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France on Brink of Revolution



Students in the Latin Quarter of Paris begin building one of the sixty barricades which they held against de Gaulle's police on the night of May 10-11 with a heroism that stirred all of

France. The workers then rallied to the cause of the students with a giant demonstration and one-day strike. This triggered the nationwide revolutionary upsurge now shaking the country.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN FRANCE?

By Joseph Hansen

New York

MAY 21 -- As many as 10,000,000 workers are out on strike in France, according to the latest report on the radio, and the revolutionary upsurge appears to be developing undiminished.

One of the most significant features of the enormous strike wave is the occupation of the factories. This recalls the actions of the Italian workers in the early twenties, the French workers again in 1936, and the American workers in 1937. By occupying the factories, the workers indicate what they want -- a complete take-over.

On the political level this means ousting the general administration of the capitalist class -- their government -- and replacing it with a workers government.

The take-over in the plants provides the necessary base in the economy for the take-over on the government level.

The French workers themselves are showing this in their own way -- by running up the red flag over the plants they have occupied. The red flag, in their minds, stands for socialism or communism.

The depth of the upsurge is indicated by its spontaneity. As in all genuinely revolutionary situations, no one planned it that way.

It began with the students, as described in detail in other articles in this issue of Intercontinental Press written by eyewitnesses of the events. The student movement at a certain point triggered a sympathetic response among the workers and this led to the one-day general strike and giant demonstration of May 13 in Paris.

This action alone was sufficient to alter the entire political situation in France, all of western Europe, and without doubt the whole world. But it turned out to be the detonator for something far bigger.

On May 14, the day after the Paris events, the workers at Sud-Aviation in Nanterre staged a sit-down strike. They took over the plant, including the management, which they placed in custody. This set off the subsequent chain reaction that led to the complete paralysis of all industrial activity in France within a couple of days.

"We weren't trying to make a revo-

lution," Georges Vincent, a 35-year-old union spokesman at the plant was quoted as saying.

"It's fantastic, what happened," another worker, Yves Rocton, said. "It wasn't planned this way, I can assure you."

These remarks accurately reflect what happened on a nationwide scale in France. The working class moved into action in spontaneous fashion and everything stopped -- plants, transport, finance, the schools...It was one of the most dramatic demonstrations of the power of labor yet seen in history.

And there is more to come. The high-school students are pouring into the streets. The farmers are preparing their own day of protest May 24, and they have been building barricades and occupying city halls for the past few years.

A fitting symbol of the state of affairs was the fact that at Orly, one of the world's biggest airports, only one passenger has gone through the gates for days -- that was de Gaulle.

The general, who has ruled France with an autocratic hand for ten years, has remained silent up to this moment about the situation. The pundits are speculating whether he will resign or seek to ride out the storm.

What de Gaulle does or does not do is no longer decisive. He has exhausted the role he has played up to now; and the French capitalist class, which owes him so much, may now decide that the best course for him to follow is to imitate Johnson and bow out, whatever face-saving formula he may decide on.

French capitalism is looking toward another savior -- Waldeck-Rochet, the head of the Communist party, who can, without stretching things too far, be called the French counterpart of Britain's Harold Wilson.

The French Communist party has already demonstrated its capacity to save the capitalist structure in moments of extreme crisis. Its first performance on a major scale was in 1936 when France witnessed a working-class upsurge comparable to the one now taking place.

Because the Communist party had the confidence of the workers owing to its association with Moscow and thus ultimately with the October 1917 revolution, it was able to take them down a political blind alley. The device used

for this was the "Popular Front"; i.e., unity with the "progressive" or "democratic" sector of the capitalist class. The condition for maintaining this "unity" was to forego the perspective of socialism "for the immediate future."

Instead of the country going socialist on the eve of World War II, France remained capitalist; and this made it possible for Hitler to proceed with his plans. The outcome was the catastrophic invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazi occupation of most of western Europe, and for the French workers -- the Petain regime.

Again after the end of the second world war, the French workers went into action, going so far as to occupy the town halls in some areas.

Under Thorez, the Communist party came to the rescue of French capitalism once more. As ministers in a coalition government, the Communist party leaders called for "unity" with the "progressive" or "democratic" sector of the capitalist government and succeeded in diverting the struggle of the workers into a political blind alley for the second time.

The Communist party bureaucrats are now preparing to play the same role for a third time. How well this is understood among the French bourgeoisie was shown by an incident reported by Henry Tanner, the Paris correspondent of the New York Times in a dispatch yesterday:

"When told that Communist 'militants' had taken over from the young students, a solidly bourgeois restaurant-owner heaved a huge sigh of relief. 'Thank God,' he said, 'we're over the hump.'"

The Communist party bureaucrats gave the tip-off on what course they hope to follow by a number of moves.

They sought to assert leadership over the spontaneous movement by going along with it after having failed at an earlier stage to block it. Thus they put the trade unions they control in the forefront of such demonstrations as the one on May 13. At the same time they shouted about the danger of "provocations." What is meant by this was shown by the dispatch from Paris May 20: "To reduce the risk of violence, it [the General Confederation of Labor] banned parades and demonstrations outside the plants, and in nearly all cases it obtained the release of plant managers sequestered by enthusiastic workers."

The CP aim is transparent. It is to get the workers out of the plants and out of the streets, and convert the strug-

gle in which power is really at stake, into the shadow play of parliamentary politics. Hence the CP demand that de Gaulle "resign." (They have the power to remove him with a flick of the finger.) Hence the CP appeal for a new Popular Front.

Will the Communist party succeed in carrying through a third betrayal?

This remains to be seen. The entire constellation of international political forces is completely different from the previous periods. Moscow has lost much of its former hypnotic influence on the workers and students. The latter especially are aware of the mood of the students in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. And there are other centers of attraction, especially Cuba and the example of such figures as Che Guevara.

One of the notable features of the street demonstrations in the past days in Paris was the interest and sympathy displayed by the younger layer of workers for the students.

The truth is that the Communist party has been cut off to a considerable degree from the younger generation, who set up the barricades in the Latin Quarter and touched off the entire current upsurge. This generation now has an excellent chance to outflank the CP bureaucrats from the left.

The possibility itself constitutes a source of pressure on the CP that did not exist in 1936 or 1947 and which could compel these bureaucrats to go even further than they themselves dream.

The formation of Action Committees, or something similar, on a widening scale can prove decisive, particularly in making possible the swift growth of a mass revolutionary Marxist party in the very course of action in the period now opening up.

The role of the Trotskyists, and particularly the Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire, has been mentioned repeatedly in the press for what they accomplished in the first stages to set the class struggle in motion.

The references are neither detailed nor very laudatory. Both Premier Pompidou and l'Humanité find common ground in denouncing them as "provocateurs." What really disturbs these representatives of bourgeois "law and order" is the simple fact that the Trotskyists and currents close to them are now forging ahead at a completely unexpected rate. In a matter of days, their voice -- the voice of revolutionary Marxism -- began to reach tens of thousands of militant youth. This augurs well for the revolutionary period now opening up in France.

AS REPORTED BY THE "SUNDAY EXPRESS"

[The following report on the situation in France, sent from Paris May 18, appeared in the May 19 London Sunday Express. Written by Gerald Kemmet, it was headlined: "Strikers paralyse the nation in a challenge to de Gaulle -- FRANCE TOTTERING."

[Founded by Lord Beaverbrook, the Sunday Express is highly conservative in outlook.]

* * *

The proud France created by Charles de Gaulle tottered deeper into industrial anarchy today -- and as nearly 2 million strikers brought the nation to a halt the General cut short his Rumanian tour and flew home to face the massive challenge to his authority.

Nobody here in Paris dares predict what the outcome will be. The life of the Fifth Republic which de Gaulle brought into existence now hangs by the thinnest of threads.

No one in authority will speculate if the strikers who have seized scores of factories and occupied railway stations, airports, telephone exchanges, docks, and mines will heed any orders which de Gaulle may issue.

