

unprecoR

international press correspondence

fortnightly, no.64, 9 december 1976

the great maneuvers
of the bourgeoisie



and the rise of
the mass movement



This will be the last issue of INPRECOR to be published in 1976. After the year-end break, we will resume our regular, fortnightly publication schedule with the issue of January 13, 1977, No. 65.

contents

SPAIN

- Bourgeois Maneuvers and the Mass Movement —by Juan Fernández 3
Regime Defeated in Attempt at Repression 4

GERMANY

- Restore Biermann's Citizenship —by Werner Hülsberg 9

QUEBEC

- The PQ Victory—Causes and Effects 15

U.S.A.

- The Left and the Presidential Election —by Tim Wohlforth 20

MEXICO

- Peso Devaluation and Social Crisis —by Antonio Cuadros 23

BRAZIL

- On the November 15 Municipal Elections 27

ZAMBIA

- Kaunda Clique Faces Growing Isolation —by John Blair 32

SRI LANKA

- Police Open Fire on Students 37

THAILAND

- Resistance to Military Junta Broadens 40

INPRECOR 76 rue Antoine Dorsaeert Brussels-1000 Belgium

INTERNATIONAL PRESS CORRESPONDENCE

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

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of INPRECOR.

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

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

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

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND US\$6.50.

TO SUBSCRIBE: TO PAY BY PERSONAL CHECK OR INT'L BANK MONEY ORDER:

Send name and address to INPRECOR with check made to the order of GISELA SCHOLTZ.

TO PAY BY INT'L POSTAL ORDER: Send name and address to INPRECOR. Send postal order to GISELA SCHOLTZ, 127 rue Jasse Impens, Brussels 3, Acct. No. CCP000-1085001-56

SPAIN

bourgeois maneuvers and the mass movement

by JUAN FERNANDEZ

The "law on political reform" adopted by the Spanish Cortes on November 18, 1976, is the provisional outcome of all the efforts to "reform Francoism" undertaken since the death of the dictator. To the applause of Spanish and international finance capital and with the benevolent support of the entire European bourgeoisie, the Suárez government will submit a project for new political institutions in the Spanish state to the vote of a referendum, scheduled for December 15.

The new political institutions called for include the following points:

- * A bicameral system in which the Senate will have the same powers as the Chamber of Deputies, although the Senate will contain some non-elected members appointed by the king;
- * Maintenance of institutions of the dictatorship such as the Council of the Realm;
- * An unclear electoral system, but one which will certainly exclude proportional representation and will be based on some variety of majority vote by province, probably with a stipulation of the minimum number of votes needed nationally for representation in parliament;
- * Maintenance of the illegal status of the Communist party, the organizations of the far left, the Basque nationalist organizations, and the major trade-union formations which represent the majority of the presently organized workers;
- * Monopoly of access to the mass media for the post-Francoist political organizations, with even the "respectable" opposition still banned from radio and television;
- * Maintenance of the entire repressive apparatus of Francoism, continued detention in prison of hundreds of political prisoners, and complete immunity for the fascist para-police gangs like the "Guerrillas of Christ the King," which continue to carry out terrorist attacks against the militants of the opposition movements, continue to attack bookstores in which leftist literature is sold, and continue to threaten and intimidate the families of political prisoners.

Given the gravity of the economic situation and the rise of workers and people's struggles, the historic project for surmounting the dangers that threaten the survival of Spanish capitalism in the era of the death agony of the institutions of the dictatorship remains that of a "social pact" which requires that the reformist workers parties, the CP and the PSOE (Partido Socialista Obrero Español — Spanish Socialist Workers party) be associated with the government (which requires that they be legal) and also requires that the leaderships of the trade-union organizations recognized by the workers be integrated into this "social pact."

What, then, is the point of a "political reform" that falls well short of what is needed to set the political project of the Spanish bourgeoisie on the rails? It represents a political and social maneuver aimed at shifting the relationship of forces in favor of big capital in order that the fundamental political project may gain greater chance of success. In fact, the bourgeoisie fears that in the wake of the rise of struggles, the radicalization and politicization of an increasingly broad workers vanguard, and the modification of the relationship of forces within the working class and the workers movement, the "social pact" could be disregarded by a significant portion of the workers. The threat of the reformist leaderships being outflanked increases as a function of the scope and dynamism of the mass movement. For the bourgeoisie the point of the "political reform" is to try to limit this scope and break this dynamism before the liquidation of the institutions of the dictatorship is completed. To this end it is necessary to:

- * Divide the "democratic" opposition and integrate its moderate wing (the Christian Democrats and the right wing of the Social Democracy) into the operation of the Suárez government;
- * Seek to isolate the Communist party (and the far left), or at least to use the blackmail of isolation with the aim of accentuating the "moderation" of the reformist leaderships with a view toward fragmenting and demobilizing struggles;
- * Accentuate the repression against the far-left organizations and the entire advanced wing of the mass movement;
- * Try to use the economic crisis to strike at the unity of the proletarian front, particularly through massive layoffs, factory closures, and lockouts, and by using threats and fear of unemployment as a means by which to blackmail the combative layers of the working class;
- * Accentuate the trends toward trade-union division and fragmentation and postpone as long as possible the legalization of the Workers Commissions as trade-union organizations. This is intended to permit the Social Democratic and Christian Democratic bureaucrats to catch up to the CP in the organization of a broad mass base in the factories;
- * "Legitimize" the post-Francoist bourgeois political formations by using the referendum to obtain a plebiscite vote among the petty bourgeoisie and the less politicized layers of the toiling masses. This demagogic maneuver consists of identifying any rejection of the "political reform" with maintenance of the status quo and of thus obtaining a vote in favor of the "reform" from all those who are opposed to the dictatorship but whose political opinions are not sufficiently firm or whose links with the great organizations of the workers movement are not sufficiently consolidated;
- * Give the bourgeoisie time to organize structured political formations and select a representative political personnel, which is manifestly not the case with politicians left over from the Franco era, such as Fraga, minister of the interior in the previous government.

In the final analysis, all this means one thing: gain time. The "reform" is only provisional, like everything

else that has been done in the Spanish state since the death of the dictator. But time is important, especially in a country in which unemployment is on the rise (there are more than half a million actually unemployed, although official statistics speak of 300,000 jobless), in which the rate of profit is collapsing, in which the inflation rate is more than 20% a year, and in which the flight of capital amounts to something like 20-25% of capital in circulation, namely 100,000-125,000 million pesetas (more than \$2,000 million).

Will this maneuver be successful in the short term? The fact that the "democratic opposition," including the CP, has put its finger into the machinery of the "negotiated break" with the upholders of the Francoist monarchy incontestably facilitates the game being played by the Suárez government. The first response of the CP and the PSOE was to say "No" to the project of political reform and to call for "active abstention" on the referendum. But the Christian Democrats are already negotiating with the government, and the Social Democrats of the Popular Socialist party of Tierne Galván are hesitating. The threat of a two-stage capitulation is real.

If Suárez were to make a few minor concessions — for example, keep the CP illegal but allow CP candidates to run for election on "front" lists — the reformists might accept de facto the fake elections of next year, without the workers movement first gaining legal status,

without the real reestablishment of democratic rights, without a real dismantling of the institutions and repressive apparatus of the dictatorship, without the release of political prisoners, and without institutions genuinely founded on universal suffrage.

More than ever, the response to this question remains linked to the trends and dynamic of mass struggles, in a twofold sense. Will the hesitant attitude and vacillations of the "democratic opposition" be able to disorient, fragment, and thereby curb the mass movement? Can the continuation of the impetuous rise of this mass movement compel the Francoist monarchy to retreat on questions of repression? Will it be able to "break" the maneuver of November 18 and compel the "respectable opposition" to harden its opposition and engage in a resolute battle to actively boycott the referendum, which would incontestably contribute to unifying and politicizing the mass movement itself?

Lessons of November 12

In this regard, the analysis of the general strike of November 12, 1976, enables some data to be accumulated which allows the general trends of the mass movement to be judged.

November 12 was undoubtedly the greatest strike movement in the Spanish state since the establishment of the

REGIME DEFEATED IN

On Saturday, November 20, the Guardia Civil, machine guns and pistols in hand, broke into the Aranzazu Sanctuary in the Basque province of Guipúzcoa. They had come to arrest the participants in an assembly 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. The assembly was about to conclude when the Guardia Civil entered the monastery.

All of the 154 people present were arrested; among them were fraternal delegates of other workers organizations of the Basque country as well as several national leaders of the LCR. Some of them were beaten and even tortured. The Spanish police were attempting to deal a heavy blow against the revolutionary Marxists of Euzkadi and the entire Spanish state. But the affair turned against the regime. It ended in a manner totally unforeseen by the tinpot Gestapo, which has proven incapable of understanding the change in the relationship of forces that has occurred in Spain. News of the arrest of our comrades spread like wildfire throughout the provinces of Euzkadi. The response of the toiling masses was immediate. Five metal factories in Pamplona, the capital of the province of Navarra, closed down, the workers going on strike to protest the arrests. In Vizcaya the colleges of Deuste and Gerona, as well as the college of economic sciences, went on strike. In the big industrial center of Bilbao, on both banks of the Nervión, all the neighborhood associations convened a street demonstration. In Alava general assemblies were held in the major factories, which also happened in the province of Guipúzcoa.

Within twenty-four hours, united slogans signed by the Communist party, the Socialist party, the KAS (nationalist), and all the organizations of the far left demanding the immediate release of our comrades appeared on the walls of cities and villages throughout Guipúzcoa. After a united meeting held Monday, November 22, all the workers organizations and revolutionary nationalist forces of the four provinces of Euzkadi concluded an agreement to wage an intensive common campaign around the following four points: release of the militants arrested at Aranzazu; immediate and total amnesty for political prisoners; freedom of organization and assembly; boycott of the constitutional referendum of December 15.

Francoist dictatorship. In all, more than 2 million workers stopped work, 500,000 in Catalonia, 420,000 in the Basque country, 300,000 in Madrid, 230,000 in Valencia, 120,000 in Andalusia, 90,000 in Asturias, 80,000 in Galicia, 60,000 in Aragon, 35,000 in the Balaeric Islands, and so on.

The November 12 general strike was a palpable demonstration of the refusal of the workers of the Spanish state to tolerate the consequences of the capitalist economic crisis, of their determination to compel satisfaction of their economic demands against the high cost of living, the wage freeze, and layoffs for economic, trade-union, or political reasons — in spite of the chatter about "the need for a responsible attitude in order to overcome the crisis." It also demonstrated that a real general strike is now possible, even a political general strike, which would overturn the whole applecart of the "reform of Francoism," which would put an end to the Francoist monarchy, which would genuinely win democratic rights.

But November 12 also demonstrated that winning genuine satisfaction of all the demands of the workers, both economic and political, and genuinely bringing down what remains of the dictatorship requires that the mass struggles be organized differently. In this sense, the November 12 strike and the success of November 12 must be analyzed in depth in order to draw all the lessons, positive and negative, so as to prepare for taking a step forward in coming months.

The first lesson that must be drawn is that economic demands must absolutely be linked to the demand for the full and integral reestablishment of democratic rights, with no restrictions whatsoever. In the course of each strike for demands, even if it is deliberately limited to advancing only economic demands, the same phenomena are repeated: police repression, arrest of strikers, lack of freedom of organization and expression, lack of legal and representative trade unions. All this makes it difficult for the workers to defend their rights and win their demands.

In the immense majority of cases, when strikes have ended in failures, it has been due to the repressive action of the state which has arisen out of the dictatorship. The workers have understood this, for when they draw up platforms of demands, they regularly include the demand for the reestablishment of democratic rights, the struggle against Francoism and its remnants, along with the purely economic demands. But the platform on the basis of which the trade-union coordinating committee (which included the Workers Commissions, the Social-Democratic dominated UGT, and the USO) called for the general strike of November 12 left the political demands aside completely. Did this contribute to a greater mass mobilization? On the contrary.

The proof of this came in the Basque country, where participation in the November 12 general strike was less than it had been in the two previous general strikes,

ATTEMPT AT REPRESSION

Of the 154 comrades arrested, the government was rapidly forced to release 119, under the pressure of the masses. Thirty-five remained in prison, among them the comrades who had presided over the assembly at Aranzazu. Among those remaining in prison were:

- * Jaime Pastor, Jordi Jaumendreu, and Ramón Zaya of the national leadership of the LCR/ETA-VI;
- * José María Solchaga, Isabel Ciriza, and Pilar Andriego of the Workers Commissions of the province of Navarra;
- * Patxi Allestarán of the Workers Commissions of the province of Guipúzcoa;
- * José Luís Pariza of the Workers Commissions of the province of Vizcaya;
- * Anton Carrera, sentenced to eight years in prison in the infamous Burgos trials of 1970 and released in March 1976;
- * Felipe Izaguirre, member of the leadership commission of the united campaign for amnesty in Guipúzcoa (spent eight years in prison, released in February 1976);
- * Javier Armendariz, member of the leadership commission of the united campaign for amnesty in Navarra (seven years in prison, released in March 1976);
- * Pedro María Zugadi (eight years in prison, released in August 1976) and Yosi Llorono (eight years in prison, also released in August 1976).

The comrades who were kept in jail came before the San Sebastian tribunal at 7:00 p.m. on November 23. They were indicted and sentenced to fines totaling 600,000 pesetas (about \$10,000). Collections were immediately organized. Within three hours after the sentencing, 700,000 pesetas had been collected in the popular neighborhoods of San Sebastian. A collection in the five metal factories in Navarra that had gone on strike brought in an additional 200,000 pesetas.

Thus, the "mistake" the government made in arresting our comrades permitted a popularization and greater implantation of the organization. And, no less important, it stimulated the process of unity in action of the workers organizations in Euzkadi, which will bear fruit in the struggle to boycott the fake referendum.

which were political. Further proof is that with the exception of Valencia and some neighborhoods of Madrid and Seville, it was impossible to draw the teachers into the November 12 strike or to get the artisans and shopkeepers to participate. This would have been avoided if the social and political demands of all the oppressed masses had been added to the demands of the workers.

The "depoliticization" of the platform of the trade-union coordinating committee for November 12 corresponds to a precise political project. Given the perspective of the reformists, it was necessary at all costs to prevent the general strike (itself reluctantly "conceded" as a result of pressure from the rank and file) from interfering with the negotiations of the political parties of the "democratic opposition" with the government. In other words, it was necessary to prevent the conquest of democratic rights through the mobilization and direct action of the masses from being understood as an alternative solution to the project of negotiating the reestablishment of these rights one step at a time through making successive compromises with the politicians who have emerged from Francoism.

But events like the vote of the Cortes in favor of the political reform law precisely confirm that negotiation with the regime is not the road by which the disappearance of the regime will be achieved. Even the limited demands presented by the Coordinación Democrática (Democratic Coordination) — which for the moment includes the entire "respectable" opposition, both workers parties and bourgeois liberal organizations — have resulted only in a retreat by the bourgeois opposition parties, which have now agreed to negotiate on the only grounds the government has offered from the very beginning: the fraud of elections without the prior legalization of the entire workers movement, without elementary guarantees that the workers will be able to organize their parties and unions freely.

That is why the future rise of the mass movement desperately requires the unification of the economic and political demands, the amplification of strikes and mobilizations toward a political general strike against the Francoist monarchy for the conquest of all democratic rights.

The second lesson of the November 12 strike is that the workers struggle must be organized on a united basis. Wherever massive participation in the strike occurred, it was in large part a result of the united convocation of the three trade-union confederations and the support accorded the call for the general strike by the immense majority of the workers organizations.

But a united call for the strike should have led to a united organization of the strike. And that was another weakness of November 12. The united call came from the top. The workers supported it massively. But there were no centers of united organization and leadership at the rank-and-file level. There was no massive information campaign and no broad democratic preparatory assemblies before the strike. There were no strike committees based on delegates democratically elected in such assemblies in order to lead the struggle. There

were no structures that could have drawn tenants, housewives, youth, teachers, artisans, and shopkeepers into the struggle.

This was no accident either. Right from the time of the call for the general strike, the leaders of the three trade-union federations insisted on the necessity of "controlling the movement," of preventing it from spilling out of the factories and into the streets. The aim of this "control" is to curb and fragment the mobilization of the masses, even at the cost of reduced effectiveness of the strike. For it is clear that the greater the impact of the movement on the whole of society, the greater are the chances of forcing the bourgeoisie to grant satisfaction to the workers. It is easy to understand how difficult it would have been for the government to maintain the illegal status of the majority of the workers organizations if November 12 had resulted in a complete paralysis of the state and society in Spain.

The "technical" domain in which this problem was most forcefully manifested was that of public transport. In the great urban centers paralysis of public transport was the most adequate means by which to broaden and generalize the strike to all the workers. This was publicly asserted by the spokesman of the National Workers Commission in Catalonia when he drew the balance of the November 12 actions. But in Madrid and Barcelona, there were only a few united groups of transport workers to try to extend the strike to the whole of this sector, and they were unsuccessful.

It was not a massive presence of the cops in the subways that was responsible for this failure but rather the refusal of the reformist trade-union leaderships to include this sector in the general strike. Proof of this can be seen in Seville, where a three-hour work stoppage by bus and taxi drivers was sufficient to lend November 12 a genuine character as an inter-professional general strike with the massive participation of the entire toiling population of the city.

On the basis of these two lessons of November 12 it can be concluded that the mass movement will succeed in going beyond a certain threshold and upsetting the political plans of the bourgeoisie only if it overcomes these two inadequacies.

