

# THE INTERNATIONALIST

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## ALGERIAN GOVERNMENT SLASHES RENTS

The Ben Bella government announced February 19 that it was establishing rent ceilings which will be among the lowest in the world when they go into effect March 1. Rents per room will range from 1,500 to 7,650 francs (\$3 to \$15.30).

The new rate was calculated at about ten to fifteen percent of income.

Still lower ceilings will be established for certain categories. These include deductions of ten to twenty percent for homes distant from the center of town; and up to forty and fifty percent for the families of victims of the war and veterans.

It is calculated that rent ceilings on the average will thus be ten to twenty percent lower than under French imperialist rule. The action of the Ben Bella government follows the precedent set by the Castro regime which slashed rents by fifty percent soon after coming to power.

For many families who moved into the tens of thousands of homes and apartments abandoned by the "pieds noirs" (Europeans born in Algeria), the ruling means the beginning of payment of rent. The government explained that the abandoned dwellings like other "biens vacants" (vacated property) now constitute a national heritage. Rents will be used to keep up the buildings and to construct new homes. The rent will not go to private landlords. It is payable to the tax office.

An interesting sidelight on some of the problems faced by the new government was cast by its admonishment to many poor Algerians now living in the comfortable quarters abandoned by pieds noirs that they should cull all family animals that have been brought in to share the comforts of the new home. Among the privileged animals, according to Al Chaab, official daily of the FLN (National Liberation Front), are "goats, sheep and even cows."

In some apartments bath tubs have been filled with soil and put to use as easily watered miniature gardens.

"All this must be criticized by the neighbors," declares Al Chaab, "and these people re-educated."

#### ALGERIAN OFFICIAL APPEALS FOR MORE TECHNICIANS

PARIS, Feb. 22 -- An appeal by Ahmed Boumendjel for technicians to come to Algeria to help repair the war damage and aid the country in building a new structure was prominently featured in France Observateur yesterday. Algeria's Minister of Reconstruction was in this city during the week in an effort to loosen the strings which the de Gaulle regime has tied on any aid it provides.

"Finances are available," said Boumendjel, "but there is a fearful absence of skilled forces and that is what counts most in the long run. If we don't get the technicians needed to start agreed-upon projects, then the French government can say next year that the financial aid must be reduced. . . ."

"In 1961," he pointed out, "there were 250 public works engineers. Between March 19 and July 1, 1962, the decrees of the French government, in connection with its policy of withdrawal, caused 170 of them to leave. Inasmuch as they were guaranteed jobs in France, often well paid, they figured it would pay off to go back. Of the eighty remaining engineers, one third have already said they won't renew their one-year contracts which expire next July 1. But I need a minimum of 120 public-works engineers and 200 technicians or administrators for construction works. . . ."

"The solution is difficult. First, the results of foreign aid are not too brilliant. Obviously, because of language and methods, co-operation is easier with French technicians. But the problem is, how to get them to come. . . . It happens to be a fact that in the French administration -- at least in the intermediate levels if not at the top -- nothing is done to speed things up. There are many cases of applications made last October and November which have not yet received a reply."

Boumendjel appealed especially to associations of technicians, particularly those of the left "not because we want to use a political criterion but because I still think that the French left is more receptive to the idea of helping the New Algeria. Co-operation must not be a nice-sounding word in official speeches; it must find a human content, otherwise it has no meaning. . . ."

#### FRANCO POSTPONES TRIAL OF THIRTY-EIGHT SOCIALISTS

PARIS, Feb. 22 -- The scheduled trial of 38 members of the Frente de Liberación Popular was postponed two days ago without

any explanation by Spain's fascist authorities. A new date for the trial has not yet been set.

Yesterday, however, another trial before a military drumhead court railroaded a fresh batch of victims to Franco's infamous fascist prisons. Several alleged members of the Communist party and Pestaña, a leader of the FLP, all of whom are accused of participation in a strike at Valencia, were given sentences ranging from one to ten years.

