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CHINA AFTER MAO





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after the death of Mao

A NEW PHASE IN CHINESE POLITICAL STRUGGLE

by LIVIO MAITAN

The death of Mao has provoked reactions that would have seemed paradoxical in other periods. The chief-tain of American capitalism spoke of a "tragic loss" and his collaborators made no secret of their concern for the future. In Moscow there were open and indecent expressions of satisfaction and hope. Obviously, these reactions are linked to the international policy Mao had imposed during the last years of his life. After accusing the Kremlin bureaucrats of having capitulated to American imperialism since the end of the 1950s, Mao changed his battle cry, first taking a position of equal distance from the two "superpowers" and then adopting the thesis that "social-imperialism" is the main enemy, with all the consequences, from criticizing the western capitalists for not arming themselves sufficiently and for being too accommodating toward Moscow to red carpet welcomes in Peking for the likes of Fanfani and Strauss.

Nevertheless, in a more general sense Mao was a contradictory figure, and any historical evaluation of his work must emphasize this essential characteristic.

A contradictory historical figure

From 1927, drawing the balance-sheet of the defeat of the Chinese revolution of 1925-27 in his own way, Mao adopted a critical position in regard to the line

imposed in China by the Stalinized Comintern and sketched out positions that differed from those of the leadership of the Chinese Communist party. Nonetheless, he refrained from openly contesting Stalinist orthodoxy, adopting Stalinist conceptions and utilizing substantially bureaucratic methods of organization and leadership. While continuing to proclaim more or less classical ideas about the leading role of the working class, at the right moment he perceived the fundamental importance of the peasantry in the specific Chinese context of that period, in particular within the perspective of a protracted war. On various occasions after the Comintern's turn to the policy of popular fronts, he assumed positions even further to the right than those of the other Communist parties. He not only advocated but also implemented a policy of collaboration with the Kuomintang of Chiang Kai-shek, and during the second world war and immediately after he tenaciously sought a compromise with the old dictator.

U.S. documents published during the 1950s confirm that if no agreement was reached it was because of Chiang Kai-shek's refusal. But in spite of his desire for collaboration and compromise, in practice Mao never yielded on one essential point: he refused to give up the independence of his army, which at no time dissolved into the army of the Kuomintang, not even when there was a convergence of struggle against the armed forces of



Japanese imperialism. At the decisive moment in the new revolutionary upsurge of the masses, when faced with an ineluctable choice, Mao placed himself at the head of the peasant insurrection, disregarding Stalin's advice, which was to seek an agreement with Chiang at any cost, and led the red army to the conquest of power. Ten years later he assumed the role of spokesman for left criticism of the policy of the Kremlin leaders and various Communist parties.

For forty years Mao stood at the head of a party that led a socialist revolution, one of the milestones of our century. But after introducing bureaucratic conceptions and methods of administration even in the liberated zones and after carrying through a Stalinization of the structures of the party, once in power he presided over a relatively rapid process of bureaucratization of the new workers state. Given his leading role and prestige, any attempt to absolve Mao of any responsibility and to lay the blame for the phenomena of degeneration on leaders other than Mao amounts to nothing but apologetics. Nevertheless, it is true that at a certain point Mao began to become alarmed at the consequences of what he himself defined as a "process of alienation" with respect to the masses. In a period in which many profound tensions had ripened, he took the initiative of the so-called cultural revolution, appealing to the masses even more than on other occasions, first the students and later, although with greater caution, the workers and peasants as well.

He proclaimed that the masses would decide everything, but in reality he constructed (and in the final phase of the cultural revolution reconstructed) a centralized and fundamentally monolithic apparatus based on an authoritarian paternalism of which the cult of the personality represented the crowning touch. He upheld the necessity of an intransigent struggle against imperialism and for some years severely criticized Moscow's policy toward the bourgeoisies of various colonial and neocolonial countries. But he unreservedly supported the collaboration with the bourgeoisie that led to the tragic

defeat of the Indonesian Communist party and the paralysis of his followers in Pakistan and East Bengal, not to mention the positions of later years, which saw him side with the government of Sri Lanka in carrying out a ferocious repression, avoid any condemnation of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile, and assume a hypocritical position of neutrality during the war in Angola. He tried to put himself forward as the inspirer of a battle against bureaucratization, which he presented as capitalist restoration, but despite the criticisms and differences in practice, to the very end he considered Stalin a great revolutionary and one of the leading theoreticians of Marxism.

Thus, in a concentrated and symbolic form, the figure of Mao more than any other reflected the contradictions of a historical epoch, the contradictions that have so far emerged in the phase of transition from capitalism to socialism. Lenin died only a few years after the October Revolution and thus passed into history primarily as the leader of the first socialist revolution. Trotsky, defeated because of the relationship of forces during the period in which he launched his struggle against the bureaucracy, became the symbol of intransigent defense of the conquests of the revolution. Stalin, an obscure figure before October, assumed historic stature as the protagonist of the bureaucratic counterrevolution. Mao, as we have seen, was simultaneously the top leader of a revolution and the major person responsible for the bureaucratic degeneration of the workers state that emerged from that revolution. As the leader of a victorious revolution he contributed to inflicting a historic defeat on the world imperialist system. But at the same time, he did not at all abandon the Stalinist conception of socialism in one country and of subordinating the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the masses of the world to the interests of the state.

The disappearance of a man who had played such a great part in the contemporary history of China incontestably represents an element of rupture which will trigger rather profound shakeups.



At the time of the death of Stalin revolutionary Marxists stressed the essential role his personality had played in assuring the cohesion of the bureaucratic caste and in the functioning of the mechanisms of leadership of the state and the party. In various respects, the role of Mao has been even more decisive. Like Stalin, Mao held the ruling bureaucratic layer together and appeared as the only person who had the authority to have the last word during times of conflict. But Mao's "Bonapartism" operated not only within the bureaucracy but also within society as a whole.

Here we must recall certain peculiar features of the Maoist method of leadership and exercise of power, palpably different from those Stalin imposed in the USSR during the 1930s and 1940s. This method may be summed up as the effort to maintain more direct and living links with the masses and to resort to the more or less controlled and canalized intervention of the masses themselves during periods of special difficulty.

In order to survive and win victory in a long and bitter protracted revolutionary war, Mao had to rely not only on the support but also on the active participation of the masses. Similarly, he had to seek a certain mobilization of the masses when it came time for the gigantic work of building a new society beginning from a material base that was even more backward than that of Russia in 1917 while having to contend with imperialist sabotage. This explains why the relations between the leaders and the masses in China have always been more direct than those between the masses and the Stalinist leading group in the USSR, which were virtually nonexistent. It further explains why in spite of the bureaucratic degeneration, a sort of "horizontal democracy" (the term used by S.S. Wu — see INPRECOR, No. 55, July 8, 1976, and No. 56, July 22, 1976) has existed in China, especially during certain periods. In other words, there is a certain degree of independence of decision-making on the local level in choosing the forms in which the general orientation decided at the top will be applied. This also explains why at various times

Mao and other leaders have turned to the masses to extract themselves from situations of conflict or paralysis within the party leadership. Naturally, these leaders were always careful to establish a precise framework for the mobilizations they stimulated and, in the final analysis, to channel them. The experiences of the last months of 1966 and the first months of 1967 demonstrated, contrary to any apologetic interpretation, that barely as sectors of the masses began to act according to their own dynamic, pursuing objectives different from those set by the Maoist leadership, the latter did not hesitate to resort not only to a variety of massive ideological terrorism, but even, in the last instance, to repression.

(Let us recall that it was precisely the emergence of such explosive situations of tension that induced Mao to rely on the army, which for a certain period took on a prime function). But all this does not change the fact that Mao's "system" assigns the masses a different role, one of more active participation, than was the case in the USSR during the Stalin and post-Stalin periods. On the other hand, the very raising of revolutionary-democratic and egalitarian themes on various occasions, despite all the tactical machinations and attempts at instrumentalization, inevitably had various consequences, objectively stimulating the tendency of the masses or the most mature layers of the masses to bring their weight to bear more forcefully, to fill the "horizontal democracy" permitted by the leading group with a real content.

The existence of a charismatic leader having sufficient prestige to call upon the masses at decisive moments but also capable of suddenly imposing discipline and a return to "normality" was essential for such a practice of the exercise of power and such a method of leadership — even more essential, let us repeat, than the personality of Stalin in the system of rule imposed in the USSR. In this sense above all, there can be no substitute whatever for Mao. His death thus introduces what may be called an element of "structural" imbalance into the Chinese political system.

In order to examine some hypotheses on possible developments in post-Mao China it is first of all necessary to briefly recall some of the tensions that subsist structurally and politically, which were not overcome by the cultural revolution and the subsequent period.

According to official statistics, during the past several years the Chinese economy has registered successes which are not contested even by experts of the most diverse orientations. Overall, however, taking a longer period into account, the pace of development remains relatively restricted. This means not only that the absolute levels achieved remain modest, but also that the gap between China, the USSR, and some capitalist countries has not narrowed or even threatens to widen, especially in some sectors. It is significant that in many discussions with foreign guests, according to the undoubted accounts of the latter, both Mao and Chou En-lai continued to stress the persistent backwardness and poverty of China.

It must be recalled that after violently polemicizing against the USSR during the 1950s because of Moscow's policy of increasing economic relations with the capitalist countries, China has done the same thing even more systematically, not only seeking to broaden commercial trade, but also acquiring machinery and even entire industrial complexes from the western countries and Japan. After a certain point, however, this policy began to conflict with a requirement set down as a norm by the Chinese leaders: that the country not build up a foreign debt. If this option were rigorously confirmed, the inevitable consequence would be a slowdown, not an acceleration, of the pace of industrial development, at least in some sectors. A policy of self-sufficiency and even basic autarky can be obligatory under exceptional circumstances (let us not forget that for years China had to contend with both the persistent imperialist blockade or partial blockade and the open sabotage of the Moscow bureaucrats), but in the long run it inevitably entails extremely negative consequences. To judge from allusions made in certain polemics, this problem has already been a source of conflict within the leading group. It is quite probable that it will be posed again more acutely in the future, even though the development of oil exports might lessen this contradiction.



Let us look at some quick considerations on agriculture. Not even Maoist China has been able to escape the dilemma facing bureaucratized transitional societies

that have arisen on the basis of a low level of productive forces (a factor which must never be forgotten, with the permission of certain neo-utopians). This dilemma may be stated as follows: either to accept, after the radical reforms of the initial phase, the subsistence for an indefinite period of relations that are not collectivist but instead intermediary between private-plot or cooperative peasant agriculture on the one hand and collectivized agriculture on the other, with all the economic consequences and social risks that logically follow, or else to force the pace of collectivization, to a large extent ignoring the real possibilities of mechanization and leaving open the threats of dramatic breaks with vast peasant masses and repercussions that in the final analysis are negative for production itself. This problem, which was at the root of the regime's crucial choices in the countryside, from the massive launching of the cooperative movement in the middle of the 1950s to the largely voluntaristic attempts to form people's communes in 1958 to the subsequent rectifications, has still not been solved. On the one hand, the rates of development of production, again according to official figures, continue to be limited (which is especially serious since China continues to register consistent increases in population). On the other hand, the peasants tend to devote more care to their individual plots than to collective production. The consequences inevitably make themselves felt, first on the general economic level and second on the social level, since under such conditions it is inevitable that differentiations among various layers of the peasantry will persist and even deepen.*

In connection with the problems posed by the difficulties of economic development and the problems of agriculture in particular, a series of social tensions continue to arise and even to intensify, judging by certain signs. To give just one example, difficulties and contradictions have come up regarding the integration of new generations into the economic fabric. Imbalances arose on the one hand because of the still limited specific weight of the industrial and urban economy and on the other hand as a result of massive access to education (which, there is scarcely any need to recall, constitutes one of the major gains of the revolution). The existence of such problems has become clear, for example, in the polemics on the so-called educated youth sent to work in the countryside. For the time being at least, this involves relatively limited sectors, but the absolute number of youth involved, according to figures cited in the above-mentioned article of S.S. Wu, approaches 12,000,000. These youth do not always freely accept being transferred to the countryside, where living conditions are generally more arduous, and quite often they were not greeted with great enthusiasm by the peasants.

*On this and other problems, it would be useful for readers to refer to the articles that have previously appeared in INPRECOR, particularly those of S.S. Wu in Nos. 55 and 56. For more general observations and an analysis of developments in postrevolutionary China, permit me to mention my own book, *Party, Army, and Masses in China*, New Left Books, London, 1976.

Hence, there has been a back and forth movement between the cities and the countryside, with some youth returning to the cities unauthorized. This threatens to result in the development of layers of youth who are uprooted in a certain sense, deprived of any stable place in society and thus tempted to operate on its fringes. According to some interpretations whose veracity we are not in position to check, such situations may have been at the root of the criminal incidents that have recently occurred in some cities, to which the official press has referred.

A series of problems and tensions are also posed on the purely political level. The critical analysis of revolutionary Marxists has demonstrated that from the very beginning the Chinese workers state has been characterized by the absence of a network of organs of proletarian democracy of the soviet type and even by a certain survival of the previously existing administrative apparatuses. (The negative influence of this latter element was denounced by the Maoists themselves during the 1966 and 1967 polemics). The Chinese constitution calls for the election on the basis of local organs of a National People's Assembly which is supposed to be the real repository of power. In practice, the Assembly, when it has met, has had no function except to formally ratify decisions that have already been made elsewhere, in the leading bodies of the party. (Let us not forget that Maoist conceptions assign the party a function of absolute preeminence and rigorous control, similar to the conceptions that held sway in the USSR both under and after Stalin). Since it is practically impossible for the restricted leading bodies (even considered in the broad sense, that is, including all their various subcommittees and branches) to actually make decisions on all the problems that arise in a country as large as China, there is some margin for the exercise of "horizontal democracy" on the one hand and there is a tendency to create relatively independent regional or local power bodies on the other hand. The result is a precarious situation laden with conflict. In fact, on various occasions — and not only at the most dramatic point of the 1966-67 crisis — the masses have sought to lend a more substantial content to this "horizontal democracy" and centrifugal forces have thus developed within the bureaucracy (the recurrent polemics against people accused of having created "independent kingdoms" reflect these types of centrifugal tendencies).