Restructuring of the trade-union movement

But this brings us directly to the problem of the restructuring of the Spanish workers movement, and more exactly the Spanish trade-union movement, in other words, the evolution of the relationship of forces between the worker cadres who still apply in practice the orientation of the reformist leaderships and those who have shown that they are prepared to break in practice with these leaderships, at least on some occasions and on certain key questions. The emergence of a new leadership for the Spanish working class depends in large part on this modification of the relationship of forces among the natural leaders of the class and on the ability of revolutionary Marxists to win over a growing portion of the

new workers vanguard in formation to the program and organization of the Fourth International.

There are now four central trade-union federations in formation in the Spanish state: the Workers Commissions, under the leadership of the CP; the Unión General de los Trabajadores (UGT — General Workers Union), under Social Democratic leadership; the Unión Sindical Obrera (USO — Workers Trade-Union Federation), under Christian Democratic leadership; and the old Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT — National Confederation of Labor), of anarcho-syndicalist inspiration, which is now on the road to reconstruction. Of these four formations, the Workers Commissions are far and away the most influential within the working class, at least for the moment. After months of hesitation, the CP leadership of this organization has issued an appeal for massive recruitment, with the sale of individual membership cards, a project which is aimed at signing up between a million and a million and a half members.

A future article in INPRECOR will deal with the question of how revolutionary Marxists should defend the project of trade-union unity, that is, the united response of the working class to the maneuvers of bureaucratic division openly encouraged by the Spanish and international bourgeoisie. For the moment, our central point is to examine the evolution of the situation within the Workers Commissions themselves.

Three currents have taken shape here:

*The majority current, led by the CP, which has recently accentuated its bureaucratic and sectarian course out of fear of being pressed by reformists on the right and revolutionaries on the left.

*The so-called minority current, primarily inspired by two Mao-centrist organizations, the Partido del Trabajo (PT — Labor party) and the Organización Revolucionaria de los Trabajadores (ORT — Revolutionary Workers Organization). This current has carried out a de facto split, founding a separate organization on November 7 in Madrid; it is oriented toward the creation of "red unions" closely controlled by the above-mentioned political organizations.

*The unitary current, within which the comrades of the LCR/ETA-VI are leading forces. This current has significant strength not only in the Basque country, in Navarra, but also in Madrid and even more in Catalonia. The weekly Cuadernos para el Dialogo reported in its November 27, 1976, issue that during the delegates' assembly of Catalonia a representative of the unitary tendency, Comrade Nuria Casals, was elected to the secretariat of the confederation and that in the vote on the general secretary of the confederation 597 delegates were for the candidate of the CP, while 106 were against; there were 37 abstentions. It may be supposed that a good part of the votes against came from representatives or sympathizers of the unitary tendency.

The sectarianism and bureaucratism of the majority current has been clearly manifested in the limitations that have been systematically imposed on the exercise of the right to form tendencies in many regions, as well as by the expulsion of some leading Mao-centrist trade

unionists, like Linde in Barcelona, Casasola and Sanchis in Andalusia, etc. Above all, this tendency has attempted to impose from the top down the coordinating bodies and various inter-professional organisms of the Workers Commissions and has made a turn toward the transforming the Workers Commissions into a new trade-union federation alongside the others without any real consultation of the rank and file.

In face of this bureaucratism the Mao-centrist current inspired by the PT-ORT has nonetheless reacted in an ultrasectarian manner, precipitating yet another trade-union split. The PT-ORT formula "construct a united trade union outside the existing trade-union organizations" is a real example of what Lenin called "destroying unity in the name of unity." While using the word "unitary" in virtually every sentence they pronounce, the leaders of the PT-ORT current have in fact perpetrated a new split, whatever the responsibility the bureaucrats of the CP may bear in this matter. It should also be added that they themselves behave very bureaucratically wherever they control trade-union organizations. In Galicia, for instance, they rejected adherence to the Workers Commissions they control of the comrades of Coruña, who have been regularly elected as delegates in assemblies.

The position of the unitary current within the Workers Commissions is very different. The comrades of this current assert that the struggle for trade-union unity requires primarily the assertion, strengthening, and organization of the majority character of the Workers Commissions within the working class in order to defeat the maneuvers of division and diversion of the employers and the government as well as the organization of strong rank-and-file pressure for united and democratic structures both within the Workers Commissions and within the factories, which is the real starting point for tomorrow's organic trade-union unity.

In this regard the unitary current upholds the idea of a constituent congress for a United Trade-Union Federation of Workers on the basis of delegates democratically elected in general assemblies held in the factories. It particularly upholds the following points, which were presented during a press conference held October 28 in Madrid:

"Formal affiliation of workers to the Workers Commissions and the election of trade-union delegates by the workers themselves;

"Maximum democracy to enable the various trade-union positions, both majority and minority, to make their program known to all the members of the Workers Commissions in preparation for the congress and in the discussion before the congress;

"The right of all tendencies of the Workers Commissions to democratic access to leadership posts based on the strictest proportionality.

"We think that the battle for trade-union unity through a constituent trade-union congress in the course of which

the Workers Commissions should dissolve as a separate union federation should be fully taken up by the Workers Commissions. Toward this end it is important:

"To structure the Workers Commissions as trade unions which fight for trade-union unity in the most consistent manner;

"That the trade-union confederation of the Workers Commissions commit itself to stimulating and supporting the united trade-union bodies both on the factory level and on the industrial branch level, in the provinces and throughout the state;

thus call for a boycott of the referendum farce the government has planned around this reform. Most of the workers organizations also reject the reform. But their decision for "active abstention" still lacks clarity and punch. By definition, abstention represents an attitude of absence, of abstentionism without mass mobilization, without struggle, without activity directed against the fraud being perpetrated by the Francoist monarchy. If the "active" character of the abstention is limited to denouncing the fraudulent nature of the referendum, these organizations will be far from responding to the needs for a reaction by the mass movement to the great maneuvers of the Spanish bourgeoisie.



"That we defend and push for the broadest and most effective unity in action of all the separate trade-union organizations, recognizing the sentiment for unity among the rank and file."

The unitary tendency also defends the sovereign right of the trade-union organizations of each oppressed nationality to define their own status and action programs for their own area of activity, as well as their right to adopt the organizational forms best suited to their own needs.

The battle for a united and democratic class trade union which the unitary tendency has launched within the Workers Commissions and the factories will be of considerable importance in fostering the emergence of an alternative leadership of the working class which will be able to counter all the maneuvers of the bourgeoisie aimed at fragmenting and breaking the rise of the mass movement as well as the aid to these bourgeois projects objectively furnished by the policy of class collaboration pursued by the various reformist leaderships.

For an active boycott of the referendum

Revolutionary Marxists have unhesitatingly pronounced themselves in favor of a pure and simple rejection of the "political reform" of the Suárez government. They

That is why, without hoping that the government will "clarify" its positions, without spreading the pernicious illusion that freedom will be won through negotiations with post-Francoist politicians, without hoping that the conquest of democratic rights will depend on reaching agreement with those who make negotiating with the regime the axis of their whole policy (as is the case with all the bourgeois parties in the Coordinación Democrática), confidence must be placed in the mobilization of the masses and only the mobilization of the masses in order to break the maneuver of the bourgeoisie and win democratic rights in action. That is why the common attitude of all the workers organizations, the only vote of the entire working class on December 15, must be that of active boycott and the broadest mobilization to win:

- *Total amnesty for political prisoners;
- *Immediate free elections for a Republican Constituent Assembly;
- *Self-determination for all oppressed nationalities;
- *Complete and non-exclusive legalization of all the political and trade-union organizations of the working class;
- *Conquest of all democratic rights: freedom of association, freedom of the press, of demonstration, the right to strike, etc. with no restriction whatsoever;
- *Dissolution of all the repressive bodies and all institutions of the dictatorship.

November 21, 1976

RESTORE BIERMANN'S CITIZENSHIP!

by WERNER HÜLSBERG

On November 16, 1976, the singer, poet, and oppositionist Wolf Biermann was deprived of his East German citizenship by decision of the Political Bureau of the SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands — Socialist Unity party of Germany, the Stalinist Communist party of East Germany created in 1946 by the fusion of the CP and SP in East German territory, then occupied by the Soviet army). The decision was taken while the singer was making a tour in West Germany. It closes the East German border to him and prevents him from returning to the country, at least for the moment.

The Stalinist bureaucracy used a dirty maneuver — granting Biermann permission to leave East Germany and assuring him that he would be able to return — in order to get rid of its best known and most politically prominent critic. It has thus once again demonstrated the unbridgeable chasm that separates it from real Marxism.

The tour Biermann was making when the SED Political Bureau took its decision was sponsored by the West German metalworkers union, IG Metall. It was his first public appearance after an eleven-year ban on exercising his profession which had been imposed on him by the SED bureaucracy. Some 7,000 people attended Biermann's concert in Cologne.

Using their traditional methods, falsifying and distorting the positions of opponents, the Stalinist bureaucrats have tried to present Biermann as an "anticommunist" in order to justify the withdrawal of his citizenship. But the attempt has not at all succeeded. During his appearance in Cologne, Biermann explained more than

once that he was not at all an opponent of the German Democratic Republic, but only of its bureaucratic degeneration, that he was not at all an enemy of socialism but only of the "reactionary Stalinist bureaucrats" who repress freedom of opinion, information, the press, and assembly for the working class. He has not acted as a discouraged man or a deserter, like another Solzhenitsyn (much to the regret of the reactionaries in West Germany) who could be used by the capitalist ruling class for its own purposes.

Since there was absolutely no objective basis for its "argumentation," the Stalinist bureaucracy did not hesitate to resort to the most gross falsifications. During the Cologne concert someone in the audience asked Biermann to sing a certain song. Biermann replied sarcastically, "I am prepared for any shameful act." This statement was reported as follows in the West German Stalinist newspaper *Unsere Zeit* (November 19, 1976): "He insulted the citizens of the German Democratic Republic in the crudest manner, from the workers in the factories to the leadership of the party and the state. He even went so far as to assert: 'I am prepared for any shameful act.'"

Who is Wolf Biermann?

In 1953, at the age of seventeen, Wolf Biermann left West Germany to settle in East Germany, which he henceforth referred to as his "homeland" and as "the better Germany." He comes from a family of Communist workers in Hamburg. His father, a worker in the shipyards who was active in the resistance to the Nazi dictatorship, was murdered in 1943 in the concentration camp at Auschwitz.



Biermann studied political economy at Humboldt University in East Berlin and later joined the Bertholt Brecht theater group (the Berliner Ensemble). In 1960, following the great historical examples of Villon, Heinrich Heine, and Bertholt Brecht, he began writing songs, ballads, and plays that critically treated social reality and the bureaucratic deformations of the German Democratic Republic while at the same time calling for solidarity with struggles in the framework of "the unified process of world revolution." In 1962 one of Biermann's plays ("Marriage in Berlin") was placed on the index for the first time and performances of it were banned. In 1963 Biermann was expelled from the SED and was forbidden to hold public appearances in East Germany. During the eleventh plenum of the Central Committee of the SED in December 1975 Biermann was the object of a definitive condemnation. It was stated that he had gone over to the camp of the class enemy. His songs were slandered by the cultural bureaucrats of the SED as "exalting skepticism" and "exhibiting an anarchist philosophy" and "the cult of self-indulgence."

From that time on slanders and threats against Biermann mounted ceaselessly. In 1966 Horst Sindermann asserted, "Biermann should not be surprised if he wakes up one morning and finds some other people besides the milkman at his door." Biermann responded in a song called "That makes me popular." He never let himself be intimidated, and he never took the bait of "unrestricted possibility of travel abroad." In another song he explained that it would be too much to the bureaucrats' liking if their most annoying critics left on their own

initiative; if somebody should take off, he said, it was the bureaucrats themselves.

Biermann fully committed himself to defense of the Prague Spring and against the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the troops of the Warsaw Pact states. ("The Paris Commune lives on in Prague/the revolution frees itself/Marx himself and Lenin and Rosa and Trotsky/stand at the side of the communists.") Since then he has become the best-known figure of the Marxist opposition in the German Democratic Republic. Through the "involuntary" vehicle of the West German press Biermann has taken positions on nearly all the essential events in East Germany and the international workers movement during the past ten years.

In spite of his forced isolation in East Germany and in spite of the fact that he has been cut off from current discussion among Marxists (and in part from historical discussion too), Biermann has formulated surprisingly clear and correct positions on key problems of revolutionary Marxism. For example:

*On the workers states: During each of his public appearances in West Germany Biermann has defended the qualitatively different character of the transitional societies as compared to the capitalist countries, particularly when confronted with Maoist arguments. For him, the German Democratic Republic and the other workers states represent societies superior to capitalism since the means of production are state owned and constitute the basis of a socialist society; nevertheless "red democracy" has not yet been achieved.

***The bureaucracy:** Biermann characterizes the ruling layer in the German Democratic Republic as "the reactionary Stalinist bureaucracy" which has usurped power and seeks to prevent or roll back social progress: "The smallest bureaucrat/the meanest bureaucrat/cries for his post./ Socialism has triumphed/as soon as he has his job/as soon as he has his cash."

***Workers democracy:** As he has explained during each public appearance in West Germany, Biermann fights for the "red democracy" of Rosa Luxemburg as she developed it in her writings on the October Revolution: "Without general elections, without unlimited freedom of the press and assembly, without the free struggle of opinions, life dies out in all public institutions; it is transformed into a fictitious life wherein only the bureaucracy remains the active element. . . . A dictatorship no doubt; not the dictatorship of the proletariat, but the dictatorship of a handful of politicians, that is, a dictatorship in the purely bourgeois sense of the term."

***Defense of the workers states:** Biermann defends the bases of the deformed workers state and the successes achieved by the sacrifices and energy of the working class: "Never before have I defended with such clarity, passion, and argument how valuable and important the experience of the German Democratic Republic is for all Germany and for the German workers movement." (Interview with *Der Spiegel*, No. 48 in 1976.)

***Deformed workers states and the revolution in West Europe:** Biermann does not limit himself to taking positions on the German Democratic Republic. He aims at a universal socialist revolution. He appreciates the importance and tasks of the Marxist opposition in the workers states. "What makes a serious obstacle for the left in West Germany, apart from its own stupidities, is the repugnant example of a bureaucratically deformed society that calls itself socialist. The West German working class, the major part of the population, will make a judgment of the chance for a socialist transformation of its own society not on the basis of the study of theoretical writings, but rather on the basis of observing reality as it is and as it appears through the mass media." (Interview with *Der Spiegel*.)

***Other oppositionists:** Biermann does not ignore his differences with the non-Marxist opposition in East Germany. He defends the democratic rights of this opposition, recognizes that its criticism is based on real social ills (as in the case of the writer Reiner Kunze, who was expelled from the writers' association in East Germany). But he draws a line of demarcation: "The problem is that in telling the sad truth about the societies that call themselves 'socialist' you can also spread dangerous lies about the only chance humanity has, which is socialism." (Quoted from the tape of the Cologne concert.) And this "chance, socialism" does not necessarily have to take the distorted road of the German Democratic Republic and the other bureaucratized workers states: "No, I would be something like an enemy of the human race if I were to wish that on other peoples and if I tried to impose it on them, even in the form of a general law of societies." (Interview with *Der Spiegel*.)

No clear position on Eurocommunism

Many Marxist oppositionists in the workers states take a euphoric attitude toward the Italian, French, and Spanish Communist parties and the "Eurocommunism" they represent. "I see a gratifying and remarkable transformation which has occurred recently, especially in the course of the last year. It is linked to . . . the Berlin conference of workers parties in June 1976, that is, to the fact that the Communist parties of France, Italy, Spain, and other countries have taken a 'clear step' toward 'socialist democracy.'" (Interview with *Der Spiegel*.)

But Biermann's position on Eurocommunism is in fact contradictory, for it scarcely takes account of the present role of these CPs in the class struggle in their respective countries, nor does it draw out the concrete evolution of these Stalinist parties (their "Social Democratization"). In the bureaucratized workers states, however, the declarations of the "Eurocommunists" have a totally different dynamic and import than they do in capitalist West Europe, which does not make them any more attractive. Their criticism of the crushing of the Prague Spring and their pleas for more "democracy" as a social goal are inevitably understood in the workers states as an orientation toward more workers democracy and are used as arguments in this direction; undeniably, they also create illusions.

The "Eurocommunists" have renounced the dictatorship of the proletariat in their programs in the name of "democracy in general" rather than giving the dictatorship of the proletariat its meaning as an orientation toward full workers democracy in the real sense. Biermann does not share this position. During his Cologne concert he defended the dictatorship of the proletariat as an alternative to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. In his "Ballad of the Cameraman" he criticized the policy of the Unidad Popular in Chile precisely because of its legalist tactics oriented toward the "peaceful road to socialism." "Ah, power comes from the fist/ And not from the smiling face/ Power grows out of muzzles/ And not out of mouths."

Response in West Germany

Solidarity with Biermann in West Germany has spread with striking rapidity. Initially, all the parties condemned the removal of his citizenship, albeit for different reasons, and this gave great publicity to the Biermann case. This solidarity has been carried out mainly by the non-Stalinist left and by the youth and student organizations under socialist influence. The strength of this movement of solidarity is expressed particularly in the fact that the Sozialistischer Hochschulbund (League of Socialist University Students), which generally collaborates very closely with the CP's student organization, also decided to adopt a protest motion. All the intellectuals not tied to the CP

have protested the measures taken against Biermann, even those who usually work closely with the CP and called for a CP vote in the elections, such as Professor Wolfgang Abendroth.

The concerts Biermann gave in West Germany after he was deprived of his East German citizenship were transformed into impressive demonstrations of solidarity with his fight to regain citizenship.

