

imprecor

international press correspondence

fortnightly, no.54 24june 1976

£30, \$75, 30fb

THE ITALIAN FAR LEFT & THE JUNE 20 ELECTIONS





contents

ITALY

The Italian Far Left and the June 20 Elections	3
Joint Appeal of PDUP, AO, MLS, LdC	7
Prepare a Left Way Out of the Italian Crisis —Avanguardia Operaia	11
Government of the Left and Popular Power —Lotta Continua	15
The Mass Movement and the Government of the Left —Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari	19

PORTUGAL

Vote Pato!	24
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LEBANON

The Stakes of the Syrian Intervention —by Majida Salman	26
---	----

SOUTH AFRICA

For a World Boycott of South Africa! —by Langa	32
--	----

INPRECOR 76 rue Antoine Dansaert Brussels-1000 Belgium

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORRESPONDENCE

Fortnightly information organ of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International
published in English, French, Spanish, and German.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of INPRECOR.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: 1 year (25 issues) — US\$17; Can\$17; £7

AIR MAIL TO U.S. & Canada: \$24. TO AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND: US\$30.

SPECIAL SIX-ISSUE AIR MAIL INTRODUCTORY SUB: U.S. & Canada \$5.50;

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND US\$6.50.

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THE ITALIAN FAR LEFT & THE JUNE 20 ELECTION



Previous issues of INPRECOR (No.51, May 13, and No.52, May 27) have described the political context in which the campaign around the June 20 national elections is unfolding in Italy. We have likewise stressed the importance of the electoral grouping that has been organized for these elections under the designation *Democrazia Proletaria* (Proletarian Democracy). The formation of this grouping falls within the framework of a complex process of unification, recomposition, and discussion now going on within the Italian "revolutionary left."

The electoral campaign being waged by the various components of *Democrazia Proletaria* indicates the significant audience that has been won by the Italian far left since 1969. The electoral results will certainly confirm this audience. Two poles have taken shape within *Democrazia Proletaria* itself, one composed of the Organiz-

zazione Comunista Avanguardia Operaia (Workers Vanguard Communist Organization) and the Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PDUP — Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism), the other constituted by *Lotta Continua*. In fact, common meetings and actions between these two poles have been rather rare.

Democrazia Proletaria was originally founded by *Avanguardia Operaia* and the PDUP. It was the designation they gave to their common slate in the regional and administrative elections of June 15, 1975. They thus claim the paternity and legitimacy of DP. *Lotta Continua*, which is presenting its own candidates at the end of the DP slate, has thus placed itself in a position of "conflict-unity" with the two organizations that constitute the backbone of *Democrazia Proletaria*.



The political debate that has gone on in Italy during the electoral campaign is of great importance. It reflects first of all the political evolution undergone by the most significant organizations of what was called several years ago the "extraparlimentary left" in Italy. In addition, this discussion shows that the depth of the social and political crisis in Italy, the potential for an immense response by the working class, the development and internal contradictions of the reformist parties — the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI — Italian Communist party) and the Partito Socialista Italiano (PSI — Italian Socialist party) — and the initiative capacity of the organizations now regrouped under the designation Democrazia Proletaria have combined to give rise to a political situation that confronts all these organizations with decisive questions of revolutionary strategy. On many points the discussion taking shape within the Italian far left is not a reproduction of the discussions that have been initiated in France, Spain, or Portugal, but anticipates the sort of political confrontations that will soon develop in these countries.

If only for this reason, an attentive examination and critique of the positions enunciated by these organizations is of considerable interest. While throwing into relief the value of the strategic responses offered by revolutionary Marxists in the framework of application of their own theoretical heritage (dual power, workers democracy, united front, etc.), such an examination and critique also indicates the necessary precisions that must be advanced in face of the new revolutionary upsurge now tending to develop in southern Europe. Hence, the discussion initiated in Italy must be extended, as broadly and publicly as possible, on an international scale. The publication of the following dossier is an initial, limited step in this direction.

While it is not our intention here to make a general critique of the positions now held by the groups of the far left, nevertheless, in order to facilitate the reading of the documents published below and to enable our readers to situate them within the political evolution of these groups, we will try very rapidly to describe the conditions under which the groups arose, their initial positions on some problems, and their present orga-

nizational size. We cannot retrace their entire evolution, which has been linked to the development of the social and political crisis in Italy, but this will have to be done in the future.

We will draw the balance-sheet of the election campaign in the next issue of INPRECOR, when we will analyze the results of the vote and their national and international implications. For the moment, we limit ourselves to presenting the political positions that have been developed during the most recent period by the AO-PDUP alliance, AO itself, Lotta Continua, and the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR — Revolutionary Communist Groups, the Italian section of the Fourth International).

LOTTA CONTINUA

The first issue of a journal entitled Lotta Continua (Struggle Continues) appeared on November 1, 1969. The journal began to appear regularly beginning on November 22, 1969. It was produced by the regroupment of a fraction of the Potere Operaio (Workers Power) group in Pisa (the head of which was Gianni Sofri, presently one of the leading members of LC) and many militants of the student movement in Turin, Trente, the Catholic University of Milan, and the Potere Operaio group in Pavia.

Lotta Continua came out of the spontanéist current. In 1969, for example, Sofri wrote: "The workers, students, technicians, and peasants will come to develop a general revolutionary consciousness on the basis of experience in struggle, which they will wage within their class conditions, and on the basis of their capacity to be the vanguard of this struggle. . . . If they lose this capacity, they can learn many things, but they will remain suspended in the void."

During the great labor contract battles of the autumn of 1969, Lotta Continua proposed a "cultural revolution in the Italian factories." In the summer of 1970 the group held its first congress. In one of the preparatory documents of this congress, "Workers Independence," Sofri described the meaning of this concept, which occupied a central place in Lotta Continua's general conceptions, in these terms: "It (workers independence) is the explicit and radical rejection of wage labor and the laws that govern it . . . to damage production, abolish material incentives tending to link the workers to the expansion of production, reject the economic and normative division, reject the measuring of work time and poisonous working conditions, hours, shifts. . . . Production is the business of the employers; the crisis of production is a political objective of the workers."



Independence was defined on another terrain as well. It consists of "unmasking the counterrevolutionary role of the trade unions and the parties represented in parliament. The trade union is the essential instrument serving to imprison the class struggle within the rules of the functioning of capitalist development." The PCI was defined mainly as "the essential instrument for channeling the anticapitalist struggle into rules of the game of bourgeois democracy in order to preserve the system."

One of the most significant themes pushed by Lotta Continua at the time was summed up in the formula: "Let's take the city!" Sofri explained its meaning as follows: "This is not an infantile and provocative slogan. It is not an irresponsible invitation to plunder or insurrection. On the contrary, it is a strategic program of formation and consolidation of the proletarian vanguards within the long-term revolutionary process. To take the city means to unite the proletarians beginning from their fundamental needs, to bring them out of their isolation, out of the poverty to which the employers condemn them, to make them get used to discussing in the struggle, to living as communists."

Since that time, LC has experienced an important organizational growth. During its last congress, in January 1975, it claimed 10,000 members. According to one of its leaders, Luigi Bobbio, "after first underestimating the question of party building, we have since arrived at a structure inspired by democratic centralism." Statutes were adopted during this congress which recognize the "right of tendency," but this is linked to the conception "of the necessity that the organization be affected by real contradictions that exist among the masses. The tendencies must thus reflect these contradictions." LC has a base on a national scale in the major Italian factories (Fiat, Alfa-Romeo, Pirelli, Italsider, the chemical complex of Porto Marghera). In the North it is most strongly represented in Turin, its "city of origin." In the South it has a strong base in Naples, where it plays a leading role in the organization of the unemployed. In addition, LC is growing in Sicily, where the PCI is relatively weak.

Since 1972, the organization has had a daily newspaper, also called Lotta Continua, of which it claims to sell 15,000 copies. It has no theoretical review. Its programmatic documents, as well as the main theoretical contributions of its leaders, are published in the daily.

Luigi Bobbio explains: "LC is the organization of the new vanguards that have emerged out of struggle and that have discovered politics. LC has above all played a role in those factories that have in turn played a role in breaking from the trade unions and revisionism (the PCI)." Although still marked by its spontaneous origins, LC has gone through a significant political evolution. This has stimulated a process of rethinking both on various theoretical themes linked to the history of the workers movement and on strategic and tactical questions that are posed in Italy today. The documents of Lotta Continua published below express the current positions of the group and allow for grasping the evolution of the organization.

AVANGUARDIA OPERAIA

The Organizzazione Comunista Avanguardia Operaia, better known simply as Avanguardia Operaia (AO — Workers Vanguard), arose in 1968 in Milan. A number of its founding members and present leaders came out of the ranks of the Fourth International (Massimo Garla, Luigi Vinci, Silvio Corvisieri, and others). The organization is linked to an intervention in the Comitati Unitarie di Base (CUB — United Rank-and-File Committees), which arose in 1967-68 in several important factories in northern Italy, especially in the Milan area (the Pirelli factory, among others).

In December 1968 the first issue of the journal Avanguardia Operaia appeared; the second issue was published in May 1969. In 1971 AO brought out a fortnightly, which later became a weekly. By 1973 the weekly conserved the name Avanguardia Operaia, while the theoretical review had taken the name *Politica Comunista*.

The first issue of Avanguardia Operaia in 1968 announced a fusion between Avanguardia Operaia of Milan, the Circolo Lenin of Mestre, and the Circolo Rosa Luxemburg of Venice. Since then, AO, which places itself within the "Leninist ambit," has adopted a systematic policy of unitary work aimed at fusion with various local or regional organizations, among them the Centro di Coordinamento Campano and, above all, the Collettivo Lenin of Turin. Although AO's preponderant weight is in the North, in the regions of Milan and Venice among others, it does have a base on a national scale.

For the past two years, AO has conducted special unitary work with the PDUP, with the perspective of a fusion that is intended to occur in the relatively near future. This year's electoral accord, like the one around the June 1975 elections and the platforms signed jointly by AO and the PDUP, are presented by AO as falling within this perspective. The document below signed by four organizations — AO, PDUP, the Movement of Workers for Socialism, and the League of Communists — reflects the political axis around which the current rapprochement is occurring.

With a view toward a "process of unification of revolutionaries," Lotta Continua has proposed a "constituent congress of revolutionaries." AO has responded as follows: "It is necessary also to see the positive evolution of LC. On more than one occasion we have criticized the difficulty or inability of LC to define its relations with the reformists and above all with the trade unions, not only in terms of struggle, but also in terms of the

common construction of anticapitalist movements . . . Recently, in the course of the electoral campaign, LC has made a rectification, manifesting a willingness to go into the unions, a comprehension of the political struggle developing within them, and a willingness to adopt an attitude no longer of frontal attack on a possible government of the left, but to instead manifest the will to approach it in a simultaneously critical and unitary fashion. . . . Nevertheless, any proposal of a politico-organizational type, if it is not to be demagogic, fragile, and manipulative, requires a clear and definitive response from LC, in practice and not only in words, on the crucial questions of its viewpoint on construction of a revolutionary party really rooted in the working class: the question of the 'mass line,' of the relationship with the movements of struggle on the one hand and with the trade unions and the reformist parties on the other hand." (Quotidiano dei Lavoratori, June 17, 1976.) The place of the debate between AO and LC in the complex process of recomposition of the far left that has been initiated in Italy may well become a decisive one, particularly since the debate runs through the participating organizations themselves.

As far as the orientation now being worked out is concerned (see the document "The Proletarian and Popular Forces Prepare a Left Way Out of the Italian Crisis"), it is perhaps useful to furnish some points about the original position of AO on the PCI, the unions, and the CUB. In order not to fall into sectarian schematism, we must note that AO, while claiming to be Maoist and still exhibiting a substantially uncritical position on the Chinese leadership, has constantly emphasized an effort to develop a comprehensive political line.

The third issue of the AO review (November-December 1969) asserted: "At the origin of the crisis of the regime . . . (lies) the malfunctioning of the institutions that have assured bourgeois hegemony for more than two decades, (hence) the insertion of the PCI into the governmental camp is less and less seen as a solution to the crisis and more and more as an obligatory step on the road to the establishment of a new political regime, a regime less tied to nineteenth century schemas of parliamentary representation and 'party-ocracy' as they are affirmed in the Italian constitution." In addition, AO then analyzed the crisis of the PCI in a very linear and catastrophist manner, asserting: "Even several years ago, the best elements of the PCI chose the trade-union field as the only possible one for militant action after the party had lost any leading role in the factories as a result of its electoralist policy." Or: "The terrain on which the hegemony of the modern revisionists (the PCI) had to pay the highest price was that of the class confrontation, which was led by the trade-union organizations according to the method of firemen (that is, with the aim of 'extinguishing' the movement for workers demands — INPRECOR)."

AO drew the following conclusion in terms of the construction of the organization: ". . . the fact that the dynamic growth of the world revolution and the exacerbation of class confrontations in our country makes it ever

more clear that revisionism plays the role of agent of the bourgeoisie imposes precise tasks on revolutionary militants, on the workers vanguard: to lead a process of growth of new instruments of struggle and organization that are situated within the perspective of the reconstruction of the party of the proletariat and, simultaneously, that place the class struggle outside bourgeois control and influence and point in a revolutionary direction. . . . The task of Marxists-Leninists is to prevent the dispersion of militants who, individually or in groups, detach themselves from the revisionists; this must be done by offering them conditions for revolutionary militant activity among the masses and a coherent communist organization." ("Il revisionismo del PCI, origini e sviluppi" — The revisionism of the PCI: Origins and Development, 1972.)

