical anticommunist campaign and declared a "war-time emergency" rule. The entire male population under fifty, including all male students, have been forced to serve in civil military units; that is, they have been placed under the military discipline of the regime and are deprived of any semblance of democratic rights.

IV.

The last axis of the U.S. confrontationist military structure in the Pacific Asian region is now in full crisis. The South Korean state has been maintained on the assumption that U.S. imperialism would succeed in preserving its role in the forefront of the counterrevolutionary drive against "Asian Communism." Now that U.S. imperialism has been forced to retreat from this role, it is absolutely out of the question that Japanese imperialism can replace it as a prop for the ROK, despite the enormous growth of the Japanese economy.

Faced with this new situation, U.S. imperialism is now searching for a means by which to "decrease hostility" between South and North Korea and to "disengage" its military forces from South Korea. The general outlines of Kissinger's solution to the Korean question are quite clear: to expand the U.S. "détente" policy with China and the Soviet Union to include the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, to grant international recognition to the DPRK from the imperialist camp in exchange for recognition of the Republic of Korea by the workers state in the North, to "normalize and pacify" relations between the ROK and the DPRK. Finally, within that international framework, the aim is to change the character of the ROK from a military neocolonial state to a "normal" neocolonial state, which means keeping South Korea in the international capitalist camp through the domination of its economy by Japanese imperialism and perpetuating the national division of Korea through the international framework of détente between the capitalist world and the bureaucratized workers states.

In principle, the Soviet government has no objections to the general formula of a détente-type solution to the Korean question. It is a matter of timing and de-

depends on the capacity of Washington and Tokyo to resolve the present crisis of the Park regime. Recently, the Soviet government has granted USSR entry visas to South Korean sports figures and semi-official representatives of the ROK.

As for the Chinese government, its position on the Korean question is very contradictory. The Chinese government is shaking hands simultaneously with Washington and with the Kim Il Sung government of the DPRK. Washington is hard at work trying to persuade the Chinese government to help U.S. and Japanese imperialism resolve the Korean question in the neocolonialist and détente direction. On the other hand, Kim Il Sung and officials of the DPRK visited Peking last year, and a joint Chinese-North Korean statement was issued at the time of the liberation of Phnom Penh and Saigon. Although in 1972 the Kim Il Sung leadership accepted the joint statement with the Park regime, now the North Korean leadership is reorienting itself in anticipation of the new situation in South Korea that would appear with the downfall of the Park regime. Recently, the DPRK struck out against U.S. imperialism by recognizing the People's Republic of Angola proclaimed by the MPLA, in spite of the fact that Peking continues to center its attacks against Soviet "social imperialism" in Angola. The Chinese government supports the North Korean side in the United Nations, as does the USSR, but at the same time Chinese policy objectively works in favor of the interests of U.S. and Japanese imperialism by giving de facto recognition to the U.S. military presence in East Asia, to the U.S.-Japan security treaty, and to the Japanese imperialist "Self-Defense Forces." But even the Chinese government cannot provide U.S. imperialism with the immediate and effective support on the Korean question it needs in face of the North Korean government and the present crisis of the ROK.

V.

Kissinger's entire Pacific Asian policy for U.S. imperialism is a genuine historic turn from the former confrontationalist politico-military strategy that was applied during and after the Korean War. The significant decline of U.S. imperialism's international counterrevolutionary capacity, caused by the victorious Indochinese revolution, and the consequent decisive turn of U.S. strategy in this region are the fundamental factors accounting for the present crisis of the ROK. As a military neocolonial state, the ROK has no future in the new Pacific Asian strategy of weakened U.S. imperialism, and that is why the Park regime is now making its final, desperate efforts to maintain itself. The South Korean masses perceive this decisive change in the relationship of forces in the region and the weakened international position of the Park dictatorship.

Despite the rather rapid development of the South Korean export industries linked to the expansion of the Japanese economy, the Park dictatorship has never produced a popular social base for the South Korean

regime. The popular desire for national unification of Korea has never decreased; on the contrary, it has deepened, broadened, and gained strength among the South Korean toiling masses. The neocolonial subordination of the ROK to Japanese imperialism has served to renew anti-Japanese consciousness among whole layers of the South Korean toilers. In the rural areas, the severe poverty and deep indebtedness of broad layers of the peasantry have not been alleviated despite the "New Villages Campaign" sponsored by the regime in recent years. Strong discontent is now penetrating the army. Despite the strong press control and the severe military-police suppression in the barracks, several soldiers revolts have been reported in the last two or three years.

Because of the crisis of the international capitalist economy, and especially the Japanese recession, the rapidly developed South Korean export industry and the balance of payments of the ROK are now in severe crisis. This economic crisis makes the neocolonial subordination of the ROK to Japanese imperialism even more vital for the Park regime. At the same time, the Japanese economy has lost the perspective of continuous growth and expansion that it enjoyed in the 1960s, and the Japanese political situation is no longer characterized by the relative stability of the past. The crisis of the traditional bourgeois Liberal-Democratic government is deepening, and the coming explosions in South Korea will have an enormous impact on Japanese politics, intensifying the crisis facing the Japanese bourgeoisie. The critical political situations facing the ROK and Japanese imperialism are very closely interrelated, especially since the victory of the Indochinese revolution.