The trade-union bureaucracy, however, has limited itself to adopting quite lukewarm resolutions. Oskar Vetter, president of the Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund (DGB — German Trade Union Federation), of which the metalworkers union which invited Biermann to West Germany is a member, even said that he saw no reason to take any initiatives toward the trade unions in East Germany in regard to the anti-Biermann measures. The bureaucrats understand one another and do not throw obstacles in each other's paths.

But it took only a few days for the movement of solidarity with Biermann to separate the fake friends from the real ones. The Social Democrats limited themselves to lukewarm statements. Even those who had



signed an appeal supporting Biermann's right to visit West Germany a few weeks before preferred to keep silent once Biermann had spoken in such a forthright manner. The conservative parties, the CDU and CSU, lost patience after a few days. They protested that the "spectacle around the Biermann case is developing excessively" and complained that the radio and television "were constantly intoxicating people with communist ideology." These protests were unfortunately only echoed by the West German Stalinists, who also complained about "all the noise being made about the Biermann case."

So it was not Biermann — accused by the West German Communist party of having provided grist for the anti-communist mill and of having given ammunition to those who support the *Berufsverbot** in West Germany — who concluded a traitorous and revealing alliance, but rather the Stalinists themselves.

The fear of the ruling class was expressed in its reactions. It is no exaggeration to say that the clear positions taken by Biermann and the unexpected publicity he has received have contributed to spreading revolutionary ideas in West Germany. Biermann has served these ideas mainly because he has remained faithful to Marxism in spite of his bitter experiences and because he agitates for real socialism. The critique Biermann has made of prevailing conditions in East Germany and the bureaucratic deformation in that country has been accompanied by an even more severe critique of the capitalist system. The West German capitalists are afraid because what is involved here is not merely solidarity with Biermann as an individual, but also the attractive power of his ideas in a society racked by an overall crisis. The November 24 issue of the leading bourgeois daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* had this to say in an editorial: "The friends of liberty and pluralism in Germany naturally prefer the kind of communists who cannot attract anyone, such as the three parties faithful to Moscow — the SED, the West German CP, and the SEW (the SED's affiliate in West Berlin). Up to now, we have these parties to thank for preventing any development of left socialism or communism in Germany. If they are no longer able to fulfill this function, and if an apparently respectable left socialism along with a 'clean' communism should raise its head in this country while also basing itself on a broad layers of cadres in the German Democratic Republic, then the political landscape of West Germany, even on the left, would become unrecognizable." Apart from the terminological gibberish, it is a very concrete prediction.

The West German Communist party (DKP) once again demonstrated whose offspring it is when it unconditionally supported the withdrawal of Biermann's citizenship. In 1956 the old Stalinist Communist party of Germany (KPD) was banned in West Germany. It continued to work underground, which strengthened its dependence

*The *Berufsverbot* is the decree prohibiting "extremists" from employment in the public services in West Germany.

on the SED organizationally, financially, politically, and in terms of personnel.

The conditions under which the CP legally reemerged in 1968 clearly showed this dependence. Up to one year before the reemergence, the leaders of the SED and the illegal KPD spit fire and poison against any attempt at legal reemergence that would entail abandoning the traditional name, KPD (Communist party of Germany). Then, a few months later, there was a 180 degree turn. The new DKP (German Communist party) was founded bureaucratically, on the basis of an agreement between the West and East German governments in the context of the new "Ostpolitik" initiated by then Chancellor Willy Brandt. The leading posts of the new party were occupied by a layer of functionaries trained for years, if not decades, in East Germany. The financial resources of the workers state did the rest.

It thus logical that the leadership of the DKP not only covered for the SED measure against Biermann but even played an active role in paving the way for the dirty maneuver. Vicious attacks and slanders poured from the pens of the editors of the DKP's organ *Unsere Zeit* concerning Biermann's first concert, in Cologne, and were reprinted as "news articles" in *Neues Deutschland*, the organ of the SED. The following day the SED Political Bureau issued its decision, which had thus been prepared propagandistically.

Nevertheless, the DKP leadership had additional jobs to carry out during subsequent days, beyond the distribution of SED propaganda. In fact, the wave of protest even reached the members of the DKP, even if only in an embryonic manner. Important sympathizers and even some members of the DKP allowed themselves to drift into "prematurely" signing protests. Then, apparently under the pressure of the party leadership, they withdrew their names. The "explanations" for this were generally far-fetched.

The Deutsche Friedensgesellschaft (German Peace Society), a group of conscientious objectors strongly influenced by the DKP, characterized the withdrawal of Biermann's citizenship as "an incredible measure." The Deutsche Friedensunion (German Peace Union), a sort of mini-popular-front party set up by the illegal KPD during the 1960s, fell into an internal crisis. One of its leading members, Arno Behrisch, took his distance from the SED leadership and accused it of having taken an "infamous" measure and of having "trampled the rights of man." Many members of various "broad front" type organizations, as well as members of groups of fellow travellers and intellectuals presented as "progressive" by the DKP leadership, also took their distance.

Fissures emerged even among the rank and file of the DKP, whose members cannot be identified with the bureaucrats and who have often been in the party only a short time. Particularly in the university sector, some local groups of the DKP's student organization differentiated themselves from the leadership's position,

under the pressure of the solidarity movement and out of fear of isolation. In Marburg twenty-nine members of the DKP pronounced themselves against the measure and the position taken by the party leadership, writing, "We cannot agree with the two charges made (that Biermann had acted as an enemy of socialism and that he had supported anticommunist forces — INPRECOR). During his concert in Cologne, officially cited as the justification for depriving him of his citizenship, Biermann demonstrated that fundamentally he considered socialism and the first German socialist state as 'something of great value.' Even if we cannot share his criticism of the political system that exists in the German Democratic Republic in some of its aspects, it is impossible to attribute a counterrevolutionary orientation to him. Anyone who attended the Cologne presentation will be able to confirm this." Something has begun to move within the DKP, even if still very timidly. And the motion is in a good direction.

Solidarity and repression in East Germany

The reactions in East Germany give still greater cause for rejoicing. The withdrawal of Biermann's citizenship has had unexpected consequences for the bureaucracy in this country. For the first time in more than twenty years, since the workers uprising was crushed in June 1953, the bureaucracy is confronted by a public opposition that goes well beyond a few well-known personalities. It is true, however, that for the moment the opposition movement is led by intellectuals and not workers, unlike what happened twenty-three years ago.

The decision to take the measure against Biermann had certainly been made before he left East Germany on his tour. Regardless of what he may have said or sung at his first concert, he would have lost his East German citizenship anyway. The fact that the East German bureaucracy had tried to stamp out the internal opposition without taking reprisals so long as Biermann remained in East Germany reflects a modified political situation as well as the difficulties with which the SED must contend. These difficulties were manifested even during the ninth party congress in the spring of 1976 (when measures were taken to increase minimum wages and retirement benefits).

The economic difficulties are accompanied by growing self-confidence among the working class and other layers of the population. The previous five-year plan (1971-75) had further encouraged this trend. Frightened by the revolt of the Polish workers in the Baltic ports and seeking to start fresh by getting rid of Walter Ulbricht, the bureaucracy had based this plan on an accelerated rise in the living standards of the workers. Although investments were planned to increase only 3.6% a year, the standard of living was to rise 5.1% a year.

But the new plan (for 1976-80) calls for a complete turnabout in these proportions. The German Democratic

Republic depends in part on imports from the West, and the trade deficit is constantly rising. The generalized inflation in the West has repercussions for East German economic development in that the unit prices of imported goods are going up at an average of 20% a year. To this must be added the institutionalized disadvantages the "people's democracies" suffer in the Comecon compared to the Soviet bureaucracy. The supplementary charges the Soviet bureaucracy has imposed on East Germany can be compensated for only by an expansion of exports.

But this implies an accentuation of investments with a view to introducing new techniques. That is why the new five-year plan calls for a 5.8% annual increase in investments, while the standard of living is to rise only 3.7% a year. What the bureaucracy cannot predict is whether this turnabout can be carried through without open conflicts. The new strike wave in Poland has taught the value of caution. That is why an example had to be made on the intellectual front.

But this example has had a boomerang effect. Biermann and his ideas are now probably more popular than ever in East Germany. Through the vehicle of West German television he has had an opportunity to address East Germans and ask for their support: "The growing solidarity of my friends and comrades in the German Democratic Republic has encouraged me, for who else can win my right to return to the GDR?" he asserted just before a four-hour presentation of a Biermann concert was rebroadcast in full by West German television.

Even before this broadcast, events had moved rapidly. For the first time in more than two decades in East Germany, thirteen writers resorted to collective protest, sending a resolution to the leaders of the party and the state. Writers who are known beyond the borders of East Germany — such as Sarah Kirsch, Stefan Heym, Christa Wolf, Stefan Hermlin, Heiner Müller, Jurek Becker, and others — declared in part: "Biermann himself has never left any doubt about which of the two German states he considers his own, in spite of all his criticism. We protest against the withdrawal of his citizenship and we ask you to reconsider this measure." The sculptor Fritz Cremer, who has received the national prize of East Germany on several occasions, withdrew his signature from this resolution only when his son-in-law was arrested in connection with the solidarity campaign. In spite of this repression, the appeal has been signed so far by several hundred writers, artists, actors, and even singers.

The leadership of the SED has tried to respond with a counter publicity campaign by writers loyal to the party. But this has amounted to a drop in the bucket. On the one hand, some well-known artists have abstained, preferring silence. On the other hand, many of the "counter-statements" have had an effect opposite to that expected among a population which is used to "reading between the lines," for there have been few direct approvals of the party leadership's

accusations against Biermann. Finally, the counter-campaign was suddenly halted on the eve of the normal session of the Political Bureau, at which five members reportedly voted against the measure depriving Biermann of his citizenship.

Then the repression was intensified. The writer Jürgen Fuchs was arrested, as well as the singers Pannach and Kunert in Leipzig. The bureaucracy was especially annoyed about the efforts of some oppositionists to collect signatures for the appeal in the factories. Some students from the University of Jena, along with the writer Jurek Becker, collected several hundred signatures at the Zeiss factories in a very short time. The latest blow was dealt against the well-known oppositionist Professor Robert Havemann, who was placed under house arrest on November 26.

Spontaneous and anonymous expressions of protest have also spread. Every day masses of flowers turn up at certain places in East Berlin often mentioned in Biermann's songs, such as the Weidam bridge over the River Spree in front of the "Prussian Eagle" and the cemetery of the Huegenots.

It is not certain whether the East German bureaucracy will further intensify the repression. One thing, however, is certain: without an intensification of the movement of solidarity in West Germany and elsewhere, the developing opposition in East Germany is in danger. It is our duty to support this opposition with all our strength.

Free all the arrested comrades!

Restore Wolf Biermann's citizenship!

November 27, 1976

Several hundred artists, writers, and poets in East Germany have signed the following statement protesting the withdrawal of Wolf Biermann's citizenship:

"Wolf Biermann was and remains an uncomfortable poet — he shares this quality with many poets of the past. Our socialist state, in conformity with what Marx said in 'The Eighteenth Brumaire' about the proletarian revolution's tendency to constant self-criticism, should be able to tolerate such discomfort, considering it calmly, contrary to what occurs in anachronistic societies. We do not identify with every word and action of Wolf Biermann. We take our distance from all attempts to use the events around Biermann against the German Democratic Republic. Even in Cologne, Biermann has never left any doubt about which of the two German states he considers his own, in spite of all his criticism. We protest against the withdrawal of his citizenship and we ask you to reconsider this measure."

QUEBEC

THE PQ VICTORY— CAUSES AND EFFECTS

The elections of November 15 in Québec, won by the Parti Québécois (PQ — Québec party) mark an important turn in the political situation. The results of the elections were as follows: The PQ, led by René Lévesque, received 41% of the votes cast (30% in the elections of 1973) and won 69 of the 110 seats in the assembly (6 in 1973). The Parti Libéral du Québec (PLQ — Liberal party of Québec) of Robert Bourassa won 33% of the vote (55% in 1973) and will hold 28 seats in the assembly (102 in 1973). The Union Nationale (National Union) received 19% of the vote (5% in 1973) and won 11 seats (0 in 1973; the Union Nationale had gained one seat during by-elections in 1975). The reactionary Ralliement Crédiste got 5% of the vote (10% in 1973) and will hold 2 seats (the same as 1973).

We are publishing below an analysis of the causes and effects of the PQ's election victory written just after the elections by the Groupe Marxiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Marxist Group), a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Québec.

* * * * *

1. A new political period opens with the end of the Liberal regime and the introduction of a PQ government. The fall of the Bourassa government is not the fall of just any bourgeois government. For the first time in the history of the Canadian Federation, the fall of an existing government has been accompanied by the accession to power of a party that calls for the secession of Québec. This new situation opens both a period of political and social instability in Québec and a political crisis on a pan-Canadian scale.

2. While the period now ending was marked above all by the rise of the PQ in a context of ascending workers struggles, the present period is characterized fundamentally by the new role of the PQ as a government party. A number of points follow from this:

a) An exacerbation of the crisis of Canadian federalism, which thus enters the most critical phase of its history.

b) The necessity for the imperialist bourgeoisie to restructure a new political alternative to the PQ and to block Québec's accession to independence by all possible means.

c) The development of the internal contradictions of the PQ under the twofold pressure of the demands of the

masses and the barely concealed hostility manifested toward the PQ by virtually all the bourgeoisie, most especially the Canadian bourgeoisie. This means that on the one hand the PQ will henceforth be squeezed between imperialism and the Québécois working class and on the other hand it will tend to further internalize the contradiction between those who will be increasingly inclined to negotiate a "special status" under the pressure of imperialism and those who support independence unconditionally.

d) Progressively as the above elements unfold, there will be the opening of a real political space on the left of the PQ, which will go well beyond the narrow terrain to which the various far-left grouplets are presently confined.

The PQ victory

3. Of the various hypotheses as to the outcome of the recent Québécois elections, the prospect of a PQ government was considered the least likely. Even the leadership of the PQ had not planned on forming the next government in Québec. The most likely probability was considered a minority Liberal government. But the results could not be clearer, above all in terms of parliamentary representation: a leap forward of more than 60 seats for the PQ, a loss of more than 70 seats for the PLQ.

4. There is no doubt that the present electoral system based on the British parliamentary model, that is, the unicameral system with single-round elections, tends to distort the representation of parties in the National Assembly. The elections of 1973 provide the most flagrant example of this: the PQ, with 30% of the vote, got only 6 seats, while the PLQ, with 55% of the vote, got 102 seats. Nevertheless, the present elections provide an additional example, in the opposite direction and in a less spectacular (although real) manner, of the inadequacies of the present electoral system. This time the PQ, which won 41% of the vote, finds itself commanding a large majority in the National Assembly, while the PLQ is under-represented. What permitted this reversal of the 1973 situation was primarily the PQ's development of a national base, which allowed it to contend seriously with the PLQ in the provincial cities and even in the rural areas, thus attenuating the inequities of the electoral system, which tends to over-represent the rural regions compared to the big urban

centers. The second factor is the new rise of the Union Nationale and the division of the federalist vote.

5. Nevertheless, apart from the problems of proportionality between votes cast and parliamentary representation, the PQ's victory is an overwhelming one on several levels, not only in terms of the number of deputies. First, with its 10% leap forward in the number of votes the PQ becomes the largest political party in Québec. Second, it won the absolute majority of the French-speaking vote. Third, and this is even more important, the quality of the PQ's vote is superior to that of the other bourgeois parties. It holds a majority in nearly all the urban centers. In the regions of heavy industrial concentration dominated by imperialism the Québécois industrial proletariat is one of the pillars of the electoral base of the PQ. Among the youth and student layers of the population, within the organized workers movement, and now within the Québécois working class as a whole the PQ holds nearly undivided domination. Its influence now extends into the provincial areas, even the regions that are not much industrialized (Gaspésie, Îles de la Madeleine, etc.). Finally, the PQ has broadened its social base, rallying to its banner a whole layer of local notables (or a good part of them at least) who are now won to the PQ project. Thus, independent of the fact that the PQ vote represents a minority in Québécois society as a whole, the PQ is a much more solid political reality. It enjoys the support of the most dynamic, most progressive, and best organized elements of Québécois society. The PQ is the dominant political factor in Québec. It is also the major element of political disequilibrium on a pan-Canadian scale, both in its government role and in the very nature of its project.

The crisis of the Federal Liberal Government

6. Two years after the victory of the Canadian Liberal party in the federal elections of 1974, we are now witnessing an erosion of the electoral base and credibility of the government of Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. This is attested to by the rise of the Conservative party, the loss of personal popularity of the prime minister himself, the disintegration of what had constituted the historic backbone of the Trudeau government, the marginalization of the provincial Liberal parties in a whole series of provinces, etc.

7. The basic causes of this are of two orders. First, the failure of the bilingualism policy of the Trudeau government and the government's increasing inability to appear as the sole guarantor of Canadian unity. The Trudeau government today is being squeezed between the rise of anti-Québécois chauvinism on the one hand and the coming to power of a bourgeois nationalist party in Québec on the other. Trudeau's solution to the national question (bilingualism, French-speaking personnel in Ottawa, etc.) is an obvious failure for everyone. The second factor is the economic situation, which has not been significantly improved by the so-called anti-inflationary measures that have been taken.

Unemployment remains high (7%) and the Canadian economy is facing a coming economic recession. In addition, the wage-cut measures and the budget cuts have engendered strong social discontent.