On the basis of this conception, the CUB were defined as follows: "The CUB, which arose in struggle, are mass organs with their own independence, both organizationally and in terms of line. They are composed of all those workers who recognize them, first spontaneously and later in an increasingly conscious manner, in a clear perspective of defense of class interests both inside and outside the factory, in an anticapitalist and anti-collaborationist manner. The CUB are not organized bureaucratically, but as independent organs they possess broader consciousness. They develop their activity in various forms, through assemblies, leaflets, nighttime meetings. . . . It would be easy to ask, 'but should the factory councils and the unions cease to exist?' Let us immediately eliminate this misunderstanding and respond: No, the factory council and the unions must continue to be present, but we say that the CUB also must not disappear.

"The CUB, as democratic mass organs with their own independence, do not want to replace the factory councils. On the contrary, the councils must more and more be qualified as defenders of the fundamental interests of the workers and must jettison their collaborationist attitude. . . . In relations with the unions, the CUB want to maintain an independence of line precisely because they are convinced of the need to denounce before the workers all the things the unions fail to do, all their capitulations, in order to indicate their responsibilities and also to develop the class orientations that the unions have long since renounced. The function of the CUB must thus be to ever increasingly influence the action of the unions in order that they put forward a real class line in opposition to the present line of collaboration that the unions are advancing." (January 1972.)

Since 1974 AO has been publishing a daily newspaper, called Quotidiano dei Lavoratori, of which 15,000-20,000 are sold. In addition, AO operates two radio stations, in Milan and Rome. It now claims about 8,000 members. On the politico-organizational level, AO claims allegiance to "democratic centralism," which nonetheless seems to be quite far from the conception upheld by revolutionary Marxists on the question of internal democracy. — A.U. □

JOINT APPEAL OF



- PDUP
- AO
- MLS
- LDC

On May 30 Avanguardia Operaia and the Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PDUP), the two organizations that originally founded Democrazia Proletaria (DP — Proletarian Democracy), the electoral bloc established for the regional and administrative elections of June 15, 1975 (see INPRECOR, No.30, July 3, 1975), issued a common platform to serve as the basis for DP's campaign in the current elections. This platform was then to be discussed by the organizations included on the electoral slate bearing the DP designation.

On June 8 Quotidiano dei Lavoratori, daily newspaper of Avanguardia Operaia, published a document including very large sections of the initial platform. It was signed by four organizations: AO, PDUP, the Movimento dei Lavoratori per il Socialismo (MLS — Movement of Workers for Socialism, a Mao-Stalinist tendency), and the Lega dei Comunisti (League of Communists, an organization created in 1972 by the fusion of the League of Communists of Tuscany and the Rome-based Workers Unity group).

This document was not published in Il Manifesto, the daily of the PDUP! Lotta Continua has asked to sign it, but had not yet done so as of June 18. The four signing organizations explained the meaning and purpose of this platform as follows:

"The line expressed here and the objectives presented are those around which DP must develop its propaganda during the last days of the electoral campaign and on which DP will have to put the emphasis after the campaign. In addition, it is a concrete exposure of the distortions of the Communist party press, which is seeking to present the DP as an assembly of heterogeneous forces having no common orientation and united only by electoral pressures. For this reason, the document we are publishing here, which must also be distributed as a national DP leaflet, should be used as much as possible not only in political discussion, but also as an instrument of propaganda."

We are publishing below major excerpts from this text. Deletions are marked by ellipsis; the subtitles appear in the original.



Citizens, men and women comrades,

It is finally possible to put an end to the Christian Democratic regime; it is possible to open a new phase, to place the forces that represent the working class and the popular masses at the head of the country, to initiate a phase of struggle for power to those who labor.

This is the meaning of the June 20 elections: to defeat the Christian Democracy not only in order to replace the political personnel of the government with new and honest people, but to give life to a new and different mode of governing, to a system in which the government will be under the constant check and pressure of the mass movement and will have a program based on the needs of the masses and not on the exigencies of capital.

Democrazia Proletaria is the only electoral formation that clearly poses the objective of providing a positive way out of the crisis of the regime through a government of the left in which the historic parties of the working class, the PCI and the PSI, will have decisive weight, a government open to Catholic forces that free themselves of the domination of the political Catholicism of the Christian Democracy, open above all to the movements of struggle within society, whose strength can impose a program based on the popular interest and devoted to its realization.

Democrazia Proletaria considers illusory and dangerous the proposals that have been advanced to somehow assure the continuation of the Christian Democratic presence in the government. The proposal of the PCI for a coalition government which would see the initiative of the left paralyzed and the workers movement torn apart would thereby allow freedom of maneuver to the capitalist power in the country and would leave room for the reorganization of the right. The proposal of the PSI,

once the smokescreen is blown away, boils down to a DC-PSI government somehow acceptable to and tolerated by the PCI. Regardless of the many protestations to the contrary, this would be simply a new edition of the center-left.

How to respond to the present crisis

The crisis of the Christian Democracy is the fruit not only of its own internal disintegration and more generally of the crisis of imperialism, but also of the impetuous movement of struggle which began in the factories and has since extended, in new and original forms, to so many aspects of social life. It is out of this movement that the need arises today for a government of the left that would prevent the Christian Democracy from doing further damage to the economy and civil life of our country, from organizing financial terrorism, and from seeking obscurantist and reactionary revenge in the field of community life. To forcefully and coherently confront both immediate problems and those of long-term perspective, a substantial turn is indispensable, a break with the political system that has reigned for thirty years.

What is necessary today, through the June 20 vote and through uninterrupted pressure of struggle, is an advance of the left, of the whole left. But within this general advance a clear political qualification is necessary, and only Democrazia Proletaria is capable of offering it. The advance of the left must not conclude with compromises that somehow perpetuate the Christian Democratic regime, but must have an outlet: the full assumption by the united left of the responsibility of running the government of the state on the basis of a program that accords with the objectives expressed by the movement in struggle. . . .

The only possible and necessary response is to agree unhesitatingly to confront the difficulties, to respond to the blackmail with the mobilization of the masses, and to have a clear action program both for perspectives and for the immediate future.

What distinguishes Democrazia Proletaria from the Communist and Socialist parties is not only the objective of the government of the left, but also the sort of program and mobilization that must back the program up. The context in which the government of the left may arise, in fact, finds all the centers of economic and administrative decision-making in the hands of the capitalists. Only constant mass pressure can bring the government of the left to reject any role of normalization of the workers' struggles and of stabilization of the capitalist system; only thus is it possible to initiate popular control over the decision-making centers in order to open the road to power for the working class.

Our objectives

On the international level the objectives of Democrazia Proletaria are:

1. Out of NATO and for a nonaligned policy that achieves a closer connection with the countries of the third world and favors the construction of a new international order. Rejection of the counterposed blocs headed by the superpowers and of the increase in military spending that results from their existence. Withdrawal of the American and Soviet fleets from the Mediterranean.

2. Initiation of a new international division of labor in which Italy establishes economic relations not only with the industrialized countries but also and ever increasingly with the countries of the third world, guaranteeing trade conditions that favor the development of the more backward countries.

3. Radical redrafting of Common Market agricultural policy so as to be able to pursue an independent development of agriculture, limiting the penetration of the multinationals and thus beginning to balance the agricultural deficit; support to public spending and credit with this objective in view.

4. Introduce elements of selection and control of imports, which, while maintaining the market open to abroad, prevent speculation by the big importers, limit luxury and superfluous imports, and guarantee an adequate quantity and egalitarian distribution of mass popular consumer goods as well as raw materials for the productive apparatus.

5. Link foreign investment (of the multinationals) to precise imperatives of job stability and intervene with nationalizations against arbitrary shutdowns.

On the internal level, Democrazia Proletaria proposes:

1. Absolute priority to the objective of full employment on the basis of intransigent defense of current employment by means of a ban on layoffs and the intervention of the state and the local state bodies to prevent the closing down of productive units.

Expansion of the productive apparatus, directing control and utilization of private industrial investment, credit, and public spending toward this objective. Private and public productive orientation on a priority basis toward the development of agriculture, production of mass popular consumer goods (thus tending to substitute for the greater part of imports), socially useful services (housing, hospitals, schools, transport), initiatives to clean up the big southern cities. All this must be done by implementing a policy that strives for full employment and the elimination of the waste of human and material resources, thus also modifying the very quality of collective needs.

2. Development of workers and people's control over working conditions (against poisonous conditions, use of the labor force with the perspective of a radical challenging of capitalist organization of labor), control over the search for and assignment of jobs. Extension of the 150 hours (the yearly amount of paid time for workers education), not only in the direction of the transformation of the schools, but also as a basis for concretely challenging the technical division of labor. Intransigent defense of individual and social real wages and introduction of price support for indispensable consumer goods and to assure adequate quantity. Drastic reduction of profits as a decisive factor in this policy.

3. Mobilization of the local bodies and peripheral democratic structures (factory councils, zonal councils, neighborhood councils, etc.) in support of a drastic reorganization of the fiscal system hinged around direct and progressive taxation. Only thus is it possible to bring the methods of assessment up to date, strike drastically at the big tax evaders, and block the flight of capital. . . .

4. Maximum-broadening of democracy beginning with full implementation within the sphere of the present constitutional order. Abolition of the fascist and antidemocratic laws. . . .

Democratic rights in the armed forces and the police. Opening of the magistrate system at the local level and the local state bodies to popular representation.

Democratic and popular control over the means of mass communication (public and private radio and television, freedom of the press, etc.).

5. Commitment to accept the demands raised by the feminist movement, understanding the male-female contradiction as an expression of political conflict and creating the conditions for the maximum generalization of struggles, of independent organization of women, and of the demands they themselves express (control of their own bodies and lives, and in this framework, medi-

cal care for women, free abortion on demand, clinics controlled by women).

6. Commitment to support all those movements (students, youth, women, etc.) tending to modify social-ideological relations (in culture, morals, and clerical and reactionary ideology).

This battle, which tends to be today's harbinger of a deep proletarian cultural revolution, is a qualifying element, an essential precondition for the political, social, and economic transformations now on the agenda.

Some of the above-mentioned objectives will have to be pursued immediately:

- 1) Political control of the banking system in order to reduce the export of capital to a minimum and to direct credit toward employment and development.
- 2) Immediate removal of corrupt and reactionary elements from the main decision-making nerve centers, especially in the banks, foreign trade, and the financial administration.
- 3) Initiation of an investment policy aimed at the sectors listed as priorities.
- 4) Ban on layoffs.
- 5) Redrafting of the restrictive clauses of the Common Market, especially as regards agriculture.
- 6) Price supports for large-scale consumer goods.
- 7) Elimination of inequalities in pay scales.
- 8) Urgent measures and rank-and-file mobilization against tax evasion.
- 9) Repeal of the Keale laws and the fascist codes.

But no immediate measure, no matter how modest, can be realized without an extensive and deep popular mobilization. This is even more true for the medium- and long-term measures. Democrazia Proletaria upholds the necessity of unreservedly supporting the mass movements that, beginning from popular and proletarian needs and expectations, aim at a modification of the relationship of class forces, at the construction of organs of control and contestation of capitalist power.

Develop workers control

It is exactly these instruments of workers and people's control (workers control in factories over the organization of labor and investment, tenants' control over housing assignments, workers control over the schools of the 150 hours, popular control of reconstruction of Friuli (site of the recent devastating earthquake), etc.) which prepare and bring closer the real conquest of power by the masses.

Democrazia Proletaria firmly supports a strategy and tactics that constantly lead toward the unification of the proletariat of the big and middle-sized factories with the layers of workers whose jobs are marginal and precarious, with the great forces of the unemployed, with the enormous mass of people who stand outside the labor market only because they know they cannot find work. Unemployed youth, whether intellectuals or not, emigrant workers returning to the country, the great mass of workers laid off by the small industries, and the great number of workers whose jobs are precarious are all, together with the workers, technicians, and those whose jobs are stable, the protagonists of the transformation of society. For this reason, Democrazia Proletaria, which sees the trade union as the essential intermediary between the mass movement and the government of the left, considers itself fundamentally committed to struggle for the unions to be linked to the masses and not to operate as instruments of social stabilization. The unions must place themselves at the head of struggles and must carry through with their unitary reconstitution, begun with the formation of councils; they must thus become ever more capable of drawing together and not curbing the upsurges that arise from the movement itself.

Democrazia Proletaria, while distinguishing itself from the other left parties by its different analysis of the phase through which we are passing and by its different political desires in regard to the struggle for socialism, is committed to putting forward a policy of unity of the left within the movement and within the institutions; it addresses its proposals (and it is open to discussing them) to all the politico-social components of the movement of workers, in the profound conviction that the sphere of revolutionaries includes not only the vanguard but also, as a concrete potentiality, the broad masses.