Among the members of the FLP whose trial was postponed and who have now been held in prison for more than nine months are the well-known left-Catholic writer Recalde; a Catholic trade unionist of Asturia named Revilla, who has a family of seven children; the Valencia writer Francisco Gordenor; and two left-wing intellectuals of Madrid, the lawyer Zayas, who became well-known for his aid to the National Liberation Front during the Algerian war, and Elena Salas, a courageous woman who organized a woman's demonstration of solidarity with striking miners right in front of Madrid police headquarters.

The FLP is the extreme left-wing organization of the new Spanish underground which was instrumental in spreading last year's miners strike in Asturia to the Basque country, to Catalonia, Valencia, Madrid and Andalusia.

According to a recent article in El Socialista, emigré monthly of the reformist Spanish Socialist party, the members of the FLP are noticeable above all else for their ardent sympathy for the Cuban Revolution and their efforts to adapt "activism" of the Fidel Castro type to Spanish conditions.

The FLP is an underground organization founded in 1958 by intellectuals, workers and students assembled from various traditional organizations ranging from the Christian Democrats to the anarchists. The diplomat Julio Cerron, commonly identified as the leader, is from the Christian Democrat wing.

The FLP publishes several illegal papers in Spain. These include Unidad Obrera (Workers' Unity) in Madrid, Accion Obrera (Workers' Action) and Revolucion (Revolution) in Valencia.

In the big 1962 strike wave, the FLP was the only Spanish underground organization that was not caught sleeping. It worked on a surprisingly wide scale to spread the strike.

The FLP's official Declaration of Principles includes the following paragraph as a statement of its aims in fascist Spain:

"The FLP is a revolutionary organization. Revolution means the violent conquest of power by the working classes and the liquidation by them of the capitalist system of production, the suppression of private property in the means of production being a prerequisite for

the organization of a classless society. Any bourgeois political regime is necessarily a class dictatorship, whatever may be its juridical or constitutional form. Therefore, the only road towards the liquidation of class society is to abolish by force bourgeois power. A power can be revolutionary and democratic only insofar as it is conquered by the workers."

The FLP stands for a radical land reform, nationalization of the banks and big industry, liquidation of the bureaucratic state machine, the replacement of the standing army by a people's militia and workers self-government in the factories and communes. It advocates a federation of the various nationalities living on the peninsula and a united front of all working-class organizations.

### BELGIAN METAL WORKERS STAGE TOKEN STRIKE

BRUSSELS, Feb. 23 -- Some 250,000 Belgian metal workers stopped work yesterday for a few hours to hear representatives of both their Socialist and Catholic unions appeal for a campaign to get an immediate wage increase of four and a half percent. The employers have refused to negotiate.

The unions decided to follow up the token strike by rejecting any more overtime work and by preparing for stronger action against the bosses.

The demand of the metal workers comes at an awkward moment for the reformist-Catholic coalition government which is seeking to push antistrike legislation through parliament (a so-called "law for the maintenance of public order"). This reactionary legislative effort is reaching its final and decisive stage just as the Socialist party meets in a special March 2 congress to determine its attitude toward the proposed new law.

Reformist leaders fear that the demands of the metal workers and their preparations for further strike action will meet with a favorable response in wider circles of the working class and thus strengthen the campaign of the left-wing opposition against the antistrike law.

### "UNION VOICE" LAUNCHED IN GREAT BRITAIN

The first issue of a new monthly trade-union paper Union Voice appeared in Great Britain in February. Backed by an important sector of left-wing trade unionists and Labour party members, it counts among its sponsors thirteen members of Parliament; two members of the Labour party executive committee (Anthony Greenwood and Ian Mikardo); and such well-known trade-unionists as Ernie Roberts, assistant general secretary of the Amalgamated Engineering union; Bob Edwards, general secretary of the Chemical Workers union; John

Horner, general secretary of the fire Brigade union, etc.

The aims of the paper are summed up in three points :

- (1) The election of a Labour government as soon as possible,
- (2) The implementation of Clause IV of the Labor party constitution (calling for public ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange).
- (3) The establishment of world peace and socialism.

The address of Union Voice is Mrs. E. Roberts, 43 Copers Cope Road, Beckenham, Kent. A twelve-months subscription is nine shillings (\$115).