8. Thus, while the Liberal party still represents the interests of the Canadian big bourgeoisie, it is increasingly cut off from its mass social base, the urban petty bourgeoisie, which no longer follows the Liberal party's policy. Although the major beneficiary of this decline of the Liberal party has been the Conservative party, the latter is not yet a coherent alternative. It is in fact undermined by the existing contradictions between its leadership — which seeks to present itself to the big bourgeoisie as a credible alternative to the Trudeau government and therefore refuses to challenge some of the basic orientations of the Liberal cabinet — and its reactionary and chauvinist base, which rejects the policy of bilingualism and refuses any concession to Québec. A Conservative government would be a disaster for "Canadian unity" if this government were to prove incapable of acquiring a mass base in Québec and of offering a coherent solution to the national question. Up to now the leadership of the Conservative party has proven incapable of attaining these objectives. A prisoner of its chauvinist base, the Conservative party is incapable of sketching out any alternative. The failure of the Trudeau solution thus leaves the Canadian bourgeoisie with no clear policy toward Québec in a situation in which Québec is now governed by "separatists."

9. The present dynamic thus points toward an accentuation of binational polarization, an exacerbation of the tensions between Québec and the rest of Canada — and this in a situation in which the economic margins of the Canadian bourgeoisie are rather narrow and the bourgeoisie commands no coherent political solution.

The stage of the referendum

10. The dominant sectors of the Canadian bourgeoisie derive their strength and their ability to participate in international imperialist exploitation from their historic control of the great monopolies linked to the Canadian state: the banks, the financial institutions, transport and communications, etc. Historically, for the petty and middle-sized Canadian bourgeoisie maintenance of the pan-Canadian national market has been the only way to resist the competition of American capitalists. All sectors of the Canadian bourgeoisie thus have a vital interest in keeping Québec within the Canadian federation. If not, all the regional centrifugal tendencies that exist within the pan-Canadian state would intensify considerably. The political stability of the Canadian state would be destroyed. Economically, the Canadian bourgeoisie would be directly affected by the project of a Québécois state capitalism actively supporting the development of small and middle-sized Québécois industry. The political, economic, and social costs of a possible secession of Québec make it completely unacceptable

to the Canadian bourgeoisie. Beyond the panicky reactions just after the PQ victory, it must be understood that the bourgeoisie's entire tactic during an initial period will be determined by the following objective: the reconquest of a federalist majority during the referendum and the next provincial elections.* Ottawa must thus avoid a generalized economic and political destabilization in Québec, which would throw the Québécois masses behind the PQ and would compromise a massive "No" vote in the referendum. As long as this crucial test has not yet occurred, the Canadian bourgeoisie must continue to rely on its parliamentary mechanisms for fear of stimulating extra-parliamentary mass movements in Québec that would be difficult to control.

11. By all evidence, a federalist victory in the referendum is not at all a sure thing. A PQ in power commands a whole gamut of means and measures by which to increase the breadth of support to independence. In addition, even the rejection of independence



through a referendum would not be sufficient in itself. The bourgeoisie needs an overwhelming rejection. The PQ's coming to power will stimulate a whole series of struggles which the Canadian bourgeoisie will not be in position to effectively contain through the intermediary of a PQ government. Whatever Lévesque's reassuring promises that everything is to occur in an orderly manner, no sector of the bourgeoisie has confidence in his ability to indefinitely contain a dangerous political and social dynamic. The election of the PQ is a major political defeat for the Canadian bourgeoisie, and it is around the referendum that the counteroffensive will be concentrated. First the re-

*The leadership of the PQ has promised to hold a referendum in Québec, putting the question of Québécois independence to a vote. No definite date for the referendum has been set yet. — INPRECOR

composition of a Québécois political alternative to the PQ. Second a policy of economic pressure accompanied by political toughening.

12. The creation of a Québécois political alternative to the PQ is now posed. The collapse of the PLQ (loss of 21% of its vote, defeat of Bourassa and of about a dozen ministers, among them some of the strongmen of the party) now requires the reconstruction and reorientation of the Parti Libéral. It would be suicidal for the Canadian bourgeoisie to allow the PQ to dominate the Québécois political scene and to allow a confrontation to develop along the lines of the Federal government versus the Québécois government. Such a policy would further accentuate the dynamic of binational polarization.

13. The causes of the defeat of the PLQ are rather evident. An unfavorable economic situation, the avalanche of scandals that have sullied the Liberals, the PLQ's image as a corrupt party, linguistic legislation that has alienated a substantial portion of the English-speaking vote, its inability to impose a solution in face of persisting social struggles. All this contributed to dissolving not only the artificial majority the PLQ had acquired in 1973 but also the traditional historic vote of this party, which generally exceeded 40%. The present collapse leaves the PLQ in full disarray, politically and psychologically crushed. The attempt to refloat the sinking team around Bourassa by adding a few well know federal figures has been a resounding failure. The major task of the bourgeoisie at the present time is to recompose an instrument that can appear as a credible alternative to the PQ in order to campaign for federalism during the referendum and to take power out of the hands of the PQ.

14. The Union Nationale (UN) cannot be such an instrument. A good part of the UN vote was a reactionary protest vote against the corruption and incompetence of the Bourassa government. In no way can it be considered a stable vote. This party remains a third party that can possibly serve as a prop for a federalist alternative to the PQ, but scarcely more than that. A representative of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, the UN has only slight links with monopoly capital. Its potential utility can nonetheless be very real in the future, as a component of a coalition government, for example. Finally, the few gains achieved by the UN in English-speaking and immigrant milieus are ephemeral and express only the rage of these layers against a specific problem, that of Law 22. (This is the law designating French as the official language of Québec. — INPRECOR).

15. The major instrument of the bourgeoisie remains the PLQ. This party conserves its links with the Canadian Liberal party, major organ of the Canadian imperialist bourgeoisie. It is the only provincial party that maintains links with a federal party having a pan-Canadian base. It remains the second largest party in terms of votes. The reconstruction of this party is therefore a logical choice for the Canadian bourgeoisie.

16. This reconstruction requires the construction of a new party leadership and thus the elimination of Bourassa and his replacement by a new chief with the greatest possible federal links. At a second level, in order to reconquer a stable base in the English-speaking community the PLQ will have to completely repudiate Law 22. The reconstructed party will be much more directly an instrument of the Canadian Liberal party than was the case under Bourassa.

17. But the most crucial aspect of the federalist reconquest of Québec lies outside the Québécois National Assembly. It relates to economic policy and the attitude of the federal government to the PQ government. These three axes — reconstruction of the PLQ, measures of economic pressure, and the federal government's aggressive policy toward the PQ government — constitute an indissoluble whole. Each of these elements is necessary to the effectiveness of the others. They constitute the three pillars of the policy which the Canadian bourgeoisie will have to implement in order to deal with the new situation.

18. The Canadian bourgeoisie as a whole has so far reacted rather calmly to the PQ's accession to power. It is reassuring the population through the referendum proposals of the PQ. There must be no illusion about such behavior. The election of the PQ is a major political defeat for the Canadian bourgeoisie. The present assurances are aimed only at calming certain spirits (marginal sectors of the bourgeoisie, Francophobic bourgeois politicians, massive chauvinist reactions on the part of the Canadian petty bourgeoisie), which would threaten to disastrously precipitate the situation. The Canadian bourgeoisie is seeking to create a climate that would enable it to control the terms of the confrontation. It will thus undertake a long-term campaign in order to make sure that the confrontation around the referendum takes place under the most favorable possible conditions. Thus, economic pressure on the Lévesque government will be rather discreet so as not to take on the appearance of shameless blackmail; such pressure will have to avoid provoking a reaction opposite to the one hoped for but nevertheless must be sufficiently strong to keep the government on the straight and narrow. Blackmail may be especially effective if it takes the form of blocking funds for the PQ's social reform projects. At the same time, pressure will be exerted to make the PQ government "bring the trade unions to reason" under penalty of facing a shortage of investments in the province. Everything will be done to lead the PQ to discredit itself. Simultaneously, the contributions of the federal government to economic development in Québec will continue to flow, but there will of course be a constant threat of withdrawing them.

19. This little game will be accompanied by a political toughening. No concession will be made to Québec on the question of sharing constitutional powers. This is linked to two factors. On the one hand the PQ's referendum project falls within a very clear dynamic: to wage a series of partial battles, while demonstrating

that it is a good manager of the Québécois economy, the intention being to lead to the turntable of the referendum. Any concession from Ottawa can only intensify this dynamic and thus strengthen the PQ. On the other hand, a policy of concessions would further undermine the position of the Trudeau government in English Canada. In the event of a Clark government (Clark is the leader of the Conservative party — INPRECOR), this government would also be a prisoner of a wave of anti-Québécois chauvinism such that it would manifest an even less conciliatory attitude. Trudeau's initial response to the PQ victory is clear: "The PQ was not elected on the basis of constitutional positions." He could not have been more clear.

20. Thus, the initial position of the Canadian bourgeoisie will be a policy of wait-and-see and maneuver. There will surely be various attempts to "buy off" the Lévesque government, to make it abandon the perspective of independence. But even in the context of this tactic the bourgeoisie cannot place confidence in the PQ as it exists today. The bourgeoisie's attitude during the electoral campaign was very clear: "While we have confidence in Lévesque, we are afraid of some of the elements behind him" (in other words, the mass movement which the PQ will be unable to contain effectively). This can lead to only one tactic: to place all bets on the referendum and use its results to push forward a renovated PLQ.

For its part, the American bourgeoisie is relying on the policy of the Canadian bourgeoisie. It will proceed in the same manner in regard to credits to the Québécois state. It will be led to take some independent initiative only if the Canadian bourgeoisie proves completely incapable of controlling the dynamic of the situation and of maintaining a minimum of political stability.

21. The economic pressure will thus be combined with various constitutional maneuvers aimed at making the referendum occur at a time and under conditions chosen by Canadian imperialism in order to make sure that the result will be a victory for "No" to independence.

Internal contradictions of the PQ

22. The internal contradictions of the PQ will begin to be concretely manifested in the present period on a hitherto unequalled scale. But they will not necessarily develop in a rapid or spectacular manner. During an initial period the new PQ government will proceed cautiously. In addition, the opposition to the referendum policy within the party itself will inevitably be thrust to the sidelines, for it is precisely this option that enabled the PQ to gain power. Lévesque is now the uncontested chief of the party. During an initial stage the "left" will be drowned in the victory of the party as a whole. The necessity of proceeding cautiously, of defining a government orientation, will hold the internal tensions at a relatively low level. But such a situation will not last. On the contrary, the incompatibility between the independentist project of the PQ and the fundamental interests of the Canadian imperialist

bourgeoisie — in a situation in which mass struggles will inevitably be stimulated by the victory of the PQ — will shake the internal cohesion of the party.

During the previous period the independentist projects of the PQ in opposition clashed with the federalist project of the PLQ in power. Now that the PQ constitutes the government, the clash between the currents radically attached to independence and the currents inclined to dilute this project indefinitely will take place within the party itself. Further, the beginning of class polarization which has resulted from the rise of workers and people's struggles will continue. The workers and people's radicalization will also have repercussions within the PQ.

23. Two levels of contradictions will first of all assert themselves within the PQ. First that of independence; second that of the workers and people's radicalization.

Several of the candidates of the "left" campaigned actively for independence, while the leadership of the party played down this theme. The various imperialist pressures, the policy of the federal government, the difficult negotiations between the Lévesque government and the federal government, and the continuing radicalization of the masses will make this question the key one in Canadian politics as a whole. On this question an entire wing, in fact the majority wing, of the PQ is prepared to make concessions to imperialism and to attenuate the independentist aspect of its program. But another wing has fought and will fight in the opposite direction. In addition, such a policy will place the PQ in contradiction with a substantial portion of its mass base.

In addition, the PQ was elected fundamentally by the working class. While for an initial period the PQ government will be able to offer certain concessions, its long-term orientations will be determined by imperialist pressure (American and Canadian), most particularly as concerns social policy and labor relations. Once again, the tensions between the electoral base of the PQ and its governmental policy will be manifested within the party. But also, and this is infinitely more important, they will be manifested in disillusionment with the party among entire sections of the working class.

The workers movement and the far left

24. In the end, a PQ in power becomes a much more fragile obstacle for revolutionary communists. In the historical sense, the erosion of this party will be in proportion to the illusions it has sowed. Commanding only narrow politico-constitutional and socioeconomic maneuvering room and caught between imperialist pressure and pressure from the mass movement, this party will be increasingly reduced to being a clever defender of the status quo. The objective conditions for a break with this party by advanced sectors of the working class will be posed in the coming period.

25. The trade-union bureaucracy is now celebrating its victory. This euphoria is shared by the entire working class. For the workers, what is involved is revenge against the multinationals, their lackey Bourassa, and all the tinpot local reactionaries; the workers see it as a victory against the limitation of the right to strike, the anti-trade-union campaign of the other bourgeois parties, and the blows they have suffered under the Bourassa government during past years. For the bureaucracy, what is involved is the election of a government which (at least they hope) will help to avoid struggles as much as possible and will negotiate in a completely, or nearly completely, friendly manner. For the bureaucracy the victory of the PQ will be a pretext for curbing these struggles. We have a friendly government in power, they will say, let's give it a chance. For the working class as a whole, on the other hand (and for several other popular movements), the PQ victory will be a stimulant to struggle. These two contradictory exigencies could lead to a phase of a wait-and-see attitude toward the government on the part of the workers movement. But this attitude threatens to be broken by the application of Phase 2 of the Trudeau measures (6% ceiling on wage increases) and the PQ's inability to respond, by the contradictory behavior of the PQ during conflicts with the multinationals, etc.

The far left was totally marginalized in the course of this election. There is nothing surprising about this. The weakness of its base, of its central political presence, combined with the desire of many militants of the mass movement to "make their vote count" and get rid of Bourassa, as well as the strong pro-PQ wave, contributed to this marginalization.

26. More specifically, the New Democratic party-RMS coalition, presented as the first step toward the creation of a party of the workers, was a lamentable failure as a political operation. This coalition, explicitly formed to seek votes, in fact attracted very few. Politically it completely side-stepped the decisive factor, namely a correct position on the national question. In reducing the problem of the political independence of the working class to the construction of a Social Democratic party (the NDP by implication), the RMS seriously undermined the credibility of its previous work and provided a weapon for the bureaucrats, who would like to marginalize the RMS in the short term. This does not mean that this marginalization will necessarily be decisive. Disillusionment in the PQ may be able to open some room for such a formation (whether the RMS or another grouping of the same type).

27. The possibilities opened for the development of the GMR are becoming considerable. Our strategic orientation, that of a Workers Republic of Québec, falls within the dynamic of the present situation and enables us to take advantage of the potential growing discredit of the PQ's project. It also falls within the perspective of an accentuation of the contradictions within the PQ.

THE U.S. LE PRESIDENTI

The Socialist Workers party (SWP) has just concluded the most successful presidential election campaign in its history. A case could be made that it was the most extensive socialist propaganda drive conducted in the United States since the days of Eugene V. Debs. Certainly there is nothing in the postwar period to compare with it and it overshadowed every other effort on the left.

The SWP began its campaign by nominating Peter Camejo for president and Willie Mae Reid for vice-president in December 1974, long before the major capitalist parties had even considered their candidates. The nearly two-year-long campaign was conceived as a vehicle for popularizing the socialist program among broad masses of working people and as an aid in building the party.

The most intensive stage of the campaign began last spring as the SWP conducted petition drives to get on the ballot in as many states as possible. Reactionary election laws place the two capitalist parties automatically on the ballot while making it extremely difficult for minority parties to achieve ballot status. Each state has its own election laws and they differ widely. The high point of this petition drive was the collection of some 300,000 signatures of registered voters in California to place SWP nominees for state and national office on the ballot in that state for the first time ever. In all, the SWP achieved ballot status in twenty-eight of the fifty states (representing 72 percent of the voting age population), after securing some 600,000 signatures.

The SWP campaign focussed on the central issues facing working people and their allies and was integrated with the ongoing work of the party in the unions, in defense of the Black, Chicano, and other oppressed minorities, in support of the fight of women, etc. A central concept raised in the campaign was the need for working people to make a class break with the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties and construct a labor party based on the unions.

The SWP called for a sliding scale of wages and hours to protect working people from unemployment and inflation. It opposed the war budget, urging that these billions be spent for needed social services (instead of cutting back on them as the ruling class is now doing) and for a massive federal jobs program. Support for the right of Black people to equal education, and in particular support of busing and Boston's embattled Black community, were central features of the campaign, as were demands for equal rights and opportunities for women and the oppressed minorities in general. The party campaigned vigorously for passage of the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution to remove legal backing for discrimination against women.

The campaign was also tied into the massive suit the party and the Young Socialist Alliance have filed against the FBI, CIA, and other government agencies. The suit itself helped concretize the demand that all the books and files be opened on all the secret political

PETER CAMEJO FOR PRESIDENT



police operations against the labor, socialist, Black, women, etc. movements in the United States and abroad.

Considering the SWP's small resources (some \$140,000 being spent on the campaign as contrasted to the \$70 million spent by Carter and Ford), an enormous amount of material was distributed. More than one million copies of the SWP platform, the "Bill of Rights for Working People," were distributed, in both English and Spanish.

T AND THE L ELECTIONS

WILLIE REID FOR VICE- PRESIDENT



by TIM WOHLFORTH

Access to television was nearly monopolized by the capitalist parties. But a remarkable response was received whenever the SWP candidates were able to obtain even a little time on television. After Peter Camejo appeared on a national discussion show (after a legal fight under the largely-circumvented "equal time" federal rulings), at 1:30 a.m., nearly 4,000 letters were received by the campaign committee. Of these, 999 wanted to become new subscribers to the Militant. Small donations also came along with many of these letters, totalling \$3,589.