As industrial paralysis spread through the country, the secretary general of the French Communist Party, Waldeck Rochet, stepped into the picture. He issued this statement:

"The time has come for the formation of a popular government of democratic union in which the Communist Party is ready to take its place."

A move to throw out the present government was backed by one of de Gaulle's own men, M. Rene Capitant, leader of the Left wing of the Gaullist Union of Democrats.

He announced that he will hit out at the Administration in a vote of censure already tabled by the opposition for Wednesday.

The splinter party led by de Gaulle's former Finance Minister, Valery Giscard d'Estaing, is expected to abstain -- thereby depriving de Gaulle of the handful of votes on which he counts to

assure the life of his parliamentary party.

Tonight there are doubts if de Gaulle will be able to rely completely on the police should any grave emergency arise.

As 10,000 reinforcements from the provinces were being drafted into Paris to help maintain law and order, a delegation from the police unions called at the Ministry of the Interior with an urgent demand for increased pay.

The demand was backed up by a statement from the unions -- representing 51,000 riot police and gendarmes. This statement warned the Government: "A climate of extreme tension exists at present in all the police bodies of the nation."

The red flag of revolution was run up by strikers who seized factories down the length of France from Boulogne to Lyon.

Sixty thousand men and women occupied Renault car plants in Paris, Le Mans, Le Havre, and Orleans. More than 5,000 seized the plants of Sud Aviation, makers of the Concorde, at Nantes and St. Nazaire. Dockers were in control of the port at Rouen and the shipyard men took over the yards at Le Havre.

Air France stopped flying. By mid-day there were no trains leaving Paris. Most provincial areas reported: "Nothing moving on the railways."

In Marseilles, post offices stopped paying out money "on demand" because of a shortage of funds. Some residents were reported withdrawing cash from the State savings bank (Caisse d'Epargne). One union called for a bank strike.

Several hundred film directors and film workers occupied the main projection room at the Cannes Festival and the jury announced that it could not continue its work.

The French train ferry services from Dieppe to Newhaven were cancelled. The British ferries continued to run although there were no trains to meet them at Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe or Dunkirk.

AS REPORTED BY "THE OBSERVER"

[The following excerpts are from a report datelined Paris, May 18, by Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville, which appeared in the May 19 issue of the liberal London weekly, The Observer. The article was headlined: "De Gaulle hurries home as workers' revolt halts France."

[Particularly to be noted is the considered estimate of the two reporters that the Communist party stands as the "ultimate bastion" of capitalist society in France.]

* * *

In a staggering end to a staggering week, the commanding heights of the French economy are falling to the workers.

All over France a calm, obedient, irresistible wave of working-class power is engulfing factories, dockyards, mines, railway depots, bus garages, postal sorting offices.

Trains, mails, air flights are virtually at a standstill. Production lines in chemicals, steel, metalworking, textiles, shipbuilding and a score of industries have ground to a halt.

Nearly a million men and women in key industries are seizing their places of work and closing the gates. Many a baffled and impotent manager is being held prisoner in his own carpeted office.

General de Gaulle has cut short his Romanian tour to return to Paris tonight. He spoke to the Prime Minister by telephone this morning.

The paralysis, creeping hour by hour across the country, has been ordered by the French Communist Party and its trade union arm, the CGT, and followed by other unions. It is an imposing demonstration of the Communists' organised strength. They are the arbiters of the situation. If the Government wants a settlement, it must deal with them.

But the paradox which underlies this controlled chaos is that the Communist unions and the Gaullist Government they appear to be challenging are really on the same side of the barricades. They are defending French society as we know it. Their common enemy is the astonishing student insurrection which, for a moment this week, rocked not only the regime but the social structures of the country.

The students opened the door to the unknown. The Socialist Utopia they preached seemed horrifyingly plausible.

They tore down the intimidating edifice of French education, and from the rubble marched, banners flying, on society itself. Bourgeois France trembled. Was this another 1789?

The turning-point of this whirlwind crisis came late on Thursday night. In near desperation, the establishment -- not only the Government but also the bureaucrats of the great Communist unions -- rallied to its own defence.

The Prime Minister, M. Pompidou, called on all Frenchmen to turn away from anarchy. Police reservists were called up. The Eiffel Tower was placed under guard. The CGT alerted its members against any outside interference in the affairs of the working class -- a clear sign that the Communist unions had disowned the students.

The Communist Party thus stood revealed as the ultimate bastion of the consumer society which the student Bolsheviks were pledged to destroy. It is as if Washington and Moscow had got together to put down North Vietnam.

This is the real significance of the vast Communist-ordered strike movement. Like a gendarme astride the French economy, the CP has held up and stopped the traffic. 'We are in charge here,' the party is saying.

Only by this dramatic mobilisation of its troops can the orthodox Communist Party outbid the student agitators and isolate their revolutionary virus. 'Who is Cohn-Bendit?', the CGT secretary-general Georges Seguy asked last night with dismissing mock ignorance, like a High Court judge trying to identify Miss Elizabeth Taylor.

Only in this way can the apparatus which heads the Communist unions retain its control and protect its base from contamination. Economic dislocation and incredible inconvenience are the price which French society is having to pay to head-off an insurrectional movement which no one saw coming and few have yet understood.

It now looks as if the Government and the CGT -- in tacit alliance -- have contained the insurrection, at great profit, incidentally, to the unions. But the revolution triggered-off by the students goes on. In a fortnight it has transformed the tone of French life to an unimaginable degree.

A great gust of liberalising fresh air has blown through French minds. Under the irresistible pressure of events, the

Gaullist style of government -- fatherly, sanctimonious, preachifying, distant -- can hardly be the same again. The sheep have risen. The Elysée no longer has the monopoly of wisdom.

In a curious way, General de Gaulle himself, after being dominant in French affairs for a quarter of a century, has suddenly seemed an irrelevance. His name has hardly been mentioned in the past two weeks -- and this is not only because he has been out of the country preaching his gospel of national independence to the Rumanians. His great age, his authoritarian habits, gloriously traditional vision of France, seem to have put him completely out of reach of the student revolutionaries.

Overnight he seems to have become an ancient monument, as pointless as the Invalides in the current ferment among the young.

It takes a moment of crisis to show up the irrelevance of many national monuments. At an astonishing, semi-burlesque meeting at the Ministry of the Interior this week, the Minister asked his aides which public buildings were worth defending by force, if the students attacked. The Comédie Française? The French Academy?

The French have always been talkative, but not for years have French tongues wagged so vigorously as this past week. From the day-and-night orgy of talk at the Sorbonne, a great explosion of public debate has burst across the country. People are speaking their minds. Nothing is sacred. The ruthless control of information, one of the main features of the Gaullist regime, has been broken.

In a modern telecommunications society, the radio station is one of the real seats of authority, its seizure the symbol of a successful revolution. On Thursday, the student insurgents who had already spilt out of the University and occupied the State-owned Odéon Theatre, declared they would march on broadcasting house.

For the Government, this was the gravest moment of the crisis. It faced two horrifying dangers: first, that the student rabble army might attack and seize further Government property, and particularly the radio; secondly, that the Communist unions, the most powerful popular force in the country, would join forces with the student extremists. This could have meant real, and probably bloody, revolution.

M. Pompidou held a council of war and addressed the nation. He pledged, in the most sober tones, that the Government would defend the Republic. At that moment

he gambled with his whole political future. In the short term at least, his gamble has paid off.

By yesterday morning it was clear that the students did not want another bloody clash with the police. The march on the radio station was called off. Secondly, and still more important, the Communist unions disowned the students' insurrection, and called out their own men in a rival show of strength. The fateful wedding of workers and students was not to be. From that moment the Republic was reasonably safe.

* * *

Last night a crowd of at least 2,000 strong, drawn from the whole range of broadcasting services, demanded a complete overhaul of French radio and television: a new statute, real freedom from Government control, and the wholesale resignation of the existing management. They have decided to strike if the Government does not give way.

* * *

At least 16 of France's 18 universities have crumbled to student power in an atmosphere of incredible delirium. Many faculties have declared themselves autonomous.