International policy also holds a potential for tensions within the bureaucracy itself and even more so between the bureaucracy and the masses. The death of Mao may provide an additional stimulus toward drawing a balance-sheet for which the leading group itself must have already felt the need. For a whole period, and even now, the assertion of complete independence of the USSR has paid off for the Chinese bureaucracy both internally and in important sectors of the communist movement. Even the polemic against the "two superpowers" bore some diplomatic and political fruit, for it was able to correspond somewhat both with the interests of some "national" bourgeoisies and states and with the sentiments of some movements in colonial countries which

were impelled by the necessities of the struggle against imperialist powers to seek the "friendship" of the USSR and thus had occasion to undergo bitter experiences of "collaboration" with the Kremlin leaders. But now, after nearly two decades, a general balance-sheet is needed, and so is a balance-sheet of the line of the past several years, which has been based on the supposition that "social imperialism" is the main enemy.



Now, while there is no doubt that the existence of the Washington-Moscow-Peking triangle has enabled one or another of the three to win conjunctural tactical advantages from time to time, the major benefit overall has been reaped by American imperialism. To mention only the central episode of the past ten years, while it is true that the Sino-Soviet conflict did not spare the imperialists their defeat in Vietnam, it must not be forgotten that the very sharpness of that conflict considerably broadened the maneuvering room of the White House and the Pentagon. It has since been shown by various documents that among the elements that induced Johnson to plunge into the Indochina adventure in 1965 one of the most important was the conviction that the United States would not have to face a united front of the major workers states. And there is no doubt that this division, like the limits of the military aid to the Vietnamese fighters for a whole period, contributed to significantly delaying the final outcome.

Second, the policy of the Peking leading group, which has sacrificed the needs of the struggle of the working class and the anti-imperialist movements of various countries on the altar of diplomatic advantages (of dubious value in any event), has not only resulted in a loss of prestige for this leadership, which for many years had appeared as the protagonist of a great victorious revolution, but has also facilitated both reactionary regression in various countries and maneuvers of the so-called national bourgeoisie, in the final analysis in contradiction with the legitimate requirements of defense of the Chinese workers state. As far as the Communist parties are concerned, the balance-sheet of Maoist policy also leaves no room for doubt. Since a few successes of the early phases of the Sino-Soviet conflict, the attractive power of the Chinese Communist party has been constantly on the wane and the CCP's sphere of influence



is now smaller than ever. Even among the far-left groups, which the cultural revolution and the Chinese criticisms of the Kremlin had contributed to creating, sometimes decisively, the hard-line defenders of Peking's positions increasingly fall into the category of political paranoia, while more critical and sophisticated tendencies prevail. (This is reflected in the dreary delegations of Maoist Communist parties received in Peking; the existence of these groups is often unknown in their countries of origin.)

But beyond the balance-sheet of the past fifteen years and beyond the conjunctural difficulties, sooner or later one fundamental contradiction must inevitably come to the surface in a more or less acute form. Regardless of Maoist theoretical deviations or propagandistic mystifications, the social character of the USSR is analogous to that of China and qualitatively different from that of the United States and the other capitalist countries. This hard fact is in contradiction to the thesis of "social imperialism" as the main enemy and even more in contradiction to its practical implications. This will be a source of inevitable conflict. The fact that on various occasions oppositionists who have fallen into disgrace have been accused (with how much justification it is difficult to say in most cases) of desiring a compromise with the "social imperialists" and of acting as their agents demonstrates that this is not a matter of speculation about the future but of understanding the significance of clashes that have already occurred within the leading group on various occasions.

Mass mobilizations and tendencies in the bureaucracy

All these potential conflicts may become that much more operative in the new phase now opening since changes have occurred or are occurring on an ever greater scale on two levels.

First, the generation that was born or grew up after 1949 is now becoming predominant. For the older generations, the essential reference point tended to be the

conditions of prerevolutionary society. As difficult as the post-1949 situation may have been as a result of the mistakes or crimes of the bureaucracy, the contradictions of the new society seemed insignificant when compared to the oppression of the old China. For the new generations, the conquests of the revolution represent an already achieved starting point. Their attitude will be and already has been determined by the extent to which the transitional society is capable of responding to their needs and by whether or not constant progress is made in all fields. Second, a replacement process has occurred or is occurring with ever increasing rapidity not only in the central leadership but also at all the various levels of the party. The "historic" leaders and cadres are disappearing and being replaced by leaders and cadres who will not be able to avail themselves of the prestige of the leaders of the revolution and will be judged on the basis of their present behavior, their present successes and failures.

Finally, Mao has disappeared from the scene at a time which, far from being one of stagnation or demoralization of the masses, is marked by a new rise of political sensitivity and combativity and a reemergence of critical cadres capable of taking courageous initiatives. The first signs of new ferment occurred as long ago as 1973, in Canton for example, where material presenting an antibureaucratic critique was circulated. But especially during the past two years, various events have shown even more clearly that the situation is in motion once again. Again in Canton there have been demonstrations of soldiers whose terms were running out, as well as various spontaneous strikes. In Hangchow the strikes reached such proportions that it was decided to order the army to intervene. The demonstration in Peking's Tien An Men Square last April 5 may have been, as claimed by official sources, the scene of maneuvers by the Teng Hsiao-ping tendency and thus may have originated in intrabureaucratic conflicts. But in the final analysis its size (tens of thousands of participants) and dynamic expressed a spontaneous explosion of criticism of the group that leads the party and the state.

What will happen in the coming period? It is not easy to reply, at least on the basis of the meager information

we now possess. The battle within the bureaucracy will be extremely bitter. The very problem of succession is posed in dramatic terms. It is not only a question of appointing a successor to Mao, but also of filling all the voids left by deaths or political liquidations in various levels of the leadership (the case of the standing committee of the Political Bureau, now reduced to two or three members, is symbolic of a more generalized instability). The fact that in the very communiqué announcing the death of Mao (it would be interesting to know what body actually approved this communiqué) there were violent and repeated attacks not only on past "deviationists," but also on the most recent victim, Teng Hsiao-ping, is a sure sign of a situation of persistent tension and fear among the group that emerged victorious from the conflicts of the first months of this year.

It is probable that the first round will end with some compromise solution. In fact, the very selection of Hua Kuo-feng was already a choice of this type.

More generally, there is no doubt that the tendency which more directly represents the apparatus, the tendency which appeared as the most conservative one as long ago as during the cultural revolution, the most prominent representatives of which were Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping, which on various occasions has been able to recover after defeats, has been objectively strengthened by the disappearance of Mao, the only figure who had been able to oppose this tendency successfully. Nor can another Mao be constructed artificially.

The strengthening of such a tendency would probably be viewed favorably by all those who aspire to defend, consolidate, or increase positions of privilege, primarily the upper levels of the bureaucracy. But layers of intermediary cadres might also lean toward such a tendency, those who have greater links with the masses but exactly because of that have often had to pay the price of sharp turns, have been more directly targeted by the great "rectification campaigns," or have even been deliberately cast in the unenviable role of scapegoat. Thus, they may feel a genuine need to get out of the line of continuous fire and enjoy a period of greater tranquility. Finally, a tendency of this type could seek to assure itself a base in the countryside, probably not without some temporary success, by proposing a series of Khrushchev-type concessions to some sectors of the peasantry. (The reference to Khrushchev is purely indicative, since the conditions in the Soviet countryside when Stalin died were significantly different from those that now prevail in China.)

Most commentators have raised the question of whether the post-Mao period will be marked by a turn in the orientation of Chinese international policy. We have already indicated the problems posed in this sphere, the tendencies that have already taken shape in the past within the leading group itself, and the contradictions that will eventually come to the surface. Without engaging in abject speculation, we can advance the hypothesis that changes will surely occur sooner or later.

There is already pressure in this direction. Among other things, Moscow would have an interest in a détente, even in the near future, as was confirmed by the reactions to the death of Mao. A whole series of Communist parties, among them those with the greatest weight and international prestige, surely advocate not only a détente but even a rapprochement and recomposition of the front of "fraternal parties." From the Vietnamese Communist party to the most authoritative representatives of the so-called Eurocommunists to the Cuban CP, without exception and regardless of their present persuasions, all of them are convinced that an evolution in a positive direction could in no way lead to a return to the monolithism of the time of the Stalinized Comintern and Cominform but on the contrary would deprive Moscow of any possibility of once again imposing its control and hegemony and in general would increase the prestige and attractive power of all the Communist parties.

In conclusion, the death of Mao will certainly open a new chapter, although it would be idle speculation to try to predict which tendencies will prevail in the coming phases and what specific forms the crisis of the bureaucratic system will take. The Chinese masses have entered a new period of activity and critical reflection. The most probable objectives of the coming battles will be the improvement of living standards, reduction of inequality, actual exercise of workers democracy. These battles will be integrated into a more general perspective of antibureaucratic struggle.

The cadres who have been trained during the past several years will be able to make their weight felt in these battles. Let us not forget that the sharpest phase of the 1966-67 crisis saw the maturation of tens of thousands of cadres who, beyond the mystifications of the leading group, committed themselves to struggles of an antibureaucratic dynamic and provided themselves with various sorts of instruments of organization. In some cases — the literature on this has been extensively reproduced — extremely interesting efforts toward comprehensive criticism and theoretical generalization were made. The protagonists of these events lost out in the last phase of the cultural revolution; on occasion they were hard hit, in general they were marginalized. There were inevitable phenomena of demoralization. But now conditions have been recreated for new developments, for a reactivation of these cadres. They will now be able to make an especially important contribution, for the disappearance of Mao will tend to eliminate the major obstacle to their understanding of the nature of the regime and the leadership, rendering inoperative the myth of a Mao as the standard-bearer of the antibureaucratic struggle, a myth to which they had continued to cling. In other words, they will be able to avoid objectively becoming instruments in a struggle of one faction of the bureaucracy against another. And, linking themselves more directly to the masses, they will be able to assume a leading role in the struggle against the bureaucracy as a whole.

September 14, 1976



NON-EUROPEAN UNITY FORGED IN STRUGGLE

by LANGA

Throughout the Soweto uprising, the leaders of the "black consciousness" movement such as Mkele and M. Buthelezi, along with the Quislings of the Bantu Affairs Department and Coloured Affairs Department such as "Chief" Buthelezi and Sonny Leon, were calling for a "dialogue" with Vorster. At the same time, leaders of the "independent" neocolonial states — Nyerere of Tanzania, Kaunda of Zambia, Mobutu of Zaire, Kenyatta of Kenya, Amin of Uganda, and Khama of Botswana — were continuing their collaboration with imperialism, conducting their own dialogues in the framework of Kissinger's "African shuttle" diplomacy. As against this collaboration, the oppressed of South Africa were pursuing a nationwide policy of non-collaboration with apartheid and non-European unity. This contrast constitutes the heart of the events in South Africa between June and September.

African-'coloured' unity

The official number of students and workers murdered in South Africa since June rose toward 400 in September; more reasonable estimates of the true number exceed 1,000. The official number of arrests rose to more than 2,500 as the September struggles reached levels even higher than those of the August struggles, just as the August struggles had evidenced greater unity and consciousness than those of June. The nationwide character of the battle became especially evident in one important aspect: the powerful upsurge of the "coloured"

students and workers side by side with the Africans. ("Coloureds" are defined under racist South African laws as people of "mixed" ancestry.) This was not so much an act of solidarity as a reflection of the consciousness among the coloureds that they are part of one and the same struggle along with the Africans.

Throughout the Cape, where most of the 2,250,000 coloureds live, the struggle raged to the point that one correspondent could write: "The situation is clearly out of control in the sense that the police are unable to prevent the outbreak of violence or to suppress violence when it occurs." (The Guardian, September 10.) For imperialism and its racist South African regime, "violence" is the struggle of the oppressed against the institutionalized violence of the regime, which through its oppression and exploitation kills an average of 2 million non-Europeans each decade (calculated on the basis of the difference between black and white mortality rates under apartheid).

The coloured upsurge, centered in Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, swept through large rural towns like Paarl and Huguenot, where the whites fled in panic from their own commercial centers as the coloured workers entered the white city, from which they are barred by the location system. The police opened fire everywhere, sometimes using snipers. The coloured locations of Cape Town, similar in structure and conditions to the Soweto black location outside Johannesburg, erupted, including Ravensmead, Elsie's River, Athlone, Tiervlei, Bon-

theuvel, Bishop Davis, Grassy Park, Manenberg, Sherwood Park, and Retreat. According to official figures, twenty-four coloured demonstrators were shot dead on September 8 and 9 alone.

This struggle went hand in hand with that of the African locations of Langa and Nyanga. On September 14 and 15 some 500,000 African workers of Soweto and Alexandra Township went on strike (mainly in services, commerce, domestic service, and light industry). At the same time, some 1,600 kilometers to the south, the coloured workers of the Cape joined in with a massive strike of 250,000 in the docks, industry, commerce, and transport.