These responses came from virtually every state and corner of the country, from minuscule farm towns as well as the largest cities. By and large they were written by ordinary people without a radical political background, workers and middle class people who usually vote Democratic. They reflected discontent with the two capitalist parties and a greater willingness to consider socialist ideas in the population at large.

Forty-seven percent of Americans of voting age did not bother to vote. Many who did vote did so with little enthusiasm, voting largely against the other candidate rather than for theirs. A poll taken by the New York Times after the election indicated that the majority of both voters and non-voters thought the government serves "big interests" rather than "all the people." A difference between voters and non-voters was that voters said by a 75-21 majority that one should vote for the "lesser evil" while non-voters said by a 50-45 margin that they preferred not to vote if they didn't like any of the candidates. "Nonvoters were much more likely to say that one person's vote makes no difference, that there is no difference between the major parties, or that it makes no difference who is President. These feelings are especially prevalent among those in the lower socio-economic classes," the Times pointed out.

Other Tendencies on the Left

The SWP campaign stood out sharply on the left. The other tendencies were forced to take their positions in light of the SWP campaign.

Only the Communist party mounted a serious campaign. The Stalinists obtained ballot status in twenty states for their ticket of Gus Hall for president and Jarvis Tyner for vice-president and clearly were trying to outpace the SWP in election work. The effective election campaigns of the SWP in the past and the impact of the Camejo-Reid campaign (the CP ticket was announced only a year after the SWP campaign began) were no doubt a spur to the CP effort.

The running of a CP ticket did not represent any change in the basic class collaborationist strategy of the CP. Since the 1930s, when Stalin made the turn to the popular front, the American CP has translated the popular-front line into basically support for the Democratic party. The CP utilized its ticket to beat the drums for détente and to attempt to counter the appeal of the SWP campaign. Consequently, it ran a more "left" campaign, denouncing both capitalist parties and claiming to stand for "independent working class political action."

However, the CP continues to be buried inside the Democratic party and to support "working class" candidates of that party. It supported Tom Hayden, the ex-New Lifter, when he ran against the incumbent candidate in the California Democratic party senatorial primary, and then, when Hayden lost, supported the incumbent against the Republican.

The CP's call for "independent working class political action" — for the future — turns out to be far from that. The CP explains that what it means is an "antimonopoly coalition," a multiclass party including a supposedly pro-peace and "antimonopoly" section of the ruling class. While waiting for such to appear, the CP supports Democrats and runs certain CP campaigns to preserve its image, especially in face of the challenge from the SWP. The Hall-Tyner campaign, however, was not able to match the Camejo-Reid effort in impact and scope.

Another interesting development on the left was the role of Michael Harrington of the Democratic Socialist Organizing Committee (DSOC). DSOC resulted from a split in the Socialist party, which also produced the Social Democrats, USA. The Social Democrats, USA, stand to the right of Ford on most issues, especially foreign policy, and support the most reactionary wing of the trade-union bureaucracy. They originally campaigned for Senator Henry Jackson and then supported Carter when he won the Democratic nomination.

The DSOC has a more "radical" and "socialist" image, tends to support the more "enlightened" wing of the trade-union bureaucracy, participates in some struggles, and has attracted some socialist-minded youth. DSOC also urged a vote for Carter.

The SWP campaign had an impact on the general radical milieu the DSOC works in, and even on DSOC members. It was probably for this reason that Harrington agreed to debate Camejo on the day before the elections. The debate was held at Queens College in New York City and broadcast on the city's nonprofit radio station; it was rebroadcast on election day.

The debate centered on whether to vote for Carter or Camejo. Harrington said that the election was a class confrontation, with big business behind Ford, and the workers, Blacks, and women behind Carter. He felt that Carter's election would make at least a little difference, especially in areas of economic policy, and would encourage further progressive developments.

The radio station took telephone calls from listeners after the debate for two hours. Many who called said they agreed with Camejo in terms of what was necessary for a long-run solution, but that they had voted for Carter as the lesser of two evils.

All the major Maoist factions called for abstention. They sat the election out, doing virtually nothing even to make their abstentionist position known. This absolved them from fielding their own candidates in a test of strength with the other left tendencies, or even from differentiating themselves from the Democrats many of them support on a local level.

The International Socialists, which looks to the group of the same name in Britain, also called for abstention.

The Spartacist League sect accused both the CP and SWP of favoring reforming capitalism and on this basis

also called for abstention. They pointed to the SWP's suit against the government as proof of its "reformism," and added the absurd assertion that the SWP believes in achieving socialism through a constitutional amendment.

The Workers League, the dwindling U.S. supporters of Gerry Healy of Britain, fielded some local candidates. At the last minute, they called for a vote for the SWP. This was odd, because for the past year the major campaign of this group has been to spread the slander originating with their British guru that the SWP is led by "accomplices of the GPU."

Spark, the newspaper of the American group affiliated with the French Lutte Ouvrière group, gave critical support to the SWP ticket.

La Raza Unida parties exist in some areas of the Southwest. These parties are independent Chicano-based organizations which are still at the level of propaganda groups. The New Mexico Raza Unida party endorsed the SWP campaign and actively campaigned for it.

A bizarre sidelight in the campaign was the role of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, which ran Lyndon LaRouche for president under the ballot designation of "U.S. Labor Party." This group can in no way be considered part of the left. It is an extreme-right wing group that the media often misidentifies as Marxist. It did its best to get the SWP and the CP ruled off the ballot through legal challenges. On the eve of the election, LaRouche obtained a half hour of prime television time, reportedly costing \$90,000 which was brought to the TV studio in small bills in a paper bag. In his broadcast LaRouche explained that the election of Jimmy Carter would mean thermonuclear war in the next few months, to be followed by a depression. He urged Republicans to vote for Ford and Democrats to vote for him to avoid these catastrophes.

* * * * *

On the American left, the recognition won by the Trotskyists in the antiwar movement and other struggles placed them in a favorable position to turn the new openings that developed in the course of this campaign to account. The cumulative impact of the SWP's participation in the major social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s enabled the party to win new forces to its ranks, new allies, and growing respect.

This was reflected in the course of the campaign by a geographical expansion of the party. Many new branches were established in cities where there were none before.

Overall, the 1976 election campaign marked a further shift in the relationship of forces on the American left. The SWP emerges in a stronger position relative to the Stalinists and Social Democrats and in a good position to carry forward its work in all aspects of the class struggle.

MEXICO: PESO DEVALUATION & SOCIAL-POLITICAL CRISIS

by Antonio Cuadros

Twice in the space of two months the Mexican peso has been devalued relative to the American dollar, the European currencies, and the Japanese yen. The first time, September 12, its value was reduced from 12.5 to 19.6 pesos to the dollar. The second time, October 26, the peso was "floated" and fell from 19.6 to 26.5 to the dollar. Thus, the peso lost more than half its dollar in just a few weeks.

According to Dr. Ernesto Fernández Hurtado, official spokesman for the second devaluation, the cause of the operation was the same in both cases: "strong pressure on the exchange market" provoked by speculative dollar buying. In reality, the "adjustments" foreseen for the first devaluation and the results the government hoped to achieve did not occur in the expected proportions. The economic crisis Mexico is now experiencing has thus been intensified.

It is true that the second devaluation was followed by a temporary stabilization of the peso, which rose again on the free market on November 9. Its exchange rate now "floats" in the area of 24.83 pesos to the dollar. Official circles hope that the rate will rise to about 22 pesos to the dollar by the end of November. But such a slight rise would be the direct result of aid from the International Monetary Fund: a loan of \$1,200 million which the Mexican government obtained in exchange for the first devaluation.

But the fragility of the economic situation in Mexico, the enormous weight of the foreign debt, and the persistent balance of payments deficits are generating fear of new devaluations and new and accentuated conflicts between the state and private entrepreneurs of the same type that occurred in the period just before the second devaluation.

In contrast with the first devaluation, which occurred in a more or less unexpected manner, the period preceding the second devaluation was marked by an atmosphere of tension, criticism, and recriminations between the state and its nationalist spokesmen on the one hand and those groups of Mexican capitalist entrepreneurs most clearly tied to imperialist capital on the other hand. These groups centered their attacks on the "wasteful" character of the administration of President Luís Echeverría and on the political priorities that have determined the amplification of public investment (above all in the realm of the "economic and social infrastructure") under the Echeverría government (1971-76). They assigned responsibility for the fall of the peso to the public finance deficit and the concomitant inflation, said to have been triggered by the "social demagoguery" of Echeverría.

These criticisms reflect strategic and immediate differences between the nationalist regime and sectors of the private big bourgeoisie. The private capitalists, for example, criticize the expansion of state and parastate enterprises, which they call "excessive." (Expenditures in this area had nearly tripled under the Echeverría government.) The growth of the state sector has resulted primarily in an enormous increase in the public debt. The Nacional Financiera (a public investment company) has invested 113.5 million pesos during the past forty years, 64.5% of which has been raised by loans abroad (or loans from foreigners). A good part of these investments were made during the six years of the Echeverría government.

The objective of the Mexican big capitalists is obvious: The state must no longer play such a decisive role in economic development. According to them, it is time to put an end to the growth of the state sector at the cost of an increasingly heavy foreign debt. The most audacious representatives of the bourgeoisie have gone

so far as to propose that the majority of nationalized enterprises be sold to the private sector as a way out, that is, as a way of resolving the crisis of public and foreign financing of the Mexican state.

In terms of more immediate interests, the stakes in the conflict consisted of a series of fiscal measures taken by the Echeverría government since August 31 aimed at channeling resources toward pruning public finance and the public sector of the economy. For instance, the government decreed a tax of 15% on export income. The response of the capitalist group of Monterrey, the most powerful of the private capitalist groups in Mexico, was immediate: This group, along with 80% of the enterprises it controls, completely suspended sales abroad, thus increasing both the trade deficit and speculation against the peso, which precipitated the devaluation.

In the course of this confrontation, which was waged with unusual aggressiveness by the Mexican bourgeoisie, the government was defeated by private capital. The industrialists refused to supply even a minimal fraction of the resources needed to pay for the various public investment projects, even temporarily (even though in the longer term these projects profit the private sector, precisely because of their character as expenditures on the economic and social infrastructure). They likewise refused to foot the bill for the various movements supporting wage demands which had occurred in the meantime. And the government capitulated.

The export tax was lifted one day before the second devaluation. At the same time, the CEDIS (Tax Value Certificates), which are a variety of state subsidy accorded export enterprises, were reestablished.

Hence, the industrial and financial bourgeoisie emerges strengthened from the two devaluations. It was this bourgeoisie — and not the mass of small savers, as has been demagogically asserted in the bourgeois press — that exerted the major pressure on the government to change the orientation of economic policy. And it was the bourgeoisie that got its way.

After the devaluation, the Mexican Institute of Financial Specialists (IMEF), an organization of private employers, formulated new criticisms of the allegedly wasteful behavior of the Echeverría government. The government was once again forced to respond, timidly defending the nationalist-type perspectives and priorities of its economic policy against increasingly powerful and aggressive private capitalist groups which not only lack "social consciousness," but also pretend to misappreciate the specific role played by public investments in the process of accumulation of capital in Mexico.

The greater aggressiveness of the well-off bourgeoisie against the Echeverría regime also has another target: the decision made by Echeverría just before the end of his term to grant poor and landless peasants half a million hectares of fertile land in the state of Sonora in northern Mexico, land which the large capitalist landlords of this state had previously appropriated

illegally in order to establish modern mechanized agriculture.

The poor peasants acted on this decision, massively occupying these lands without waiting for the verdict of the courts (which have a solid tradition in Mexico of ruling in favor of the owning classes).

Once again the bourgeoisie cried scandal, denial of justice, and violation of respect for the courts and separation of powers. The bourgeoisie maintained silence about the fact that the formation of vast private domains in the state of Sonora and elsewhere (sometimes under the cover of property shared out among various members of the same family or owned by front men) is in open violation of the Mexican constitution, supposedly the "supreme law." After the Mexican revolution of 1910-17, this constitution limited land ownership to 100 hectares.

This campaign of violent denunciation of the nationalist regime by the private bourgeoisie was accompanied by a strike of industrialists and large merchants in eleven of the thirteen Mexican states, as well as by an export strike and a massive flight of capital, at a rate of \$400 million a week to Texas banks alone. It should also be added that imperialist circles, particularly representatives of North American imperialism, strongly supported this campaign of the Mexican bourgeoisie. For months U.S. newspapers have been denouncing the threat of the establishment of a "socialist regime" in Mexico, systematically discouraging American tourism. And in fact tourism has declined, and with it one of the factors providing supplementary income to help cover the heavy Mexican trade deficit (which rose to \$3,000 million in 1976).

Washington's irritation at Echeverría is a result both of several initiatives taken by the outgoing Mexican president in the realm of foreign policy which were annoying to American imperialism and of a desire to blackmail Mexico economically in order to keep this country out of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) and prevent any measure that would conflict with the interests of the American firms established in Mexico.

In spite of the rapid industrialization of Mexico during the past several decades and in spite of the vast rural exodus, peasant agitation nevertheless remains endemic in several Mexican states. It is not at all limited to the state of Sonora, where Echeverría wanted to set an example in order to counter somewhat the reactionary assault that has been mounted against the ruling Nationalist party.

The case of the state of Guerrero is quite significant in this regard. Until recently, 66% of the population of this state had an average monthly income of 250 pesos, that is, \$20 before the devaluation of the peso and \$12.50 at the present rate of exchange. In spite of the presence in this state of the tourist center Acapulco, the vast majority of the inhabitants live in

complete misery. The total absence of credit or financial aid to this state leaves the small farmers at the mercy of monopolists, merchants, and local usurers.

The result was the beginning of a rural guerrilla war, strongly repressed by the army. But the government had to make some concessions to the poor peasants. Although the credits accorded to 725 ejidos (peasant communities) in the state stood at only about 30 million pesos a year at the beginning of the 1970s, they were sharply increased to 450 million pesos in 1975. The government also decided to combat middlemen and private monopolists by using the Mexican Coffee Institute and the Vicente Guerrero Forest Company to intervene in the purchase of commercial harvests.



These measures were belated, petty, and insufficient. But they once again revealed the specific bonapartist character of the Mexican bourgeois government. In spite of all the repressive violence with which it periodically strikes the independent action of the workers, peasants, and students, it is also periodically led to seek to maintain and stabilize its popular base by making some economic, social, and political concessions to the popular masses. It is above all these concessions that irritate the big bourgeoisie, even if they serve the interests of this class in the historic and long-term sense, for they retard determined anticapitalist revolutionary action on the part of the majority of the proletariat and poor peasants.

End of relative 'prosperity'

What appears clearly after these two devaluations is that the Mexican economy has now entered a period that definitively closes the stage of relative "prosperity" based on an orientation of accelerated economic growth

in which the state was the main motor force in the accumulation of capital. This crucial reversal in the economic cycle cannot be concealed by any amount of official rhetoric.

Everybody feels obligated to make predictions these days. There are those who believe that the devaluation will serve to stimulate a phase of economic recovery and will relaunch an economic cycle comparable to that which prevailed during the era of "stabilized growth" that followed the devaluation of 1954. It is obvious that this prediction is based on abstract reasoning and that in reality there is no basis for such optimism.

In 1954, just after the devaluation that set the peso exchange rate at 12.5 to the dollar, the international capitalist economy entered a long-term boom which ended in the late 1960s. Mexico amply profited from this international capitalist expansion. Today one can hardly predict a new boom of the international capitalist economy. The recrudescence of the crisis of the international monetary system with the fall of the pound sterling during recent weeks and the factors revealing a new ebb in economic activity in the United States during the last quarter of 1976 confirm that the 1975 economic upturn was only transitory and that we are heading toward an even deeper crisis.

In a country like Mexico, which remains structurally dependent on the imperialist economy and its financial decision-making centers, it is totally irresponsible to pursue a policy of increased foreign debt. This path engenders the most pronounced inflationary pressures, directly proportional to the increase in the public debt (which now stands at \$22,000 million).

These two phenomena — growth of the foreign debt and galloping inflation — represent the two major threats to the immediate future of the Mexican economy. The situation is further aggravated by the trend toward stagnation of material production which has been manifested since the beginning of the 1970s. This year the slowdown in the growth of production will attain an even greater scope, because the government had not considered the risks of the immense social and economic pressures of the magnates of industry and finance.

There is no point in insisting on the fact that in all branches of the economy the skyrocketing of prices has intensified this trend toward stagnation of production. Following inflation and the reduction of the purchasing power of the masses, this has already become clear in the chemical industry, the steel industry, the shoe industry, construction, textiles, and the automobile industry, all of which have suffered pronounced reductions in their markets.

The automobile industry has suffered a 35% sales decline, which includes the Volkswagen trust. In fact, this company has begun demanding that its Mexican subsidiary be "nationalized," that is, that it be funded by the Mexican state. The construction industry is working at only 30% capacity. There is a serious threat

that more than 300,000 workers will be laid off. In the textile industry, which has been in serious crisis for the past two years, there is a similar threat of unemployment. The bureaucracy of the CTM (the Mexican trade-union federation) has proposed the introduction of a three-day workweek in this industry, with a proportional reduction in wages, in order to avoid massive layoffs!

Even in an industry like steel, which had been the showcase of the nationalist demagoguery of the Echeverría government and in which production had risen from 3 million tons to 6 million tons during Echeverría's six-year term, the atmosphere is openly somber. When the Sicasa industrial complex in Truchas was opened after much celebration and fanfare, the government had to admit that the second phase of construction, planned for the third quarter of 1976, would not be initiated. The new phase of construction requires investments of 30 million pesos, and this sum cannot be raised in the short term after the two devaluations.