The popular militancy of the South Korean masses has never been completely liquidated by the Park regime in spite of the long years of military-police dictatorship and the repeated severe repression against the student, intellectual, and other opposition currents ever



poet Kim Chi Ha

since the May 1961 coup. While massive expression of popular militancy has been violently suppressed by the military-police regime, this repression has not been able to establish counterrevolutionary political hegemony over the masses as was the case immediately following the Korean War. Ever since 1963, the South Korean urban masses have expressed this continuing opposition to the Park regime through the presidential and parliamentary elections and through the repeated outbreak of mass actions by students even under the prevailing conditions of severe repression. In the 1960s, the South Korean masses were not afforded a favorable international relationship of forces for a total political confrontation with the dictatorship, but now the situation has changed decisively in favor of the masses.

Now, poet Kim Chi Ha and other oppositionists in Park's jails are strongly convinced of the coming downfall of the dictatorship. Even the liberal Christian oppositionists are now talking about popular violence to overthrow the regime. An important process of political differentiation is developing inside the South Korean opposition. This takes the form of a polarization between the bourgeois-liberal opposition as represented by the former presidential candidate of the opposition, Kim Dae Jung, who was kidnapped by the South Korean police while in Japan and who has many contacts with so-called liberal elements in U.S. and Japanese political circles, and left-populist militants who are seeking a base among the workers and poor peasants, whose orientation is reflected in the popular poems of Kim Chi Ha.

In face of these developments, the Park regime has no future, and is only digging its own grave with all the repressive emergency decrees, the KCIA secret police rule, the execution of young anti-Park fighters, and so on. The only realistic political perspective is now the violent explosion of the South Korean toiling masses and the final downfall of the Park dictatorship. Even if a military coup against the Park regime were to occur, such a coup would only open a violent social and political mobilization of the masses.

VI.

The fact that neither Washington nor Moscow nor Peking nor Pyongyang can control this explosion of the South Korean masses is the Achilles heel of the "solution" to the Korean question now being sought by U.S. imperialism. Nobody can predict the exact timing of the coming explosions and the downfall of the Park regime. But the immediate task of the international working class, and especially the Japanese working class, is to fight against U.S.-Japanese support to the Park dictatorship, to organize international solidarity with all the anti-Park fighters, and to denounce the brutal repression carried out by the regime. The Japanese and international working class must prepare for the new situation in Korea and Far East Asia as a whole that will follow the overthrow of Park, a situation for

which U.S. and Japanese imperialism are already preparing.

The uprising of the South Korean masses and the fall of the Park regime will trigger a strong explosion of the deep and popular desire for national reunification of Korea as well as a rapid development of class struggles by the workers, urban masses, and peasants. The fall of the regime will pose the anti-imperialist national question of the reunification of Korea and the class question of the struggle of the workers and peasants against the neocolonial bureaucracy, bourgeoisie, and landlords.

A class polarization will develop. On the one side there will arise a genuine neocolonial bourgeois tendency, which will seek to preserve neocolonial relations with the Japanese and other imperialist bourgeoisies and which will be ready to accept some kind of weak "federal" relations with North Korea under the protection of U.S. and Japanese imperialism. On the other side, a working-class tendency will develop which will try in an empirical way to put an end to the entire anti-North-Korean politico-military structure of U.S. imperialism and the ROK, to abrogate the ROK-Japan treaty, to nationalize Japanese and all other foreign capital, to expropriate the ROK neocolonial bourgeoisie and landowners, to destroy the ROK army, to found a South Korean workers, peasants, and soldiers government, and to fight for immediate economic cooperation with the DPRK and for the popular and democratic reunification of Korea based on the will of all the Korean workers and peasants. The fall of the Park regime and the explosion of broad and powerful popular struggles will pose the question of a specific Korean permanent revolution. The Japanese and international working class must be prepared for the coming struggle of the Korean proletariat.

The fall of the Park regime and the powerful upsurge of the South Korean masses will pose a real threat to the very existence of South Korean neocolonialism. The North Korean regime will attempt an active political intervention into the South Korean situation, not without fearing that the deeply democratic mass upsurge of the South Korean workers and peasants might profoundly shake its own bureaucratic rule over the North Korean workers state.

U.S. and Japanese imperialism will make every effort to intervene in the South Korean situation in order to "rescue" South Korean neocolonialism from this mortal threat. The entire military structure of U.S. and Japanese imperialism will be mobilized for this purpose, and the U.S. is likely to threaten the DPRK with its nuclear arsenal in order to control and limit the actions of the DPRK in South Korea. Thus, the unfolding of the struggle of the South Korean workers and peasants for popular national reunification of Korea will bring about new and historic tension and will unleash a decisive confrontation against the joint forces of U.S. and Japanese imperialism in Far East Asia.

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