It was the first time since the Cape Town struggles of 1919-20 that there had been a simultaneous and combined non-European strike, and this time on a much broader scale and higher level. The theme of non-European unity was taken up by the student strike organizations, and for the first time this unity took a mass form, expressed in industrial action on close to a national scale. Moreover, this struggle was centered on the issue of the Bantustans and the Coloured Affairs Department, against racism and for full democratic rights, although this was not explicitly expressed everywhere because of the lack of leadership.

One nation or multiracial racism?

In essence, this non-European unity was antiracist and not antiwhite. The stoning and bombing of white cars, businesses, and houses were fundamentally expressions of anti-racism. The terror of the white racist oppressors was based on their fear of the just retribution of their virtual slaves; it was their reaction to the backlash against their own system. Kissinger's panicky call for financial and political guarantees for "minority rights" for the white populations of Rhodesia and Namibia were thrust aside by the non-European oppressed fighting for one, unpartitioned, non-racist nation with equality and democracy for all and not for another form of apartheid, a "multiracial" form of racism. The massive struggles of August and September and the unbreakable courage and united action of the non-European oppressed were their response to both the "multiracialism" of the liberals and the "Black identity" schemes of the apartheid government.

In a public statement on September 15 Vorster himself expounded on the "identity" cult now being fostered by European liberalism, imperialism, and the African collaborators. He declared that apartheid would remain forever, which indeed is the basic policy of U.S. and European imperialism, both of which deliberately excluded South Africa from the policy of "one man one vote" and "majority rule" in their policy statements of last April. But Vorster went further. He explained that "apartheid is not oppression. It is not inequality. It recognizes the equality of everyone, but on the basis of their differences. Apartheid is based on the principle

of identity." Since June, nearly 500 non-Europeans have lost their lives fighting against this Catholic-"Socialist"-European apartheid "identity principle," which Vorster's September 15 speech revealed for the racist nonsense it always was.

The June-September events have continued to confirm the fundamental analysis of South African revolutionary Marxists that it is the working class that must lead the struggle to resolve the national question. The strikes of August and September, it is true, did fall short of the complete unity that is necessary. The compound workers, who stand at the heart of mining and heavy industry, hub of the economy, were generally absent from the strike. But the location workers, those forced to live on the outskirts of the big cities, rose up in united fashion against the creed of Botha, Vorster's white minister of Bantu affairs, who had declared on August 26 that the Africans came to "the white areas to sell their labor and for nothing else. Those who accepted the citizenship of a tribal homeland would be more welcome in white areas than those who did not." The non-European working class, both African and coloured (and some sections of the Indian population as well) struck 1 million strong against this basic and unifying economic principle of apartheid: cheap labor and Bantustans.

Toward a pre-revolutionary situation

Sir Villiers Graaf, leader of the liberal pro-apartheid United party, the white opposition, said on September 9 that "the past twelve weeks have changed South Africa." This does not mean that he or any other representative of imperialist racism, whether Boer or British, believes that there is yet a revolutionary situation in South Africa. They are well aware that the economic, political, and military might of the Common Market, NATO, and U.S. imperialism have a vested interest in the preservation of apartheid and will back up the racist state against the non-European oppressed by any means necessary. Unless the proletariat of the imperialist countries takes action against its own bourgeoisie on this point, the non-European working class in South Africa will face a difficult task indeed. But what worries Villiers Graaf and his like is that there has now been a crack in the structure of apartheid. This crack has been conditioned by four essential factors:

* the world capitalist economic recession, which for the first time has hit South Africa hard, halving the price of gold, South Africa's main export, at least temporarily;

* the military and political victories of the MPLA and FRELIMO over Portuguese imperialism, which whatever the deficiencies of the leaderships have moved the border of white-controlled African states southward;

* the entry of Soviet influence and of Cuban troops into southern Africa;

* the contradiction between the necessity for the South African ruling class to establish Bantustans on the

one hand and the impossibility of doing so because of the mobilization of the non-European oppressed on the other hand.

From the standpoint of the non-European working class itself, the fourth factor is the most decisive one, for it is linked to one of the classical elements of a prerevolutionary situation: the inability of the ruling class to continue to rule in the old way. Since the Nigerian- or Kenyan-type alternative of "independence" and the establishment of a neocolonialist state in place of the old system of apartheid within a unified South African state is not a viable one in South Africa, the Vorster wing of the ruling class has opted for the only remaining solution: apartheid in a "multiracial" framework including nine "independent" Bantu mini-states, one all-powerful white state commanding all the country's wealth, and some as yet unresolved "national" solution for the coloureds and Indians. (The struggle of the coloureds during September has dashed any hopes Vorster may have entertained for finding a smooth solution to the crucial "coloured problem.") Since the regime is unable to rule in the old way, it is seeking to establish the Bantustans as a new form preserving the old content of apartheid. The non-European unity forged during September in a struggle against Bantuization is thus a potentially mortal blow to the keystone of the new western strategy in South Africa and therefore to western strategy in southern Africa as a whole. It is this that concerns not only Villers Graaf, but also the South African ruling class as a whole as well as its imperialist backers.

After his talks with Helmut Schmidt in Bonn and with Kissinger in Bavaria last June and after his September 16-17 talks with Kissinger in Pretoria, Vorster made it clear that the program of establishing Bantustans would not apply to Namibia. The latter, called South West Africa by the apartheid regime, is a territory two-thirds the size of Angola that is occupied by South Africa in violation of the will of the population and various decisions by international bodies and courts. Because South African sovereignty over Namibia is not recognized by the imperialists (for their own reasons, as we shall see), the more "classical" neocolonial solution is more practical there than any attempt to include the territory in the Bantustan program.

As long ago as his August 24 statement in Windhoek, Vorster had declared that Namibia would be granted "full independence" on December 31, 1978. Until that time there would be "self-government" under "mixed rule," with a Bantu chief as "president." Vorster intends to exclude the South West African People's Organization (SWAPO) from this arrangement, whereas German imperialism, which has direct stakes in the Namibian economy (Namibia was one of Germany's African colonies before the first world war, and German capital and settlers have held important positions in the economy ever since), prefers to try to integrate the SWAPO leadership into the neocolonial project. The German settlers in Windhoek, Lüderitz, and Swakopmund, as well as the German-owned ranches, businesses, and mining

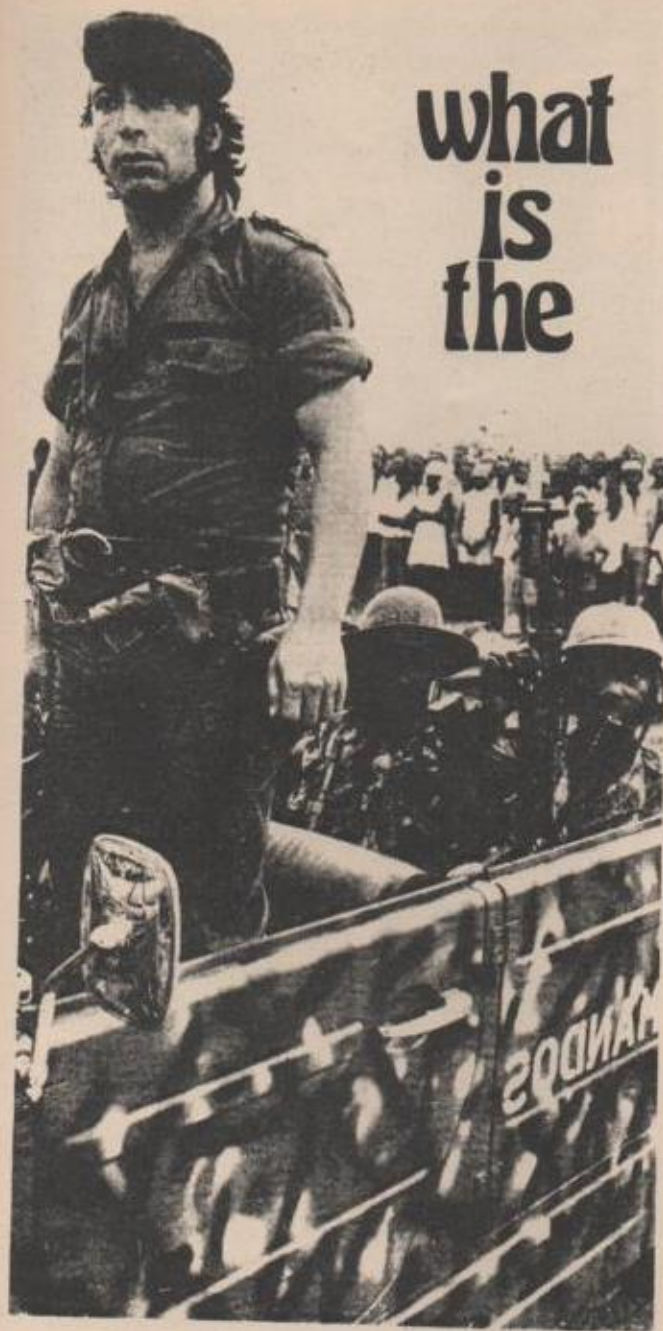
companies, believe they can buy off SWAPO and thus swallow up an "independent" Namibia. The most likely content of a deal arrived at between Vorster and German imperialism is that Germany would be given a free hand in Namibia while in return the German government would recognize the "independence" of the Transkei, which is slated to become an "independent" Bantustan in South Africa on October 26, 1976. It is also likely that this subject was discussed by Kissinger and Nyerere during their September 14 talks in Dar es Salaam. In fact, the rising influence of German imperialism is one of the important factors in the new world imperialist strategy in southern Africa. One of the indicators of this rising influence is that West Germany is now South Africa's largest trading partner, if the trade in gold is left out of account.

For a world boycott

Regardless of the collaborationist diplomatic aims of the "independent" African collaborators like Kaunda, Nyerere, and Mobutu, and whatever the maneuvers of people like Agostinho Neto and Samora Machel, the current armed struggle against the Rhodesian regime being waged both inside and outside the country weakens Vorster's position in South Africa. The Herrenvolk imperialists will make every effort to have the Smith regime in Rhodesia accept a "peaceful solution" or to eliminate him if this becomes impossible, in order to pacify and protect the northern border of the West's white bastion of South Africa. In any event, however, the Rhodesian crisis will contribute to intensifying the non-European struggle in South Africa. In spite of that, the non-European oppressed face heavy odds, even greater than those faced by the Vietnamese revolutionaries, for imperialism's direct economic and political stake in South Africa is greater than was the case in Indochina. The entrance of the proletariat of the United States and the Common Market countries into the struggle against apartheid would be of enormous aid to the South African proletariat. In fact, in the long run it may be said that without the active solidarity of the proletariat in the imperialist countries, without a mass movement against imperialist intervention, the South African revolution will not be able to achieve victory.

Airport workers in Rome have decided on a one-day boycott of South African Airlines. There were also actions in Genoa, Trieste, and Naples. Such actions, of a primarily token content, are steps in the right direction. But they fell short of what is necessary in one essential respect: They did not attack the direct Italian involvement in apartheid. The Rome protest shows the possibilities of a genuine boycott of all imperialist traffic, trade, and financial, military, and diplomatic dealings with South Africa by the proletariat in West Europe. This is what is needed from the standpoint of the interests of the South African proletariat and from the standpoint of proletarian internationalism in general.

September 16, 1976



what
is
the

People's Republic of Angola?

by C. GABRIEL

Although independence was proclaimed on November 11, 1975, by an MPLA anxious to follow the letter of the Alvor accords on the process of decolonization, it was not until March 27, 1976, that South African troops, defeated militarily and politically, withdrew from Angolan territory. With UNITA and the FNLA beaten, the MPLA found itself in control of a country not only devastated by the war but also deformed by the several-centuries-long colonial presence. With the bridges destroyed, the trails cut, and the villages razed it was very difficult to assure transport between the cities and the countryside. Supplying the urban centers did not necessarily become any easier with the cessation of fighting. The Huambo region, traditionally the "breadbasket" of Angola, had for several months been the sordid arena of imperialist intervention. In the course of their retreat, the South Africans and the Zairois soldiers had managed to carry off many cattle, plundering and burning as they left. In the northern part of the country, in the regions that were held by the FNLA, and even in the capital, Luanda, it is still difficult to find products of basic necessity. In the south, in Huambo, on the other hand, the peasants are unable to sell their meager production on a rickety and badly organized market.

It was in this context of grave economic crisis that the People's Republic of Angola was constituted. This crisis is exacerbated by the lack of technical and administrative personnel after the massive departure of the colons. And the solidity of the army is not much greater, considering that the presence of about 10,000 Cuban soldiers is still necessary to assure the reorganization of Angolan troops and to aid the reorganization of the police, the administration, and the economic enterprises.

Conscious of this weakness, the government of the People's Republic very soon engaged a diplomatic battle to have the country recognized by the international bodies capable of providing some aid and legitimizing independence. Although not yet admitted to the United Nations because of the grotesque veto of the United States, the People's Republic of Angola is a member of the Organization of African Unity, the International Labor Office, and UNICEF and has even accepted the charms of the very much neocolonial African Development Bank, which is linked to the European Common Market.

Economic policy

The economic project of the MPLA was drawn up little by little during the months that followed the Portuguese coup of April 25, 1974. Motivated by the nationalist political line of the movement, the government remained ideologically faithful to what was the program of the armed struggle: the construction of a free Angola with an independent national economy. There was to be no break with the laws of the imperialist market, but there was a desire to control the machinery of the Angolan economy and to decide economic policy. The phraseol-

ogy of the regime, while extensively sprinkled with Marxist terminology, undoubtedly reflects the influence of the "Algerian road."

Thus, for purposes of demonstration the Angolan economy may be analyzed on three levels.