In fact, what may be expected in the short term is an aggravation of social tension, especially between private capitalists and the public sector, over the "proper" use of the public debt. The pressure of imperialism has been manifested publicly and obviously in this domain. The present astronomical level of the public debt makes illusory any hope of a new boom of the capitalist economy in Mexico through new massive support from foreign capital.

The other immediate perspective is one of "overhauling" all the industrial branches, with an accentuation of monopolistic concentration in the sectors linked to the big multinational firms; the ruin of small industry; an aggravated shortage of commodities in the border regions, where the reign of the dollar is more "sovereign" than elsewhere; the worsening of inflation and a rising cost of living. All this results more or less automatically from the two devaluations.

'Austerity' policy

The crisis the Mexican economy is now going through thus threatens to be reflected in very hard blows against the wage earners and the less privileged layers of the population in general. The "austerity" measures that have been taken — wage freeze, factory shutdowns, and massive layoffs — are the logical by-products of the political victory won by the Mexican bourgeoisie through the two devaluations.

All these features of economic and social evolution once again highlight the capitalist character of the Mexican economy, regardless of the weight and scope of the nationalized sector. They emphasize the necessity for the working class and the workers movement to adopt an orientation and organization of class independence of the bourgeoisie, the state, and the nationalist government.

That is why the Political Bureau of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Revolutionary

Workers party), Mexican section of the Fourth International, issued an appeal in the November 15, 1976, issue of its newspaper, *Bandera Socialista*, to all the workers organizations in Mexico to form a vast workers united front to defend the working class against the effects of the austerity policy. The first objective of this united front must be to defend real wages and the social gains won by the past struggles of the working class. It must also take consciousness of the fact that the bourgeoisie and the government will inevitably further attack the purchasing power and jobs of the workers in view of the crisis their economy is now going through. The only means by which to avoid greater poverty for the working class and to put an end once and for all to the hunger suffered by millions of Mexicans is to attack the economic system that is synonymous with inflation, permanent unemployment, and poverty for broad popular layers.

Thus, the defensive struggle around purchasing power and jobs must be linked to the struggle for broader anti-imperialist and anticapitalist objectives, such as:

*Opening the books of all the big companies so that the toiling masses can check the veracity of the arguments with which the private capitalists and the government explain and justify the price increases, layoffs, factory closures, inflation, etc.;

*Workers control of industry, large-scale commerce, and finance, in both the private sector and the nationalized sector;

*Formation of popular committees against the high cost of living and against capitalist austerity in all the popular neighborhoods and in all regions, committees that can carry out a broad united mobilization of the toiling masses, uniting the trade-union forces, the forces of the tenants associations and inhabitants of the slums, the student and peasant organizations, and in general all the exploited and oppressed layers of the population. Their main function would be to expose, denounce, and combat price increases and to organize the broadest united mobilizations and struggles in order to attain this objective.

The Political Bureau of the PRT hails the formation of a united front of the Mexican Communist party, the Mexican Workers party (PMT), and the Popular Socialist party (PSP) aimed at propaganda and agitation against the austerity measures taken by the Echeverría regime in its death agony. It declares that the PRT is prepared to participate in any common action to defend the economic interests of the Mexican workers and it proposes non-exclusive unity in action in a national campaign of workers against the high cost of living and capitalist austerity.

The serious economic, social, and political crisis in Mexico at the moment when López Portillo succeeds Echeverría makes the struggle for the class independence of the Mexican proletariat a question of immediate and burning importance for the Mexican workers.

November 15, 1976

BRAZIL

GEISEL REACHING OUT FOR VOTES



ON THE NOVEMBER 15 MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

In the midst of a deepening of the economic and political crisis opened after 1974, which day by day threatens to become transformed into a social crisis of profound consequences, the country is preparing for the municipal elections of November 15. Once again, millions of Brazilians of all social classes are preparing to exercise the sole political "right" they have been granted by the dictatorship during the past twelve years: the right to choose among rigorously selected candidates sifted through the sieve of the security organs and presented by two servile puppet parties to represent them in a fake democratic game, to represent them in the legislative bodies and municipal councils. (With the exception of about 150 municipalities which are considered areas of national security, the mineral centers and state capitals have mayors directly appointed by the government).

Although conscious that the bourgeoisie, through its representatives in power, the officers, transforms every electoral process in Brazil into a farce, revolutionary Marxists know that it is not enough simply to denounce

the electoral fraud and ignore the election campaign from Olympian heights in the name of revolutionary purism, using arguments like "this is an affair of the bourgeoisie," "the workers are not interested in elections," and so on. On the contrary, revolutionary Marxists believe that the coming elections, more than ever, require an active and consistent participation on the part of the revolutionary vanguard, which must not limit itself to propagandism and abstract denunciation, but must instead present to the broad masses, particularly the workers, students, and all exploited and oppressed layers of the population, a political and programmatic alternative to the political projects and programs backed by the two bourgeois parties inside and outside the government. It must be an alternative that prepares for consistent action independent of any tutelage of the ruling classes and the government.

Whether we like it or not, the electoral process, even with all its deformations and given the caricature to which it has been reduced, nonetheless constitutes a political event, an important moment in the life of the country. As was shown by the parliamentary elections of 1974, elections create a period favorable to political discussion, one which opens breaches of relative freedom for discussion and denunciation of the regime. Even given the degree of disorganization of the mass movement, the lack of free trade unions and independent organizations, the lack of a free press, of political parties with solid bases, and finally, of channels of genuine popular expression, the elections nonetheless constitute one of the few means through which the workers and the Brazilian people can, collectively and on a national scale, manifest their repudiation of poverty, political oppression, and the crimes committed by the military dictatorship, the bourgeoisie, and imperialism.

The gigantic "No" of November 15, 1974, when 15 million Brazilians repudiated this anti-worker and anti-popular government, is one proof of this. The fact that they voted for the MDB (Movimento Democrático Brasileiro — Brazilian Democratic Movement) was not an indication of support to this party of the marginalized bourgeoisie but rather a deformed expression of protest in the absence of channels of genuine popular expression.

To create these channels, to offer correct perspectives and leadership to this discontent, which has been consistently on the rise since 1974 given the failure of all the government's attempts to bridge the chasm that separates it from the broad masses, is the central task of revolutionaries.

Political and economic crisis

It is important that we have a clear view of the context in which the coming elections will take place. Two parties, ARENA and the MDB (ARENA: Aliança Renovadora Nacional — Alliance for National Renewal) will play the role of trying to channel the millions of popular votes. ARENA is discredited in the eyes of

broad sectors of the population because of its complete lack of independence and its identification with the central power, its obligation always to say "Yes" to the demands of the regime, even when a majority of its members want to say "No." ARENA therefore knows in advance that it has little to hope for from these elections. Its defeat is a foregone conclusion in the large and middle-sized urban centers, especially those of great working-class concentration and greater politicization. This defeat will scarcely be attenuated by the favorable results it may obtain in some small localities where the official machine may consign it a few limited positive results. Already a walking corpse, ARENA will be buried definitively on November 15. The government and the big bourgeoisie will have no choice but to seek to create new alternatives of representation beginning next year.

The MDB, the party of the "permitted" opposition, has emerged as the probable "victor" in the November elections. The massive vote it received in 1974 breathed new life into its moribund body at a time when the party was threatened with extinction. Once again, no thanks to its own merits, the MDB will capitalize not on a consistent practice of opposition to the Geisel dictatorship, but rather on the fact that it appears to millions of Brazilians as a form in which to express their repudiation of the government.

Nonetheless, the MDB's position relative to 1974 should certainly deteriorate considerably, at least among the most conscious sectors of the mass movement and its vanguard, which supported the MDB in 1974. Incapable because of their own weakness, the liberal bourgeoisie and the radicalized sectors of the petty bourgeoisie that make up the MDB have not succeeded in demonstrating that they can constitute a genuine alternative for all those who oppose the dictatorship. The MDB's trajectory since November 1974 has been one of continual capitulation to the dictatorship. Sparring no effort to win recognition from the "system" as a party of Law and Order, the bourgeois leadership and the great majority of MDB parliament members have not hesitated to betray the commitments they made to the popular sectors which voted for the party and have not at all carried out any of the points of the program they demagogically presented during the last electoral campaign.

There are many examples of this: the refusal to convoke the parliamentary commission of inquiry on Human Rights in 1975, although legal conditions for the MDB to do so existed; the refusal to demand that the Ministry of Justice account for the whereabouts of twenty-five political prisoners who had disappeared (murdered under torture); the virtual lack of reaction to the "risk contracts" which benefit the capitalists; the silence about the murder of Wladimir Herzog and Manuel Fialho and the massive imprisonment of militants during the repression against the Brazilian Communist party; and finally, the caution and moderation exhibited at the time of the ouster of five deputies of the "autentico" group from the parliament. Not to mention the clear

and total absence of the MDB and its workers and youth departments (with a few rare exceptions) from any and every strike movement or mobilization that has occurred among the workers and students.

This capitulationist and conciliatory position, which is also shared by the great majority of the "autentico" group, contributes to discrediting the MDB in the eyes of some of the most important and conscious sectors that supported it in 1974. Many of the illusions that flourished in 1974 have rapidly withered as this bourgeois movement's evolution of betrayal has been confirmed; in any case, this was no surprise to revolutionary Marxists.

In spite of this, for the most right-wing sectors of the armed forces and the ruling classes, the MDB nevertheless appears today as a focus of dissent, a "leftist" danger, because of the presence in this party of groups and militants identified with popular sectors, in turn a result of the straitjacket of the two-party system. The workers, youth, and women's sections of the MDB, as well as the institutes for economic and social research, are considered dangerous "focuses" of dissent, more because of what they represent potentially than because of what they represent today. Not even the laborious intensity with which the leadership of the MDB tries to control these groups and reduce them to silence is sufficient given the hard line of the government; the MDB thus preserves an undeserved image as an opposition party.

The so-called Falcão Law, which maximally reduces the already limited right of parties to use the radio and television for electoral propaganda, falls within this political framework. The censorship imposed by the federal police and the self-censorship the leaderships of the two parties exercise over their own candidates are not enough, for the government wants to hold political debate to a minimum. The government has not forgotten the bitter experience of 1974, which cost Geisel's "détente" plans dearly. Although for Geisel a relatively strong MDB has a role to play in the so-called "gradual relaxation," the unexpected and excessive growth of the opposition vote, in addition to being a surprise, was a factor that gave rise to tension with the "hardliners" of the regime, and this forced Geisel to make a series of retreats.

Given that political conditions do not permit simply canceling the elections (neither internally nor externally, in view of Brazil's need to polish up its "foreign image"), Geisel's present aim is to maximally limit the debate and prevent the social tensions that have built up over past years from worsening. Finally, he is seeking to silence any and every critic: The vulnerability of the government on all points, the collapse of the "economic miracle," the administrative corruption, the rise of inflation and the cost of living and the consequent worsening poverty of the broad masses mean that any criticism, even the timid and constructive criticism of the permitted opposition, appears extremely dangerous for the stability of the regime.



The Falcão Law, one more factor in the right turn of the regime, is another concession which Geisel, representing the most lucid and enlightened sector of the ruling classes (but not the strongest politically or militarily on that account) has had to make in order to maintain the project of his "détente" policy, even if tenuously. Geisel and his ilk know that a qualitatively greater hardening of the regime, a more accentuated "fascicization," or a pure and simple return to the methods of government used during the Medici period would also entail serious dangers for the survival of the regime.

We are no longer living in the golden age of the "economic miracle." The foreign debt should exceed \$30,000 million by the end of 1977; inflation has not been brought under control; spending for imports and the deficits in the trade balance have compelled the government to take a whole series of unpopular palliative measures (prior deposits for imports and for trips abroad, for example), without any visible results being achieved. Domestic production is declining in various sectors, which boosts the unemployment figures, and the number of bankruptcies has been rising, especially since the latest measures restricting consumer credit. The economic pie is getting smaller, and even some sectors of the bourgeoisie are losing their slices. The crumbs with which broad segments of the petty bourgeoisie were bought off or neutralized are increasingly skimpy. The broad masses find their state of poverty reaching intolerable levels. The masses are now tending to raise demands, although in an atomized and disorganized way, while the deepening of the crisis is

reducing the government and bourgeoisie's maneuvering room and possibility of granting significant concessions practically to zero.

Given the context of crisis, it is difficult to reestablish the homogeneity and monolithism among the ruling classes that existed during the Medici regime. It is equally difficult to reestablish unanimity around an even more repressive regime representing an even greater dominance of the technocrats and officers over the state apparatus. On the contrary, the tendency is precisely one of the bourgeoisie (or at least some sectors of it, the landlords, big industrial national capital, and sections of finance capital) attempting to recover at least a part (if not all) of the exercise of political power that had been delegated to the officers and technocrats, who are now demoralized by their failure and inability to bring the country out of the crisis. It is extremely difficult for the anticommunist hysteria pushed by some sectors (Dinarte Mariz, José Bonifácio, and some of the major military chiefs) to be able to motivate and unite all the presently conflicting bourgeois groups.

To moderate the growth of the MDB in these elections, to turn them into a virtual formality, is part of Geisel's tactic, which is aimed at gaining enough time to make his "détente" project prevail within the military establishment itself and to introduce some changes in the facade of the regime, hopefully capable of prolonging its existence for a few more years.

Concurrently, the mass movement has taken some small but significant steps toward recovery. The strikes, work stoppages, "slowdowns," and protest demonstrations which had developed in the factories, construction sites, popular neighborhoods, and railways even before 1974 are now proliferating. Significant nuclei of trade-union oppositions have developed in some of the largest and most industrialized states, while at the same time a critical position toward the official unions and a recognition of the necessity of beginning immediately to build independent organs — workers commissions — in the factories and neighborhoods is starting to take root among the most advanced elements of the workers vanguard.

The student movement, which has always opposed the military dictatorship, has not abandoned this tradition and has even played a vanguard role in struggles against the dictatorship on many occasions. Since its virtual paralysis during the years 1971-73, the student movement has reemerged in a combative manner, carrying out many protest actions around the quality of education, the lack of democratic rights in the universities and in the country, the imprisonments and murders (for example the reaction to the death of the journalist Wladimir Herzog), against the "risk contracts." The representative bodies of the movement are being reorganized and strengthened and the government has been compelled to recognize the free organizations of the students, as in the case of the Central Student Directory of the University of São Paulo.

This radicalization of the student movement has now spread to other sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, such as journalists and artists, while employees of the middle layers (such as bank employees) are also showing signs of recovery.

Without falling into impressionism and crude voluntarism, we may assert that there is now motion in the mass movement. Although it is true that the movement remains embryonic and atomized, suffering from an inadequate development of struggles, lack of links among various struggles, and the lack of solid independent trade-union organizations and a firmly based political vanguard.

Tactics of revolutionary marxists during the election campaign

This framework is decisive in formulating the tactics of revolutionary Marxists during the electoral period. Beginning from the assumption that is important to participate in the electoral process, that the elections constitute a significant event in national political life, what position should be adopted? Support the MDB and inflict a great defeat on the dictatorship, or simply cast blank ballots?

In our view neither of these two choices represents an adequate orientation for the mass movement, either because they are incorrect (support to the MDB) or because they are insufficient (call for a blank vote). Let us look at each possibility.

The first alternative, support to the MDB in order to inflict a defeat on the dictatorship, appears totally false to us. As we have already pointed out, the MDB, which capitalized on popular discontent in 1974, at no time constituted a consistent alternative for the anti-dictatorship forces. The MDB was not even able to constitute itself as a bourgeois anti-imperialist movement, which at certain moments can and must be supported by a revolutionary Marxist organization (for example the July 26 Movement in Cuba during its early phase or the Basque nationalists in Spain). Although the MDB is seen by the most right-wing sectors of the ruling classes as a focus of dissent, this organization is nonetheless useful for a whole other sector of the bourgeoisie and the armed forces led by Geisel, who rely on it as a factor for neutralizing and channeling popular discontent into the framework of the regime. As has been demonstrated by its practice throughout its existence, both before and after 1974, at no time has the MDB been a "genuine, authentic, and effective opposition." Nor has it been capable of turning itself into a "stronger democratic party," which is what was desired by some honest but confused sectors of the MDB, such as the people who signed the May 29, 1976, manifesto of Porto Alegre.

Obviously, no serious and non-sectarian revolutionary with a minimum of sensitivity would refuse to recognize that some sectors of the MDB, mainly among the rank-

and-file workers and youth, are sincerely committed to a perspective of struggle against the dictatorship. Nor do revolutionaries ignore the fact that these sectors' attachment to the MDB is primarily the result of the defeat suffered by the revolutionary organizations beginning in 1968, the failure of militarist adventures, and the lack of an organic alternative with a solid national base and recognized by broad layers of workers in the cities and the countryside as well as by the other exploited sectors as their own political organization. It is precisely this weakness of the left that accounts for the fact that many old vanguard militants as well as a whole generation that is just now undergoing its first political experience see the MDB as an alternative party.

This observation poses some important tactical problems for revolutionary Marxists. Recognizing that because of the weakness of the revolutionary pole these sectors will continue to undergo political experience in the MDB, we must adopt a tactic that enables us simultaneously to work together with these sectors, constantly calling for unity in action with them (for example, during student and workers' mobilizations, for campaigns against the crimes of the dictatorship, in defense of the popular vote and against the removal of opposition deputies, etc.) and to compel them to radicalize increasingly in the direction of a definitive break with the MDB. In order for this work to be consistent, in order to be able to correctly channel the full potential for combativity that exists among many of the popular militants of the MDB, revolutionary Marxists must, beginning right now, maintain their organic and programmatic independence, which will enable them to capitalize on the future breaks that will inevitably occur in the MDB. This means implanting the revolutionary organization in the basic sectors of the mass movement, independent of any and every link with or subordination to the MDB, without postponing the formation of such a revolutionary organization to the future. Whatever the importance of regional specificities, the existence of more combative MDB rank and file militants in this or that region, this must be our fundamental orientation.