Still more devastating, the contagion has spread to secondary schools: the baccalaureat, the revered summit of French school education, has come under frontal attack. This may be the last year in which the shadow of this examination darkens the life of every well-bred French teenager. From top to bottom of the system, exams -- the very symbol of French education -- are being boycotted. The cry is not so much for reform as for total destruction and reconstruction. There has not been such a shake-up for 150 years.

* * *

Another casualty of the past week is the credibility of political parties in the centre and on the Social Democratic left. The regime has lost the students, but it is clear that the Socialist Opposition has not gained them. In the minds of student revolutionaries, Government and Opposition are lumped together in one dreary, fossilised, discredited bunch.

* * *

France is in revolutionary ferment. Who is responsible? Who put the spark to the dead wood? In the permanent disorderly festival of the Sorbonne, drunk on a week's total freedom, all seems confusion and spontaneity. It is hard to believe that anyone anywhere is pulling the

strings to set this spectacle in motion.

The great solemn courtyard has been taken over by a bedraggled, wild-eyed mob. Decorated with portraits of Mao, Lenin and Marx, Trotsky, Castro and Guevara, festooned with Marxist, anarchist and Vietcong flags, it is a sort of bazaar for trafficking in revolutionary ideas. A dozen extremist groups clamour for attention and peddle their tracts.

The staircases to the upper storeys are blocked with a hurrying, scurrying stream of militant functionaries, some in the red armbands of the service d'ordre. Lecture halls, and particularly the great central amphitheatre, are packed day and night for a nonstop debate. Confused, wordy, violent opinions are hurled into the microphones. Feverish young women shout slogans like, 'Universal suffrage is the most obvious form of dictatorship.'

What is going on is an unforgettable and moving chapter of direct democracy. For the thousands of young people taking part, it is a delirious experience, one of the most formative they may ever live through, an instant political education.

At night one room is given over to love, another to a deadly earnest debate on sexual repression. A Commission of Cultural Agitation is in permanent session, staging alternating performances and discussions. A motion to plaster over Puvis de Chavanne's fresco, Ancient Greece unveiling herself before Archaeology, is narrowly defeated.

In the upper storeys, where police spies are thicker, the more serious political work takes place.

Action committees ponder the next objectives. Anxious teenagers with furrowed brows and tobacco-stained fingers spell out revolutionary tracts. Girls, often with more fervour and staying-power than the boys, type, cut stencils, cook, make beds in the improvised communal dormitories.

All this fever is not wholly spontaneous and undirected. The organisation best known to the public is Daniel Cohn-Bendit's Movement of March 22. Cohn-Bendit, short, stocky, 23, with flaming

red hair, is a born leader, a mob orator of real talent. He is an ex-anarchist, but at this moment belongs to no political party. His fief is the Paris University annexe of Nanterre, his followers students.

A second, less well-known organisation, is the Movement of 3 May (like 22 March named after a turning-point in the recent crisis) made up mainly of rather older militant research students and teachers, often former members of the CP. They provide intellectual stuffing and political experience. Like 22 March, they are also Paris-based.

These two groups are in loose alliance with the two principal students' and university teachers' unions, UNEF and SNESUP.

Behind these organisations lies one further body, the only really political movement among them.

It is the Jeunesse Communiste Revolutionnaire (JCR), the French branch of the world Trotskyist movement, under the unified secretariat of the Fourth International. It can claim to have provided the chief inspiration and political direction of the insurrection of the past two weeks, which may justly be described as the greatest success the Trotskyists have ever achieved in Europe.

In France they are estimated to have some 1,000 hard-core members spread over 30 cities. In Paris, scratch any one of the proliferating Sorbonne committees and you find their man. Their directing hand is at work in the March 22 Movement, the May 3 Movement, and also in the CAL (Comités d'Action Lycéen), the secondary school action committees, which are leading the attack on the baccalaureat -- and which, if successful, could plunge France into a crisis even graver than the university revolution.

The JCR believes that revolution is war. Like Trotsky, its prophet, it is fascinated by military strategy. Its members are inflamed by the twin themes of the ills of bourgeois society and what they call 'colonial revolution' like the Vietnam war. They provide the principal French link with the German League of Socialist Students (SDS) led by Rudi Dutschke.

AS REPORTED BY "THE NEW YORK TIMES"

[The following report of the situation in France was sent from Paris by Henry Tanner, appearing in the New York Times of May 19. The headline was "Unrest

in France -- The Students Sow Seeds of a Revolution."

[As the most authoritative voice

of the ruling class in the United States, the Times' estimate of the political role of the Communist party in the current events is of special interest. As will be noted, the judgment of the Times corresponds with that of the liberal Observer in London.

* * *

PARIS -- What started modestly as little more than a student "happening" three weeks ago has become a country-wide tide of discontent and revolutionary fever that threatens the basic institutions of France and may yet bring the down-fall of the Government. So serious has the situation become that President de Gaulle rushed back yesterday from a visit to Rumania, a day ahead of his scheduled return.

How did so small an event become so big and potent?

Up till now, essentially, there have been four stages.

The movement started with a mere handful -- a few dozen -- student extremists of vaguely Trotskyite persuasions at the Nanterre branch of the University of Paris. These Enragés decided that a certain professor should not be permitted to hold a certain lecture. The Government closed the Nanterre College. And the handful of Enragés moved to Paris and the Sorbonne.

The second stage came when the police occupied the courtyard of the venerable old university to prevent the Nanterre leftists from clashing with Paris rightists. The occupation brought out a few thousands other students who clashed with the police.

The police clubbed, gassed and kicked the students with unbelievable brutality and this, in turn, touched off a general uprising of students throughout the country. From then on it was a movement of hundreds of thousands of youngsters.

It was at this point that the revolt, by its spontaneous, totally uncontrolled and uncontrollable nature had become a truly revolutionary event.

In the third stage, last Tuesday, the workers moved in for the first time. Strikers at an aircraft plant in Nantes, on the Atlantic coast, took a leaf from the students' book, and occupied their factory, keeping the manager and his executives prisoners. They are still being held this weekend.

The men at Nantes acted without instructions from their Communist and other labor unions and without consult-

ing the opposition parties. This meant that the traditional opposition parties as well as the Gaullist regime were in jeopardy.

The speeches at the National Assembly seemed strangely irrelevant. Francois Mitterrand, the opposition leader, and Waldeck Rochet, the head of the Communist party, were as hopelessly out of touch as Premier Georges Pompidou. They were all part of the "Establishment." And they were all faced with a popular tide that they had cause to fear.

It was then, Thursday evening, that the fourth phase of the crisis began. It is still underway. It consists of two counter-offensives waged for different reasons and with different means by the Gaullist Government and the traditional opposition parties.

The two counter-offensives have the same goal: To stop the spread of the popular uprising that had been touched off by the freelance revolutionaries among the students and the workers.

The Government, in the person of Premier Pompidou, announced Thursday night that the "agitators" were out "to destroy the nation" and that the Government would fight to protect the country's institutions and the national heritage.

The opposition parties and the labor unions have a more complicated and more ambitious task. They want to harness the movement of revolt and to bend it to their own purposes -- against the Government.

The Communist party and the Communist C.G.T., the largest union federation, both disavowed the students in a striking rebuff -- perhaps in reaction to student disavowal of Communist ties since, they said, Communism was just another facet of the Establishment -- and announced that their own "militants" would forthwith lead the revolt. Striking workers in all parts of the country were warned against fraternizing with the students.

This was the situation yesterday:

The students had relinquished the center of the stage to the workers. But the occupation of practically every university in the country continued. Hundreds of thousands of students and high school children were still defying the Government. The strike movement of the workers was still spreading.

But it was too early to tell whether the nature of the revolt had changed. Were the new strikes, which were

announced from all parts of the country, the result of spontaneous action by local men caught in the contagious fever of revolt? Or were they organized and controlled by the unions and Communists?