The economic sectors that had always been controlled by non-Portuguese imperialist capital, which are the sectors that provided Angola with virtually all its currency, remain in the hands of their owners. The Cabinda Gulf Oil company continues to operate in Cabinda, paying royalties to the government, although we do not know whether or not the contract will be renegotiated. The Diamang company, owned by Anglo-Saxon and South African capital, continues its activities. Krupp and its subsidiaries still own the Benguela iron mines, although they are not operating at present. Only the Benguela railway has been taken over by the state and is now the subject of negotiations with the states of Zaire and Zambia, which want to use the railway to transport their mineral resources.

Specific resources like coffee, cotton, sisal, and other export crops have been placed under control in the framework of the nationalization of commerce and trade; some large plantations that had been abandoned are now under administrative control.

The traditionally Portuguese industrial sectors have been nationalized, including the Textang company, under the joint pressure of the workers, the official economic project, and the departure of the colors.⁽¹⁾ It is here that the MPLA wants to consolidate its economic power, by taking over the sector oriented toward the domestic market and by taking the first steps toward a policy of investment and industrialization. It is here that the project of state capitalism takes form.

Finally, and this is not greatly different from what we had seen fifteen years ago in other African countries, there is a rather impoverished economic sector open to national private enterprise: small and medium-sized commerce, tourism, various black markets, and so on.

The development of the intermediary sector will occupy the greater part of the government's attentions. It is here that the regime will gain its credibility, including among imperialist circles, and it is by virtue of this development that it will be able to give some substance to its populist project of "people's power" for some time.

Authoritarianism and repression

The final months of the struggle demonstrated, even to its most enthusiastic supporters, that the MPLA, as a radical nationalist movement, would not break with the traditional practices of paternalism and authoritarianism in regard to the masses. That the masses nevertheless did rally behind the banner of the MPLA against reaction within the terms of a complex historical process



LUCIO LARA

does, of course, confirm that the various political forces involved in fact represented different historic interests. But this was obviously not enough to ensure that the MPLA would take any sort of anticapitalist road.

From November 1975, the leadership began to frontally attack what had up to then constituted the most advanced wing of the Luanda neighborhood committees, namely the militants of the Amilcar Cabral Committees. On the radio and in the press constant warnings were issued against "ultraleftists" and "infiltrators." Militants were thrown into prison, many of them brow-beaten, without the popular movement ever being given the opportunity to hear and discuss the differences. In their speeches, the leaders always insisted that the MPLA "directed the state" and that any attack on the MPLA was an attack on the unity of the Angolan people. A typical example of good old nationalist rhetoric.

In October 1975 a fraction of these Amilcar Cabral Committees regrouped underground to create the Angolan Communist Organization (OCA). But there was nothing attractive about this project except its name, for after a period of entrism in the MPLA, the militants involved boosted the prestige of the leadership and began denouncing the influence of Soviet "social imperialism," calling for a boycott of the Soviet Union. The Maoistic irresponsibility of this turn obviously aided the repressive plans of Agostinho Neto and Lucio Lara. The OCA was gradually rooted out and strongly weakened by arrests in Luanda, Malange, and Lobito. The regime took advantage of contact between the OCA and elements of an old tendency of the MPLA that had emerged at the MPLA's second congress (the Active Revolt tendency) to make an amalgam between the two. All the former members of this tendency were compelled to make personal self-criticisms if they wanted to come back to the organization or even find jobs in the state sector or the administration. It appears that many of them did not accept this humiliation.

Finally it came the turn of the former members of the Henda Committees, for example Betigno, the leader

of these committees, who was deprived of responsibilities within the apparatus. Cut off by a fraction of the movement, these militants lost their radio station, Qu-dia Baguela, which was extremely popular because it was antibureaucratic. Subsequently, there was an attempted demonstration of several hundred people in Luanda, which was reported by the international press. This clash led to a new wave of arrests. Betigno can no longer work at the radio station and has lost any possibility of finding a job in the state sector.

Is it supposedly necessary to close one's eyes to this repression under the pretext that it involves an opposition to a very respectable progressive anti-imperialist movement? This is precisely the attitude that seems to have been taken by a number of militants who supported the MPLA completely uncritically during the struggle. The choice of silence in order "not to weaken the anti-imperialist camp" has been the sad reasoning of some organizations, such as the PSU (Parti Socialiste Unifié — United Socialist party) and Révolution, two centrist formations in France.



NETO

The best response has been offered by the mass movement itself. This repression has not been aimed solely at a few "ultraleftists." It has served to reestablish a grip on the neighborhood committees, to place them under the heel of the MPLA and reduce them to simple transmission belts. It was thus that after a series of inter-factional negotiations in the MPLA Political Bureau it was decided to officially elect the leaders of the neighborhood committees in Luanda last June. During this campaign it was carefully stressed that "infiltrators" had to be ousted, whether they were former Salazarist secret police members or ultraleftists. It was an election in which an MPLA commission proposed a single slate of candidates for each neighborhood. The biographies of the candidates were carefully apolitical and all those branded as "infiltrators," in particular the former members of the Amilcar Cabral Committees and the Active Revolt tendency, were denied the right to vote. What was the result of this election, highly representative of "people's power"? A total of 10 percent of the people cast votes!

The urban movement, the force which was responsible for the MPLA's victory and which provided Africa with its best experience of struggle, was subjugated on the day of that election, in which even the neighborhood of the cadres and bureaucrats of the movement did not produce a better turnout.

"What good are your committees?" Lucio Lara is reported to have said to his opponent Nito Alves. "It is through the MPLA that we will construct the state." The management committees in the factories have been subjected to complex rules of elections and division of responsibilities. In any event, people appointed by the MPLA play an important role in these committees, which is especially easy since the task of the committees is to "apply the policy of the MPLA."

The latter has thus been able to quickly assert itself as the backbone of the administrative system of the country, especially through its Action Groups, its army (the FAPLA), the Popular Defense Organization, and the DISA (the political police).

Authoritarianism has taken the place of the old relationship of forces between the MPLA and the workers. The campaign for the coffee and cotton harvest, a sort of mini-Zafra, (2) is such that the "jobless" people in the cities are sometimes transferred forthwith to work in the north in order to make up for the shortage of labor there. In the past the Portuguese used to run their plantations with people who came from the south. Since independence these populations have understood their right no longer to emigrate to sell their labor-power.

The state takes form

Once independence was won, the nationalist leadership of the MPLA monopolized power. The government was formed in a meeting of the MPLA Political Bureau and the Central Committee has not met since independence. Neto became president of the republic as well as president of the MPLA. In exchange, the Lucio Lara group got Lara appointed secretary of the MPLA Political Bureau, which is the second highest post in the hierarchy of the country, higher than the prime minister. The rest — the ministries, the key posts, and so on — was shared out among Nito Alves, Iko Carera, (3), and others. The inter-clique tension over the division of power is sometimes serious. There has been some talk of shake-ups in the ministries and it is not known what has become of the project of transforming the MPLA into a party.

Some speak of a worker-peasant alliance, while others, no doubt with greater prudence, prefer the formula "anti-imperialist front of workers, peasants, petty-bourgeoisie, and bourgeois patriots." But there is nothing very decisive here. What is under discussion are alternative institutional structures for a state whose very forms and functioning have always been bourgeois. The fact that nationalist petty-bourgeois layers are now in control of this state changes nothing in this political and social reality.

Political power is the source of accumulation of posts of responsibility as well as various fringe benefits. A certain Bires is cabinet director for the minister of foreign affairs, but he is also a judge and a professor. The same is true for the state prosecutor, Manuel Rui Monteiro. Escarcio, presidential protocol chief, is also the owner of the big Luanda restaurant Panque. Neto complains about the lack of cadre in order to justify this situation, but at the same time Angolan cadres who have committed the sin of no longer agreeing with the MPLA leadership are not allowed to work in the public sector. Some people have even been imprisoned in the Sapu camp, without trial.

The regime tries the mercenaries of imperialism and executes a few of these dogs of war. It intervenes to stop the excesses committed by some FAPLA soldiers against the population. But it keeps silent about the fact that militants who have fought against reaction by leading committees have been arrested and are being held in prison without trial.

There is no longer any force within the MPLA capable of fighting against the right turn now under way. But it is nevertheless probable that new crises will break out among various factions within the regime. While it is not yet possible to predict what the economic differences will be in regard to the state sector and relations with imperialism, it is nonetheless possible to assert that the division of power among factions will inevitably provoke differences over the way in which to construct the Angolan state and stabilize its leadership.



The Cubans

Without the presence of the Cubans in the administration, the hospitals, the barracks, etc., the disorganization would be such that the MPLA would have much greater difficulty stabilizing its authority in the cities.

Castro has announced the departure of the Cubans, but certain signs indicate that the bulk of the Cuban presence will remain, even if its composition must be changed. But this presence is made necessary not only by the period of "national reconstruction." There are still pockets of resistance led by UNITA, and the FNLA is talking about taking up the armed struggle again. The MPLA has recently recognized these facts publicly, denouncing the infiltration of mercenaries from Zaire.

In fact, while retreating from Angola the South African troops established a 70-kilometer-wide band of no-man's-land along the Namibian border, displacing populations by their usual methods. It is probably here that the UNITA sanctuaries are located. Some pockets have been recreated in the interior of southern Angola. Last June the FAPLA and the Cubans took a small base in Cagombe, where they discovered a small landing field, undoubtedly used by the South Africans to fly in aid. The FAPLA and the Cubans are now trying to encircle these pockets, where Jonas Savimbi, leader of UNITA, may still be functioning. Thus, the ambushes the UNITA has been organizing may soon come to an end.

The bureaucratic grip of the MPLA on the state apparatus and the competition among cliques fosters the peremptory terminology of the ideologues of the official press. A good dose of Marxist verbiage, along with classical and ritualistic thanks to Cuba and the USSR, has become the best recipe with which to justify appeals for discipline and labor. Who then would doubt the socialist convictions of Doctor Neto?

Repression and authoritarianism have become the political repercussions of the social processes under way in the People's Republic of Angola just a few months after its formation. The conflict-laden social alliance against imperialist reaction forged during the independence struggle has broken up, and the mass movement has lost its battle against careerism, bewildering bureaucracy, and cliquism. All this was predictable. But it remains more complicated to define the ways in which a possible opposition to the regime might develop. The fight for democratic rights remains at the center of all concerns. Will this battle be launched spontaneously on the occasion of a workers strike or will it be the product of a revolt of disgust on the part of some intermediary cadres of the MPLA and the administration? This is still a difficult prediction to make.

FOOTNOTES:

1. This especially applies to the sectors of fishing, textiles, drinks, and canned food. Some factories have not started working again; others are running at 25 percent capacity.
2. A reference to the campaign for the ten-million-ton sugar harvest in Cuba in 1970.
3. Nito Alves is minister of the interior and rather favors leftist verbiage about "people's power." Iko Carera is the minister of defense.



SPAIN A LETTER FROM POLITICAL PRISONERS

We are publishing below excerpts of a letter received from political prisoners who remain incarcerated in the Puerto de Santa Maria prison in spite of the amnesty decreed by the Spanish government. The letter describes the deterioration of the living conditions of the prisoners, a phenomenon which is universal throughout all the prisons of the Spanish state. According to official figures, there are still about 300 political prisoners in these jails, among them fifteen militants of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria/Euzkadi ta Askatasuna-VI (LCR/ETA-VI — Revolutionary Communist League/Basque Nation and Freedom-Sixth Assembly), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International. There are twenty-two political prisoners in Puerto de Santa Maria, twenty-one of them Basque militants, among them several members of the LCR/ETA-VI. Some of the Puerto de Santa Maria prisoners are militants who had escaped from Segovia prison and were recaptured and then transferred to Puerto de Santa Maria as punishment.

. . . The only newspaper allowed in the prison is the regional journal *Diario de Cádiz*, usually with the reports of political events cut out (things like the Vitoria general strike and the demonstrations around the death of Ulrike Meinhof). . . . The General Administration of Penal Institutions (DGIP) issued a memorandum prohibiting certain reviews from entering the prisons (such as *Triunfo*, *Cuadernos*, and *Mundo*), and the entry of all similar magazines (like *Posible* and *Cambio-16*) was also banned by decision of the DGIP, although without any accompanying memorandum. . . . Our only source of information is the news broadcast that goes on at 9:00 every night, which means that we are virtually deprived of news. . . . There is a list of banned books which includes such titles as "*Cien años de soledad*" and "*Y creo en la esperanza*," but the warden in charge of censorship has an even stricter list.

. . . Puerto de Santa Maria is one of the toughest prisons in the whole Spanish state. We cannot leave the cellblock area. There is one courtyard about 40 meters

by 20. We are not allowed to go to other parts of the prison like the library and the exercise yard. . . . We live in deplorable cells from the standpoint of hygiene. They are 2 meters by 3 and the water doesn't work. The humidity is so bad that most of us have begun to suffer from lumbago, rheumatic ailments, etc. There are cockroaches everywhere and rats in the toilets. There is only one shower for the twenty-two political prisoners. They force us into an exercise schedule which we have to perform like robots. . . . The food is generally inedible and insufficient and we can barely keep it down, so we try to live on the food our families send us. . . . The medical care is deficient. It is horrible to think what would happen if one of us ever got sick enough to have to be immediately transferred to a hospital for emergency surgery, because it is doubtful that there would be enough time to get out of the prison and get to the hospital in time to be treated. . . .

Besides all this, we are subject to constant political persecution and continual provocations from the guards.