What revolutionary Marxists cannot accept — even at the risk of being called purists, sectarians, conspirators, incapable of political action, etc. — is, in the name of working with the MDB rank and file in order to influence them, to take a conciliatory attitude toward the MDB's vacillations or to feed illusions in the possibility of this party's being able to represent, even episodically, a genuine opposition to the dictatorship or in the possibility of transforming it into a genuinely popular party in the future. These sorts of illusions in the democratic or progressive character of the liberal bourgeoisie have been paid for by innumerable defeats for the Brazilian workers.

For us, the MDB is a bourgeois party. This character derives from its origin (it was created in 1965 on the basis of a decision of the victorious dictatorship itself), its programmatic proposals (which have never gone be-

yond the limits of the redemocratization of the country and have never considered any transformation of society), by its social composition, its leadership, and above all its political practice.

The MDB is working along with significant sectors of the marginalized bourgeoisie, attempting to represent it in its struggle for survival against the attacks of monopoly capital, especially international monopoly capital. It is also trying to base itself on the mass movement in order to obtain greater economic and political concessions from imperialism and the allied national big bourgeoisie.

Nor does the claim that a greater penetration into some popular sectors could be achieved through the MDB have any validity in these elections. As we have seen, the recovery of the mass movement has its own dynamic, which unfolds independent of the action or participation of the MDB, and this offers revolutionaries a framework for intervention enabling them to maintain their independence of this party. The tactical concession of supporting the MDB in order to penetrate its rank and file is not justified.

In view of this, the position of revolutionary Marxists during these elections is to give no electoral support on any pretext to the MDB as a political party, nor to any of its "progressive" candidates, the members of its "autentico" wing, who are more closely identified with some popular sectors but who attempt to channel popular discontent into solutions of a parliamentary/electoralist type, urging their ranks to have confidence in the MDB or its left wing as a political alternative. Full solidarity with the rank and file and militants of the MDB who are persecuted, beaten, and tortured by the dictatorship; constantly call for united action with the popular rank and file of the MDB around objectives in the interests of the workers and the oppressed; try to convince them to abandon this party, while never supporting it ourselves — that is the position of revolutionary Marxists.

Nor do we believe that the second alternative — that of simply casting blank ballots — offers a better orientation to the mass movement and vanguard militants, for it also falls into an electoralist deviation: it limits the orientation to the electoral period. "Vote blank" instead of "vote MDB" does not respond to the most burning problems felt by the masses.

Our proposal is to transform this electoral campaign into a broad campaign to denounce the dictatorship through an active boycott of the elections, through the struggle for democratic rights and for raising the living standards of the masses. We must agitate offensively and propose in practice the creation of independent organizations of the workers and students; we must demand the right to strike, freedom for political parties, the holding of free and direct elections, and the convocation of a constituent assembly elected by universal suffrage and secret ballot with the participation of all the popular parties.

The struggle for democratic rights, beginning from the most immediate problems felt by the broad masses, can, if it assumes a revolutionary dynamic, lead the masses to become conscious of their political oppression given the lack of liberty and can show them the necessity of creating their own free trade unions, the embryonic germs of power, and of overthrowing the dictatorship and moving toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government in Brazil.

The struggle for democratic rights is the means by which the workers, echoing the needs and aspirations of all the oppressed of the nation, will themselves become capable of developing a political consciousness that goes beyond the limits of economism. It is not a matter of an abstract stage to be achieved, after which conditions will be created whereby the workers and their allies will form their own political parties, their own independent unions, and so on.

Revolutionary Marxists believe that this must be the real tactical axis during the election campaign, the blank vote emerging as a consequence of this position.

With this aim, we call upon the workers and people's organizations, the various revolutionary nuclei that exist in the country, the trade-union and Christian oppositions, and the other organizations of the working class, the student movement and its associations, and the groups that are fighting, inside and outside the MDB, for the revolutionary conquest of democratic rights and for raising of the living standards of the masses to support this proposal, promoting unity in action wherever possible and transforming the electoral process into a gigantic struggle for democratic rights and for defense of the most immediate interests of the broad masses.

Brazil, July 1976

* * * * *

The results of the municipal elections of November 15 confirmed the predictions of our Brazilian comrades. The MDB won in the major cities. It took 70% of the vote in Rio de Janeiro, 65% in Porto Alegre, 60% in São Paulo, and 57% in Belo Horizonte. The MDB held the lead in eighteen of the thirty-two cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants. Its only important defeat occurred in Recife in the northeast. As a whole, the MDB's vote rose from 14% of the total in the municipal elections of 1972 to 38% in 1976.

The "majority" of the vote won by ARENA on a national scale was the clear result of fraud, intimidation, and terror, used by the dictatorship on a grand scale. The decline in the MDB vote in the small cities compared with the legislative elections of 1974 was the result of both pressure and the spectacular rise in the number of blank ballots cast, especially in the states of São Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul.
November 24, 1976

ZAMBIA: KAUNDA CLIQUE FACES GROWING ISOLATION

by JOHN BLAIR

"I expect a great improvement in our economic situation next year," said President Kenneth Kaunda on October 18 at the opening of the Kawambwa tea factory. "I can't pretend, and I cannot mince words, because the picture before me in the treasury shows that hard times lie ahead of our country," said Minister of Finance John Mwanakatwe speaking on Zambia Television on October 17.

Despite the optimism of Kaunda's statement a quick glance at a few key statistics (see tables) will demonstrate that Mwanakatwe was being a good deal more honest than his boss on the prospects for the Zambian economy in the coming period. As we predicted a year ago,* the recovery of the imperialist economies which began in a stuttering fashion in late 1975 has not been of sufficient dynamism to promote a commodity price boom equivalent to that of 1973-74. If account is taken of the 20% devaluation of the kwacha last July, we find that the price of copper in October 1976 was approximately equivalent to the disastrous average for 1975. If devaluation were to have any real effect it would have had to be reflected in significantly higher prices over a long period of time. In fact, for a number of reasons (which include the chronically ailing state of the pound sterling, in which all transactions are conducted), the kwacha value of Zambia's copper is now back to what it was immediately before devaluation.

*See "Zambia — Humanist Rhetoric, Capitalist Reality" (Africa in Struggle Pamphlet No. 1, available from Red Books, 97 Caledonian Road, London N1, 30p).

Copper Prices per Ton for Wire Bars (London Metal Exchange) — (in kwacha; K2.50=US\$1)

1973 (average)	1,155
1974 (average)	1,326
1975 (average)	794
1976 (average January-June)	897
1976 (August)*	1,300
1976 (September)	1,155
1976 (mid-October)	1,002

*The kwacha was devalued by 20% on July 8, 1976.

Balance of Payments on Current Account
(in millions of kwacha)

1972	-148.8
1973	+ 93.4
1974	+ 48.5
1975	-393.0

Note: Total exports in 1975 were K510 million.

Nor would the return of copper prices to their 1974 levels recreate the heady conditions of the first part of that year. The cost of copper production rose 37% between 1975 and 1976. This figure cannot include the full effects of devaluation, which will become apparent only as higher costs of imported equipment and labor begin to make themselves felt in the account books. In addition, it has been found necessary to take further costly measures to try to stem the outflow of expatriate labor. The turnover of the latter now stands at the quite uneconomic level of 37% per year and the labor force is less than 4,000 instead of the 5,000 considered necessary for maximum efficiency. In an attempt to reverse the trend, the new wage agreement for the mines, in effect as of November, guarantees expatriates a yearly gratuity of K2,000, in addition to their basic wages, payable externally and not subject to income tax.

Previously, gratuities were calculated at 25% of gross earnings over a minimum contract period of two years and were liable to tax. Since few expatriates earn more than K8,000 a year (which is more than seven times the average Zambian wage), the effect of this award will be to greatly add to mining companies' expenditures and to the "remittances" section of the minus side on the balance of payments. In 1974 "private transfers" — which consist almost entirely of foreign currency purchases by Zambia's 34,000-strong expatriate labor force — amounted to K86.5 million, more than 10% of the income from copper sales (K838 million). In 1975, for which figures are not yet available, it is certain that these transfers rose to at least 20% of the total copper sales of K471 million. The new incentives will further increase the part played by this cost in the future. But given the current international competition

for such technical staff, it is likely that the new incentives will still not solve this problem.

Zambia's desperate financial situation, which has led to lengthy delays in the payment of importers' bills and in some case a consequent complete cessation of supplies, has found willing creditors over the past year in the capitalist countries whose aim is to cement the position of their most important bulwark in central Africa. Thus, in August and September there were announcements of a K50 million loan from the EEC, K24 million from the U.S.-controlled World Bank, and K12 million in U.S. foreign aid. Zambia's indebtedness to such donors is reflected in its foreign policy, as we shall see.

In the meantime, a constant feature of government statements during the past two years has been the need to redress the imbalance of the economy through a revival of the agricultural sector. Indeed, the more fanciful government representatives have suggested that wheat, beef, sugar, etc. should eventually replace copper as the country's most important export earner. As yet their words have failed to show any tangible result and the picture of stagnation described in the pamphlet referred to above remains unchanged. There is now much talk of this year's 7 million bag commercial maize harvest (1 bag = 90 kilograms). But this is a crop which is subject to extreme fluctuations caused by weather and disease (for example, the 1970 harvest was 1,388,000 bags; in 1972 it was 6,367,000). It is certain that this "achievement" will make little difference in the prevailing situation, under which more than 90% of export earnings derive from copper sales. Further, in the absence of any significant development in other fields, the maize harvest will not change the situation of 1974-75, when 40% of retail food was imported.

Finally, it should be emphasized that the past year has strengthened the conclusion drawn in our pamphlet that Zambia has totally failed in its efforts to develop import substitution manufacturing industry. In fact, employment in that sector remained virtually stagnant through the years of the latest copper boom (December 1972: 39,360; June 1974: 40,820). The most recent news of layoffs indicates a significant decline in employment here. Many factories have laid off workers due to the prevailing shortage of foreign exchange for essential plant maintenance and raw material inputs.

All these trends confirm our analysis of the impasse reached by government attempts to break away from Zambia's role as an insignificant part of the southern African sub-sector of the imperialist world. They are reflected in the desperate current attempts of the government to advance a "settlement" in southern Africa that would "excuse" Zambia's full reintegration into this economic system.

Wages and the mines

As the key sector of the economy and the employer of nearly 20% of the wage-earning population, the mines

remain the central indicator (and to some extent the determinant) of the position of the entire working population. The results of the recent "negotiations" conducted between the MUZ (Mineworkers' Union of Zambia) and the two 51% state-controlled companies, RCM and NCCM, are just becoming public knowledge. Significantly, the content of the new agreement has been allowed to filter out bit by bit rather than being issued in a single announcement. The object is presumably to avoid any kind of militant reaction to their abysmal content. Below we statistically describe the effect on real wages of this and previous agreements dating back to 1970 on a representative group of miners: the lowest grade of surface worker. Since no official statistics on cost of living increases are available beyond August 1975, we have projected our figures by using the rate of increase for the first months of 1975, which gives an annual rate of increase of 15%. This extrapolation is almost certain to lead to a conservative estimate of current and future situation. As justification for this we may cite the statement of Government Minister Alexander Chikwanda in the October 1976 issue of the magazine *African Development* (special supplement on Zambia): "The internationally induced pressure on the internal price structure is calamitous. For a long time we have held prices even of things we imported at constantly higher prices at the same level to keep the cost of living of our lowest income social groups bearable. . . . Now the inflation flood gates can no longer be kept in check."

	Monthly Wages	Wages needed to keep pace with official low income index and projection of 15% increase per year in the future
1970	K54.50	----
1975	K64.50	K79.45
1976 November	K70.50	K91.37
1977 November	K77.60	K105.07
1978 November	Renego-	K120.82
	tiation date	

The wage statistics amply demonstrate that real wages in the mining sector have already undergone a substantial decline and will continue to decline for the next two years. The question is not whether but when the strongest section of the working class will react against an agreement in the course of whose application their living standards will fall to 50% of 1970 levels.

Up to now there are no signs of an organized resistance. This is not surprising in a situation in which union officialdom is in no effective way responsible to the rank and file. As of now, mass meetings have been called only in certain areas to announce some requests

of the new agreement relating to a slight improvement in the conditions of granting retirement benefit to sick employees and to an improvement in terms for the granting of loans for purchasing bicycles and motor bicycles. But at these meetings union officials have refrained from explaining the details of the pay agreement (despite the fact they have been published in the national press), on the grounds that they are still subject to final government approval. It is thus clear that they intend to introduce the sweet before the sour to deflect any reaction.

One encouraging sign that the miners retain some tradition of militancy came in their reaction to a government proposal whereby candidates for election to any official post within the trade-union movement would be subject to approval by the Central Committee of the ruling party, the United National Independence party (UNIP). It was explained that in a "one-party state" such a step was both logical and necessary in order that the workers be protected from becoming the pawns of self-seeking careerists and instead be guaranteed representation by dedicated servants of the nation! Reaction to this attempt at eliminating the last remaining vestiges of trade-union freedom was violent. A meeting of 8,000 miners in the copperbelt center of Kitwe saw speaker after speaker denounce the proposal as an insult to the intelligence of the workers and an unprecedented intrusion on their freedom to elect whom they wished as representatives. After this single meeting the government, clearly fearing any further demonstrations of opposition, backed down, explaining that the directive would in fact be limited to leadership elections in the ZCTU (Zambia Congress of Trades Unions), a body which is already a de facto government organ.

It is to be hoped that the reaction shown in this instance on the question of representation will be imitated in the future in the beginnings of the organization of a fight against government's wage cutting policy.

Government and Party

The past period has seen a noticeable weakening of the position of the small clique that effectively rules Zambia through its government and sole legal political party. As we have stressed before, the latter has long since ceased to be any kind of mass party. Rather it consists almost exclusively of government officials and aspirants to office. The latest evidence of its decline came during the copperbelt regional conference in September, when it was revealed that the party had signed up only 32,000 members out of an eligible population of more than one million.

Far more serious than the loss of its mass base, however, is that the UNIP leadership itself shows every sign of disintegration. In the past period we have seen:

1) The demotion of the most capable of Zambia's younger generation of politicians, Vernon Mwaanga, from his post of foreign secretary to a place on the Central Committee and a few months later his exit from politics to become chief executive of Lonrho in Zambia;

2) The sudden demise of Mwaanga's successor, Rupiah Banda, who was reportedly excused from duties to go on "study leave" in Britain. In fact, it is well known that Banda had been exposed as having acquired personal property far in excess of that stipulated by the "leadership code";

3) The sacking of Sikota Wina, long-time Central Committee member, on the grounds that he had supposedly failed to devote his full attention to his job — no doubt because his attention was rather more occupied by his extensive business interests;

4) The recent removal to East Germany on study leave of Sefelino Mulenga, minister of lands, natural resources, and tourism. Mulenga had just become involved in a bitter public argument with the Law Association of Zambia, whose president was accusing him of having used his position to secure grants of land for his own personal friends;

5) The arrest for embezzlement of the governor of the Bank of Zambia, Bitwell Kalwani, who is said to have diverted hundreds of thousands of kwacha to his own pocket.

All these cases and the hundreds of others which probably exist but have not yet been uncovered are evidence of the extreme insecurity felt by the governing group in a neocolonial state like Zambia. The state capitalist bureaucracy whose control of the state machine itself is its only security is desperate to acquire wealth to insure itself against the future and become an independent bourgeoisie in its own right. To achieve these ends it attempts to enrich itself at every possible opportunity. Thus the attempts of Kaunda, and similarly of Nyerere in Tanzania, to cover up this process through promulgating a "leadership code"; thus also the inevitability of at least some government leaders' falling victim to rules whose existence is required to ensure the credibility and therefore the continuity of the whole system.

The hemorrhage of talented leadership in this fashion and the effective reduction of the ruling group to a tiny number of Kaunda's most intimate associates have been important factors in the recent attempts to reintegrate the remnants of the most serious split to have taken place within UNIP, that of the UPP under Simon Kapwepwe (former vice-president) in 1971. This party, which included men like Valentine Musakanya, ex-governor of the Bank of Zambia, and John Chisata, ex-leader of the MUZ, temporarily won considerable support, especially in the copperbelt. This was not because it offered any real alternative program to that of UNIP, but because its very existence was a magnet for all discontent. The UPP was squashed by detentions and the declaration of the one-party state in 1972. But it has retained a certain prestige and even organization throughout the subsequent period. Aware of this, the government has initiated a series of secret negotiations conducted by Home Secretary Aaron Milner with Kapwepwe and other leaders. The aim was to reintegrate them into government. In this way not only would the latter's leadership gain sorely needed reinforcements, but a potential organizer of discontented elements would be eliminated.

So far these attempts have failed, because the remnants of UPP recognize that their scattered following would be completely lost in the process. The continued failure, however, serves only to strengthen the feeling of vulnerability among the Kaunda clique.