The answer, when it becomes apparent, will be all-important. If the movement is an uncontrolled revolutionary upsurge, the country may be plunged

into anarchy.

If the Communist party has managed to take over the movement, then, ironically, the institutions are safe and the political contest is likely to move back into the National Assembly, with votes of confidence and votes of censure and traditional speeches -- and sooner or later a new election.

KHRUSHCHEV STILL BOTHERED BY FATE OF ZINOVIEV, KAMENEV, BUKHARIN

Agence France-Presse reported from Moscow May 9 that Khrushchev recently indicated that when he was head of the Communist party of the Soviet Union he favored rehabilitating Kamenev, Zinoviev, and Bukharin, three of the leading Bolsheviks killed by Stalin in the great purge trials on framed-up charges of having sold out to Hitler.

According to the dispatch, Khrushchev and his wife attended a performance of the play The Bolsheviks at a Moscow theater "the other night."

In the play, which is set in the early days of the Russian revolution, a scene takes place where the members of the Soviet government gather around Lenin to discuss unleashing red terror in the civil war in response to the terror of the White Guards.

At the end of the play, Khrushchev went backstage to congratulate the cast

and the theater's literary director, Oleg Efremov.

"That was good; I liked that," the former first secretary said. "But I'm sorry that you didn't put in certain figures, like Kamenev, for example, or Zinoviev or Bukharin.

"They committed errors but I think that they were honest Communists."

"I tried for a time," he added, "to rehabilitate them, but I didn't succeed."

Khrushchev's wife gently took him by the arm. "Come, Nikita, let's go. You're beginning to get tired..."

Khrushchev, it may be recalled, owed his career under Stalin to the zeal with which he carried out the purge program and helped send Lenin's comrades-in-arms to the execution squads.

LAURENT SCHWARTZ BARRED FROM U.S. FOR PARTICIPATING IN WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL

The Paris daily Le Monde reported May 11 that the U.S. government has refused to grant a visa to the world-famous French mathematician Laurent Schwartz.

Schwartz had been invited by the chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley to take part in the projected centennial celebration of the university.

The U.S. State Department gave as its reason for refusing the visa Schwartz' membership "in an organization whose members are considered undesirable by the United States." Le Monde added that "without doubt" the organization referred to was the International War Crimes Tribunal initiated by Bertrand Russell.

It should be noted that the Inter-

national War Crimes Tribunal, which did not claim to be an "official" body nevertheless invited the U.S. government to send an unofficial representative to present its case, if it thought it had one, or to provide a written brief, or submit evidence for the record. Squirming in embarrassment, the White House ignored the invitation.

Now the Johnson administration is using its official power to prevent anyone who disagrees with its imperialist course from even entering the country.

This petty and vindictive stand is all the more flagrant in view of the fact that the antiwar opinions of the prestigious mathematician are shared by a sizable section of the American people.

An Eyewitness Account

THE MAY 10-11 BATTLE OF THE BARRICADES

By Gisela Mandel

Paris

The students in France had mobilized for months in struggle against the Gaullist government's education policy. They had been fighting its decision to reduce the applicant pressure on the universities by an earlier weeding-out process. They had been fighting its determination to maintain a situation where there is a scarcity of professors, classrooms, and laboratories due to cuts in educational appropriations resulting from exorbitant military spending (e.g., the French atom bomb).

In the course of these actions, there were several student strikes, as for example the November 20 strike in Nanterre -- the largest student strike in France up to then -- in which 10,000 students took part. On December 13, university students held a nationwide day of struggle. Six high schools also participated.

On February 21, Paris witnessed the first mass university and high-school student demonstration, which renamed the Latin Quarter the "Heroic Vietnam Quarter." This demonstration had a number of sequels, including the arrest of several student leaders of the Comité Vietnam National [National Vietnam Committee].

On March 22, a mass demonstration against these arrests was held in Nanterre. On this occasion the March 22 Movement was formed. The students occupied the university and took over the university broadcasting station. They decided to hold a day of political discussion at the University of Nanterre on March 29. The rector closed the university for two days. Then large-scale clashes developed between the students of the March 22 Movement and the fascist students of the Occident [West] group.

Days of struggle against imperialism were to be held in Nanterre on May 2 and 3. On May 2, the rector again closed the university. On May 3, the students of the Sorbonne and several high schools declared themselves in solidarity with the students of Nanterre and above all with the seven Nanterre students of the March 22 Movement against whom the rector had initiated disciplinary proceedings.

On the afternoon of the same day, a demonstration of several thousand university and high-school students took place; it ran up against sharp police re-

pression. The first street battles began. The police invaded the Sorbonne. On May 6, the students in Paris organized a mass demonstration. The Sorbonne was closed and surrounded with heavy police cordons and armored cars.

On May 7, another mass demonstration, involving 20,000 students, protested the arrests of their comrades and demanded that the Sorbonne and Nanterre universities be opened. These universities remained closed and surrounded. On May 9, teach-ins took place on the streets throughout the Latin Quarter. It was decided to hold a mass demonstration on the following day.

That same evening, the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire -- Revolutionary Communist Youth] held a mass meeting of 6,000 students in the Mutualité, to which Comrades Semmler and Rabehl from the Berlin SDS [Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund -- German Socialist Student Federation] had been invited. When the news came that they had been turned back at the Paris airport, a real storm broke out among the students.

On May 10 at 6:30 p.m. 35,000 university and high-school students gathered at the Place Denfert Rochereau. The high-school students, who had struck that day, showed up two hours earlier and had a good time, singing songs of the French revolution and the Paris Commune along with the "Internationale." At 6 p.m. the students formed up in front of their different institute and university buildings and marched with banners from all directions toward the assembly point.

At that point a broad, open discussion was held on where the march should go. Representatives of the most diverse tendencies were invited to climb up on the monument, a lion, and voice their opinions. After a half hour's discussion, two opposing proposals were put to a vote: that they march into the working-class district of Paris to discuss in groups with the workers; that they demonstrate in front of the Ministry of Education and demand the minister of education's resignation. The majority voted to go to the Ministry of Education. However, they decided to take a route through the working-class district.

While discussion was still going on among individual leaders, the march started quite suddenly and began moving along the Boulevard Arago in the direction of Santé prison, in which several

of the students' arrested comrades were imprisoned. The discussion was over; suddenly they were all united. Quickly long lines of marshals formed to the right and left of the march, shielding the demonstrators from either side.

The police were nowhere to be seen. Since neither the route of the march nor its destination had been disclosed, the police deployed their forces around the university and closed off the bridges over the Seine. They feared an attack on the Hotel Crillon across the Seine at the Place de la Concorde, where the American delegation to the Vietnam "peace" talks is staying. They also feared an attack on the Palace of Justice.

For this reason, thousands of police with hundreds of armored cars blocked off the bridges over the Seine. Already that day still more companies of militarily armed and trained CRS [Compagnies Républicains de Sécurité -- Republican Security Companies] and the so-called Gendarmerie Mobile [Mobile Gendarmes, or paramilitary police] were concentrated around the Latin Quarter. The Sorbonne had been heavily ringed by police since its closing. The demonstration was followed by helicopters moving very high above the demonstrators like insects.

After roughly a quarter of a mile, the students reached the prison. There they chanted their solidarity with the prisoners as victims of the bourgeois state and demanded the immediate release of their imprisoned comrades. Then they moved on, to the left onto the Avenue des Gobelins and the Rue Monge.

On the Boulevard Arago, the people looked askance at the demonstrators. But once they entered the working-class district around the Mutualité spontaneous demonstrations of applause broke out from the onlookers. The students responded with jubilation and calls to join them on the street.

The main slogans of the march were: "De Gaulle Is Responsible," "We Will Free Our Comrades," "For a Free University," "For a Workers University," "This Concerns You: Your Children Are Affected," "Teachers Instead of Police," "Against a Police State." The slogan, "De Gaulle Is Responsible," recurred continually.