. . . All of us, with the exception of the two most recently arrived prisoners, have spent the last several months in punishment cells, serving terms of 300, 121, or 105 days. The punishment cell is completely bare. They take out everything, including the mattress, so there is no place to sit down all day long, except on the floor or iron slabs that serve as beds. This causes strong back pains by the second or third day. It is forbidden to lie on the floor or lean against the wall during the day. It is very difficult to eat, because you have to rest the plate on the floor or else hold it with one hand and eat with the other. All you get to eat with is a spoon. It is forbidden to talk to anyone or look out the window, and when they open the cell door you have to stand against the opposite wall. You can't take any more than three steps in any one direction in these cells. The mattresses are taken away when they wake us up and have to be brought back at night. . . .

They take away all watches, so we lose any notion of time, and all other personal effects as well, even eyeglasses. Absolutely everything is designed to be physical and psychological torture. Physical because a few days after being put in the cell you lose your appetite, they give us very little to eat and what they do give us is miserable. You get weak from lack of exercise, because you can't do anything because there's no room to move around. You can hardly walk because you get dizzy fast. Your whole body gets cramped and painful. We all have insomnia and cannot sleep more than a few hours at a time, waking up constantly. Psychologically because the persecution is constant and the situation of total isolation leads to all sorts of ailments and a feeling of constant tension, anxiety, and anguish. . . . We are not able to denounce these conditions to the court, because they don't let us have paper and pens. . . . Besides our conditions in the cells, the police persecute our families, registering the houses where they live and threatening people who help them.

. . . We have the "right" to write two letters a week, only to immediate families, in big letters, on one sheet of notepaper, covering only one side. We are allowed to write only about "family matters." . . . We are allowed six visits of twenty minutes each month (suspended when we are in punishment cells). We have to speak through a glass without any holes at all, which means that we have to practically shout to be heard. We can talk only about family matters or the visit is cut off. The Basques are not allowed to speak in their own language. . . . We are never even allowed to briefly embrace our wives. . . .

"I already know how to solve the Basque problem. Kill them all." "I'm all worked up and I feel like knocking some of them off." "I don't see why they let them have visits." These are the sort of things you hear when the guards talk among themselves. They treat us like animals to be persecuted and exterminated. . . . We are surrounded by informers who are set against us and get commendations for contributing to the repression. . . . They don't let us talk to the common prisoners. If we do, we are punished. □

Lebanon



The Palestinian Resistance Faces Critical Choices

by SELIM ACCAWI

After sixteen months of bitter battles, the situation in Lebanon is now ripe for the realization of a reactionary peace. The Arab regimes are stepping up their diplomatic initiatives and political pressure in order to be able to reap the fruit of the military plot they have been perpetrating against the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left for eight months now.

None of the objectives of the first civil war (April 1975-January 1976) had been achieved. The resistance had emerged from the test more powerful than before; it held absolute control not only of the Palestinian camps but also of a good number of Lebanese neighborhoods. Besides, the military regime the Christian right had sought to establish did not exist; in fact, the Lebanese army itself crumbled under the weight of confessional dissensions and the Lebanese state was disintegrating.

The failure of this war, the major objective of which was to militarily (and hence politically) cut the Palestinian resistance down to size in order to facilitate the realization of a number of partial accords between Israel and the Arab regimes, had opened the way for a different war, one waged by the Arab regimes to bring the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) to heel. The disagreements between the Palestinian leaderships and the Syrian regime, which had hitherto appeared secondary, suddenly came to the fore. Syria, which is seeking to work out an overall agreement to end the Arab-Israeli crisis, proposed the establishment of a Syro-Jordanian-Palestinian confederation as a solution to the "Palestinian problem" and demanded the acceptance, or rather the total obedience, of the PLO leadership. The past four months of the civil war may be characterized as a period of bitter military and political struggle by the resistance to preserve its independence of the Arab regimes.

In the course of past weeks the vise has been tightened considerably. In the eyes of the PLO leadership, the only possible way to avoid extinction is to accept compromise. Since the fall of the Palestinian camp Tal el-Zaatar last August 12, the military fighting and political wrangling have revolved around the scope and weight of this compromise.

The turn in the situation

Following the series of military successes won by the Palestinian-progressive camp during the offensive of March 1976, the tide turned after the last quadripartite Arab summit, which was held last June 23 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, attended by Syria, Egypt, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Before this summit what had somewhat reassured the Palestinian leaders was the relative isolation of the Syrian regime, both internally and especially in the Arab world, for Damascus was waging its reactionary offensive alone and the Arab bourgeoisies had hitherto adopted a position of "neutrality" in the conflict. But the relationship of forces turned around completely after this summit. After June 23 isolation was the lot of the Palestinian resistance and its Lebanese allies. It is probable that Saudi reaction had already decided to support the Syrian crusade politically and financially even before that date, but it was on June 23 that the facts became absolutely clear. In their majority, the Arab regimes would support with all necessary means the effort at pacification undertaken in Lebanon by the dedicated Syrian regime. While Syrian President Hafez el-Assad left Riyadh reassured, the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left made the sad discovery that even the relationship of military forces in the field no longer counted for much. Completely isolated politically and dependent primarily on the active support of the Arab regimes, these forces were not at all able to turn the situation around by winning new military victories, especially since it was becoming increasingly difficult to make new breakthroughs because of the striking force thrown against the anti-reac-

tionary forces by the Syrian regime.

The tactic adopted by the leadership of the resistance after June 23 was to resist in the field without occupying any new sectors and to intensify political initiatives and public appeals aimed at "convincing" Saudi Arabia and the other Arab regimes to adopt a less "negative" attitude. During the last month of resistance in Tal el-Zaatar, while the fighters of the camp were waging a determined struggle, no offensive of any real scope was launched by the resistance or the left to reduce military pressure on the camp. Yassir Arafat, leader of the PLO, refused to take any measure that would definitively burn his bridges to the bourgeoisies of the region. He preferred to address appeals to the "various Arab kings and governments" asking them to intervene to stop Palestinian blood from being shed in Lebanon. The effect of this policy was exactly the opposite of what was hoped for by the Palestinian leaderships. The Arab regimes intervened in a manner that was clearly contrary to Palestinian interests, while the military pressure of the Syrian troops and the Lebanese reactionary forces mounted ceaselessly.

The military situation today is extremely unfavorable to the resistance and the left. All the coastal Muslim or Palestinian enclaves in the Christian region have now fallen. The city of Tripoli in the northern part of the country is completely surrounded, while a maritime blockade has been imposed on it by the Syrian fleet. A similar blockade has been clamped on the ports of Sidon and Tyre in the south by the Israeli fleet, which leaves no possibility for the anti-reactionary forces to communicate with the outside.

The only sectors in the Christian zone still occupied by Palestinian-progressive fighters amount to a few villages of Mount Lebanon. Military and political pressures have been brought to bear to have these regions evacuated as quickly as possible.

But the most serious aspect of the situation is the behavior of the inhabitants of the Muslim neighborhoods of the capital. Thousands of families have fled Beirut during the past two months. The popular neighborhood of Shiyah, where 100,000 people lived before the outbreak of the civil war, is now virtually empty of civilian population. This massive exodus is of course due in part to unemployment and the general state of insecurity that reigns in Beirut, but it is also a reflection of the growing depoliticization of the population, a result of the militarist view of the civil war held by the Palestinian and Lebanese leaderships. With this exodus, the anti-reactionary forces not only lose direct support which they most urgently need; in addition, the inhabitants who flee the combat zones generally completely abandon the cause they had supported up to then and aspire only for the return of peace at any price. This state of affairs is aggravated by the incredible state of privation that prevails in these sectors, whereas the Christian regions, which are in contact with the outside, are now receiving all the products of basic necessity at relatively accessible prices.

Is an agreement possible?

After first hoping for a pure and simple withdrawal of Syrian troops in Lebanon and after then trying to gain time in the hope that there would be a turn in the Arab world, the Palestinian leaderships were finally driven to accept the principle of making a basic compromise with the Syrian regime. What the latter is demanding is no more or less than recognition by the resistance of the legitimacy of the presence of Syrian troops in Lebanon, as well as acceptance of a relative demilitarization of the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, the right of the Lebanese state (and through it the Syrian state) to exercise control over the Palestinians in Lebanon, and the permanent non-interference of the Palestinians in the affairs of the Lebanese state. All these points are mentioned in the agreement signed by the Syrian regime and the leadership of the PLO in Damascus last July 29. This accord also includes clauses concerning the application of a cease-fire in Lebanon, which has not yet been applied in reality. Assad issued an ultimatum to the resistance calling upon it to accept an agreement with the Christian right before September 5 or the Syrian troops would launch a new offensive, more severe than the previous ones, and would impose peace (sic) throughout Lebanon. This ultimatum has since been repeated in various forms. Beyond the bluster, the threat is clear. The Syrian guns will not be lowered so long as the Palestinian leaderships have not completely submitted to Syrian will.

In the wake of the fall of Tal el-Zaatar, bilateral negotiations were opened between the Fateh leadership and the Phalangist party. The PLO also approved the call for an Arab summit to "examine the situation in Lebanon." According to the latest information, the Palestinians would be prepared to withdraw from the zones they occupy in the Lebanese mountains "if this step guarantees peace in Lebanon."

Why is it taking so long for an agreement to be applied?

The Christian right, strengthened by its recent successes, is obviously seeking to bolster its advantage. But the greatest obstacles come from the Palestino-progressive camp itself. The Palestinian leaderships have still not ruled out the possibility of the Syrians softening their conditions and they are therefore trying to stall for time. But above all, these leaderships have to face strong opposition from the rank and file, regardless of the character of the Palestinian organizations. The rank and file of these organizations have nothing to gain from such accords and they are correct to wonder what was the point of so many months of fierce resistance and privation. The July 29 accord with Damascus has run into very strong criticism even from the rank and file of Fateh. There are rumors of disagreements within the leadership of Fateh. In fact, however, a division of labor has recently been established within this leadership, the aim being to muddle things up and delude the Palestinian fighters about the leadership's real intentions. Thus, at the moment when two members of the Fateh Central Committee were meeting with the Phalangists, one of the other leaders of the organization, Abu

Iyad, issued a stinging declaration attacking not only Syria, but all the Arab regimes without exception. But the time when such maneuvers could succeed has past. There is no doubt that the content of the future accord on the crisis in Lebanon will be kept completely secret from the Lebanese and Palestinian masses. Only a few general or secondary points will be published.



Nevertheless, the Palestinian leaderships must also deal with strong pressure from their Lebanese allies, who have everything to lose from an agreement reached under the present circumstances. The Syrian regime, the other Arab regimes, and the Lebanese Christian right have refused to negotiate with the Lebanese left and consider that the only valid representatives of the regions not controlled by the reactionary Christian forces are the traditional leaders of the Sunni and Shiite bourgeoisie. Not only will the left not be included when the accords are reached, but there is a strong risk that it will be directly repressed, for there has been no guarantee, nor will there be, that left militants will not be repressed or even that they will be allowed to express themselves in the future. The Syrian peace now looming on the horizon will include no place for freedom of expression or political action in opposition to the new regime. The left today feels that it is being "cut loose" by the leadership of the PLO. Militarily it can do nothing alone, for it is very much dependent on the resistance for all heavy arms and ammunition. When the Palestinian leaderships decide the time has come to make an agreement and stop the fighting and shelling, the left will have no choice but to go along.

In any event, it is to be feared that the arguments of the left will not count for much when the PLO leadership decides to make peace with Syria. And the military and political weakening of the left will only isolate the Palestinian resistance still further and make it more vulnerable to the attacks and pressures of the Arab bourgeoisies. The Syrian regime will not back down so long as it has not achieved its reactionary objectives in Lebanon. And in view of the present relationship of forces in the Arab world, it now seems close to doing just that.

What future for the Palestinian resistance?

Does the PLO leadership have any alternative to capitulation? At the beginning of the siege of Tal el-Zaatar, when the Arabo-Syrian entente became clear, Abu Iyad made a public statement threatening the Arab regimes with a Palestinian response on an Arab-wide scale. Among other things, Abu Iyad predicted that mass movements would arise and isolate the regimes that were attacking the interests of the Palestinians in one way or another.

In fact, given the state of the civil war in Lebanon, the only way the Palestinian resistance and the Lebanese left could avoid suffocation would be to develop a popular movement of struggle in all the Arab countries. The great difficulty in carrying out this task today lies in the virtual impossibility of any broad movements of solidarity coming into existence spontaneously and without any preparation in countries in which the slightest manifestation of opposition is fiercely repressed.

Unfortunately, the Palestinian resistance is now paying the price, and a very high price it is, for its erroneous conception of the liberation of Palestine. Palestino-centrism, refusal to pose the problem of national liberation in class terms, the complex of "non-interference" in the internal affairs of the Arab regimes," and the constant concern of the various Palestinian organizations to develop "fraternal" and financially well greased relations with the Arab bourgeoisies instead of solidarizing with the movements and organizations struggling against these bourgeoisies have led to the gradual isolation of the resistance to the point that it must now stand alone against all its united enemies.

The class nature of the Palestinian organizations and their leaderships, the existence of a powerful bureaucracy within these organizations, and the policy adopted by the Palestinian leaderships from the very beginning make a radical turn of the helm very difficult in the present circumstances. In the past, every time the resistance movement came under constraint from some Arab regime, the Palestinian leaders played on the contradictions among the various regimes and thus managed to extract themselves from the impasse. In fact, they walked the tightrope between these contradictions and postponed the crucial choice between the armed struggle and its implications on the one hand and the consequences of special relations with the Arab bourgeoisies on the other hand. When the Arab regimes, overcoming their contradictions and conflicts, organize the great coalition to subdue the Palestinian resistance, the Palestinian leaderships (because of their class nature, direct interests, and political line) are much more prepared to accept the implications of the new situation than they are to unleash a struggle against the Arab regimes, a struggle they have always refused to prepare and which would directly challenge not only their previous political line but also the very structures of the Palestinian organizations.