Another "running sore" in the flesh of the regime is the situation in North Western Province. A group of armed men known as the "Mushala Gang" have been operating in the province for more than a year now, making sporadic attacks on government offices, trucks, etc. Mushala himself is known to have been one of a group of malcontents enticed into Namibia in 1973 by South African agents. There they underwent military training in order to cause disruption in the western part of Zambia. A number of them were subsequently captured, but Mushala's grouping, which appears to have passed through the eastern part of then war-torn Angola, has so far escaped, despite a major military operation launched to hunt them down. Undoubtedly they have received support from the local population in an area which does not even have a paved road across its 600 kilometer breadth and whose peasantry constitutes one of the most deprived sections of the Zambian population. Some army and police casualties have been reported, but information from the Ndola Central Hospital, the nearest reception point for dead and wounded, suggests that these have been far greater than publicly acknowledged. It is also said that UNIP Secretary General Grey Zulu's recent return after one day from a projected ten-day tour of the province was a result of the fact that his official convoy came under armed attack as it moved westward from Solwezi, the provincial capital.

At the very least, the fact that a massive police and military operation has failed to round up a gang whose number is now officially said to be only seven men is a very clear sign of the tenuous hold of the government over the populace of this area.

The student sector

The government's extreme sensitivity to any apparent threat was amply demonstrated by the closure of the University of Zambia at the beginning of February this year following a three-week campaign by the mass of students in solidarity with the MPLA in the Angolan civil war and in opposition to Zambia's collaboration with the FNLA and UNITA, covered diplomatically through its advocacy of a "government of national union" in Angola. The January-February demonstrations, which also involved other sections of Lusaka's students, were the high point to date of activity by a group which has consistently resisted integration into the government's plans. They were encouraged by the existence, in the Frantz Fanon Society, of a group of militants who were beginning to grapple with Marxism and to apply this philosophy to an analysis of Zambian society itself. Without doubt, the sudden closure of the university was partly motivated by government's fear that this element might begin to try to extend the campaign be-

yond the demand for solidarity with MPLA to the domestic political arena, where a series of price rises at the end of January had provided combustible potential for a campaign among workers.

The closure was accompanied by the detention of seventeen students and five lecturers. Four of the latter, who were expatriates, were subsequently released and deported; fifteen of the students were finally released last month. Inevitably, given the low political level among the overwhelming majority of students, the re-opening of the university in June saw a decline in radical activity. But the continued anti-government mood of the students was reflected in October 1976 in the unanimous decision of the National Union of Students delegate conference to reject affiliation to the UNIP Youth Brigade despite the exertion of numerous pressures on it to accept this. For many years the government has sought to gain a presence on the University of Zambia campus and at other institutions of higher education through the opening of party branches, but these have been unanimously resisted, a pattern which appears likely to continue.

There is no doubt that the student population will remain fertile ground for revolutionary agitation. The possibilities for conducting this will be enormously improved by the unfolding struggles in southern Africa in respect of which the Kaunda government remains deeply compromised by its actions. If it is possible to convince students of the need to link their agitation to the discontent of an increasingly disaffected working class, they will play a key role in stimulating real mass struggle in the future.

Foreign affairs

As Zambia's vulnerability to the effects of recession and dependence on loans from the imperialist economies increases, so too does the government's desperate need for a "settlement" in southern Africa. Hence the cries of delight at the arrival of Kissinger, Kaunda's tears upon welcoming Kissinger's Lusaka statement last April as opening a new phase in U.S. policy in the region, and the readiness to do everything possible to encourage the success of Kissinger's most recent mission.

Nor should one be surprised by the so-called front-line presidents' apparent rejection of the Kissinger-Smith agreement of September and their reaffirmed commitment to armed struggle in Rhodesia. In reality, their present attitude is determined by the fact that it is quite clear that no Zimbabwean nationalist (even the most compromised, like Nkomo) could accept a deal that involves leaving control of the military and police in the hands of the Smith government. Hence the proposal now being raised by Zambia, Tanzania, and most sections of the nationalist movement: that the British should be called upon to play a central role by "re-establishing their legal position as the colonial power and themselves conducting a peaceful transition to independence." They hope in this way to provide an

alternative to renewed armed struggle if the talks break down over Smith's insistence on maintaining control of the repressive apparatus. It is truly ironic to listen to supposed fighters against colonialism calling on Britain to "re-assume its colonial responsibilities." But there is no doubt that for Zambia in particular this move would be in the government's immediate best interest:

1) It would enable an immediate re-opening of the border and resumption of trading links with Rhodesia, which before Smith's declaration of "independence" provided 40% of imports, as well as opening the shortest and cheapest rail link to the sea at Beira.

2) It would be the most reliable way of assuming un-interrupted progress toward neocolonial rule in Zimbabwe. Thus, it would avoid the danger inevitably

involved in a renewed upsurge of the armed struggle; that the mass mobilization necessary to ensure success would go beyond nationalist demands and assume an anti-capitalist dimension. Even were this not to happen in Zimbabwe itself, it is certain that the imperialists and their neocolonial agents fear the exemplary effect of any massive struggles in that country on the masses of South Africa itself.

Exposure of the motivation behind the current line of Zambia's government on this issue is a central task of revolutionaries in the coming period, because it places an unquestionable identity upon the class nature of the regime.

October 25, 1976

AFRICA IN STRUGGLE

afrique en lutte



SUBSCRIBE!

Send to:
'Africa in Struggle'
97 Caledonian Road
London, N.1
ENGLAND

One year inland (three issues).....£1.20
One Year overseas (surface).....£2.50
" " " (airmail).....£4.00
(cheques made payable to 'Red Books')

SRI LANKA POLICE OPEN FIRE on STUDENTS

On the morning of November 12 some 700 armed police invaded the Peradeniya campus of Ceylon University and opened fire on about 1,000 unarmed students, killing one and seriously wounding sixty-two. At least five people are missing and it is feared that the police may have killed them and secretly buried the bodies. Mass anger grew by the hour in the wake of the shootings, with many workers going on strike. The members of the Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) imprisoned since the repression of 1971 declared a two-day hunger strike to protest the police attack. Student strikes continued to spread.

Ceylon University had been in crisis for nearly two months. The workers, teaching staff, and students had been demanding that the government remove the president of the Peradeniya campus and shelve the "university amendment bill." The president of Peradeniya campus, a close associate of Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike, has earned the wrath of the students and staff because of his authoritarian rule. Even a government-appointed commission had recommended his removal, but the regime paid no heed. The university amendment bill seeks to eliminate what little remains of academic freedom and to transform the university into an institution under open government control. The bill has been opposed by teachers, workers, and students, and there were even differences over it within the government itself, which temporarily withdrew its presentation to the State Assembly. In early November the university staff had gone on strike in support of its demands, which included removal of the campus president.

The president responded to the strike by ordering the campus closed, the third such order in two months. The students opposed the closure, which in addition to disrupting their studies also places financial burdens on students who come from far away places and are forced to go home when the university closes. On November



ROHAN WIJEWEERA
imprisoned JVP leader



11 a delegation of students went to discuss the question with the president, who refused to make any concession, even opposing the students' remaining in the residence halls at their own expense.

The students then decided to stage a non-violent protest, holding a sit-down in front of the Senate building on campus. The police came and surrounded the students, who refused to be provoked and carried on their peaceful protest. The following morning, November 12, those students who had chosen to go home began arriving at the Senate building to collect the 10 rupees customarily advanced them to allow them to go home. About a thousand students had arrived by 7:00 in the morning and were peacefully lining up when the police suddenly launched a tear-gas attack against them. The tear gas was followed by bullets. The police chased the students into the halls of residence and continued the attack, killing one student. Of the sixty-two wounded, twenty-seven were women and several were Buddhist monks.

The response to the unprovoked police attack began on November 12 itself, when the workers of Thulhiriya Textile Factory went on strike in solidarity with the students. Policemen patrolling the streets near the university were chased away by angry residents. The government dispatched two top ministers — Communist party member Pieter Keunaman and Sri Lanka Freedom party member Hector Kobbekaduwa — on a "fact finding" mission. The climate of hostility toward the police was so intense that even Anura Bandaranaike, the prime minister's son, issued a statement expressing sympathy with the students. Finally, on November 16 the cabinet announced the removal of the president of Peradeniya campus from his post. The government also promised to appoint a commission of inquiry into the killing. But the students are not satisfied.

The student union of Ceylon University called a meeting of all trade unions and student organizations for

November 15. Many unions attended — including the Ceylon Mercantile Union, the Bank Employees' Union, various unions controlled by the Communist party, and other unions controlled by the Lanka Sama Samaja party (LSSP) — and decided to organize a day of action including a general strike. The students have demanded the resignation of the minister and junior minister (a CP member) from their posts, the revocation of the "state of emergency" that has been in effect since 1971, and the punishment of all those responsible for the assault on the university. The CP-dominated unions tried to assign responsibility for the shootings to the CIA but were met with criticism from the students. The students also read out a letter sent by Rohanna Wijeweera, one of the major leaders of the JVP, and other political prisoners who had organized the hunger strike. The letter demanded the resignation of the government and called upon all socialists and left-minded people to launch a struggle against the brutal capitalist regime.

The movement against the government has begun to spread far and wide. A number of unions have issued statements of support and pledged to come out for the day of action. Students have gone on strike at Nalanda College and Dharmasoka College as well as other universities; the Jaffna and Vidyodaya campuses have also walked out.

On November 16 a mass rally was organized by ten unions* calling for the abrogation of the state of emergency. The meeting was also addressed by a representative of the students' union and adopted a resolution in support of the day of action. The government is clearly in trouble, facing very deep resentment at the cavalier manner in which it uses armed police to suppress even the smallest protest. This resentment is an expression of the accumulated anger of the workers, who themselves have been the victims of armed government intimidation at the Wellawatte Spinning and Weaving Mills, the Thulhiriya Textile Mills, and other places. (See INPRECOR, No. 49, April 15, 1976.) On each occasion the government has attempted to see how far it could go before provoking too great a response. This time it has clearly gone too far and may have helped to spark off a campaign that could ultimately sweep it out of office. There are already signs that the mass movement is reaching levels unattained in years. On November 26 half a million workers (according to a Reuters dispatch) went on strike for twenty-four hours in the tea and rubber plantations and the banks to demand an end to the state of emergency. The government has since closed down the country's six universities.

*The organizations sponsoring the meeting were: Ceylon Bank Employees' Union, Ceylon Estate Staffs' Union, Central Council of Ceylon Trade Unions, Federation of Tamil Trade Unions, Public Service Technical Officers Trade Union Federation, Ceylon Mercantile Union, Ceylon Trade Union Federation, Ceylon Workers' Congress, Union of Post and Telecommunications Officers, Independent Harbour Workers' Union.

cont'd. from pg. 40

"The Sa-Ngat Chaloryu fascist warlord clique looks big and powerful from the outside, but it is weak inside. . . . Unsolvable conflicts within the clique still exist. . . and finally they will meet a shameful end like the defeated reactionary power-holding class in the neighboring countries who served the imperialists, feudalists, and bureaucratic capitalists. . . ."

"The Thai youths, schoolchildren, and students had been peacefully struggling for independence and democracy and for the welfare of our poor fraternal people within the framework of the constitution and the country's laws, despite the fact that our friends who share the same destiny with us had been barbarously terrorized, detained, and killed one after another. But we patiently continued to resort to peaceful means to carry out our struggle in the hope that our honesty, sincerity, and good intentions toward the country and people would make the reactionary ruling class aware of its crimes and would make them turn to solving the problems of independence, democracy, and the living conditions of the poor. . . . But our peaceful means have been rewarded with grenades and hails of bullets. . . . We raised our empty hands to call for justice, but what we received caused losses of blood and lives. . . . The lessons we learned with much blood and many lives clearly point out to us that national independence and democracy cannot be gained by reform methods under this decadent and unjust society. . . ."

"Our people have no other option but to consolidate their forces to uproot this reactionary state power and establish the new revolutionary state power of the people. . . . State power is the target of every revolutionary struggle. . . . Past experience teaches us that we cannot defeat the enemy with our bare hands, nor can we solve the problems of independence, democracy, and social justice. We have unequivocally drawn the conclusion that because the enemy has guns we must also have guns. . . . The conflict between our people and the reactionary ruling class — the big landlords, capitalists, and U.S. imperialists — can be really settled only by people's war. . . ."

"Since Thailand, judging from its social characteristics, is a semicolonial and semifeudalist country, the sell-out landlords and capitalists have gathered the administrative power only in the capital, where they happily reside. They have robbed and left the masses of people in the rural areas in poverty, hardship, and backwardness. Their reactionary state power has cities as its fortresses, but it is weak in the rural areas. Therefore, in order to launch the armed struggle against the enemy, the people must use the rural areas as the places to build up and expand our forces, based on millions of farmers, to build a worker-farmer alliance, extensively consolidate forces, follow the path of using the rural areas to encircle and finally seize the cities and resort to armed struggle as the main struggle to coordinate with the other forms of struggle, while the struggle in the cities must coordinate with the struggle in the rural areas. . . ."

"We are willing to join with the people of various strata, groups, and those who cherish the nation and democracy, whether or not they are members of any political party, to struggle to drive the U.S. imperialists out of Thailand, overthrow the fascist warlord clique and its puppet government, and to establish the government of the people. . . ."

* * * * *

On November 10, 1976, a statement was issued by two workers who had disappeared more than a year ago after one had been the victim of an attempted assassination. They are Therd Pom Jaidii (of the hotel workers union) and Prasit Chaiyoo (of the textile workers). The statement was broadcast by Voice of the Thai People on November 20 and again on November 21.

"To the workers, employees, and lower-level functionaries, and to all those struggling for democracy and justice,

". . . . The junta has destroyed the spirit of October 14, 1973 (date of the student uprising). Our three-year struggle in the factories has been threatened, crushed, and betrayed by the watchdogs of national and foreign monopoly capital. . . . Our brother workers. . . represent the creative force of the economy and society. . . (but) we are condemned to a miserable life of poverty and hunger. . . . The only means we have of defending ourselves is the strike. We have used this means in respect for the law, their law. . . . But the workers who have gone on strike peacefully have faced the gangster attacks of the 'Wild Buffaloes' and the Nawapon (two far-right paramilitary groups). . . . Armed police and special anti-riot forces have brutally assaulted the workers. . . . Today the only weapon we had to demand justice, the strike, has been declared illegal by the junta. . . ."

"Workers, employees, and lower-level functionaries, unite resolutely in each factory, in each branch of industry, and fight in each factory and branch to resist the attacks of the right. Seek out and denounce the spies and traitors who have infiltrated the workers movement. . . . Do not let yourselves be divided. . . . There is no way out except political struggle to overthrow the fascist government of the far right, which is prepared to sell out the country. There is no other way except to unite. . . with the peasants. . . . The victory of the people will never be won through trickery or through peaceful struggle according to the rules laid down by the enemy. . . . We must follow the road to the seizure of power with arms. . . ."

"Revolutionary people's war has now broken out throughout the country. . . . We, the working class, have a central role to play in the revolution. History has placed on the shoulders of our class the glorious task of liberating humanity. We must carry on until victory. . . ." □

THAILAND RESISTANCE TO MILITARY JUNTA BROADENS



We are publishing below excerpts of two documents on the activity of the resistance to the new military dictatorship in Thailand. Both were broadcast by the radio station of the Thai Communist party, the "Voice of the Thai People." They are important and significant in more than one respect. The signers include some of the major leaders of the students and workers movements during the past several years. They have come forward as the animators of the urban mass movement and, at least during the period 1972-75, were not members of the CP. Many of them went underground after the first wave of murders committed by the far right; others left for Laos or the insurrectional zones after the October 6 coup. Their statement, along with that of former leaders of the Thai Socialist party, which was also broadcast by Voice of the Thai People, testifies to the current broadening of the armed resistance to the regime.

The Thai CP has indicated the importance it attaches to these statements by broadcasting them several times, sometimes slowly enough to allow listeners to recopy them. The transcriptions we are using here were made from such broadcasts and sent to us. (It should be noted that the transliteration of Thai names may vary widely.)

.....

The first statement, issued by seven former student leaders, was dated October 14. It was broadcast by Voice of the Thai People on October 31 and again on November 1. It was signed by: Seksan Prasertkul, one of the main leaders of the October 1973 uprising and a leader of the Federation of Independent Students of Thailand (FIST) and later of the workers movement; he disappeared more than a year ago; Thirayut Boonmee, another of the main leaders of the October 1973 uprising, who also participated in the formation of the People for Democracy group and was one of the leaders of the

National Student Center of Thailand (NSCT) at the time of the coup; Weng Tochirakan, former medical student at Mahidon University and a leader of the NSCT in 1974, as well as president of the Buddhism and Tradition Club; disappeared more than a year ago; Sanan Ruatwongtatt, former leader of the student union at Thammasat University; disappeared more than a year ago; Pridi Boonseu, one of the thirteen militants whose arrest by the Thanom regime in 1973 triggered the October student demonstrations; a member of one of the radical groups at Thammasat University, the Sapha Nadom group, and also a member of the Thai Socialist party; disappeared more than a year ago; Chiranan Peepricha, a leader of the women's liberation movement at Chulalongkorn University and former leader of the NSCT; disappeared more than a year ago; Wisa Khantap, one of the thirteen militants arrested by Thanom in 1973 and student leader at Ramkhamhaeng University; a revolutionary poet.

The statement begins, "Dear fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, and people, patriots, those who love democracy and justice and our beloved friends, youths, schoolchildren, and students,

"Creating a situation in order to stage a coup d'Etat by arming dangerous political hooligans to coordinate with the fascist police and military forces in killing unarmed people is not a new idea; it has been used in several countries, namely South Korea, Indonesia, and Chile, in compliance with orders from the CIA, the dirty tool of the U.S. imperialists. . . . All this is to maintain the decadent administrative system of the country based on the feudalists, big landlords, and capitalists who form only a small group and to enable the U.S. imperialists, their masters, to retain their influence and defend their political, economic, and military interests in Thailand. . . .

cont'd on pg 39