Now, the shout, "Join us in the street!" was answered spontaneously from the windows and sidewalks with the cry, "We're with you in the street." The students and bystanders sang the "Internationale" together. The march was slowing down, drawing near the first dense police cordons in the Latin Quarter. From the Rue Monge it turned left onto the Boulevard St. Germain and then left again to take the Boulevard St. Michel and move

over the Seine to the Champs Elysées. There the demonstrators were blocked for the first time.

The Boulevard St. Michel was closed off in the direction of the Seine by hundreds of heavily armed CRS with shields. Behind the police cordon were three rows of armored cars deployed across the street. Thus, the march was forced to the left on the Boulevard St. Michel and had no alternative but to retreat into the Latin Quarter. Once the marchers had passed, the CRS followed on their heels and closed off the side streets, pushing the 35,000 to 40,000 students deeper into the heart of the Latin Quarter.

At 10 p.m., after a deafening clamor from the horns of motorists, the bridges were again opened to traffic, and the police retreated into the Latin Quarter. For twenty-three hours, the demonstrators and the population of an entire district of Paris were so tightly blockaded by thousands of police that no private motorist or individual pedestrian was able to get in or out.

Divided as they were into many different political groupings and under no single leadership, the demonstrators were careful to observe the basic human rules in their later building of barricades. For example, they were careful to build the eleventh barricade, which was located at the furthest and most critical point in such a way that the Red Cross as well as individuals who wanted to could get past.

The police, however, took a different attitude. When the first serious casualties occurred and Red Cross personnel asked passage through the police lines, they were driven back with clubs and fists. Red Cross ambulances, guided through the barricades by the students, were not allowed to return through the police cordon.

The police tactics were obvious. They drove the demonstrators into the Boulevard St. Michel, the Rue Soufflot, the Rue Gay-Lussac, the Rue Royer-Collard, the Gare du Luxembourg, the Rue Monsieur le Prince, and the Place Edmond Rostand, and encircled them. Then they drove back approaching spectators with clubs, clearing a space of roughly 700 square feet, and waited.

The police calculated that about midnight the tired and demoralized students would ask in small groups to be let through the cordon to go home. They would let them shiver and stew a little and then let them pass to the accompaniment of a few club blows and loud laughter.

They even made bets among themselves as to how many minutes the students -- "these privileged ones," these "gentlemen" --

would hold out against the cold. The highest bets went as far as 1 a.m. But the others considered those who went that far crazy.

Even the bystanders behind the police lines were skeptical, although for other reasons. They were waiting for word from the trade unions and the Communist party. Most agreed that if the CP called on its members to extend solidarity the students would win.

Even those who were quite opposed to the students' demands in no way favored the police assault. And here a basic difference between Berlin and Paris, indeed between Germany and France, must be noted.

As has been mentioned, the police used in Paris were not traffic or city police. They were the so-called Republican Security Companies, an armed security police force created in 1947 by the then Social Democratic minister of the interior Jules Moch for use against striking Communist workers.

These semimotorized troops are hated by the French petty-bourgeois and working-class population. Wherever they are called in, sympathy automatically goes to the other side. Thus everywhere they are seen in Paris these days they are greeted with cries of "CRS -- SS," and not by far left groups alone.

These units are made up mostly of physically gifted but intellectually deficient young men from petty-bourgeois or army backgrounds. If they do not want to go into the factories, the only chance they have is either to become physical education teachers or join the army. Both careers are much less well paid than the relatively short period of service in the CRS.

They are, moreover, thoroughly barracks-hardened troops with a high caliber of military training. In the recent years since the Algerian war they have been unable to display their skill except in sports sponsored by the police. And now, as frustrated men, they gladly took advantage of the situation to show off all they had learned.

The CRS erred in betting that it would soon get too cold for these "mama's boys," "privileged ones," and "nice boys." The action began when the students began writing "Against Police Violence -- Street Violence," and "Long Live the Paris Commune!" on the walls of buildings lining the blockaded streets.

At 11 p.m. the JCR opened the first headquarters in the besieged district. A family made their apartment available. Loudspeakers were set up on

the windows and a radio apparatus was installed to follow the news on the negotiations which had begun between three representatives of the UNEF [Union National des Etudiants Français -- National French Student Association] and the rector of the university.

Two cars from Radio Europe I, the only radio station not controlled by de Gaulle, provided additional news and picked up opinions and discussion among the students.

World press reporters, in Paris for the Vietnam negotiations, had to present their credentials to the students. They were forbidden to photograph companies of barricade-builders directly; but some of them did so anyway. They were informed that "tourists" could not be accommodated at the moment.

The pressmen's cameras were not taken away, although the students discussed this. Some photographers who continued to take close-ups despite the requests of marshals were gently but firmly ejected from the construction sites toward the police cordon.

At 11 p.m. the building of barricades began. The negotiations with the rector of the Sorbonne had run their course without producing any results. The student representatives demanded the prompt reopening of the university and the immediate release of the arrested students. The rector refused. He was then asked to continue the discussion directly with the students in the Latin Quarter. Again he refused. The student representatives left the negotiations without a word.

By 11:30 sixty barricades were going up. With the help of a megaphone and a city map, the students divided up the mass of demonstrators into companies of a few thousand each. The cobblestones were loosened in professional style with picks, grubbing hoes, and shovels provided by people living in the area. At every barricade four to six lines, each including about fifty people, passed cobblestones from the work sites and up onto the barricades.

This work was carried on to the singing of the "Internationale." Street signs were used to reinforce the barricades and as guideposts. Eight-foot paving stones formed the foundation of every barricade. On top of these were piled cars, gasoline-soaked wood, branches of trees to block the CRS view into the street, and as much wire as could be found.

The barricades were 700 feet apart. There was a strict rule against smoking and all use of lighters or matches, and it was obeyed. The cigarettes of newsmen

unwilling to observe the ban were taken from their mouths, stamped out and returned with due apologies. At 2 a.m. construction of the barricades was completed.

Now in all parts of the occupied area chants went up calling for support from the workers. In the meantime the rumor had spread that hundreds of workers had gathered in front of the CP headquarters to demand that the party leadership extend solidarity to the students.

Earlier in the evening, the CP leadership, which had harshly condemned the student movement from the outset, was still describing it as a "small minority of adventurers, anarchists, and Trotskyists." The university rector topped this off, calling it "une dizaine d'enragés" [a handful of madmen].

Some 30,000 young revolutionists were now calling for the support of the workers. Shortly after 2 a.m., the first announcement came over the loudspeaker that the CP had just declared its solidarity with the students. This news was received with great jubilation. It was late in coming, but it came!

An hour earlier the students of the pro-Chinese faction of the CP had left the student ghetto in a body because they no longer believed that support would be forthcoming from the workers. They declared that a purely student action on this scale was adventurist. Marching with them under three black banners went the students of the Fédération des Etudiants Révolutionnaires [Revolutionary Student Federation], the so-called Lambertistes,* who had energetically taken part in building the barricades up to then.

Through their actions the students had now won the support of the workers. Not long after the CP call for solidarity with the students, the trade unions, headed up by the CGT [Confédération Générale des Travailleurs -- General Labor Federation], which is backed by the majority of the workers in France today, called a general strike for May 13. The students had won a political victory.

From the Establishment's point of view, however, this was only the beginning of the red night of the Latin Quarter. And now it was also a question of time. The traffic would start at 6 a.m.; the streets blocked by the CRS and the students lay in the heart of Paris. The police had four hours left to clear the streets.

At 2:30, the CRS were ordered to

remove the barricades but "to avoid" contact with the demonstrators "as much as possible." An eerie stillness spread over the Latin Quarter. The barricades stood. And they were, as the radio so nicely put it, "no laughable barricades." On them stood hundreds of young demonstrators, some armed with Molotov cocktails. Between the barricades were tight rows of university and high-school students, a third of them girls. All stood silently. They were waiting for orders from the marshals.

The police attack began at 2:40 at the corner of Gay-Lussac and Royer-Collard streets on the Boulevard St. Michel. Tear-gas and smoke bombs were fired over the roofs onto the street directly into the mass of demonstrators between the barricades.