Democrazia Proletaria fights for a government of the left not as a pure cover for the movement of struggle or as an opportunity to expose the revisionist line, but as an active instrument in a general process of transformation of society. Democrazia Proletaria will feel itself committed to support this government of the left and at the same time to stimulate it through struggles for ever more advanced objectives. It thus puts itself forward as an independent force within a unitary framework. A vote for Democrazia Proletaria is a vote for the renovation of the entire workers movement, for the construction of an advanced line that begins from the needs and experiences of the masses in order to place socialism on the agenda, as is possible today. □





**quotidiano
dei lavoratori**

PREPARE A LEFT WAY OUT OF THE ITALIAN CRISIS

We are publishing below extracts of a document drafted by a commission of the Political Bureau of Avanguardia Operaia (AO) entitled "The proletarian and popular forces prepare a left way out of the Italian crisis." The document was published in the June 12 issue of AO's daily, *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori*. The first part of the text analyzes the crisis of the "party-regime" of the Christian Democracy and the evolution of the relationships of social and political forces, as well as the policies of the PCI and the PSI. It stresses that in the context of the electoral advances the left is expected to make in the June 20 elections, there is a tendency among the masses, "presently only implicit and expressed ambiguously in the vote for the reformists," to "see a left government as the only real and practicable alternative in the present situation."

We have selected excerpts from the central portion of the document. They highlight the meaning Avanguardia Operaia assigns to the slogan of the "left government" as well as this organization's conception of the relationship of the mass movement to the left government.

The last part of the document deals with the function of the "left government," "not only as an instrument of defense of the workers against the economic crisis," but also as a government that could "constitute a decisive phase in the development of the revolutionary process of the struggle of the masses for socialism." In addition, the text presents Avanguardia Operaia's conception of the "development of workers and people's control and of the problem of power." On the theme of workers control the document affirms: "The strategic value of workers and people's control can be synthesized in three aspects:

*In given situations, workers control is the instrument through which the realization of important partial gains is achieved;

*The growth of workers and people's control weakens and disintegrates the degree of control exercised by the class enemy over the entire social fabric;

*Finally, the experiences undergone on a mass scale in the struggle on this field and in the exercise of forms of control constitute a precious 'apprenticeship' for the future conquest and effective management of power. . . . But at the same time, it must be clear . . . that the effective influence of workers and people's control in terms of power can only be partial and precarious."

The subtitles are from the AO text. Deleted passages are denoted by ellipsis (. . .).

The resistance of the reformists

The political period that will open up after the elections will be marked on the one hand by the Christian Democracy's inability to maintain its monopoly of government and power and on the other hand by its lack of willingness to really "share" this government and power with all the parties of the workers movement. Thus, there will be an objective thrust toward a government of the lefts as the only really practicable alternative to this situation. But the concrete realization of such a government, the content of its program, and the character of its relations with the mass movement will

have to be the object of a tough political and social struggle.

In fact, neither a parliamentary base nor the fact that the government of the lefts is to a certain extent "historically ripe" will be sufficient to impel the PCI and PSI to decide to govern without and against the Christian Democracy.

This line of the PCI and PSI will tend to manifest itself in the first instance in the attempt to include the Christian Democracy in any government formula at all costs. But even if this turns out to be impossible, the very at-

tempt will nonetheless make itself felt in terms of both the composition and program of the DC-free government that the reformist workers parties will eventually be compelled to form, whether they like it or not.

Once all possibilities of a government including the DC have been exhausted (DC-PSI and other such formulas), the reformist parties will nonetheless try to launch a sort of "historic compromise without the DC" (or, alternately, an "emergency government with what we have"). As far as the composition of the government is concerned, this would be reflected in the attempt to include "minor parties" of the bourgeoisie, in particular the PRI (the Republicans), which, in spite of its rather small quantitative weight, is actually significant in terms of representing the ruling class, for it embodies the ambition of important sectors of the big bourgeoisie to endow themselves with some representative other than the Christian Democracy. As far as program is concerned, this would probably lead to a program in which some traditional reformist objectives would stand side by side with the substance of the anti-people plans for "emerging from the crisis" upheld by the big bourgeoisie. . . .

To be sure, the attempt of the reformists to demonstrate that they are the most effective administrators of the interests of the bourgeoisie will have to take account of the mass movement, with its now seasoned resistance to attacks on wages and employment and with the new expectations and impetuses created among the masses by the assertion of a left majority. Nevertheless, two factors of significant weight must be kept in mind. First, it is not certain that the great expectations that have been generated by a left electoral victory will be directly reflected in a new and more powerful upsurge of struggle, for such an upsurge will have to confront the tendency to "give the new government a chance," a tendency the reformists will do everything they can to foster. Second and more important, the reformists hold a hegemonic position in the current relationship of forces within the workers and people's movement while the revolutionaries are in a minority position, capable of winning hegemony on certain important questions and during highpoints of struggle, but not yet capable of consolidating this hegemony into a strategic project of broad scope. Hence, the central problem with which we must come to grips will be how to "raise ourselves by our own bootstraps" through the fundamental impetus now present in the mass movement in order to make this impetus emerge and assert itself politically with a weight that goes beyond our present organizational strength.

The factor that can allow us to overcome this gap is the objective weight of the class contradictions and their reflection in mass consciousness. But we will succeed in bringing this weight to bear in a politically precise and incisive manner only if we are able to orient it on the basis of a program, above all an immediate program on the most urgent and pressing problems of the situation, the problems on which a left government will have to pronounce itself from its very inception. . . .

Program of struggle, government program

This program must be simultaneously a program of struggle and a government program.

In the first place, a program of struggle for two reasons: First because any political program of revolutionaries must grow out of the masses and their experiences in struggle and must then be able to return to the masses in the form of systematized propositions around which to concentrate the force of the struggle in order to make that force felt in a decisive political manner; second because, especially in the current phase, the independence of the class movement, its capacity to advance its own major objectives without subordinating them to the backward "political balances" within which the reformists would like to confine them, is an essential precondition for any political advance.

But also a government program. In what sense? Certainly not in the illusory sense of those who already sense the possibility of influential "government strength" and believe they can genuinely influence the new government through the power of their own ideas or parliamentary presence.

"Government program" means something else.

Above all it means fully assimilating a fundamentally new fact that characterizes the phase of the left government: the possibility (not the automatic certainty!) that this will pave the way for a government that is, at least partially, an instrument that can be used by the popular masses in their struggle instead of an instrument entirely in the hands of their enemies.

This means that at the very moment that the masses are struggling for some objective they must pose the question of how a government can act for the same objective. For example, if there is a struggle to create a given number of new jobs, it would be important at the same time to define the sort of government economic policy that would correspond to the achievement of this objective (in terms of direct public investment, credit controls, etc.). But this also means to work out a scale of priorities in the objectives of the mass movement which also (but not exclusively) takes account of the margins for action commanded by a left government in each given phase. We refer here not to the margins for action "self-limited" by the reformists' desire to compromise, but rather to the margins determined by the relationship of class forces and by the certain degree of "rigidity" (economically and institutionally) that cannot be eliminated in the short term.

Concretely, this means to define our program primarily in reference to the problems of the economic crisis now in progress, with a twofold order of objectives: on the one hand, to lend maximum force to the objectives of defense of the popular interest as it emerges from the struggles during this phase of the crisis, and on the other hand to determine the class content of the policy with which the left government will confront the crisis

— in other words, how the "costs of the crisis" will be distributed and what sorts of changes will occur, through the crisis, in economic structures and development.

The fusion of the two levels of this program ("struggle" and "government") will occur fundamentally on the terrain of the development of forms of workers and people's control (although inevitably in partial and contradictory ways that cannot be generalized in institutional forms)

Mass movement & the left government

In the overall struggle for the formation of a left government, the maximum and independent development of initiatives by the mass movement, which must in no way be subordinated to the restraining premises of the delicate compromise balancing the reformist parties will attempt, will be of decisive importance. This is true fundamentally because the motor force for the realization of our political project — a left government based on an anticapitalist program for resolving the crisis — is the effort to transfer onto the institutional level the forces and objectives that have so far been expressed only on the social level. The development of the political situation after the elections will depend in large measure on the relationship that is established between the forces of the left in parliament and the struggle of the masses in the country. Nothing is more mistaken than the illusion that the road to a left government can be opened and that its measures of social transformation can be rendered acceptable by asking the masses to delegate their power to the government and by offering mass passivity to the adversary. This sort of deal has been proposed many times by the advanced sector of the bourgeoisie, with the political and trade-union leaderships of the workers movement obviously inclined to take it into consideration, and has been just as many times rejected by the reality of the mass movement. It will once again be posed, and in a rather more dangerous and subtle manner, in the event of an electoral victory and a direct PCI presence in the government majority.

Of equal importance is the fact that once established the left government would be both pressed and supported by an external and strong mass struggle. This is the basis both for the guarantee of the very survival of the left government and for the possibility of its actually opening the way to people's power.

The first reason for this is that government does not yet mean power. When the left government is formed, the class struggle will find itself facing its most difficult goals, and only the mobilization and organized presence of the masses can surmount the obstacles, ward off the counteroffensives, and also prevent indecision and back-sliding on the part of a government which, it must not be forgotten, will be born as a coalition government and will in any event be led by reformist forces, socially heterogeneous and with a bureaucratized organizational structure.

The second reason is that only an ever more active and broader mass movement will be capable of creating an atmosphere of mobilization, of transforming the orientation of hesitant social layers. If this is not done, the action of the government, which will inevitably have to upset presently consolidated balances, attack far-flung interests, and pass through thousands of difficulties, would soon face a wave of corporative protest and would be compelled to give up, as has happened so often during past experiences. . . .

A third reason, "looking further ahead," is linked to the new quality of the present crisis, of the type of program needed to deal with it, and of the sort of revolutionary perspectives that flow from this. This third reason is as follows: The seizure and exercise of power can be conceived today neither simply nor primarily as a pure extension of the instruments of state intervention (even if they are in the hands of workers parties) or as a simple radicalization of the objectives of the left government. Rather, they must be conceived as a conscious and prolonged process of struggle for power through the realization of forms of workers and people's control of the entire social fabric, a process for which the left government may be pressed to become the instrument.

This strategic perspective therefore excludes other hypotheses, along with their consequences as to the leadership one seeks to imprint on the mass movement. On the one hand it excludes the hypothesis that the left government would open the way to the revolution inasmuch as it would be rapidly "overtaken" by the contrast between its own policy and the mass movement. On the other hand, it excludes the hypothesis of a left government that would in and of itself constitute the precondition for a kind of "rising harmonic" of workers and people's power in society such that the class nature of the regime would eventually be altered through successive steps.

A hypothesis of this variety overlooks two fundamental questions: the irreducible antagonism between proletarian power and bourgeois power, from which it follows that a gradual increase of the former within the latter is unthinkable, and the struggle between the two lines within the workers movement, from which it follows that it is unthinkable for a left government born under reformist hegemony to evolve "naturally" into a docile instrument of the revolutionary process. . . .

What sort of mass movement, around what central objectives, and with what relation to the action of the government? . . .

What is urgent to assert here — for it implies a great theoretical and practical effort on our part — is the necessity of constructing a mass movement on a new level, able to be fully independent of the left government but equally able to grasp and utilize the novelty that would be represented by this government. In sum, a movement that refuses to hand a proxy over to the

government, while at the same time not offering any room for corporatist agitation.

From this standpoint the role of the trade unions is essential, for they are the only organizations that are capable — provided they are guided by a correct class line — of gathering together the immediate thrusts of the struggle of the masses and of providing an initial unification and systemization, capable of positively bringing the struggle to bear on the political level and on the policy of the government itself, while avoiding the risks both of exemplary struggles that remain isolated and thus open to a "new model of repression" and of struggles that remain shut into a corporatist framework and are thus eventually liable to being used by the reactionary counteroffensive.

It is therefore necessary that:

- a) effective class independence of the trade unions be reconstituted, rejecting the role of "state unions";
- b) the unity of the working class stand at the center of this independence, the capacity to unify all the upsurges of struggle around a coherent strategy and not the simple scattered representation of the various upsurges of sectoral struggles (that is, the false dilemma between "a comprehensive outlook axised around social truce" and "independence of struggle within corporative limits" must be rejected).

This general proposal has a number of implications:

* in terms of objectives, the defense and expansion of employment must become the central and unifying element of trade-union action; the other major axis must naturally be the defense of wages, with particular stress on forms of social defense (the struggle against the high cost of living);

* in terms of the organizational structure of the unions, what is decisive is to relaunch the democratic rank-and-file structures where they exist and to construct them in new areas. In fact, these are decisive conditions for the achievement of three political goals: 1) construction of genuine class independence of the trade unions; 2) relaunching of a process of trade-union unity, which must not be based on paralyzing compromises and must counter the tendency to allow clashes and deals among the party leaderships to be reflected in the unions; 3) construction at the rank-and-file level of unity among the various layers of the proletariat and development, on the basis of this new capacity, of workers control over choices in economic policy;

* in terms of the strategy of trade-union struggle, this means the capacity to invest general themes of struggle with a conscious strategy: the only strategy that avoids limiting itself to putting general pressure on the government, the consequence of which would be to give the government free rein, and instead can construct forms of rank-and-file control over the process of realization of the desired objectives.

Finally, it is obvious that the role of the trade unions is decisive in the defense and development of forms of democracy, against attempted reactionary attacks that will undoubtedly be developed. . . .

But precisely because of the decisive political importance taken on by the mass movement in the current phase, it is clear that our action among the masses cannot be limited to our commitment to putting forward a class line in the unions, as necessary as that is. We must therefore commit ourselves to the construction of independent forms of mass movement and organization on various fields and levels:

a) On the very fields on which trade-union action is being developed today it is necessary to develop forms of broad and united organization of the vanguard of struggle capable, through their political orientation and, if necessary, through independent struggle initiatives, of strengthening the pressure of the masses on the unions. The point here is to gather together the experiences developed in the factories by the CUB (United Rank-and-File Committees), the Democrazia Proletaria collectives, and similar organizational forms, integrating them into a more consciously political perspective able to influence the line of the unions and the policy of the government;

b) Other forms of independent mass organization must be consolidated and extended on those fields and problems that have as yet not been directly taken up by trade-union action or have been taken up in inadequate ways: the struggle around housing, against the high cost of living, around the rates of public utilities, the struggle of the soldiers, of the lower officials, for the unionization of the police, etc.