#### KHRUSHCHEV SPEECH PUBLISHED IN PEKING

The Peking People's Daily, central organ of the Chinese Communist party began publication February 20 of a series of documents defending the position of Khrushchev. The first item was Khrushchev's speech of December 12 defending Moscow's position in the Cuban crisis and attacking some of Mao Tse-tung's positions.

Members of the Chinese Communist party are thus able for the first time to read Khrushchev's position and judge for them eleven its relative merits.

It is to be expected that the People's Daily will now follow up with extensive answers.

Whether Khrushchev will feel compelled to publish documents defending the Peking position such as "Our Differences with Comrade Togliatti" remains to be seen.

The initiative taken by the Chinese in this respect is a good one. If the example is followed by others the discussion can prove very fruitful.

#### MOSHI CONFERENCE

While it was not expressed openly, the Chinese-Soviet rift made itself felt at the second conference of Solidarity of the Afro-Asian Peoples held at Moshi, Tanganyika. According to the weekly Revolution Africaine, published in Algeria, the position expressed by delegates of the Chinese Communist party made the biggest impact at the gathering.

The Indian-Chinese border conflict kicked off a dispute that made headlines. An Indian delegate sought to discuss the issue. He was ruled out of order by the chairman on the grounds that the rules for the conference specified that no conflict between Afro-Asian countries should be discussed.

The entire Indian delegation thereupon walked out despite the appeals of the Chinese delegation to stay.

#### GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR CP OF INDIA

When the border dispute with China flared into armed conflict, the Nehru government rounded up hundreds of members of the Communist party of India and threw into prison where they still lie. Their "crime" was to take the side of the Chinese workers state, as was their revolutionary-socialist duty even though they might be critical of the tactics of the Chinese Communist party leaders in this matter. The main leaders of the Indian Communist party were not touched in the witch-hunt because they decided - in violation of all the principles of Marxism-Leninism - to support the Indian ruling class.

At a meeting of the National Council held in New Delhi the first part of February, the leadership, under the guidance of M.S.A.DANGE, decided apparently that as a party supposed to be in opposition to the capitalist government of Nehru it was not good politics to continue to display such groveling servility. After some search they managed to find an issue on which they could safely take a stand against Nehru.

Dange came out of the meeting, party banner triumphantly on high - for 22 carat gold jewelry! In a statement not likely to be challenged anywhere on earth, the Indian Communist leader declared: "The possession of pure gold guarantees the security of the poor man".

In India the hoarding of metal, one of the primitive stages of the accumulation of capital, is still widespread. Whoever can afford it has his collection of gleaming yellow rings and bracelets.

Nehru, the better to buy armaments for possible use against China, wants to economize the precious stuff by reducing the standard of gold content in jewelry sold to the public to a mere 14 carats.

Now, however, he must take into account the stubborn opposition of the Communist party of India. Let him beware!

#### TITO MAKES FOW IN ART WORLD

It is not known whether Marshal Tito ever made a serious study of art, tried putting oil to canvas or even whitewashed a wall. Nevertheless, he has now blossomed out as Yugoslavia's leading art critic. How did he perform the miracle? Last week the secret was revealed by Tito himself.

As reported by Nasa Stepan, central organ of the Yugoslav press association, the country's most eminent journalists got into the subject of abstract art at a meeting Feb. 6. Tito happened to be present, and so the abstractionists, naturally, didn't come out ahead. Like Karushchev, who has put a big cross on abstract art, Tito brought powerful logic to bear against them. They "hope to cover up their ignorance," he said, "with a foul splotch on canvas".

"I have heard," said the head of the government, "that some people who felt disturbed by my words (at a previous meeting where he condemned abstract art) asked by what right I criticized the negative manifestations of cultural life. They said: 'Tito's politics is good, however, he is not competent in the cultural field.' The person who said this did not understand the nature of the Communist party, socialism and communism. I am not only competent in questions of industry and agriculture; I am equally competent in cultural questions because I am the president of the republic and general secretary of the Communist League!"