The people of the district, who had already helped with hundreds of cups of coffee, water, and sandwiches, now showered sheets, rags, and plastic sacks out of their windows for those demonstrators without goggles. Rags soaked in sugar were distributed. Those directly hit by bombs were taken into the buildings. And the students held their ground.

Students and some doctors called on the people through megaphones to dump water out of their windows in order to neutralize the gas which was standing in dense clouds in the narrow streets surrounded by high buildings. And warm water promptly rained out of the windows.

After twenty minutes it was clear that the tear-gas and smoke bombs would not drive the students out. The barricade front was manned by 200 students, who were continuously rotated.

Now a new action began. The police fired chlorine gas over the roofs into the front ranks behind the first barricade. Within seconds a yellowish brown smoke merging into blue-green made it difficult to breathe. The students on the first barricade and directly behind it had to retreat.

They did not do so however until they had set fire to the barricade in order to prevent the police from directly attacking the mass of students, who could only slowly retreat behind the second barricade. They had to gain time.

Some smoke and tear-gas bombs exploded against the venetian blinds of a cafe on the corner of Gay-Lussac and Royer-Collard streets, setting them on fire. This gave the students more time to make a partial retreat behind the second barricade and block the space between the first and second barricades with automobiles -- they had carefully avoided damaging them up to now -- that were

* Followers of Pierre Lambert, an ultra-left sectarian allied with Gerry Healy's Socialist Labour League in England.

parked along the street. They placed these cars across the street.

An hour later, a little after 3 a.m., the police took the first barricade. The space between the first two barricades was now saturated with chlorine and tear gas. Despite the water continually rained from the windows and the sugar-soaked rags which the people kept throwing out it was no longer possible to breathe. The students withdrew in close order behind the second barricade.

Meanwhile the police had split up and redeployed their forces. Besides the frontal attack along the Boulevard St. Michel and the Rue Gay-Lussac, they attacked through the much narrower side streets, which had also been blocked off with barricades by the students. The news spread like wildfire. By means of a megaphone and a little delivery truck the marshals ordered the students to regroup their forces.

It had become clear by this time that the Red Cross was unable to break through the police cordon from the outside and that there were too few medical personnel in the occupied area. A number of medical students were then supplied with Red Cross armbands and assigned to basic first-aid work. Red crosses were painted or stuck on a few cars which were prepared for transporting the wounded. The population supplied blankets and paint.

Meanwhile a pitched battle had developed around the second barricade in the Rue Gay-Lussac. Police in gas masks had penetrated into the area between the two first barricades which had been cleared with chlorine and tear gas and advanced to the second barricade. Now they fired smoke bombs and chlorine and tear gas directly into the mass of students.

But the demonstrators determined to defend this barricade no matter what until most of the students could withdraw behind the next one. They launched their first counterattack. In tight ranks, with helmets, goggles, and with rags over their mouths and noses, armed with paving stones, they waited for the police. The CRS advanced slowly because of the burning cars and opaque smoke.

The population made a renewed effort to clear away the toxic gas behind the second barricade as quickly as possible by throwing hundreds of buckets of water out of their windows. However, even before the police breakthrough many younger comrades had been overcome and had to be taken into the buildings.

When a doctor noted the first signs of chlorine poisoning in the uncon-

scious students, and hundreds of others complained of burning mouths, throats and lungs, a newsman asked a company of police whether they were using chlorine. He was knocked unconscious and had to be immediately hospitalized.

The prefect of police still denies that chlorine was used. Unluckily for him, the hospitals where the wounded were taken revealed that they were unquestionably suffering from chlorine poisoning. Furthermore, an unexploded chlorine gas shell was dismantled by the comrades. It turned out to have been made in the USA. A press conference since then has confirmed this.

After the police moved into the student-occupied district they found themselves becoming involved in a two-front struggle. Facing them were the students defending themselves and around them was a hostile population. Here and there people threw stones at the police from their windows, but mostly they denounced them in the strongest terms.

Every assault, every arrest was accompanied by a chorus from the windows: "Is that any way to treat youngsters?" "Fascist gangsters!"

Whole police companies charged into buildings to make arrests. Smoke bombs were fired into windows, causing injuries among the people living in the area, who, in ever greater numbers, went over to the side of the students.

However, with the help of the notorious concierges,* who were upset by the proceedings, by about 5 a.m. the police were able to occupy a few roofs and from there shoot tear gas, smoke bombs, and chlorine gas directly into the crowds below.

But the comrades did not panic for an instant. They continued to follow indications from the marshals, who kept an eye on all the barricades. The sidewalks were kept clear for the messengers' motor-bikes, which were marked with red flags.

At 5:30, the second barricade on the Rue Gay-Lussac fell. One hundred and fifty were wounded in the battle. Some were severely wounded but only a few of these could be directly taken to hospitals (and directly meant only within a half to three-quarters of an hour). For the others appeals were made to people in the area for help, which they willingly gave. Wounded policemen, of course, were immediately hauled away by the Red Cross and given professional treatment.

In the meantime, the front barri-

* Building superintendents, who cooperate with the police.

acades in other places had been taken by the police. After companies of police had occupied part of the overlooking roofs, squads of students were likewise sent onto the roofs. They attacked the police from above with rocks and bricks. This caused the first serious injuries among the CRS troops.

The police were now given the order to stage an "all-out assault," using all means -- except guns. All of the student-occupied streets were hit from the surrounding roofs with a rain of various gas grenades. It became impossible to breathe. The students tried to break out on all sides and everywhere came up against the CRS troops.

Automobiles and barricades burned, set on fire partly by the comrades and partly by the police grenades. Meanwhile many demonstrators used garbage-can lids to protect themselves from the stones being thrown by the police. Both sides alike used rocks and roof tiles as weapons.

Wounded students who had been taken into the doorways of surrounding buildings had to be taken out again to avoid arrest.

The streets became the scene of sickening sights. The CRS really went all out. Following an internationally tested tactic, they tried to single out individuals to beat up and arrest. Since this was almost impossible in view of the comrades' excellent organization, they fell on their prisoners and the injured who could not defend themselves or who could not be quickly enough shifted from the front to the rear ranks. They dragged some prisoners into building entrances and beat them, afterward dragging them half unconscious to the police vans.

No sooner did new protests come from the windows of the surrounding buildings than the police fired gas shells in reply and sent companies of ten to twenty men into the buildings. There were hundreds of eyewitnesses to all these events but few pictures. Newsmen had either left out of fear, been turned away by the police, or arrested.

With 400 wounded, some seriously, the fact that no one was killed was certainly due to the fact that the students were prepared and organized in a way not seen before in Europe.

These thousands of university and high-school students had no unified political leadership; they did not belong to different factions within a single organization. Most of them belonged to no organization at all.

The demonstration was headed up by

about five different political organizations, all to the left of the French CP and by no means sharing the same general political outlook. Discussion among these groups was more or less deadlocked before this action.

Since all of these organizations -- whether rightly or wrongly -- have quite pronounced political points of view reached through constant and often very heated debates with other groups, it was difficult before this action to create a united front.

However, in the face of a solid front of Establishment repression, since their goal in the last analysis is the same -- a workers university, overthrow of the bourgeois state, a socialist France and a socialist Europe -- they put aside their disputes over the various tactics and ways of reaching this goal and spontaneously accepted the revolutionary discipline of a united action.

Moreover, "bystanders" had to decide on the spot whether they wanted to join the students or go home. In the streets of the occupied district itself there were no bystanders.

And, finally, it is by no means certain at this writing that there were none killed. The mood in France among the people is such that any deaths would be blamed on the police. Thus, the CRS is not -- unlike the German police -- interested in publicizing deaths for propaganda purposes.

The struggle lasted until 8:00 in the morning and ended with a clear victory for the students. The government capitulated. All those arrested were freed, and the universities were reopened.