The official leadership of the resistance had already taken a decisive step in accepting the principle of a peaceful solution with the Zionist state (which had the effect of creating a Palestinian "Rejection Front"); now a new capitulation is being demanded by the Arab bourgeoisies: total fealty of the policy of the PLO to the direct interests of the bourgeois regimes of the region.

If a Syrian peace is imposed in Lebanon, the cleavage between the official leadership of the PLO and the Rejection Front will no longer have any real implication in substance. The control demanded by the Syrian regime includes all the resistance organizations. Precautions will be taken to avoid any inclination to throw any monkey wrenches into the machinery. Throughout the civil war the Rejection Front has been materially incapable of setting itself off from the official leaderships of the resistance, either through its political position or its initiatives. The basic structure of all the Palestinian organizations, their degree of politicization, and their composition are in general the same. An open offensive against the Syrian regime or the reactionary peace on the part of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine for example (the major organization of the Rejection Front) would entail a violent repression and a consequent move to underground conditions for which this organization, like all the others, is not at all prepared.

It is highly unlikely that a peace will be established under the present conditions without strong opposition being manifested within the Palestinian organizations. Some leaderships (the Rejection Front) will probably criticize the terms of the accord, but the real opposition will come from the rank and file of the organizations. This opposition, unstructured, fragmented, and proposing no real alternative of any scope, will have to confront well-structured leaderships possessing not inconsiderable means of "persuasion." The strong point of this opposition will be its will to continue the struggle in spite of all difficulties.

This opposition has already been manifested and will be manifested even more in the future through planting bombs and carrying out other acts of reprisal against the Arab regimes. But since this road can in no way offer a way out of the impasse, the question of drawing a balance-sheet of the past experience and of continuing the struggle on new bases will be posed in a more acute fashion.

A Syrian victory in Lebanon will mean a retreat not only for the existing opportunist organizations but also for the mass movement as a whole. Nevertheless, the crisis of the Arab regimes is now such that more than a war is needed to assure the tranquility of the bourgeoisies and imperialism. The outcome of the war in Lebanon, no matter how unfavorable it may be, will not at all be catastrophic for the future of the Arab revolution. The struggle of the Palestinian people will remain on the agenda. Before too long the Arab revolution will be able to emerge from the defensive situation in which it has been confined for the past six years. □

WORKERS STRUGGLES RISE IN TUNISIA



• *Habib Bourguiba*

by **M. AZIZ & B. MALIK**

The Destourian regime,* which came to power twenty years ago and rests essentially on the role of Habib Bourguiba, the Tunisian Bonaparte, is now increasingly facing an impetuous new rise of the Tunisian working class. As the Paris daily *Le Monde* remarked last June, "strikes are now a feature of everyday life." Last July, under the pressure of the workers mobilizations of May and the "agitation" going on in the secondary schools and universities, the Central Committee of the ruling party declared: "The right to strike is guaranteed by the constitution, when the strikes are legal" (sic). But on July 25, taking advantage of the summer lull, the bourgeoisie tried to intimidate the workers, sentencing twelve strikers of the Jerissa iron mine, where 700 workers had gone on strike June 16 and 17, to prison terms ranging from three months to three years. The bourgeoisie believed that this was the way to prevent a hot autumn and to make sure that the Tunisian workers would not fight for satisfaction of their demands. But neither this repression nor Prime Minister Nouira's declaration to two French journalists that "the single party is a historical necessity" has been able to prevent the workers movement from providing itself with organizations capable of waging a broad battle against the regime, which, taking advantage of the effects of the civil war in Lebanon, is now trying to turn the country into one of the financial centers of the Arab world while continuing to superexploit the Tunisian workers. The article below, which deals with the current upsurge of workers struggles and the background to them, was written by two Tunisian revolutionary Marxists.

*Destour is the Arabic word for constitution. The origins of the Destourian, or constitutionalist, movement in Tunisia go back to the early twentieth century. The neo-Destour, which called for independence from France, was founded in the 1930s. In 1964 the neo-Destourian party, which had been the ruling party since independence in 1956, changed its name to the Destourian Socialist party.

French colonization, which had begun in Tunisia in 1881, came to an end in 1956 with the proclamation of the independence of the country. The achievement of independence was an expression both of the inability of French imperialism to subdue the nationalist movement led by Bourguiba and of its desire to divide the anticolonial struggles. These struggles had been spreading throughout the Maghreb and had been stimulating consciousness among the peoples of the region that they belong to the same nation. In granting independence to Tunisia, French imperialism intended to use neocolonialism in order to move from direct to indirect rule

based on the country's continuing economic dependence on France.

One of the basic characteristics of French colonialism in Tunisia had been the prevention of the formation of a powerful local bourgeois class that could have bid for direct power once independence was achieved. Instead, a weak landed and commercial bourgeoisie, based largely on speculation, took shape around the colonial enterprise. Concurrently, the betrayal of the French Stalinists and their Tunisian subsidiary — who, on the basis of a false analysis of the national question that con-

demned them to remain in the framework of the "French Union," were either unwilling or unable to grasp the immediate contradiction between the colonized and the colonizers — deprived them of any claim to provide any leadership for the movement to free the masses.

These two historic features, combined with the vacuum created by the absence of a revolutionary pole capable of uniting the spontaneous energy of the masses and directing it toward a struggle for full emancipation, pushed the petty-bourgeois team assembled in the neo-Destour party to the forefront, enabling it to take the leadership of the liberation movement. The slogan of independence, which the neo-Destour was able to raise at the opportune moment, rallied both the workers of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (GUTW) and the disinherited masses of the countryside, as well as the petty-bourgeois layers and sections of the bourgeoisie aspiring to take up the torch from the colonial power. When the neocolonial pact was signed, all these sectors assembled behind the neo-Destour.

Power was transferred (not without clashes) to the most seasoned team, the team that had demonstrated the greatest ability to hold back and dampen the mass movement while simultaneously relying on the mobilization of that movement. Once in power, this team was to place the mass organizations under its heel and operate in accordance with the historic interests of the bourgeoisie.

After noting the failure of its extremely timid liberal policy, the nationalist leadership resigned itself to entering a phase of "collectivization." In 1956, just after independence, Ben Salah, former secretary of the workers federation who had previously been condemned and expelled by the neo-Destour leadership, was recalled to the country to implement the program of the GUTW. Remaining within the neocolonial framework, the team of bureaucrats and technocrats assembled around Ben Salah had illusions in the possibility of reordering the system from within by means of increasingly heavy structural reforms. These reforms affected the sectors of wholesale and retail trade, as well as the agrarian system, the aim being to modernize the economic structures and thus permit some accumulation of capital that would then be transferred to the still very embryonic industrial sector.

This experiment received the support of American imperialism (toward the middle of the 1960s) and the ruling party, while the landed bourgeoisie took a more or less wait-and-see attitude, since the project did not damage its system of private property. In fact, the landlords were able to draw some profit from this scheme, for they participated in administering the cooperatives that were formed and also enjoyed the benefits of a parallel circuit erected by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the Tunisian central bank which ran directly counter to the initiatives of the various official plans. Ben Salah believed that the large landlords could be knocked out of commission by the mere establishment of compulsory cooperatives

on their land, a step that was taken in 1969 with the blessings of Bourguiba.

Subsequently, the economic crisis, the deterioration of the standard of living of the masses, the increasingly pronounced proletarianization of the small peasants, and the growing discontent in the countryside served as a springboard for the financial and landed bourgeoisie. This bourgeoisie reacted violently to the cooperatives, drawing the mass of small and medium-sized peasant producers behind them, for their interests were at stake as well. It was decided to break the spirit of the cooperatives. The heavy concentration of land and the proletarianization of new layers of small peasants, logical consequences of the Ben Salah experiment, intensified further.

The immediate consequence of the crisis of September 1969 (some months after the decision to generalize the cooperatives throughout the country) was the ouster of Ben Salah from power and then his condemnation to ten years at hard labor on charges of "high treason." This crisis provoked some wavering and a general malaise at all levels within the ruling layer, which had appeared homogeneous since the Bizerte congress of 1964, when the neo-Destour party changed its name to the Destourian Socialist party (DSP). The shift was reflected in a return to a so-called liberal economic policy.

From the 'congress of destiny' to the 'congress of clarity'

It was not until the DSP congress of 1971, dubbed the "congress of destiny," that the acute social contradictions among the ruling political personnel were reflected much more clearly. At that congress an inter-bourgeois clique struggle broke out over how to administer the neocolonial state. The congress exposed the internal contradictions within the neo-Destour party and state and was marked by wrangling over succession.

A bourgeois opposition of a liberal variety began to take shape. Its offensive was essentially centered around corridor battles aimed at remodeling the norms of functioning within the party and the state apparatus and at a certain democratization of institutions. Because of the crisis that had been shaking the country since 1969 and had affected the instruments of bourgeois rule full force, this battle would have been won but for the direct intervention of Bourguiba the Bonaparte, who took the wind out of the liberals' sails and reestablished an unstable equilibrium that was to last until the "congress of clarity," held in 1974. That congress purged the party, eliminating the liberal clique.

Lacking any economic or social base, the Mestirists* were unable to formulate any coherent project or to

* Mestiri, one of the leaders of the DSP, was the leader of the "liberal" current, an advocate of establishing a genuine bourgeois democracy.

present themselves as an alternative bourgeois pole to the policy of the ruling group. The congenital weakness of the local bourgeoisie, due to the structural weakness of a dominated economy, inevitably relegates this bourgeoisie to an intermediary role between a very small local market (within which remnants of precapitalist production remain very much alive) and the world capitalist market.

After the various abortive attempts at bourgeois reform under Ben Salah — projects that had been implemented on the basis of improvised plans — the entire policy of the ruling class became one of palliatives and substitutes. At the same time, the ruling class tried to make some gestures of good will to the middle classes (the social base of the regime), whose various sectors were manifesting a certain attitude of defiance in face of the repeated crises, which had cast discredit on the abilities and coherence of the neo-Destourian team in power. Condemned to remain within the orbit of imperialism, this team was to keep the door open to foreign capital in an effort to gather some crumbs, try to minimize the extent of growing unemployment, and increase long-term capacities for industrialization — all on the basis of subsidiary operations and joint ventures!

It was in this framework that the investment code was worked out in 1969. Later, 1972 legislation paved the way for the creation of the Agency for the Promotion of Investments (1973) and extended the "investment code." The real aim was to codify the implantation of imperialist corporations in the country by creating a special system that entailed fiscal, customs, and exchange benefits. This law, which relates to manufacturing industry, includes such provisions as: complete exemption from taxes on profits for a ten-year period, then 80 percent exemption for the next ten years; exemption from all restrictions and taxes on turnover relative to purchases made in the country.

The advocates of this law proudly compared Tunisia to Singapore, Malaysia, and Ireland, countries which are already rather more advanced in this realm, fiscal paradises with abundant skilled labor receiving very modest wages. The essence of this policy, which is in force today, may be summed up in this extract of an interview granted the review *Afrique Industrie* in February 1974 by Shady Ayari, ex-minister of the economy:

"Why textiles in Tunisia? Not because everybody makes textiles, but because we thought that the raw material we could produce was not wool or cotton but labor and wages. . . . This labor and these wages are now sufficiently competitive in Tunisia to enable us to produce good quality textiles relatively cheaply."

Nevertheless, in order to perfect this financial paradise, the bourgeois class must guarantee the imperialists lasting social peace in order to assure their colossal profits. Thus, in addition to restructuring and modernizing the repressive apparatus (especially the police and the parallel armed gangs), the regime passed new laws aimed

at setting up important political trump cards. The ruling class had been compelled to deal with the first wave of radicalization at the end of the 1960s, especially in the student milieu, where the direct impact of the Palestinian resistance influenced the forms in which the far left emerged. The far-left organizations were the ones primarily targeted by the repression. But as discontent spread to other social layers, particularly the workers, the regime had to confront a more threatening mass movement. It thus had to use all the means at its command, including physical force, to try to dam up the movement.

In the framework of its policy of "contract for progress" or "social contract," the Nouira government assembled the "social partners" — the employers association, the ruling party, and the workers federation held in check by the party — in an effort to dampen the effervescence of the mass movement. At the same time, however, big strikes for economic demands broke out. The workers engaging in the most advanced struggles (railway and transport workers) were attacked by the police. From that point on, the regime has not established any real social truce, despite its demands for social peace.

The latest struggles, in May 1976, beyond their spontaneous and militant character, took on a manifest political significance given the present context. The workers resolutely entered into struggle just when the contradictions among the various factions of the regime were sharpening, disregarding the "defense of the national interest" which the exploiting class had attempted to make them respect.

The advocates of "national unity" had long since counted on social peace, the guarantee needed for assuring investments by imperialist capital in the country. The control of the mass organizations (including the trade-union federation), the repression, and the role the party made the servile trade-union bureaucracy play allowed the neo-Destour to pretend that unanimity had been created around it. Thus, in March 1976, on the eve of the anniversary of independence, the regime took advantage of an abortive "coup" directed by the Qadhafi regime in Libya to wage a hysterical campaign against the "bloody and terrorist Libyan regime," to issue an appeal to the population to close ranks around the Supreme Fighter and the party he guides, to raise the specter of the fatherland endangered by foreign threats, and to warn the Mestiri bourgeois opposition clique, which had begun to agitate, once again demanding the democratization of institutions and the toning down of the old repressive methods. This campaign culminated in the carefully orchestrated show staged around the trial before the state security court of the three Libyans charged with having organized the coup.