Remarkable as Tito's talents are in this field, they have not taken him as far as they did in the case of Stalin, a similarly selfmade art critic. Tito does not propose to ban abstract art or purge those who experiment with it. He insists only that no prizes be awarded any of their canvases.

"We are not preparing administrative measures against our artists," Tito was quoted as saying. "This would be contrary to the program of the Communist League. Let those artists who want to, work as they please - but at their own expense! If people buy their works, we're not against it. But we will not give any more government funds, millions, for such paintings: I will energetically oppose it!"

#### TROTSKY'S DIARY IN POCKET-BOOK EDITION IN GERMANY

Trotsky's Diary in Exile has been translated into German and published as a low-priced pocket book.

The edition, of some tens of thousands of copies, is the biggest yet published in any language.

#### YEVTUSHENKO IN PARIS

By G. Vataud

The young Soviet poet Yevgenil Yevtushenko drew a crowd of some 5,000 students, intellectuals and young workers at the well-known meeting hall Mutualité February 17. He recited some of his political poems and answered many "touchy" questions put to him by the audience.

The meeting was sponsored by the Union des Etudiants Communistes (union of Communist students) which is in open opposition to the Thorez leadership of the French Communist party.

Hours before the meeting an enormous line up indicated that the hall would be jammed. Loudspeakers were hastily rigged in corridors and adjacent rooms to take care of the overflow.

Yevtushenko recited such "lyrical" poems as Hail, and political poems like Babi Yar (a passionate denunciation of anti-Semitism which still exists in the Soviet Union because of the use made of it by the bureaucracy) and Stalin's Heirs (an attack against Stalin and Stalinism).

Babi Yar drew the most applause. The audience, composed mostly of young Communist students stepped in the conformist atmosphere of the French CP, where only lip service has been paid to Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization", were too stunned by the vigorous anti-Stalinism of Stalin's Heirs to respond to the magnificent poem with the full enthusiasm which it merits.

During the question-and-answer period, Yevtushenko insisted that he seeks in his poetry to present "a global picture of man and the world" and that he does not really separate lyrical from political poetry.

When asked if he didn't agree that poets in France have a hard time because they are not subsidized by the government, he said that, they would do better if they handled subjects that interest and involve people.

In response to a question as to why he recited few lyrical but many political poems, he replied: "In Paris there are enough lyrical poems. But I think you could do with a few more revolutionary ones."

Yevtushenko's answers to the dozens of questions - he had no time to answer all - amounted to a single passionate appeal for revolution. He read two fine poems about the Cuban Revolution, one a tribute to a Cuban youth shot after seizing the microphone in a Batista radio station and speaking "three minutes of truth."

The poem ended, "I dedicate this poem to you, youth of the world, who are likewise ready to give your lives for three minutes of truth."

Yevtushenko wound up the evening by recalling an incident at the Helsinki Youth Festival last summer. He had a wonderful time, he said fraternizing with young Frenchmen. One of them suddenly said, "You can come to Paris, Yevtushenko. You won't interest anybody with your stuff about socialism and revolution. You won't draw a crowd. But when you have the equivalent of Galeries Lafayette (a big department store) in Moscow and the city is full of cars, then the Soviet Union will again have some influence on us."

This view, of course, reflects the perspective advanced by Khrushchev and Thorez that a "break through" will not occur in the West until the standard of living in the USSR is higher than in the



United States. Said Yevtushenko: "I listened to this youth and I thought to myself, 'You poor old man.' And I felt sorry for him. I'm convinced that French youth are different. And this evening I am glad to see them here in such numbers and so enthusiastic when I speak about revolution. I hope they make their own revolution."

These comments are all the more significant in view of the fact that at the last three congresses of the French CP, the word "revolution" doesn't appear once in the resolutions.

To a question about the Hungarian revolution, Yevtushenko responded: "It was a tragedy for all the Soviet people. The cause of the revolt was the crimes of the dogmatists. The revolt was undertaken by pure-minded people. But afterwards events turned out in such a way that they were submerged by fascists, especially those who moved in from Western Germany. To have Hungarian socialism destroyed by fascism could not be tolerated." He paused for a long moment and then sighed. "You know, I wasn't there. . . ."

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