The workers then expressed their solidarity with the students by a general strike and a mass march May 13. In this mass demonstration, which topped off the red night on the barricades, around 1,000,000 workers marched from all parts of Paris to the Place Denfert Rochereau. And this was doubtless just the beginning. The students succeeded in showing the workers of France that General de Gaulle's "strong state" is vulnerable.

The prefect of police said on May 11 that what the police had been faced with was no longer a student revolt. "The students behaved like guerrillas," he said. There is a kernel of truth in this; the student movement is no longer a movement for university reform but the start of an assault on the capitalist social order as such.

On May 13, the red flag flew over the Sorbonne and the Place de la République.





Copain

FROM A STUDENT UPHEAVAL TOWARD A PROLETARIAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

By Pierre Frank

Paris

May 1968 has gone into French socialist history as the month of the Latin Quarter "riot." This "riot" led to the general strike of May 13, ten years to the day since the coup of the generals and "pieds noirs" [French colonialists] in Algiers that precipitated de Gaulle's rise to power. The "riot" constituted the opening of the period that will liquidate the Gaullist regime. How did it occur and what happened?

Day by Day

We must go back to the Algerian war to find the roots of the intense politicalization in the student and university world. The Algerian war, the influence of Cuba, the martyrdom of Che Guevara, and, to a certain extent, also the "cultural revolution" in China heightened this political development and turned it more sharply away from the policy of "peaceful coexistence," of the "peaceful and parliamentary road" to socialism.

It was in this context that the specifically university problems, resulting from the outmoded character of the educational system and methods, were posed. The latest events began on March 22 at the University of Nanterre. This new university, recently founded in the Paris suburbs, was to be the government's most modern educational institution, equipped with every imaginable improvement.

But the government located it where it became exposed to a number of social contradictions. It was built next to a shanty town. The municipality is under the thumb of the Communist party; and the local CP looked with disfavor on the agitation, political discussion, and factional ferment that groups largely led by militants expelled at different times from the UEC [Union des Etudiants Communistes -- Communist Student Federation] introduced into this suburban town. A large proportion of the students came from the sixteenth arrondissement and other west Paris neighborhoods, the most bourgeois in the city.

The Nanterre students, unlike those at the Sorbonne, had no congenial off-campus community; they were forced to discuss university and social problems among themselves. And they connected up these two sets of problems.

What the established authorities thought about this can be gathered from the remarks of the minister of national education in parliament after the street

clashes had gone on for several days:

"What sort of machinations did these Nanterre 'madmen' carry on daily? ...Under the label of 'critical university,' the most absurd lucubrations were voiced in auditoriums renamed, to serve the cause, Fidel Castro, Che Guevara, Mao Tse-tung, Leon Trotsky." (Journal Officiel, May 9, 1968, No. 26 A.N., p. 1606.)

The university officials decided to take reprisals against a group of students, including Daniel Cohn-Bendit. The latter had already had a run-in with a minister who came to the university to dedicate a swimming pool. The Sorbonne students decided to extend solidarity to the students at Nanterre who were threatened with expulsion and to hold a meeting in support of them on Friday, May 3, in the Sorbonne courtyard.

At the same time, a fascist group, Occident [the West] -- the group is insignificant numerically but its connections permit it to carry out attacks with virtual impunity -- declared that it was going to "clean out" the Latin Quarter.

During the afternoon of May 3, the leaders and most of the militant elements of the university movements met in the Sorbonne courtyard. The marshals of these groups were also there to block any fascist movement. But at the end of this meeting, which had proceeded without incident, the police invaded the Sorbonne and arrested several hundred of those present.

The police had come onto the university grounds in accordance with a written request from the rector Roche. But, without lessening his responsibility, there is no doubt that this police operation was part of a plan conceived higher up.

The government thought that the unrest among the students was the work of small groups with no real following. It was convinced that all that was needed to end it was a show of determination on its part and all the more so since exams were in the offing. Furthermore, this same day, the organizational secretary of the French Communist party Marchais had scathingly denounced these "grouplets" in l'Humanité, speaking of "the German, Cohn-Bendit." The government must have thought that repression of the students would not provoke the workers organizations to express solidarity with them.

The arrest of the student cadres,

who were hauled away in police vans before the eyes of everybody on the Boulevard St. Michel, touched off an immediate reaction. Students attacked the police cars and clashes of a violence not seen in years broke out spontaneously. Politically unaffiliated students played leading roles.

The next day, the UNEF [Union Nationale des Etudiants de France -- French National Student Federation] and the SNES [Syndicat National de l'Enseignement Supérieur -- University Teachers Union] called an unlimited strike for Monday, May 6. After a hastily convoked court had handed down stiff prison sentences against several demonstrators, the strike began that day with three demands as prior conditions for all negotiations: release and amnesty for the sentenced students; withdrawal of the police from the Sorbonne; reopening of the university with full political and trade-union rights for the students.

Early Monday morning the day already threatened to be a stormy one. In the afternoon, still more violent fighting than in the preceding week began. In the evening, in St. Germain des Prés, clashes lasted for several hours, producing casualties on both sides. Outraged by the brutality of the police, the people of the district displayed their sympathy with the demonstrators.

On the morning of the following day, the bourgeois press did not support the police. The UNEF and SNES leaders called a meeting for 6:30 p.m. at the Place Denfert-Rochereau. The strikers occupied this square at the indicated hour and held their meeting. The police let it be known via the press that the meeting had not been authorized (no one had asked for any authorization) but had been "tolerated"! After the meeting, a procession formed and with red banners flying marched about twelve miles through the streets of Paris, going up the Champs Elysées to the Place de l'Etoile.

The bourgeois press and l'Humanité left one feature of this demonstration unmentioned. But in parliament the next day a UNR [Union pour la Nouvelle République -- de Gaulle's Union for the New Republic] deputy could not contain his indignation: "M. Didier Julia... The Internationale was sung there [at the tomb of the unknown soldier at the Arc de Triomphe] and red flags were made by tearing up red-white-and-blue ones [the French tricolor]." (Journal Officiel, May 9, 1968, No. 26 A.N., p. 1620.) Tearing up the tricolor to make red flags was a sacrilege that no daily newspaper cared to reveal.

That day, as most often in the course of the battle, the demonstrators improvised, but what improvisation! On

the night of May 7-8 there were violent encounters in the area between St. Germain des Prés and Montparnasse.

On May 8, the government, in the person of the minister of national education, made equivocating statements before the National Assembly. False promises without definite commitments were made, conditioned on the restoration of order in the Latin Quarter. Confronted with an eminently difficult situation, the UNEF and SNES leaders hesitated and the day ended with a demonstration which dissipated itself for lack of an objective.

On Friday, May 9, the students again gathered on the Boulevard St. Michel, not to demonstrate but to discuss what was to be done. By the afternoon, it was evident that the movement had not succumbed to the government's maneuver and that it was spreading to the provinces.

The organizations in the lead called another meeting for Friday, again for the Place Denfert-Rochereau at 6:30 p.m., and reaffirmed that there would be no negotiations until the three preliminary demands had been met. The new upswing in the movement continued into evening of May 9.

A month before, the JCR [Jeunesse Communiste Révolutionnaire -- Revolutionary Communist Youth] had planned a meeting for that day on the theme "From Revolt to Revolution" in the Salle de la Mutualité. They wanted to explain the causes and objectives of the student movement developing in several countries. The events gave an acute timeliness to this meeting.

During the day, the JCR announced that after the slated speakers had spoken, the meeting would be turned over to the students to continue their debate. An audience of 4,000 to 5,000 persons gave the meeting the air of a revolutionary assembly by their enthusiasm and militancy. Italian, Dutch, Belgian, German, and Spanish students affirmed their solidarity with the French students. The speakers forcefully stated that this struggle was not a reformist one, that it challenged capitalist society, that it would not end until the working class went into action in a revolutionary struggle for socialism.

The second part of the meeting given over to discussion was no less important. For nearly two hours speakers with differing political points of view aired their positions, their suggestions, and their perspectives. Although it was not an assembly of elected representatives, it suggested a student soviet [council]. Above and beyond the specific problems of the struggle, two concepts dominated the discussion:

(1) The student struggle could be no more than a part of the struggle for socialism; and the fundamental social force in this struggle was the working class. No remarks of a Marcusean or similar type were listened to. There was abundant discussion of means for linking up the student struggle to that of the workers.