The objective here must be to directly win certain objectives that have not been taken up by the unions (welding them together with a coherent political conception of the function of the left government) and also to force the unions to really intervene in these fields, adopting the essential objectives raised by the mass mobilizations that have already developed spontaneously;

c) Finally, there exists an independent mass movement that can be tied into the unions only in very partial measure, even if the unions were guided by a class line: the women's liberation movement. Indeed, this movement is rooted in a contradiction within the proletariat, one that also extends into its revolutionary sectors and will certainly not be resolved simply through a correct class trade-union line since it relates to problems that concern the entire revolutionary process and the construction of socialism itself. . . .

All these independent movements at the mass level, on all their various fields and with their varying relations to the trade-union movement, nonetheless can and must have a strategic element in common: They are driving factors and political guides in the development of forms of workers and people's control. It is this development that will have to be the characteristic element of this new phase of class conflict and that will constitute a decisive terrain on which the revolutionary line can begin to develop its hegemonic capacity within the mass movement. □

GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT

& POPULAR POWER

VOTA LOTTA CONTINUA



Below are excerpts from two documents of Lotta Continua; the first was dated May 23, the second June 14. The title of the second is: "The government of the left and popular power." In its introduction to this declaration Lotta Continua noted: "It is a special duty to introduce clarity on political perspectives; in fact, this may be the most important duty the revolutionaries have toward the masses in this final phase of the electoral campaign." The document thus appears as an important element in the discussion that has been opened among the various components of the "revolutionary left," united in these elections under the designation Democrazia Proletaria.

① A historic turn is on the agenda

We in Italy stand on the eve of a great political turn which the June 20 vote must render definitive. This turn consists of the liquidation of the Christian Democratic regime, that is, of a system based on corruption (Gava, Christian Democratic deputy from Naples, and Crociani, an industrialist, implicated in the Lockheed scandal; Leone and the oil companies), on the Mafia, terrorism (the far-right bomb in Milan's Plaza Fontana in 1969, fourteen dead; the fascist attack on the Italicus express train; the acts of the secret services), ignorance and prejudice (the garbage on television and in the schools; the pervasive clericalism), and repression (the "anti-wrecker" law, the fascist penal code, the special police, the carabinieri).

The Christian Democracy has governed Italy for thirty years, occupying all the centers of power and all the state institutions, to the benefit of big capitalists (like Agnelli of Fiat and Cefis of Montedison), big speculators and bankers (like Sindona and Carli), and NATO, that is, American and German imperialism. The defeat of the Christian Democracy; the liquidation of its regime; the establishment of a government of the left having a program that reflects the objectives of the workers' struggles, combined with a big vote for the revolutionaries (which means the slate of Democrazia Proletaria and the candidates of Lotta Continua) — those are the three big objectives of these elections. All three are interlinked; none of them can be achieved without the others. . . .

Through the struggle & through the vote: build the strength of revolutionaries

During the course of the past year, while the workers and unemployed, women and students, youth and old people have built in struggle the force that brought down the Aldo Moro government and made it impossible for the Christian Democrats to form another government, the leaders of the PCI have come up with a new proposal: a government of national unity, a government of unity with the bourgeois parties — the DC, the PRI (Republicans), the PSDI (Social Democrats), the PLI (Liberals) — a government adopting the interests and economic program of the Confindustria (the employers' association), linked to those who drowned freedom and democracy in blood in Chile.

The sort of government proposed by the PCI threatens to be only a miserable repetition of the Moro government. That is why this project must be defeated, above all in struggle, but also in the vote. This implies giving the broadest and most active support to the slate of DP, which assembles all the revolutionary forces and all those organized forces that want a genuine and radical turn. Revolutionaries are not running in these elections simply to take stock of themselves. They want to be elected to parliament and they want to get into the government in order to carry the objectives and demands of the masses into these institutions. But only on the condition that the class struggle creates the conditions and relationship of forces in the country that allows them to play a decisive role. That is why for us the relationship between the vote and the struggle is a very close one.

Government of the left, bourgeois elections, and people's power

The society in which we live is a capitalist society in which the bosses and the exploiters rule.

The Italian state is a bourgeois state, that is, an organization of bosses and exploiters created to oppress the workers and the exploited.

Even a very advanced left government like the one we are struggling for will never be able to change the nature of this state, will never be able to completely satisfy the interests of the proletarians.

The state is not the government. The state power is founded on the army, the police and carabinieri, the system of justice and the prisons, the big banks and the great economic groups — institutions that were never elected but instead created in order to defend the interests of the employers. They will constitute — in fact they already have in large part — the base on which the bourgeoisie, imperialism, and reaction rely in their attempts to recover lost ground, if necessary by force and with bloodshed.

Workers power must not be delegated, not in the factories nor in society, nor in the government. The force that is needed to continue to fight the bosses and the exploiters, to prevent and ward off fascist coups and the maneuvers of reaction is and always will be the unity, organization, and political clarity of the masses. This will result in the construction and growth of a network of mass organs in the factories, barracks, and neighborhoods, directly controlled by the proletarians. It is and will be the development of "popular power," both today and in the phase to come. It is from here that the new proletarian state will have to arise, after the seizure of power, that is, after the subversive bourgeois military apparatus is destroyed.

A politically advanced left government can and must be an important instrument for the construction of popular power. It can and must support the program, struggles, and development of the organization of the working class. It can and must serve to disorganize and disorient the ranks of the class enemy. It can prevent the bosses and exploiters from using the laws and instruments of the government in the interests of speculation, for their attack against wages and jobs. It can prevent the reactionary and subversive elements from warming their way into the ministries or from using the state apparatus to carry out their own projects, as they are doing today. It can prevent the exploiters and reactionaries of all stripes from using state money and facilities (like the radio, television, schools, and newspapers financed from the public budget) to slander the struggles of the workers and establish a consensus around their own projects. That is our "government program." It may appear rather limited, but the workers who have direct experience in struggle know how important it is.



2 GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT & POPULAR POWER

The first question around which revolutionaries' ability to orient themselves must still be much more developed is that of the relationship between independent mass movements and the administration of government institutional instruments by the left parties.

We know very well that the government of the left will not be the automatic result of June 20 and that a hard and difficult struggle will be necessary in order to impose it. Revolutionaries commit themselves to fully wage this battle both among the masses and in parliament. But precisely because of the fact that we place the will of the masses and the tenacious initiative of revolutionaries in the direction of this will in the center of the solutions to the crisis, we believe it necessary and correct to begin discussing the most general perspectives right now, including those of a "strategic" character.

Up to now the organizations of the revolutionary left have developed a discussion, although not always clear and explicit, around the problem of the relationship between the struggle of the masses and the instruments of the government, between the construction of popular power and intervention in the state institutions. This discussion has sometimes been reduced to facile schemas, with some forces stressing "the movement" and the "maximum program" and others instead lending priority to the "institutions" and the "minimum program."

We believe we can contribute to advancing this discussion by posing the problem on the basis of its rational kernel, which is the question of power and its foundations.



The struggle for power after June 20

After the conquest of the government by the left parties, an objective that will still be far from achieved immediately after June 20, the phase of the struggle for power opens. That is, a period opens during which there will be an intensification of pressures and class initiatives in opposite directions, both socially and within the institutional apparatuses. This is already a sharp feature of the phase we are now coming out of: workers control in the factory (over the organization of labor, the work pace, the number of employees, the plans for reconversion of companies) against the "freedom of the enterprise" and the despotism of the employers, clashes within the armed forces between democratic soldiers and NCOs on the one hand and the reactionary hierarchy on the other; clashes between the unemployed and the Christian Democratic Mafia over management of the labor exchanges, and so on. Obviously, in this sort of "diffusion" of the confrontation over control and power (which will take root in the major work places and in the community life of the masses, as well as within the state institutions), the various "centers" of conflict cannot all be placed on the same level.

This is true not only because both revolutionaries and the masses wage the social confrontation in "their own home" (the factory) and wage the confrontation within the institutions "away from home." The real reason is deeper and more substantial.

The deepening of the thrust of the masses toward self-organization and the construction of "popular power" in the major centers of community life inevitably implies a direct confrontation with the freedom of initiative of the employers and the hierarchies of the Christian Democratic regime. This will provoke the accentuation of a process (which has already been under way for some

time) in which the centers of reactionary initiative will seize hold of the major executive and repressive institutions, in particular the financial (the big banks and the central bank, which constitute the pillars of financial and imperialist command in our country), military, and judicial institutions.

The orientation of revolutionaries, whose center of gravity lies in unreserved support for the independent initiative of the masses and the construction of popular power, can find expression within the institutions (not only the elected ones, but also the executive organs controlled by the government), in a precise direction. In the armed forces, in the courts, in the banking institutions, and in the state apparatuses that control the economy (the ministries and the various central and regional bodies), one can struggle to break the centers of command, the vehicles for the class violence of the bourgeoisie, in order to dilute their functioning, paralyze their capacity for reactionary counteroffensive, and advance democratic and popular control within them. In this sense, these institutions must be "bent" to the service of the construction of popular power. That is what we mean when we say that the new source of legitimacy that will be asserted in the struggle for power is ever more the fundamental will of the masses organized in independent structures of power (embryos of the "workers state") and ever less the "law," understood as a form of self-perpetuation of the institutions of the state. (On this subject, the struggle waged by the movement of democratic soldiers against the disciplinary rules of the armed forces is exemplary.)

Left government and unity

It is within this framework that the discussion on the role of the left parties must be situated, in particular the question of the relations between revolutionaries and reformists.

It is obvious that the latter, who occupy the majority and leading positions within the possible left governmental formulas, will be subjected to violent pressures in opposing directions; it will be necessary for them to make a choice in one direction or the other, that is, either the consolidation of the internal "efficiency" of the institutional apparatuses (hierarchical discipline in the armed forces, selection in control over the labor market and in the orientation of public spending, authoritarian efficiency in the work places, etc.), or the utilization of the internal contradictions of these apparatuses in order to extend proletarian control.

It is around this concrete and decisive question that one must pose the problem of the unity of the left parties. What choices will the PCI and the PSI be inclined to make? The examples we have up to now . . . indicate a marked preference for the first option, that is, an assertion of the continuity of the state and of its institutional leadership apparatuses. This is a line the content of which corresponds to an acceptance of some kind of incomes policy and social truce (even today the irrev-

ocable character of the sliding scale of wages is being placed in question), of reduction of public expenditures of a social nature, of an increase in productivity through greater labor discipline, of the maintenance of Italy's international ties (Common Market, etc.).

We know very well that the phase now opening will be a very turbulent one, that diverse prospects are on the agenda, and that the violence of the pressures to which the traditional left parties will be subjected will produce very deep contradictions within them. The struggle for the hegemony of a revolutionary line within the government of the left must be waged to the hilt, using all maneuvering room and all possible measures.

The political and programmatic unity of revolutionaries is especially urgent in this situation. We have many examples of the ability to win revolutionary hegemony that such unity has succeeded in establishing (the extensive unity that included broad layers and well-known personalities linked to the reformist parties during the campaign to outlaw the MSI (the fascists) and during the struggle against the Reale Law; the electoral unity recently achieved).

Such are the more complex and dynamic terms of the question of the "unity of the lefts," a formula which, in its general aspect, cannot discriminate against any force, but which must be seen in relation to the concrete content of the political confrontation within the state institutions, a confrontation that reflects and extends the confrontations that are manifested in society itself.

Thus, it is not a matter of lending priority to "the movement" or "the government"; rather, the need for a presence of and struggle by revolutionaries in the institutions will have to be especially pressing and crucial. The fundamental question lies in the manner of "being" in the institutions (and the manner in which their functions are conceived), which depends directly on the manner of "being" in the movement (and of the way its role as protagonist and source of all new legality is understood).

What instruments for transforming society?

In the *Democrazia Proletaria* appeal published five days ago in *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori* (see the text above — INPRECOR), it is said that the government of the left must be the active instrument of a general process of transformation of society. This assertion, while acceptable, is insufficient and remains very general unless it is explained in the manner outlined above. In order for the government to be an "active instrument," it is necessary for revolutionaries to win hegemony within it on the basis of a content that arises from the needs of the masses. This constitutes a battle that remains to be waged in the concrete, on all the aspects of the program and administration of institutions in the short and long term.

Let us consider just two aspects of the institutional crisis in Italy, two absolutely central aspects for the management of the economy and the application of any program of transformation of the structures of production and distribution of income: the banking system and public administration.

When the defeated planners of the center-left complain that their bold projects of social justice and class conciliation failed because of the lack of instruments, they forget that it was precisely during the years of the center-left that we saw the completion of a process of systematic monopolization of the financial levers by big capital (above all through the monopoly of credit and the special credit institutes) and by the DC (public finances, ordinary credit institutions, savings banks).

The technocratic and elitist orientation of the center-left ended up strengthening the corporatist and selective concentration of the financial system.

The PCI's devotion to the crucial center of financial power that is the Bank of Italy . . . recalls the worst myths of technocratic efficiency.