In spite of the tarnished image of the nationalist Libyan petty bourgeoisie, which once again demonstrated its true character by expelling thousands of Tunisian workers from Libya, in the eyes of broad layers of workers and youth this trial appeared as a real charade, a way of covering up the real problems. The intervention of

Ould-Daddah, president of Mauritania, who mediated the Tunisian-Libyan dispute, came at a good time to prove once again that inter-bourgeois Arab contradictions are relegated to the back seat in face of the real threats that may emerge from the mass movement itself.

The workers struggles of May broke out in a context marked by the deterioration of the living standards of the masses, a dizzying rise in the prices of basic commodities, and a stagnation of wages. This new effervescence of workers struggles stingingly belied the regime's claims to have established social stability and negated the pretensions of the trade-union bureaucracy. This bureaucracy had just "celebrated" one of the calmest May Days ever, the "fruit" of the close collaboration between the social partners and the joint efforts of the GUTW and the DSP to finally cement "national unity," efforts supposedly facilitated by the comprehension and responsibility of the workers, who were working within and through their organization to increase productivity so as to definitively assure the beginning of real economic progress.

But immediately after the May Day weekend, thousands of workers moved into struggle, occupying their work places. The movement began in the urban transportation system, paralyzing the major activities of the capital and its suburbs for two days, and then spread like an oil stain. The truck drivers were the next to walk out. Then it was the turn of the postal workers, who held twenty-four-hour work stoppages in several centers in the provinces. The 2,400 workers of the steel factory of el-Fouladh also participated in the mobilizations; they constitute the largest concentration of workers in Tunisia and have a genuine tradition of struggle. Other smaller enterprises joined in, sometimes for work stoppages of several hours, sometimes picking up a struggle that had been left hanging. The demands were always the same. For the first time since 1956, the public health system was also affected by the movement.

The workers of some of the big hospitals in the capital stopped work for several hours, forcing the regime to make concessions, granting medical and "paramedical" personnel a one-hour-per-day reduction in hours (from eight to seven). But this gain was to be eroded several weeks later; summer hours went back to the old system.

The last week of May was marked by the entry into struggle of the young magistrates, who in violation of the bourgeois legality of the institutions in which they function (all members of the judicial system are forbidden to engage in any concerted action that halts or impedes the functioning of the courts, according to article 18 of the magistrate code promulgated in July 1967), widened the fissures in the state apparatus itself. And while a good number of the fourteen demands they raised were corporatist (such as salary increases), their demand that trade-union rights be recognized and that the threat of layoff for political activity be eliminated expressed the aspirations of some fringes of young magistrates to act against the ossification and arbitrariness of the judicial bodies.

Between the hammer and the anvil

The regime's response was clear. Once it overcame its initial surprise, it quickly recovered its repressive reflexes. The "forces of order" (police and public security brigades) attacked strikers and began arresting "ringleaders." But blind repression was no longer effective, given the scope of the movement. Thus, while utilizing a part of its repressive apparatus in an effort to break the spirit of the workers, the regime had to resort to the tactic of calling upon the trade-union bureaucracy.

The maneuver was obvious: Use the GUTW to cool things down and control the movement. Once the situation was pacified and after a number of preventive arrests under the pretext of protecting public order, the regime launched new trials of militants.

From the very first day of the transit strike, the movement had promised to be a tough one. The trade-union leadership had to assume its responsibilities. It had been driven to the wall. Previously the GUTW had organized some "legal" strikes against some of the smaller "intransigent bosses." This enabled the GUTW to preserve and even extend its working-class base. It was thus able to appear as an organization defending the interests of the workers. But this time the mobilization went way beyond the rules of the game and escaped bureaucratic control. The bureaucracy's position became clear as of the beginning of June. It was to condemn the mobilizations as illegal and to issue an ultimatum to the workers, demanding that they go back to work.

Just after the railway strike broke out, the executive bureau of the GUTW (the minister of social affairs of which is also a full member of the secretariat of the neo-Destour party) held an emergency meeting to "study the causes of the wildcat strikes unleashed in some enterprises." The motion adopted by this meeting emphasized the following four points:

- * respect for law and order;
- * condemnation of wildcat strikes and all chaotic action;
- * launching of a strike is not to be permitted without prior agreement from the trade-union federation;
- * threat of expulsion and coordination of action with the party in order to prevent elements expelled from the union federation from entering the structures of the party.

The motion concluded as follows: "to promote production and to mobilize all potential with a view toward achieving integrated economic progress and toward realizing a more just division of the national income, within the framework of national unity."

At the beginning of each struggle the party simply repeated (in the press, on the radio and television) the condemnations and ultimatums issued against the workers by the trade-union bureaucracy. While some contradictions could have emerged between the party and the union bureaucracy during the struggles, these contradictions were the product only of the position of the bureaucracy, caught between an increasingly

threatening mass movement (which it was determined to tame) and its own complete fealty to the party. The determination and insolence of the workers broke down the bureaucracy's dream of maintaining its policy of "dialogue" and harmony among the "social partners" with the aim of concretizing its hazy theory of "national unity."

Not so long ago the weekly organ of the GUTW, El-Sha'b (The People), claimed that the union had 400,000 members. In 1960 it had only 20,000. This growing influx of workers into the union proves only one thing: the workers are clearly expressing their consciousness of the need to organize to defend their immediate interests against the deterioration of their living conditions as a result of unemployment and the rising cost of living. The only legal framework open to them for doing this (even if it is a meager and even fake framework), the only structure they can occasionally use to launch some struggles, is the GUTW. It remains for the most advanced workers, those who are now waging radical struggles, along with revolutionaries, to transform the GUTW, to make it a real class-struggle trade union.

Following the latest struggles, a workers vanguard conscious of the role it will have to play in the future struggles has been taking shape. The workers who booted and challenged the trade-union bureaucrats before thousands of their comrades, who tried empirically through their creative imagination to link up with the best traditions of the international workers movement, both on the level of forms of struggle and on the level of self-defense, the workers who spontaneously and courageously contested the forces of bourgeois order for control of the streets, these workers are now asking themselves a question: How to construct the instruments, both inside and outside the union, that can enable the most militant workers to wage struggles, to make their demands felt by breaking out of the bureaucratic strait-jacket. In the course of these mobilizations, which are becoming increasingly intense, the most advanced workers have exhibited enormous capacities to draw other layers of workers behind them, to induce these workers also to wage their own struggles and to realize their potential for self-organization.

It is on the basis of these experiences that revolutionaries must concretely plan out their interventions. Addressing themselves to and relying on the most radicalized sectors of the toiling masses, they must begin from the most directly felt concerns of the masses, stressing defense of their immediate interests and the struggle for democratic rights like the right to strike, freedom of organization and the press, etc. On this basis they must formulate overall political objectives that directly challenge the bourgeois regime and the imperialist order.

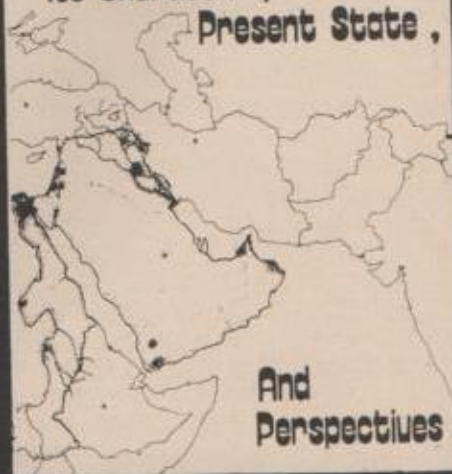
At present the main objective is to deal with the repression hitting the workers in struggle, to demand the immediate and unconditional release of those imprisoned. But to limit oneself exclusively to demands for demo-

cratic rights would only strengthen the illusions of the toiling masses in the ability of the present neocolonial regime to respond to their demands. It is thus necessary to immediately link struggles for the defense of the most elementary democratic rights to socialist objectives, in order to raise the consciousness of the masses. A discussion must immediately be opened with the existing revolutionary forces on the strategic context of the Arab nation in order to create the political and organizational instrument that is needed to confront the reactionary holy alliance of Arab bourgeoisies with the greatest chance of success: the Arab-wide revolutionary party.

The mutual defense pact that has been recently concluded between the bourgeois Sadat regime in Egypt and the bloody military junta of Jaafar el-Nimeiry in the Sudan is only one more declaration of war on the Arab mass movement developing in the region. The workers of the Tunisian transit and rail system, the postal workers, and the workers of el-Fouladh, following the example of the workers of Helwan, Mahalla el-Kubra, the Cairo industrial suburbs, and Alexandria in Egypt, have now pointed the way forward. They have demonstrated the sort of class solidarity that can unite them in the daily fight they must wage against the bourgeois regimes that exploit them. □

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**THE
ARAB REVOLUTION
Its Character,
Present State,And Perspectives**



sri lanka



Bandaranaike

REGIME IN CRISIS

by **BALA TAMPOE**

There is a good deal of speculation in Sri Lanka today as to whether the legislative elections, scheduled for the middle of 1977 according to the provisions of the constitution, will actually take place or whether the government will postpone them, as the Gandhi regime did in India. The possibility of early elections cannot be excluded either, with the government seeking to cash in on the temporary increase in its prestige which resulted from the conference of so-called nonaligned countries, recently held in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo.

The political influence of the parties in the government coalition (the Sri Lanka Freedom party and the Communist party) has seriously declined among the popular masses, but it is the United National party, the right-wing opposition party, that has primarily benefited from this. The expulsion of the reformist Lanka Sama Samaja party (LSSP—Ceylon Equal Society party) from the government coalition deprived this coalition of its "left" cover. But the circumstances under which the expulsion occurred have not at all contributed to once again stimulating illusions in the "leftist" character of the LSSP, nor have they lent any credibility to this party's call for a "united socialist front." On the contrary, instances of decomposition of the LSSP have spread since it was expelled from the government.

Thus, at the beginning of August Dasili Amerasinghe, editor-in-chief of the weekly Nation and member of

the Central Committee of the LSSP, resigned from the party to join Prime Minister Bandaranaike's party, bringing his journal with him. The LSSP was thus compelled to begin publishing a new organ, entitled Socialist Nation.

The political decay of the old leadership of the LSSP has proceeded no less clearly, in spite of the party's passage to the opposition. Several leaders of the Federal party (which is Tamil nationalist), including some members of parliament, are now being prosecuted on the basis of repressive legislation enacted under the state of emergency. Their "crime" is to have issued a leaflet "subversive" to the constitution. Their lawyers have challenged the validity both of the emergency legislation and of the constitution. The spokesman for the loyal opposition, Colvin R. Da Silva of the LSSP, immediately rose in parliament to defend the bourgeois constitution and the repressive legislation and presented the speeches of lawyers and parliament members representing an oppressed national minority (even if they are bourgeois) as threats to the people!

The current rise of workers combativity has been reflected in many strikes and demonstrations, some of the largest of which have involved the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU). For example, the CMU waged an important struggle to prevent its members employed in the firms administering the plantations from being sacked after the nationalization of these firms, which was decided on last March. A mass meeting in the center of Colombo on May 27 accompanied by a strike of all members of the CMU was attacked by the police. But the attack was unable to prevent thousands of workers from assembling. On July 21 there was a twenty-four-hour general strike of the employees of the Ceylon Estates Staff Union, with which the CMU has established friendly relations. The influence of the CMU among the workers and employees of the plantations has grown as a result of these activities.

The growing militant activity of sectors of the working class is creating problems not only for the LSSP but also for the SLFP. On the eve of the Colombo conference of nonaligned countries there was a brief strike of postal and telephone workers. It was "suspended" on the basis of emergency legislation and under the threat of arrest of the leaders of the strike. One of the two unions that organized this strike was affiliated to the trade-union federation controlled by the SLFP. It was disaffiliated by the federation for having called the strike.

The revolutionary Marxists of Sri Lanka plan to participate independently in the electoral campaign by presenting some candidates of the Revolutionary Marxist party (Ceylonese section of the Fourth International), some candidates of the CMU, and some independent workers candidates upholding a common platform of reestablishment of democratic rights and struggle for transitional demands.

August 10, 1976

BOLIVIAN MINERS LOSE A BATTLE

● by S. FERNANDEZ ●

Toward the end of 1975 it became clear that the Bolivian masses were recovering from the blows that had been dealt them by the repressive government measures of November 1974 and the clashes of early 1975. In fact, the year 1976 began with a revolutionary rise. As we pointed out at the time, this new awakening of the workers and people's movement was expressed in the centralized conflicts around the Manaca shoe factory in Cochabamba and around the universities. (For an account of these struggles, see INPRECOR, No. 50, April 29, 1976.) More than 70,000 people, both workers and students, mobilized in these struggles during February and March of this year. The dictatorship was forced to yield in face of this attack by the masses. It was the first test of strength to end in a political gain for the workers.

The high point of this new rise of the mass movement occurred with the miners' congress in Corocoro (see INPRECOR, No. 56, July 22, 1976), both because the government was unable to prevent the congress from being held and because of its political, economic, and social conclusions. But while the Corocoro congress reflected the new rise of the masses, it also revealed the limits and inadequacies of that rise.

As we explained during the pre-congress discussion itself, the Bolivian masses are not developing in a uniform manner or at the same level. Instead, the resistance to and struggle against the measures of the dictatorship are marked by uneven development and maturation. The new rise of the masses has been limited to the miners and the university students, while other sectors (with a few exceptions, such as the Manaca workers in the industrial sector) have held back, unable to defeat or overcome government control.