On the other hand, the orientation toward the abolition of secret banking represents both the axis of a fundamental break with the antiproletarian function of the banks and the backbone of proletarian control of credit in order to assure the implementation of measures aimed at orienting credit in the right direction. It is frivolous to ask that credit "serve the development of employment" outside of this basic clash over the breakup of the internal mechanisms of the private, separate, and antiproletarian function of the banking system. Flight of capital, tax evasion, and fraudulent speculation are systematically carried out in the shadows of secret banking, jealously guarded by the powerful banking corporations, beginning with the governor of the Bank of Italy. . . . To make the whole network of banking activity public and transparent, to give the workers organizations the right to inspect financial activities of national interest . . . , and to open the meetings of the interministerial committee for credit and savings to the control of the workers represent the preconditions for a radical reform of the banking system. . . . It is known that Italian companies are able to function thanks to loans that run as high as half the value of their liquid assets and that the special credit institutions control the major part of credits for industrial reconversion. Without examining the functions of the banking system and placing them under the tight control of the workers organizations, many demands around defense of jobs, increases in employment, and reconversion are destined to remain futile.

Those, then, are some examples of the way in which class struggle takes place and will take place ever more violently within one decisive instrument of the government's economic policy — the credit system — through the confrontation between proletarian control and privatization of the institution. □

THE MASS MOVEMENT & THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT



The text below, produced by the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups), explains the position of the Italian section of the Fourth International not only on the nature of the relations between the mass movement and the reformists, but also on the character and function of the "government of the left," as well as the attitude revolutionaries must adopt toward such a government.

The GCR is presenting candidates on the slate of Democrazia Proletaria. During the electoral campaign, members of the GCR have participated in many meetings with Lotta Continua. The GCR newspaper, *Bandiera Rosa*, is being published weekly during the campaign.

Although the die is not yet cast and the ever more frenetic mobilization of all the conservative and reactionary forces may yet have an impact on vacillating layers of the electorate, mainly the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, it remains possible that the parties and formations of the workers movement — PCI, PSI, DP* — will win an absolute majority of the vote in the national parliamentary elections on June 20. This would be an electoral reflection of the relationship of forces that

*PCI: Partito Comunista Italiano — Italian Communist party; PSI: Partito Socialista Italiano — Italian Socialist party; DP: Democrazia Proletaria — Proletarian Democracy. The DP is the common slate of the far left, the major participants in which are the Partito di Unità Proletaria (Party of Proletarian Unity), Avanguardia Operaia (Workers Vanguard), Lotta Continua (Struggle Continues), the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups, Italian section of the Fourth International), and the Movimento dei Lavoratori per il Socialismo (Movement of Workers for Socialism).

has been established by the class struggle itself during the past several years.

In light of this possibility — for the achievement of which a determined battle must continue to be waged — it is necessary to clarify a series of points and to define, even if only in its overall lines, the orientation of revolutionaries.

First of all, it would be simplistic to establish an identity between the experience that may be inaugurated in Italy in several weeks or months from now and the experiences undergone in other countries, and even in Italy itself, in other periods. In fact, a relationship of forces could emerge that is clearly more favorable to the workers parties than was the case, for example, at the time of the successes of the Popular Fronts in Spain and France in 1936. Moreover — and this is an essential point that must not be lost sight of for a moment — this would go hand in hand with a deeper and more comprehensive crisis of capitalist society and would

be the product not of a sudden explosion or a series of struggles limited in time, but rather of a long-term upsurge, one which began nearly a decade ago, has experienced no genuine reversals of its trend, and has successively taken root not only in the working class and the student movement but also among all the exploited and oppressed layers of capitalist society. In the course of this period, in Italy more than in any other European country, broad social vanguards have emerged which have at various times played leading roles, escaping the control of the reformist bureaucratic leaderships and seeking alternative solutions, even if only empirically and episodically. Finally, the international context appears particularly favorable, first because American imperialism has suffered a defeat of historic proportions in Vietnam and now finds it impossible, at least for a certain period, to envisage any military intervention and even has difficulty adopting threatening political attitudes, and second because the revolutionary crisis now ripening in Italy is linked to potentially explosive situations in other countries of southern Europe (primarily Spain, but also France, and one cannot yet speak of stabilization in Portugal).

The first conclusion that must be drawn from this array of analytical elements is that a majority for the workers parties would emerge in a context in which it would be difficult for the reformist leaderships to limit themselves to assuming tasks of managing the capitalist system, of simple rationalizations or moderate reformist actions. It would likewise be difficult for them to arrange everything in advance with the political forces of the bourgeoisie, or to rigorously curb or channel the movement of the masses. In a phase of such acute crisis of the system at all levels and of great dynamism of the movement of the masses, the reformist bureaucratic leaderships would find themselves compelled to make a choice between systematic class collaboration (with a renunciation of at least a part of their own program, moderate as it is) and the adoption of measures that could strike at a series of not at all marginal vested interests. Opting for the former choice would mean careening toward rapid defeat; the latter choice would contribute, even if against the plans and intentions of these leaderships, to sharpening and dramatizing social conflicts and political clashes.

The paradox of the position of the reformist leaderships, in particular that of the PCI, lies in the fact that the very success of their political project could lead to exactly the situation they want to avoid: a further aggravation of political paralysis. It is significant that under the impact of the debate around the elections, both Lama (central PCI trade-union figure) and PCI secretary general Enrico Berlinguer have had to indicate, albeit with the greatest caution, that it is possible that if the workers win a majority, they could be compelled to assume government responsibilities on their own if the Christian Democrats (DC) and the other bourgeois parties continue to reject both the historic compromise and the "government of democratic coalition" that have been proposed by the PCI.

A government of the left

Here lies the first difference between reformists and revolutionaries. While the reformists conceive of a government of the left as a solution to be adopted only in extremis, imposing such a government must be the primary objective for revolutionaries during the current phase.

The knotty economic and political problems, which are becoming increasingly entangled in the context of the overall crisis of the system, can be unraveled only if the very structures of capitalist society as they have developed in Italy over the past thirty years are challenged. The reformists claim to want a change, but they commit themselves to guaranteeing profits and the "normal" functioning of market laws. They pledge to act within the framework of the political structures of bourgeois democracy and to respect so-called international alliances, which means Italy's adherence to the imperialist-military and political bloc. For revolutionaries the aim is just the reverse. The priority is to prevent the working class and other exploited layers from being the main victims of the crisis, and so much the worse for the economic mechanisms of the system if the satisfaction of this demand requires challenging or infringing upon these mechanisms. The broad masses must command the democratic-revolutionary instruments they need to express their will and to exercise their hegemony concretely, and so much the worse for the republican constitution if the achievement of this goal contradicts formal respect for the framework of that constitution. The country must be withdrawn from the tutelage of imperialism, thus permitting it to line up with the peoples in struggle for their emancipation, and so much the worse for NATO if this demand cannot be satisfied within the framework of that alliance.

Such a project requires an unambiguous definition of the character of the government that must implement it in practice. On the basis of their own premises, the leaders of the PCI seek not only generic collaboration with the bourgeoisie or with sectors of it, but specifically with the parties that represent this class, whether in the form of a special alliance with the Christian Democracy or in the form of a coalition of all parties except the neofascist far right. Under certain conditions, the PCI leaders could be compelled to shift their target a bit, aiming at government collaboration with some minor party, such as the PRI (Partito Repubblicano Italiano — Italian Republican party), which today more than ever enjoys the direct support of some sectors of the ruling class. For revolutionaries, on the other hand, the objective must be a government from which all representatives, direct or indirect, of the ruling class are excluded, a government that defends the interests of the working class and the other exploited layers, a government in which only representatives of these classes are present. This means a government composed of the PCI and the PSI (the parties that up to now enjoy the confidence of the great majority of the masses) and based on the trade unions and all the other mass organizations. It cannot be ruled out in advance that independents who are not members of either of these two parties or representatives of possible new formations might be

part of such a government, provided they were willing to accept its program and discipline. But no bourgeois group or party — even potential new groups created by splits from the traditional formations — should be admitted. The experiences of Spain and Chile, in spite of their many differences, highlight the negative role that can be played by such Trojan Horses, regardless of their precise composition.

What kind of program?

It is not possible here to sketch out the full program of a government of the workers parties. This would risk becoming a mere literary exercise, for it is not yet possible to foresee all the problems that will be posed or the concrete manner in which it will be necessary to tackle them. The essential thing is to establish the criteria on the basis of which this program will have to be worked out. These are the criteria that were used, for example, by Lenin in listing the objectives for which the masses had to struggle in his well-known article of September 1917, *The Impending Catastrophe and How to Fight It*. These same criteria were again taken up in some of the documents of the first congresses of the Communist International, at a time when capitalist Europe was being shaken by the postwar crisis. They were later confirmed and made more explicit by Trotsky in 1938, during yet another critical phase of the system on a world scale. These criteria are embodied in a transitional program that must begin from the problems posed by the objective situation and its trends, seek to correspond to the living demands of the masses and their will to satisfy them, and stimulate a dynamic of anti-capitalist mobilization and struggle. On the basis of experience — and in a revolutionary situation this can occur with notable rapidity — the masses will come to realize that in order to achieve the objectives they consider vital, they must make inroads against the existing structures of society, build a new power, and erect a government whose social content differs qualitatively from all previous ones.

Let us take some examples, as concrete as possible. It is an incontestable fact that the defense of employment and of the living standards of the masses against erosion



by inflation are central problems, felt as life-and-death questions by the entire proletariat. The bourgeois thesis that the solution to these problems depends on an increase in productivity (to be achieved through new investment or through rationalization of the productive system) is a mystification that conceals the reality of bourgeois attempts to increase the reserve army of labor (which means a reduction in the effectively employed active population) and to intensify exploitation (with consequent reductions of real wages, for a whole period at least).

The reformist thesis is not substantially different, for it also puts the emphasis on investment and "rationalization." It is not enough to respond to this simply by noting that a real "rationalization," one that is beneficial instead of damaging to the masses, requires the initiation of socialist construction on the basis of a planned economy. It is also necessary to create conditions such that it is possible to actually struggle for this objective and for the qualitative revolutionary leap that it requires, mobilizing the masses for goals that they feel to be necessary, goals whose realization would entail a break with the logic of the system in the given context. The struggle for the reduction of the workweek with no reduction in pay and the struggle for an integral sliding scale of wages under the control of the workers at various levels are the objectives that best fall within this logic. The thirty-five-hour week with no reduction in pay would not only guarantee employment levels, but even lead to increases. In this sense, the demand has a general impact and permits a linkup with the movement of unemployed workers. (It is significant that the representative of the unemployed organizations who spoke at the national demonstration of metalworkers in Naples last December raised exactly this demand.) And it is clear that to struggle for this objective in the present context means to raise a demand incompatible with the system; in other words, to attack the profits and power of the employers. The impact of a sliding scale that would completely and immediately compensate for the erosion of buying power need not be demonstrated. All the workers understand it perfectly. It is sufficient to stress first the necessity of revising the package to include items that have now become articles of mass consumption (this would be a concrete way of struggling against the regression in the scale of consumption that has been imposed on the working class as a result of the enormous price increases) and second the importance of also introducing, in connection with the sliding scale, the idea of workers control (at the point of cost determination, price-fixing, and so on).

The program of the PCI for the electoral campaign has confirmed the reformists' renunciation of nationalizations, of the expropriation of capitalist property. For revolutionaries, this is not a matter confirming in general terms the necessity of striking at the great monopolistic groups, expropriating them without compensation, but of enumerating the specific terrain on which the problem can be posed in the short term, in relation both to the urgent problems now posed and to the level of assimilation of certain demands on the part of the broad masses. Al-

ready there is no lack of examples, nor will there be a lack in the near future. There are employers who claim that they cannot continue functioning, who are threatening bankruptcy, and who want to use such blackmail and pressure to receive a blank check to lay off workers and appeal for state aid. So, if these gentlemen cannot go on any more, let them take their leave. Let their companies be nationalized, and let them be placed under workers control, in order to avoid the creation of new state posts, sources of corruption and mismanagement. Another example: The oil trusts and the large-scale distribution network for consumer goods are engaging in dizzying speculation, raking in fabulous profits while the workers have to tighten their belts, which contributes to inflation. A government of the workers parties, rather than simply whining about this or denouncing it, would have to counterattack vigorously through measures of nationalization, once again under workers control. Similar reasoning goes for real estate, where the most frenetic speculation is continuing, while housing costs are soaring and the great majority of the workers are unable to satisfy their most elementary household needs. Here again, nationalization without compensation of the property of the land speculators is the required measure (in combination, of course, with other measures more directly related to housing construction), without which any project of urban reform is only empty chatter.

It is certain that in the event of a success for the workers parties and of their accession to the government, the flight of capital and exchange speculation that has gone on in recent months will acquire even greater dimensions, with disorganizing effects on the entire economy. It is illusory to think that this danger can be somehow exorcised by issuing guarantees left and right and by proclaiming the will of the workers parties to respect profits, the sacrosanct laws of the market, and the mechanisms of the Common Market. The response must be drastic measures against smugglers of capital and speculators. These gentlemen must be expropriated and prosecuted. But this can have only limited effectiveness if it is not accompanied by additional measures, such as control over banking activities with the direct participation of the workers (the experiences of the struggles of the Portuguese bank employees provide useful lessons in this regard) and forms of state monopoly of foreign trade (in order to prevent exchange speculation by big exporters and importers).

The advocates of the policy of the historic compromise or of national coalition will object that if all this is done the 51 percent majority for the workers parties would wind up provoking a situation marked by grave tension and conflict, which would entail the risk of tragic fissures in society. But is it perhaps possible to resolve such a profound crisis — whose roots, as the reformists themselves are forced to admit, lie directly in the structures of the system itself — without attacking many powerful vested interests, without facing opposition from the holders of privilege, without great social conflict? In reality, as we pointed out earlier, the workers government will have to make a clear choice,

almost immediately: Either to limit itself to administering the crisis within the framework of the status quo (in other words, to take on the function of stabilization and normalization, inevitably at the expense of the broad masses who made it possible to form the government in the first place) or else to seek to defend the basic interests of the masses and thus to begin to strike against at least a part of the existing vested interests, which would of course inevitably create situations of conflict, but with the knowledge that this is the only way not only to maintain but also to enlarge the support of the actively mobilized masses. Revolutionaries must do everything possible to create favorable conditions for the second option being chosen.

Attitude of revolutionaries

This point raises the general question of the attitude of revolutionaries toward a government of workers parties with reformist leaderships. This attitude must be defined while taking account of two essential elements.

The first is that revolutionaries, on the basis of all historic experience, reject the hypothesis of the traditional workers parties that the transition to socialism (after the phase of the "second stage of the democratic antifascist revolution") will be able to take place gradually through a succession of reforms and through internal transformation of the political structures of bourgeois democracy. Revolutionaries do not confuse the formation of a government of the workers parties with the seizure of power by the proletariat. The seizure of power can in no way be identified with a PCI-PSI government after June 20, nor can the role of revolutionaries be reduced to one



of applying pressure (from without or within, that is, through the presence of several ministers or under-secretaries). It will be the task of revolutionaries always to put forward the point of view of the interests of the working class, of the necessity for the building and strengthening of the mass movement and its democratic and revolutionary organization.

This does not at all rule out support, even formal support, to all those political decisions of a government of workers parties that effectively strike against the interests of the ruling classes, whether the local capitalists or the foreign imperialists, and that represent real gains for the working class and its allies. It does not rule out defense of the government that enjoys the confidence of the majority of the masses against any reactionary, fascist, or parafascist operation. But this must be done without creating the slightest confusion as to strategy and without the slightest renunciation of political independence.

A possible victory for the left on June 20 would undoubtedly be accompanied by great mass enthusiasm, by increased confidence of the masses in their own strength, by a will to take advantage of the new relationship of forces sealed on the institutional level. This could create favorable conditions for mass mobilizations with a comprehensive political scope and for the emergence of new organs of mobilization and organization. All the problems relating to organs of revolutionary democracy of the soviet type will then have to be placed on the agenda. Their translation into concrete terms will have to be a cardinal element of revolutionary strategy. What will have to be posed through these organs — and through other mass organs such as the trade unions — will be, among other things, the crucial problem of workers self-defense against the attacks of the repressive forces and of fascist or parafascist gangs. The systematic organization of self-defense will have to be combined with a qualitative leap in political intervention within the armed forces, for elementary democratic rights for the soldiers inside and outside the barracks, for the independent rank-and-file organization of the soldiers. Only in this way and not by spreading illusions about the "democratic spirit" of the armed forces (including the officers and generals) nor by simply including some veterans on the election slates, will it be possible to tie the hands of those who dream of repeating in Italy the criminal enterprise of the dictator Pinocet.

We have insisted on the necessity of a government of the workers parties rejecting collaboration with the military bodies of imperialism and of making withdrawal from the Atlantic Pact an immediate objective. More generally, the whole international outlook of the reformist leaders will have to be turned around.

No one denies that a workers government may sometimes have to maneuver, choose the most opportune moment to act, and even accept certain limitations. (The fact



that the Cuban revolutionaries renounced driving the United States out of Guantanamo naval base for a long period did not prevent them from courageously pressing ahead with revolutionary action). But what must be rejected is the logic of so-called incompatibility. It is true that American imperialism, and more directly certain European capitalist powers, will exert great weight on the Italian situation and may not be extremely discriminating in their choice of measures. But it is no less true that the formation of a workers government and the possible outbreak of a revolutionary crisis in Italy will have enormous repercussions in a number of European countries. In the long run, the solution that is posed must inevitably be the outbreak of revolutionary situations in other countries of the continent, with the establishment of other workers governments and a potential dynamic of conquest of power by the proletariat. In the shorter run, the international policy of a workers government in Italy will have to seek to combine some inevitable tactical compromises with economic and political accords with countries in which capitalism has been abolished as well as with appeals for mobilizations of solidarity with Italy by the workers parties of other countries. (The proposal, for instance, of a congress of all the working-class political and trade-union organizations of Europe to combat possible economic sabotage against Italy could get an extraordinary response even in countries in which the objective situation remains relatively more backward.)

The advent of a left government and a further evolution of the relationship of class forces may create more favorable conditions for the building of a revolutionary party capable of fighting to overturn the hegemony of the reformist bureaucracies. Because of the differentiations and divergences, some of them quite serious, that now exist among the major and minor formations of the far left, this will not be an easy or linear process. But the new situation may compel reconsideration and reexamination of strategic suppositions, general conceptions, and methods in the light of needs that are felt concretely by the masses. The discussions that went on during April and the first weeks of May, which were not limited to the problem of electoral options, can and must continue, take on greater breadth, and become more rigorous, going beyond the scholastic remnants of the past, making inroads against sectarian crystallization, and sweeping away ridiculous organizational patriotism. If this condition is fulfilled, within the context of a rising dynamic of the movement, new situations may arise and lay the basis for a great new reshuffling of the deck, with new polarizations within the far left and new drives toward unity.

May 28, 1976

portuguese elections

VOTE PATO!

The presidential election campaign in Portugal is unfolding in a context characterized by a series of factors: the majority won by the parties of the working class in the elections to the Assembly of the Republic; the continuation of a crisis of bourgeois political leadership (in spite of the current rallying of the bourgeois parties to the candidacy of Chief of Staff Ramalho Eanes); a profound economic crisis; the continued manifestation of the capacity of resistance of the working class.

The bourgeoisie, after relatively consolidating its forces of repression, is now aiming on the one hand at getting Eanes elected by a large majority in order to neutralize its defeat of April 25, 1976, and on the other hand at rolling over the CP. While the dominant sectors of the bourgeoisie are indicating their agreement with the Soares government project — he promises to apply a program of "dynamization of the private sector" and "profitization of the public sector" (*Opção*, June 17-23) — they are openly asserting that as soon as the first government crisis breaks out, priority will be given to a "government of national union." Eanes has promised this, for there certainly will be a government crisis.

This rapid description indicates the problems that will be on the agenda tomorrow: formation of a government and its future crises; unionization and the holding of the first trade-union congress (in order to establish a real central union federation for the first time); the breadth of the workers resistance to the government's plans to prune the economy, with consequent repercussions on the SP. The various campaigns being waged by the candidates for president must be evaluated on the basis of these questions as well as on the basis of the very uneven process of development of the consciousness of the Portuguese toiling masses and of the necessary conquest of their independence.

For Eanes and Azevedo, things are clear. They are the candidates of the employers, although the latter does embarrass the former by his untimely outbursts. The candidate of the Communist party, Octavio Pato, while he declares in advance his respect for the future president, is centering his campaign on this theme: "What is in question today, the same point that was posed in April (1976), is who will govern the country. A rightist holy alliance against the interests of the workers or a leftist alliance with the workers?"

Carvalho claims that his "party is the people" (*A Capital*, June 9) and that "the parties divide the people." He proclaims his total independence of those who sup-

port him. But he admires Eanes, chief of staff of the of the army in which he, Carvalho, is a major: "Eanes is an honest man, who can be used by the forces of the right. If Eanes is really and honestly engaged in construction of a democracy of the type I favor, then it will be difficult for the parties of the right to manipulate him." (*O Jornal*, June 9)

The campaign of the organizations that support Carvalho (UDP, MES, PRP) is first of all misaxised in relation to the real problems that are posed now or will be posed for the workers tomorrow. Second, it is being conducted under the illusion that Otelo will win an electoral victory (he will, however, get a large vote), and it reproduces many of the myths for which the Portuguese working class has already paid dearly. J. A. Fernandez, editor of a weekly that supports the campaign, had to write: "At the risk of shocking some organizations and workers, it is useful to say that Otelo is not going to win... (It is serious) to cultivate the illusion that an electoral victory would resolve the people's problems." The slogans on the two Carvalho posters, which bear the colors of the Portuguese flag, are "April 25 for president" (this one shows Otelo in his general's uniform) and "A friend for president."

Finally, while the campaign has relaunched the theme of "popular power," it locates this power in the organs established for the elections (the GDUP—Dynamization Group of Popular Unity). This induced the editor of *Gazeta*, who is nevertheless a supporter of Otelo, to say: "The revolutionaries do not have a clear alternative to the strategy of the CP... At bottom, they stand side by side with the CP, as though they had broken with its theory and practice only to come up with a new leftist version of it."

The first part of the text below, a national leaflet distributed by the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League), describes the project of Eanes and the SP and raises the slogan, No votes for bourgeois candidates! The LCI then explains its central political choices and its slogan of a vote for Octavio Pato of the CP.

Against the candidates who represent November 25, Ramalho Eanes and Pinheiro de Azevedo, Otelo Carvalho counterposes April 25. In fact, his campaign slogan claims that what he wants is to put "April 25 in the presidency." Otelo respects the "April 25 of the captains so much that he declares: "In truth, I admire Ramalho Eanes very much for his professional competence and his character. The whole problem is that the political parties that support him are trying to make use of his name and prestige." (O Jornal, June 9-15, 1976.) He also speaks of the "unity, cohesion, and discipline of the army." It is this army, with its Eaneses, Jaime Neveses, and Pires Velosos, that he promises to "place in the service of the people." This army will never be in the service of the workers; November 25 proved that. There can be no illusions. Why doesn't Otelo take a stand clearly in favor of the only things that would allow the soldiers to stand side by side with the workers in the future battles against the bosses and their state:

* the right of the soldiers in uniform to express themselves and discuss freely in the barracks, which is now forbidden, even while the generals make themselves clarions of reaction;

* the right of soldiers to organize themselves in a union (linked to the workers unions) and into commissions in order to work out and defend their demands.

The cause of this silence lies in the respect Otelo manifests for an army and hierarchy out of which he has emerged and of which he is still a member. Moreover, Major Carvalho, while insisting on his respect for the officers, has not failed to stress his complete independence of the organizations that are supporting his candidacy. It is no small paradox that a candidate who claims allegiance to the working class takes greater distance from the workers parties than from the bourgeois officers.

But is "April 25 in the presidency" really what the workers need? The working men and women who are now supporting Otelo's candidacy know very well that the strengthening of the workers commissions, the broadening of the independence of the tenants commissions, the development of soldiers commissions, and the construction of a democratic and independent trade union ran and still run counter to the tutelage symbolized by the "MFA-people alliance." In continuing to represent that alliance, Otelo holds out no other road for the toiling masses except the impasse into which they have already been plunged by the MFA.

It is true that the unity of the workers is a decisive objective. But this unity — against the bourgeoisie, its state, and its parties — must be constructed:

* in the workers commissions, by making sure that they function democratically, that they are elected, that all the currents of the workers movement can express themselves within the commissions with no exclusion;

* in the trade unions, by making sure that they are independent and that they respect the right of tendency, by fighting for a democratic congress of all the unions in order to define a workers plan of struggle against capitalist cooptation.

* among the parties of the workers movement, on the basis of precise objectives that stimulate the mobilizations of the working class, the workers response to the offensive of the bosses and their state.

That is a concrete response to the division of the class! On the other hand, the "non-partyist" proclamations — which tend to erase the class difference between workers and bourgeois parties and thus tend to minimize, not to say deny, the importance of the majority won by the workers parties in the elections to the Assembly of the Republic — generate illusions in providential solutions and de-emphasize the necessity of a response of the workers organized in their commissions, unions, and parties and united around a plan of struggle.

It is only by building this unity and by repudiating "non-partyism" that the "rank-and-file popular organs" can be dynamized, that workers control can be extended and defended, that the agrarian reform can be deepened; this is also the only way Eanes, and reaction along with him, can be beaten.

Pato: Won't confront Eanes

Octávio Pato, candidate of the Communist party, the only candidate linked to a workers party, claims allegiance to the majority won by the candidates of the working class in the legislative elections. It is true that the votes of the workers in these elections expressed the desire to defeat the PPD (Popular Democratic party) and the CDS (Social Democratic Center), to defend the conquests of the workers and continue the struggle for socialism, for the democracy of workers councils. In voting for the workers parties, the workers voted against the bosses and the military hierarchy. Now, today, the candidate of the CP claims that he doesn't want to "antagonize" Eanes and Pinheiro. In addition, he affirms his respect for the pact between the Council of the Revolution and the parties, which hands Eanes, candidate of the bosses, a club with which to "pacify the factories," to impose the bosses' will, if necessary over the head of the left majority, on the Assembly and the government.

The unity of the workers which Pato invokes cannot be the simple result of an addition of the deputies of the CP and SP or the product of pressure on the SP. This unity of the working class will be constructed only on these conditions:

* if unitary demands overcoming the barriers among various categories of workers, between men and women (equal pay), are defended with determination;

* if, against the attacks of the bosses, clear projects for dynamizing, broadening, and coordinating the workers commissions and for strengthening and unifying the trade unions are put forward.