The dictatorship understood this new awakening of the masses and its limitations and thus prepared to isolate

and decapitate it, for the regime could not permit itself the luxury of allowing the development of the workers' movement, which day by day was succeeding in making its trade-union organizations function again and was becoming ever more audacious in its demands and its efforts to recover lost ground. It was urgent for the government to prevent the masses from unifying on a national scale, to prevent the more backward sectors from advancing and joining with the most advanced ones, in sum, to prevent the consciousness and mobilization of the masses from rising.

After the Corocoro miners' congress, in which their agents were unable to accomplish anything, the government, the high command of the armed forces, and the employers all agreed to move to the counteroffensive. They decided to take on the miners. In doing so, the dictatorship began by altering its command, introducing modifications, and so on. Among other important moves was the change in the general manager of Coimbol, the nationalized mining corporation; General Carlos Alcoreza Melgarejo, a typical antiworker adventurer, was placed in command.

In spite of these various adjustments, however, one important factor was still lacking. A way had to be found to pay for the struggle against the miners, which the government calculated would be a long one. At the request of the military government, Henry Kissinger agreed to generously finance the antiworker counteroffensive of Banzer and recommended that he take a hard line against the miners. The plan of attack was approved and polished up in Santa Cruz, in the presence of Kissinger and with his assistance. Kissinger left Bolivia on the night of June 7. On the following night, Banzer's cabinet voted a state of siege and decided on a military invasion of the mines, ordering the destruction and capture of the miners' leaderships, from the national FSTMB (Bolivian Federation of Mineworkers' Unions) to the local trade-union sections.

The workers' response: a general strike

The dictatorship's offensive took the trade-union leadership and the left parties by surprise. The FSTMB had begun to assemble its economic commission to prepare for wage negotiations with Coimbol, scheduled for June 10. The questions of the repatriation of the body of ex-president Torres, who had been murdered in Argentina, and the prolonged struggle of the high-school students against military service occupied the center of attention at the time when the dictatorship launched its brutal attack on the miners.

While the army entered the mines, the great majority of the leaders of the FSTMB were seized in La Paz, which succeeded in decapitating the miners' movement temporarily. The first response to the military assault thus came from the local trade unions. As always, the Catavi and Siglo XX mines were the first to take the initiative, calling a strike. The leadership of the FSTMB was then reconstituted by those who had not been cap-

tured and a general miners' strike was called. Subsequently, the miners' leadership was hit by more arrests and was again reconstituted. In practice, though, the FSTMB ceased to act as a centralized leadership providing an orientation, and the strike was maintained by rank-and-file initiative.

The state of siege, along with the declaration of the mining regions as military zones, isolated the mines. A wall of silence and misinformation was erected around the mining regions, making communication among districts difficult; communication between the mines as a whole and the rest of the workers movement and the universities was even more difficult. Throughout the thirty days of the strike, the government continually broadcast false information.

In an attempt to break the strike in each mine by subjecting the entire population to military pressure, the police violently burst into houses, seizing miners and their families and taking them away. In combination with and in support of such measures, Coimbo reduced normal food production, closing down the canteens and reducing rations to absurdly low levels. The supply of drinking water was cut off, as were lights and electricity. The miners' encampments were turned into vast prisons prey to hunger, insecurity, and violence by fascist goons. The strike continued under these conditions; strike committees arose and rank-and-file committees began to emerge in the absence of the trade-union leaders, who had been arrested or were in hiding.

The solidarity the miners awakened in the cities was also met by violence. Hundreds of students were arrested and seven universities were eventually closed down. Here again the leadership was decapitated. Genuine support from other sectors of urban workers through strikes and mobilizations could not move forward in face of the massive and violent repression.

Under these conditions, the miners were unable to hold out for more than thirty days, despite their heroism. The strike was suspended mine by mine.

Consequences of the defeat

The defeat of the miners contained the rise of the masses that had been germinating since late 1975 and had forced Banzer to back down during the mobilizations of February and March of this year. The leaderships of the FSTMB and the local trade-union sections were partially destroyed. Eight hundred forty-five miners were fired on charges of being agitators and left militants. Some 400 people were imprisoned or exiled. The miners' radio stations were taken over by the army. The mining districts are still occupied by the armed forces.

But in spite of the gravity of these blows against the miners and students, it may nevertheless be said that the defeat was not total. For one thing, even in the areas that were directly hit, demoralization is limited, while the spirit of combativity still holds sway among the broad masses. The trade-union leaderships, although

much reduced by arrests and layoffs, have preserved themselves underground.

There is one other very important element. The sectors that waged the strike or supported it morally are now radicalizing. They have been shaken by the methods the dictatorship used against the miners. In the areas around the mines, among the peasants and the rest of the civilian population that does not work in the mines, there is a positive development of opposition to the military regime. The presence of the army fuels discontent.

From the economic and social standpoint, the government has proven incapable of meeting the aspirations and demands of the miners. The wage increase decreed in the middle of the strike and later institutionalized with the conference of rank-and-file delegates, the so-called Social Plan, does not satisfy even the most minimal of the needs of the workers. The presence of the army in the mines will soon become a source of difficulty for the dictatorship, since the political influence of the masses who are suffering and fighting will have an impact on the troops. The tactic adopted by the masses, which is to get close to the soldiers and fraternize with them, is a correct one which will soon bear fruit. The government, having made use of a fake paternalism and centered its attack on the "far left," is now trying to pacify the mines. But to succeed in this would require offering the masses of miners something to compensate for their losses. And on this level the government's only response has been the presence of the army and repressive measures. The left parties, along with the miners and students, have also been dealt hard blows. They have lost their apparatuses, their means by which to work, and many of the leadership cadre. But here again the defeat is less grave than has been the case on other occasions. In spite of the hard blows, the parties are trying to examine the situation and begin again.

The rank-and-file committees

In an attempt to work around and prosecute the leaderships of trade unions elected in congresses and assemblies and also in an attempt to gain time, the government demagogically pushed for the emergence of so-called rank-and-file committees with which it could negotiate. In Huanuni even Banzer himself asked the miners to support the rank-and-file committee against the trade-union leadership. The conference of La Paz, out of which an agreement came, was made up of these rank-and-file committees.

What are these committees and what was the significance of the La Paz conference? It is important to clarify this point. Are they simply government bodies as is the case with the "coordinadores" (coordinating committees)? Not at all. The rank-and-file committees are part of the arsenal of struggle of the mining proletariat, and the masses resort to them when repression decapitates the unions. But they must have a democratic origin and must rest on the will of the workers. It is certain that in the initial period, under the pressure of the

army and the repressive measures, some scab elements wormed their way into the committees, elements on which the government tried to rely. But this was only temporary. In San José the assembly had already stated its rejection of the official coordinating bodies and its support to the rank-and-file committee, which was elected democratically. It is necessary to wage a firm struggle to maintain this traditional practice of the miners, throwing the bureaucrats out. The rank-and-file committees must serve as the present defensive trench of proletarian interests. The conference of rank-and-file delegates and the very acceptance of the rank-and-file committees clearly indicate the limits of the government's victory. The dictatorship was forced to compromise with the rank-and-file committees, since it was unable to smash the miners completely in spite of the defeat of the strike.

Furthermore, the conference showed that the government, although it had won militarily, was unable to transfer its victory to the political or social spheres. Its paternalist maneuvers, carried out with rifles pointed at the backs of the miners, will collapse resoundingly in the near future.

Causes of the defeat

One of the causes of the defeat of the miners was undoubtedly an incorrect view of reality which consisted of confusing the rise of one sector with the rise of the class as a whole. Because of this, an unlimited general strike was called against the government's attack, but because of the relative retard of important sectors of the workers movement it was impossible to generalize this battle. The strike thus remained confined to the mines and universities. Then there was the lack of flexibility. Under the present conditions, it is not correct to struggle for all or nothing. It would have been better to have been more flexible, taking one step at a time in an active process of agitation, trying to stimulate the maturation of the more backward layers, trying to draw in much broader sectors of the masses through common demands and a single leadership.

As on previous occasions, even in the mines and universities there was a lack of understanding of the importance of arming and establishing self-defense committees at the trade-union level. Such bodies were absent in face of the military occupation and the violence employed by the police. The closing of the canteens and even the cutting off of drinking water and electricity could have been countered by organized and militarily trained commandos. In the mines in the south, specifically in Siete Suyos, in the absence of such bodies the masses spontaneously resorted to dynamite as in the old days, which resulted in the death of two workers.

The smaller left parties were generally not very active in the struggle, either because of their weakness or because of incurable sectarianism. In any case, they lacked the audacity to form a united front and work out a common strategy and tactics to deal with the war declared by Banzer. This is a reflection of the Bolivian crisis of

revolutionary leadership, an urgent crisis which borders on tragedy and whose solution desperately requires a capable and strong revolutionary Marxist party rooted among the masses and holding authority among them, a party that can direct, plan, and organize the struggle, overcoming the present atomization and fragmentation.

Tasks and perspectives

The gorillas have above all gained time in which to contain and decapitate the awakening and rise of the miners and university students. The regime has temporarily gained stability. While it is certain that there will be conflicts with other sectors, they will be on a lower level for the moment. For Banzer, however, the most important point is the question of his international relations. By defeating the miners he has increased his prestige among his imperialist patrons, the banks and finance capital. He now appears to head a regime worthy of their confidence, one of the most stable in Latin America. Less than thirty days after the miners strike was broken, Banzer received various loans running into the millions of dollars. In addition, in accordance with Kissinger's promise, it is Yankee imperialism that will pick up the tab for the \$24 million spent breaking the strike and carrying out the repressive measures.

As far as the masses are concerned, one of the basic tasks now is to stand fast with the miners so that the broken strike does not result in new retrogression. The rank-and-file committees must be converted into genuine organs of the will of the workers; they must be purged of infiltrators. What remains of the FSTMB leadership must be united in these committees, incorporating them into an emergency leadership. On the other hand, attention must be directed to the sectors that have not been hard hit, those that have been more backward, in order to make them advance, to raise their political consciousness and understanding, and to push forward the tendencies toward recovery of the trade unions, casting aside the official coordinating bodies. The binding of the wounds of the miners' movement and the development of the maturation of the other sectors, especially the factory workers, has now become the task facing the mass movement.

The struggle for democratic rights and liberties for the masses, denunciation of the atrocities committed by the government, and publication of lists of those imprisoned, tortured, exiled, and persecuted must occupy an important place in the concerns of revolutionaries. To centralize the masses and unite the political tendencies of the workers movement are major tasks. We must begin with the question of wages in order to raise the transitional program.

As far as our party is concerned, the future of the revolution will depend on our growth. We must constantly remain conscious of this historic truth. We must build ourselves into the Marxist party that is now lacking. And to do this we must ever strengthen our base among the masses.

FREE JOSE PAEZ!



The life of José Francisco Páez, a veteran leader of the trade-union movement in Argentina, is in grave danger. In January of this year, Páez was arrested, along with his wife, and accused of "illegal associations and possession of subversive materials." He was subsequently tried and is now being held incommunicado in the Córdoba penitentiary.

According to first-hand accounts, several prisoners are taken away from the Córdoba penitentiary each evening. In the morning, their bodies are found, supposedly killed in confrontations between the military and the guerrillas. It has also become known that the Córdoba penitentiary officials are constructing a tunnel near the prison. There is reason to fear that additional political prisoners may be murdered under the guise of a pre-arranged "escape" attempt. These facts make the situation of José Páez all the more critical.

The arrest and imprisonment of Páez has already stirred protests from individuals and organizations around the world. Among them are 30 members of the Colombian Parliament, including Villar Borda, head of the Liberal party and close associate of President López Michelsen, and the Colombian Federation of Educators, one of the leading trade union organizations, which is urging other Colombian trade unions to also issue protest statements.

Páez, 39, began working in the Fiat Concord auto plant in Córdoba at the age of 20. His role as a leader of the massive strikes waged by the Fiat workers in the last several years won him nationwide fame as one of the most able and respected trade-union leaders in Córdoba. In 1969 he was among the leaders of a large-scale strike wave, in which the Fiat workers were in the forefront. In 1971 another huge mobilization of workers in Córdoba — known as the Cordobazo — shook the nation. Again the Fiat workers union, SITRAC-SITRAM, led the way. The union was eventually occupied by the army and Páez was arrested along with several other strike leaders. Although later released, Páez continued to be persecuted by the military dictatorship and was forced to spend nine months underground. In September 1973 Páez became the vice-presidential candidate of the Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST).

In January of this year the provincial government of Córdoba called a meeting of all political parties to discuss the wave of right-wing terrorism gripping the province. Páez attended this meeting representing the PST. He accused the Peronist government of protecting the right-wing gangs that had been murdering trade-union activists, lawyers who defended political prisoners, and even relatives of political figures. Hours later, a group of armed men in civilian clothing attempted to kidnap him in broad daylight as he was leaving a bank in the center of town with his wife, but failed to do so when Páez screamed and drew a crowd around him. Shortly after this incident, Páez and his wife were arrested.

Despite its false proclamations concerning human rights, the ruling military junta in Argentina is now being exposed as one of the most ruthless in Latin America. Páez is one of more than 10,000 political prisoners now held. José Páez is imprisoned for the sole "crime" of defending the democratic and human rights of the Argentine people. He has become a symbol of the political persecution suffered by the Argentine labor movement. Help us defend him! Only a massive international outcry can save the life of this recognized trade-union leader and ensure his release!

Send a telegram or letter today demanding the immediate release of José Francisco Páez to:

General Jorge Videla
Casa Rosada
Buenos Aires, Argentina

A REMINDER: SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY!

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

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

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

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