Of course, it is the class struggle that divides the Portuguese people. But it is the sectarian and bureaucratic methods that contribute to dividing the Portuguese workers; it is the declarations of confidence in the "officers loyal to April 25" that demobilize the workers.

Finally, at the moment when the American, German, French, British, and other bourgeoisies are openly supporting their friend Eanes and when the workers of the Spanish state are dealing the sharpest blows to the heritage of Franco, Otelo and Pato have made themselves the defenders of "national independence." They are not campaigning:

*for rejection of the Iberian pact;

*for active solidarity with the struggle of the working class of the Spanish state against Juan Carlos, against reaction, and for socialism.

Prepare tomorrow's battles

The bourgeoisie, after its defeat in the legislative elections, is now regaining its courage. With the aid of the SP leadership, it hopes to assemble the greatest number of votes around Eanes (and it will also count the votes of Azevedo as indirectly its own), in order to wipe out the unfortunate results of April 25, 1976.

*Not one vote must be lacking in the fight to defeat the Eanes operation!

*All the workers will manifest their radical opposition to "what he promises to do" and thus they will also express their rejection of the program that future prime minister Soares proposes to implement!

* If the workers must above all have confidence in their own struggles, in their ability to organize themselves more solidly in the workers commissions and the unions; if the workers will place no confidence either in the new attempted compromises proposed by the CP or in the "non-partyism" and miraculous solutions of Otelo; if the workers know that their battle in the factories will have to be continued after June 27, they must nevertheless use their votes to extend the electoral victory of April 25, 1976, and thus prepare the way for the assertion of independent solutions for the toiling masses.

* Against the projects of a government of national unity, the workers will also, through their votes, pronounce themselves for a government of the SP and CP, which reflects the workers majority that came out of the legislative elections, a government that applies a program of defense and extension of the gains won in struggle, a program defined by a democratic congress of all the unions and expressing the workers' will for independence of the bourgeoisie!

The LCI maintains that:

*to vote for Octávio Pato does not in any way imply supporting his program; in the context of these elections, it is the only way to manifest the workers' will to struggle for these objectives, the workers' will for independence, against the policy of Eanes and all those who support him;

*to vote for the only candidate of a workers party also represents the possibility of the workers' demanding of this party, within the workers commissions and the unions, a united policy of struggle against the generals and capitalists.

Vote Octávio Pato!

LEBANON



THE STAKES IN THE SYRIAN INTERVENTION

●by MAJIDA SALMAN●

With the new Syrian military intervention in Lebanon, the civil war that has raged without interruption since March 1976 has again begun to shake the entire Arab world. Since altruism has never been a distinguishing characteristic of the policy of bourgeois states, it is clear enough that what is really involved in the efforts of various states to intervene in Lebanon — from the Syrian invasion to Giscard's "offer" of French troops, to the "green helmets" of the "peace-keeping" force of the Arab League — is the overall Arab and international dimension of the conflict. The sudden military interest in the Lebanese civil war on the part of the imperialist powers and the bourgeois Arab regimes (from the most blatantly reactionary, like Saudi Arabia, to the most demagogic, like Iraq and Libya) indicates that

the confessional aspect of the conflict (see INPRECOR, No.47/48, April 1, 1976) was only the outward appearance of a war that in reality raises the problem of the future of the Arab East as a whole. The international relationship of forces in the region, the maintenance of the well-being of imperialist capital, and the stability of the existing Arab regimes, especially that of the Baath party in Syria, are some of the questions that are posed.

Syrian maneuvers and the first intervention

It was around the Lebanese presidential election, held May 8, 1976, that the new initiatives prepared by the Syrians came to the fore. Since the clear military failure of the Christian right in Lebanon, the Syrian regime had become the most credible ally of Washington and the force most interested in restoring "order" in Lebanon — an "order" that would break and wipe out the military gains of the Palestinians and the Lebanese left and at the same time would move toward the strangulation of the armed Palestinian resistance, a job that had proved difficult to carry out in Lebanon.

Elias Sarkis, who "won" the election, was the candidate of the Christian right, U.S. imperialism, and the Syrian Baathists. The decision of the Damascus regime to back Sarkis is not difficult to explain. He is one of the most unpopular personalities in the country; once designated president of a thoroughly destroyed Lebanese state all of whose institutions are broken up, he would be able to fulfill his functions only by calling upon a Syrian intervention, or at least by facilitating the exercise of Syrian influence in Lebanon. Moreover, Sarkis is the favorite of the most influential officers of the Lebanese secret service during the Chehab regime, and he is thus in the best position to reactivate the old Chehabist secret police, the discredited officers of which had sought asylum in Syria (where they underwent "refresher courses") after the Franjeh government came to power. The Syrian regime thus counted on being paid back for its hospitality and hence brought all its weight to bear to get its candidate elected.

Raymond Eddé, a reactionary Christian leader who had adopted a moderate position during the war, was the candidate who opposed Sarkis. Although known for his hostility to the Palestinian presence and activity in Lebanon and favorable to repression against the Palestinians, Eddé was nonetheless the candidate supported by the Lebanese Communist party and the leadership of the Palestinian resistance, both of which frequently exhibit short memories.

By greasing the palms of the parliament members on the one hand and by threatening them on the other, the Syrians succeeded in getting Sarkis elected president by the Chamber of Deputies, which has been totally paralyzed throughout the civil war. At first, the Lebanese left and the Palestinian resistance had been firmly opposed to the holding of these elections, which were

imposed by the Syrian regime. But Yassir Arafat, who traveled to Damascus a few days before the date set for the elections and held long talks with Syrian President Hafez el-Assad, agreed to the election of Sarkis in exchange for a promise from the Syrian leaders not to interfere militarily against the Palestinians in Lebanon. The effect of this agreement was to reduce opposition to the elections considerably. Sarkis was elected thanks to the passivity of the Palestinians and their ally, the Army of Arab Lebanon, a passivity that had been demanded of them by the leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Arafat, sure of the inability of any new Lebanese regime to "tame" the armed Palestinian camps, taken in by the promises of Assad, and, above all, little concerned about the problems of the masses and the Lebanese left, fell into the Syrian trap. The Syrians, of course, declined to keep their promises. Having scored some points on the internal Lebanese field, they prepared to execute the second stage of the plan: the definitive strangulation of the Palestinian resistance.

The central position occupied by Lebanon in the framework of the "peaceful solution" to the Arab-Israeli conflict derives from the impact and effective military strength of the Palestinians concentrated there. The determination of the Syrian Baathist regime now being evidenced is the result not of a simple desire to gain a tight grip on the politics of a neighboring country, but rather of the extent to which the Syrian regime wants to achieve an overall settlement in the Arab East. The Syrians are well aware of the fact that the key to this "peace" lies in Lebanon, center of the Palestinian component of this Syro-American sponsored peace. Strengthened by their increased influence in Lebanon since the cease-fire of January 1976, the Syrians concluded an agreement with American imperialism: The Syrians would restore "order" in Lebanon, wiping out the victories of the Palestinian resistance and crushing its effective freedom of action. In return, the Americans would exert pressure on their Zionist ally in order to draw the Israeli state into a solution based on the establishment of a Palestinian mini-state in a federal Jordanian-Syrian-Palestinian framework, a mini-state subject to Syro-Jordanian domination. For this solution to be credible, it was necessary for the Syrians to demonstrate their ability to fulfill the requirements demanded by American imperialism. The first Syrian military intervention in Lebanon, initiated in April 1976, came in response to the U.S. exigencies. It was aimed at choking the resistance and at weakening the Lebanese left, against which the attacks were openly directed.

The first Syrian failure

On April 12 some 2,000 Syrian soldiers crossed the Lebanese border, rushing to the rescue of the militarily hard-pressed Christian right. Three days later, the Syrians were compelled to halt their advance because of the resistance they had met. Nevertheless, the troops remained in Lebanon, contrary to the Assad-Arafat

agreement, even after the presidential election on May 8. The victim, as usual, of his own opportunist concessions to the bourgeois Arab regimes, Arafat realized that he had been tricked. A few days after the elections, the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left launched a successful military offensive against the Syrians and the Christian right. The determination of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses was decisive in this battle; it went far beyond the expectations of either the Palestinian and Lebanese leaders or the Syrian attackers. Bolstered by their military victories and by the scope taken on by the mobilization of the Palestinian Arab masses within the Israeli borders and in the occupied territories, the Palestinian leadership was not prepared to make important concessions that would damage their own interests. They saw no reason to give in to Syria and accept the imposition in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon of the same conditions that prevail in the camps in Syria, where the resistance has no freedom of action.



Hence, the Syrians resigned themselves to reconsidering their plan of attack. At the same time, the internal situation in Syria itself, which had become increasingly delicate for the Assad regime (in no small part because of the Lebanese crisis), was to become more and more important in the following stages of the "Lebanese" conflict.

The internal Syrian crisis

The military dictatorship established in 1970 as the result of a coup that brought the right wing of the Baath party (led by Assad) to power in Syria was not compelled to immediately confront serious problems that could have endangered its stability. The ferocious repression and the efficient action of the secret police triumphed over the "left" wing of the Baath, led by Salah Jedd, who was ousted by the Assad coup. The Nasserite opposition, which was less dangerous, was eliminated through its assimilation into the coalition established by the new Baathist regime just after its victory. This coalition

included the ruling Baath, the small Nasserite organizations, and the Syrian Communist party. The latter, whose influence in Syria is not negligible, renounced its opposition status in order to participate in a coalition in which the Baath is the leading force. The reality was, however, that the Baath governed alone, the CP remaining on the scene only to applaud all the regime's initiatives and to curb any possible revolt against the regime, which was granted a "progressive" cover by this formal coalition.

The civil war in Lebanon, however, with all its potential for generating major upsets throughout the region, has put an end to the apparent stability of the Syrian government and has laid bare the contradictions of a regime whose rottenness was already far advanced.

The social malaise in Syria is a product of several factors, among them the economic changes and crises accompanied by the "liberalization" introduced by Assad



SYRIAN UNIT PAUSES NEAR CHTAURA SHORTLY AFTER CROSSING INTO LEBANON

and the facilities accorded the bourgeoisie in the private sector, whose influence is increasingly manifest. This mounting bourgeois influence pressures Syria to seek a stable peace in the Arab East at the price of great concessions to Israel, a situation that is viewed with bitterness by the Syrian masses, among whom anti-imperialist and Arab nationalist conceptions are deeply rooted. While the public sector has not yet been profoundly eroded, it is nonetheless true that the bourgeoisie in the private sector has enjoyed full prosperity ever since Assad opened the Syrian market to foreign investment.

The resulting economic crisis borders on disaster. The rise in the cost of living appears limitless, the prices of some basic food products having increased fivefold during the past two years. The dangerous economic and social crisis is exacerbated by confessional gangrene. The regime is dominated by members of the Allouite Islamic sect (about 10 percent of the Syrian population), Assad among them. The Sunnis (adherents of "orthodox" Islam), who constitute the majority of the population,

have been the target of confessional agitation stimulated by far-right Sunni organizations.

All these latent contradictions were suddenly brought to the surface by the Lebanese crisis and the Syrian intervention.

The left opposition to the regime is essentially dominated by the partisans of Salah Jedid, while the Communist party continues to lend its support to the government, despite repression against CP members. This opposition has important strength, even within the army and the Baath party itself, neither of which have been completely purged of supporters of the previous regime, but especially among students and Palestinian milieus. The scope of the potential opposition is indicated by the hundreds of arrests that have occurred during the past several weeks. The wing of the Baath party represented by Salah Jedid is now experiencing an important new rise in its influence among Syrian officers.

Threatened by this situation, the Syrian authorities have but one powerful ally that can aid them in remaining in power: U.S. imperialism. They will do everything possible to establish "peace" in the Arab East, and toward this end they will do everything they can to dominate the military situation in Lebanon. For Assad, it is an all or nothing game. Hence the second, and massive, Syrian military intervention, which began on June 1.

The new intervention and the popular resistance

During the last week of May, the Christian right in Lebanon found itself clearly overrun militarily. The forces of the Lebanese left and the Palestinian resistance controlled 80 percent of the country. The bourgeois Christian leaders saw only one way to alter this situation: intervention from the outside. Syria was the only available source. With this aim in view, the Christian leadership unleashed an offensive, ordering the bombing of Muslim neighborhoods in an effort to provoke a Syrian intervention in the guise of "ending the bloodshed." This worked. Twenty thousand Syrian soldiers, backed by hundreds of tanks, entered Lebanon. In the meantime, the Phalangists indicated their support to a proposal for a "round table" of all the Lebanese belligerents. The Syrian rulers also favored this proposal, for it enabled them to present themselves as arbiters and not as open defenders of Christian reaction.

The so-called Islamo-progressive camp perceived the threats inherent in the Syrian advance very concretely. Faithful to their traditional behavior, the Palestinian leaders thought they could find a solution by appealing to the bourgeois Arab leaderships. Yassir Arafat's first reaction was to call upon the Arab League to exert pressure on Syria to withdraw. Thus, for three days the Syrian troops advanced in Lebanon without meeting any substantial resistance. The reformist Lebanese and Palestinian leaderships were not yet prepared to respond, for



SMOKE RISING OVER BEIRUT

they were busy seeking to establish alliances with the Arab bourgeoisies (including the most reactionary of them). But these leaders ran into stony reactions from these bourgeoisies, which were prepared only to denounce the Syrian action verbally in order to mislead the masses in their own countries, who are strongly sensitive to the Palestinian question and are directly affected by upheavals in any of the Arab states. They refrained, however, from really moving against Syria.

Thus, the reformist Palestinian and Lebanese leaders had only one way left by which to safeguard their independence and even their very existence: organize armed resistance to the Syrian invasion. At the same time, the Palestinian and Lebanese masses grew weary of waiting for orders from their commanders; they moved into action against the Syrian troops. The scope of the popular resistance prevented Syria from registering the rapid military victories that were essential. Dozens of Syrian tanks (made in the Soviet Union) were destroyed in southern Lebanon and in the mountains and hundreds of Syrian soldiers were taken prisoner.

In face of this situation, the League of Arab States could not maintain silence, which would have been done had the Syrians achieved a quick victory. The reactions of the various states were determined by the existing inter-Arab political and economic rivalries. Egypt, under attack by Syria since the signing of the Sinai accords with Israel in 1975, decided to outbid Damascus in the domain of pro-Palestinian demagogy. Algeria likewise denounced Syria, but refrained from doing anything because of the delicate internal political situation prevailing on the eve of so-called free elections. The Baathist regime in Iraq, delighted to score some points against its Syrian rival, issued its usual denunciation of Damascus and massed troops on the Syrian border. Meanwhile, the whole gamut of Arab bourgeoisies came together under the patronage of the most reactionary Arab state: Saudi Arabia. It

was then decided to send the "green helmets," to be composed of Algerian, Libyan, and Sudanese contingents. The stated purpose of the intervention was to reconcile Syria and the Palestinian resistance.

This decision has not been implemented. In fact, it has served as a cover for the Syrian intervention. Local commentators have noted that the arrival of what was supposed to be the first battalion of "green helmets" was in fact only the arrival of yet another Syrian battalion. The Arab regimes, extremely dynamic when it comes to raising slogans in support of the Palestinian resistance, refrain from action when it is a question of preventing a massacre. Even Libya, self-proclaimed stalwart of Arab nationalism during the past several years, supports the Syrian presence in Lebanon when the Libyan emissary is in Damascus and opposes it when this same emissary meets with the leaders of the resistance.

What next?

Faced with strong resistance in Lebanon, the Syrian leadership was compelled to halt its advance on June 12. But the halt will be temporary; it is designed to prepare for a more effective attack. A four-power summit in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) — including Syria, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Egypt — which was originally scheduled for June 17, has been postponed to June 23. Syria appears determined to relaunch its advance, and the other Arab regimes, while willing to extend complicity, prefer not to be sitting in a summit meeting with Syria while the attack is actually under way.

In this extremely complex situation, the leaders of the PLO refuse to draw the lessons; they continue to seek a solution among the Arab bourgeoisies, hoping to benefit by playing on their internal contradictions. Meanwhile, the Lebanese and Palestinian masses are continuing their resistance. The reformist and Stalinist Lebanese leaderships are paying the price for their inveterate and criminal opportunism. Isolated from all the bourgeois forces among whom they had sought allies, they have not dared to even criticize Kemal Jomblat, the bourgeois reformist they support, even when Jomblat called on French troops to save the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left!

While the future of the reactionary Syrian invasion partially depends on the relationship of military forces in Lebanon, it depends more importantly on developments in Syria itself, where the regime is now experiencing its most difficult moments. Clashes have been reported nearly everywhere in the country, with army battalions in mutiny, refusing to go to Lebanon. Hikmat Shahabi, the chief of staff, has been arrested and imprisoned.

Thus, the contradictions and repercussions of the civil war in Lebanon are shaking the entire Arab region. Once again, the absolute necessity of the Arab masses' uniting and organizing against their own bourgeoisies, which always unite whenever one of their number is threatened, is being demonstrated. □

SOUTH AFRICA

cont'd from pg.32

had been meeting with Kaunda (of Zambia), Nyerere (Tanzania), Machel (Mozambique), Seretse Khama (Botswana), Mobutu (Zaire), and Kenyatta (Kenya) to execute this plan. He is now scheduled to go to Bonn to meet with Helmut Schmidt and Henry Kissinger to work out the next steps in his dialogue with the African quislings. All was going well — until Soweto.

The Soweto uprising is the clearest rejection yet of Vorster's Bantustan plan by the people themselves on a mass scale. Furthermore, the savage repression (using arms provided by the EEC) did not engender a mood of defeat. On the contrary, the revolt has spread. As of now, no fewer than eight locations in the Johannesburg area alone are involved. Some 600 miles away, the students at Zululand "Bantustan" College have joined the protest. More than a million oppressed are engaged in the biggest revolt since the Sharpeville events of 1960, perhaps the most general uprising in the history of the South African liberation movement.

The most significant feature of these events is that despite losing battles, the oppressed non-European masses have not yet lost the war. In fact, they have not yet fought a full-scale war, but are moving toward it unbeaten in spirit. They remain unbroken as a class force of semi-transient workers and peasants, never allowed to become a settled proletariat or peasantry. The South African proletariat is cast in a mold peculiar to this state. This proletariat is now asserting itself, and it needs the support of its international class brothers and sisters.

The education issue and apartheid

The struggle for non-racist education is an essential part of the struggle for full democratic rights, which can only be guaranteed by a total social revolution in South Africa. This explains the explosive nature of the Soweto protests and the subsequent events at Zululand University. The fight against "tribulization" and for a world language is a manifestation of a position of the non-European toilers virtually unique in Africa: against "black culture," against "multiracialism," against "identity" and "Africanism" and for non-racial internationalism. This is the backbone of the principle that inspired the Soweto struggle; years of political education lie behind this "spontaneous" outburst.

This struggle is a continuation of the struggle against apartheid, a system with a long history on the African continent. For the last 100 years, the apartheid of the imperialists has intensified the old system of racist education initiated when the Dutch colonial regime institutionalized segregated schools at the Cape in 1685. After the French Revolution, the German, Dutch, British, and Catholic missionaries extended this segregation into a network of strategically located labor-catching

mission stations run along strictly racial lines. As white settlement devoured the lands of the conquered Khoi-Khoi and Bantu peoples in the nineteenth century and after, the Anglican and Catholic churches established as rigid a system of segregation as could be found anywhere. The principles were that white education was designed "to maintain their (the whites') unquestioned supremacy in this land" (Sir Langham Dale, head of Cape education, 1890) and "the education of the white child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the black child for a subordinate society" (Education Commission, 1935).

In 1951 the Eiselen Commission called for "Bantu education," which was followed by the creation of a "Commission for Colored Education." The program, which was to lead to the Soweto protest, was "education for the natives as an independent race, in which their inherent racial qualities are taken into consideration.

. . . and to prepare natives more effectively for their future occupations." Eiselen, then education secretary for the Nationalist government of Malan, declared that there would be a "mother tongue medium" (Bantu), the Africans being taught enough English simply "to follow oral or written instructions." The Non-European Unity Movement (NEUM) toured throughout South Africa explaining how to fight the Bantu Education Bill as part of the struggle against racial representation and for the full franchise, including the right to make laws and form the government. The principle of the opposition was non-collaboration with the instruments of oppression. The weapon of struggle was the boycott of all institutions of racism, including the institutions of retribalization. Soweto was a continuation of this struggle, in which only the NEUM has a consistent history.

The Boers, led by Vorster, are only a politically powerful minority in the South African ruling class, which is mainly British with a heavy role played by the imperialists of other countries of the EEC and the European Free Trade Association. The entire capitalist class of West Europe is involved, directly or indirectly, in the economic and political penetration of South Africa. The Boers are the bloody fist, the watchdog managers of a combined imperialist estate that Trotsky in 1935 labeled a "white dominion" for superexploitation of what he termed "a slave colony for the blacks." The extensive scope of the international hinterland of the South African state accounts for the difficult task facing the South African proletariat, the non-European oppressed toilers.

A worldwide boycott

The importance of the franchise, which the Stalinists and African nationalists have always underplayed, was confirmed by the April decisions on Rhodesia and South Africa taken by the EEC, Bonn, and Washington. While calling for "majority rule" in Rhodesia, they called only for "steps to end apartheid" in South Africa. There was no reference anywhere to the full franchise. For the capitalists of the West, apartheid must remain in

South Africa; the imperialists know full well that they cannot pull the "independence rope trick" in South Africa as they can in order to hang the second-class "associate members" of the EEC Lome Convention. They understand that the alternative to apartheid is another Vietnam and nothing less.

Fundamentally, this explains the range and intensity of police terror in Soweto. Vorster must see to it that gold, uranium, and superprofits continue to flow into the EEC countries and the United States and that arms and capital continue to flow from these countries into South Africa (latest reports indicate that already before Soweto there was an outward drift of capital). It was expedient (and fraudulent) to impose a United Nations embargo on Rhodesia in order to bring the prodigal Smith regime back into the white imperialist fold. But a boycott is excluded for South Africa, as the West German government made very clear in its official statement on South Africa last May. At one time the white Communist party and its supporters in the ANC (African National Congress) toyed with the idea of a boycott of Boer products (tins of fruit and other small items). Tied to the Anglicans and the liberals, they refused to consider a genuine boycott of imperialism in South Africa.

The time has come for a campaign of international solidarity with the liberation struggle in South Africa. In line with the methods adopted by the toilers of Soweto and elsewhere in South Africa itself, this means implementation of the principle of non-collaboration with imperialism: a worldwide boycott of South Africa.

The scheduled arrival of Vorster in Frankfurt and of his minister in Bonn will be met by opposition from German students and other activists. This type of action is necessary everywhere. But this must be part of a total boycott. It is of little importance whether the imperialist governments consent to such a boycott on one or another level (sports being the easiest). What is important is the solidarity of the working classes of North America and West Europe in industrial actions to halt ship and air traffic of goods and travelers to and from South Africa; to demand the halting of financial exchanges with South Africa by bank workers; to demand the closing of all embassies in South Africa; to halt the sending of all arms to South Africa; to halt the flow of gold from South Africa, no matter how much it "hurts" the recipients; to bloc the flow of uranium to NATO arms stocks; to boycott anything South African in sports or art; to denounce and help Africa to break the EEC Lome Convention, which is the West European arm of an economic nutcracker across Africa, the other arm being the expanding South African Common Market up to the equator. It is correct for Zambia and other African states to be called upon to impose a total boycott on South Africa. It is equally correct for this boycott to now become a major and consistent demand of the labor movement in the imperialist countries.

LET THE WORLD BOYCOTT OF SOUTH AFRICA BE THE FIRST WORDS ON THE GRAVES OF THE SOWETO MARTYRS!



Associated Press.

Some of the thousands of students and parents who clashed with police in Soweto.

the soweto massacre

FOR A WORLD BOYCOTT OF S. AFRICA!

by LANA

JUNE 19 — As this article is being written, the unarmed South African toilers who have risen up against the white racist bastion of the imperialist West are facing a continuing armed onslaught. So far, according to the BBC, more than 100 people have been killed and some 1,000 wounded. The wave of struggle began on June 16 in Soweto, the black suburb of Johannesburg, when black students and parents staged a peaceful protest against the introduction of compulsory use of Afrikaans (the Dutch-based language of the Boer settlers) into the segregated schools. The protesters were demanding that English become the language of instruction. This demand arises not out of love for the British oppressors. (Britain is the main economic power in South Africa, owning the lion's share of the more than £10 thousand million of fixed capital and enjoying the fruits of the exploitation of cheap non-European labor in mining, industry, transport, commerce, and farming.) The Africans demanded English as the language of instruction, rejecting the use of both Afrikaans and the Bantu languages, because they wanted a language widely spoken on a world scale with significant cultural impact.

This unsentimental approach to the language problem stems from the long campaign of political education waged by the Non-European Unity Movement (founded in 1943) for non-racial, non-tribal education as part of a general struggle for full democratic rights. The Soweto martyrs stood up against Vorster's program of Bantuization, retribalization, and retardation of the educational system as a means of perpetuating a docile and cheap labor force.

Soweto is a cheap labor ghetto on the outskirts of Johannesburg, populated by nearly a million semi-transient workers. In their native land, they live without any rights. Legally "belonging" to one or another far-off

and non-industrialized Bantu "homeland," they are denied the right to remain in Soweto permanently. Pariahs in their own country, they are treated as immigrant workers; they are landless, denied any political rights, denied the right to farm, and forced to carry a pass at all times. The viciousness of the repression against the Soweto mobilization is a measure of the importance of this struggle, which has touched a nerve center of Vorster's Bantustan policy: retribalization.

The Soweto protesters have rejected a plan framed by the entire Western alliance after the fall of the Portuguese colonial regime in 1974, a new grand strategy for southern Africa that would preserve the invaluable racist state of South Africa intact. The plan had two parts. The internal aspect was to partition South Africa into Bantustan "homelands" (the first to be "independent" would be the Transkei in October 1976) in which the Africans would be "citizens" of "independent" tribal states alongside a white South Africa in which Africans would be immigrant workers. The Africans would live in the Sowetos, but as foreigners, having "citizenship" in the Transkei or some other "independent" Bantustan. Their language would be their own tribal language (Xhosa, Zulu, etc.).

The second aspect of the strategy that the Vorster regime had worked out with Washington, London, and the capitals of the EEC countries, particularly Bonn, consisted of the establishment of a belt of "independent" African states protecting the northern flank of the "white jewel" and forming part of the growing South African Common Market and the EEC-dominated semi-colonial empire that goes under the name of the Lome Convention. Rhodesia was to become one of the black states in the South African Common Market. Vorster

Cont'd on pg. 30