(2) Democracy was vital to the movement's development. Differences were normal and the existence of political groupings a matter of course. But these groupings must not try to impose their leadership on the movement or disrupt it by raising extraneous questions.

When they broke up at about 1:00 in the morning, several thousand fighters found themselves politically united for the big day of May 10, which was to prove decisive.

May 10

This day consisted of three successive phases, each with unforgettable characteristics. The morning began first of all with the spread of the movement to the medical students and, most important, with the high-school strike which had been announced at the May 9 meeting in the Mutualité.

Where did this high-school movement come from? The Vietnam war sensitized very young students. They joined the Comité National Vietnam [National Vietnam Committee]. When they tried to take this question into their schools they ran head on into an administration -- and too often a lack of understanding from many teachers, even those of the left wing -- that regarded the high schools as nothing but barracks for teen-agers, who must not concern themselves with politics.

Incidents occurred in the high schools. The expulsion of a student from the Lycée Condorcet led to a demonstration by students from several hundred high schools in front of this school and, above all, to the formation of the CAL [Comités Action Lycéens -- High-School Action Committees] in November 1967. This organization's activity developed over a period of several months. The organization of high-school students was helped along by the fact that they live together all day long in their schools like workers in a plant.

A pamphlet should be written just on this movement -- on the seriousness and perseverance of these very young militants from fourteen to sixteen years old.

Their strike began a little like that of the workers. A few schools "broke

the ground." At 9:00 in the morning, the students of these schools marched out into the streets of Paris and went from one school to another to call the students out on strike, holding meetings of 1,000 to 2,000 high-school students in the squares and quadrangles of Paris.

Their basic demand was for the right to discuss politics and social questions in general in the high schools. They decided to meet at 6 p.m. at the Place des Gobelins to march on the Place Denfert-Rochereau in order to take part in the university student action. "Your problems will be our problems tomorrow," they explained to the older students. In the afternoon, about 8,000 high-school students massed in a procession which reached the Place Denfert-Rochereau at 6:00.

The second part of the day began. After a meeting at this spot, which was rather an assembly to discuss the movement and the course to be followed, a procession set out on the Boulevard Arago and passed in front of the Santé prison to demonstrate solidarity with those who had been jailed or sentenced for their part in the demonstrations of the preceding days. It crossed through the working-class neighborhoods and then swerved to return by the Rue Monge and the Boulevard St. Germain and moved back up the Boulevard St. Michel.

This was a demonstration the like of which Paris had not seen in a long time. About 30,000 strong at the beginning, it visibly swelled, and toward the end it had clearly doubled. It had an enthusiasm and a youthful character matching the spring revivification that had brought leaves back to the trees on the boulevards. The demonstration was made up in large proportion of university and high-school students and striking professors. However, it was joined by many young workers, who every day in growing numbers had been taking part in the strikers' demonstrations, as well as by revolutionary workers and militants who had suffered for long years from the Stalinist gag on the organized workers movement.

At last, Paris again saw demonstrations planned without police participation, which were held without prior authorization, not subjected to the control of marshals from the CP and CGT [Confédération Générale de Travail -- General Confederation of Labor -- the Communist-controlled union] who barred all slogans and banners considered "subversive" by the apparatus. At last there was a demonstration that gave free rein to the initiative of the masses.

This demonstration of 50,000 persons, made up in its overwhelming majority of young people, had a very high political level. There were red flags, a black flag, the flag of Vietnam, but not one tricolor.

"The Internationale" and other old revolutionary songs were sung. Revolutionary slogans were mixed in with the strikers' immediate demands: "Against the Police State," "Against the Bourgeoisie and Bourgeois Education." In the working-class districts, the demonstrators called for worker-student solidarity.

Once it returned to the Latin Quarter, the demonstration again found itself facing a Sorbonne surrounded by several tight ranks of police troops, gendarmes [paramilitary police] and above all the gangster-like CRS [Compagnies Republicaines de Sécurité, the semimilitary elite security police]. Hatred against the "forces of order" took extraordinary forms. There was a rain of angry shouts and insults. The UNEF marshals could hardly restrain the demonstrators. Now a confrontation, a clash seemed inevitable.

Unable to enter the Sorbonne, the demonstrators decided to stay in the streets of the Latin Quarter until their demands were met. After a few clashes, they began to construct barricades. Anyone there could see how spontaneous this was. If you check a map of Paris, you can see at once that any "specialists" in guerrilla warfare and street fighting would never have dreamed of a deployment so easily encircled. No "specialists" were there. Spontaneity and popular initiative were.

In short order, automobiles were taken, materials and tools found in nearby construction sites, even air hammers being used to loosen the cobblestones in the streets. Workers were particularly helpful to the students in this.

A single fact will illustrate how well this activity expressed the general anger. The quarter where the barricades were built is essentially bourgeois or petty bourgeois. Yet when the demonstrators used automobiles to build up the barricades, the people did not protest. Everyone knows how much an automobile means nowadays to its owner. Even more, the same people gave demonstrators, who had been out since five or six o'clock in the morning, food, something to drink, transistor radios to follow what was happening over the air. Finally, when the police resorted to the most brutal measures during the night, for several hours, large numbers of fighters on the barricades were given refuge in neighboring apartments.

A few days later, when the giant demonstration of May 13 was passing by, a big contingent of "barricade fighters" marching along the Rue Gay-Lussac chanted, "Thanks, thanks, Gay-Lussac." And from the windows came an answering "Bravo, bravo." It was a most moving incident.

From the Barricades to the General Strike

It cannot be said that France woke up to all this Saturday morning, because everyone had been following the events minute by minute throughout the night as they were broadcast over unofficial radio transmitters. Journalists on the spot described the savage repression as it occurred, their voices being punctuated by the continual exploding of grenades. Anger swelled.

The evening before, the CGT and the CFDT [Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail -- French Democratic Confederation of Labor] had projected a demonstration for the following Tuesday, in the evening. They met again, because it was impossible to wait that long and do only that much. On Saturday afternoon, demonstrations broke out again in the Latin Quarter, where many streets already resembled a battlefield -- remnants of barricades, burned automobiles, streets torn up...Would the struggle in the streets be resumed?

In the evening about 9 o'clock, Premier Pompidou made a statement on TV and radio. Pale, his features drawn, with a nervousness quite different from his usual manner, he offered some generalities and then in substance indicated that the government was capitulating on the three conditions laid down by the striking students and teachers. All the demonstrators were to be released, the police were to be withdrawn, the Sorbonne would be reopened Monday.

But things had already gone too far. The declaration had other consequences than avoiding new confrontations in the streets. The CGT and CFDT had already decided to stage a general strike and a big demonstration in Paris on Monday. They held to these decisions.

Noting what the government had conceded or promised, the UNEF and SNES stressed that this proved that the government bore all the responsibility for what had happened in the previous days. They decided to continue the struggle until the promises were actually carried out.

Sunday was taken up in preparing for the general strike and demonstration on Monday. In the evening it was announced that the students and teachers were to assemble at the Gare de l'Est, that a parade would go from there to the Place de la République where the workers unions would assemble, that the unions belonging to Force Ouvrière [FO] in the Paris region would, for the first time, participate with the others. From the Place de la République, a huge demonstration would cross Paris, going through the Latin Quarter to the Place

Denfert-Rochereau. It was something like the victors paying a visit to the field of battle.

The discussions among the organizations had lasted for many long hours. We can reveal some inside information about this.

The Stalinist leaders of the CGT wanted the demonstration to leave from the Place St. Michel and go to the Bourse du Travail on the Place de la République. What they wanted was to avoid the Latin Quarter and end up at the address of the bureaucrats.

The spokesmen of the UNEF and the SNES said that they could not accept this proposal and that if the unions refused to change on this, they would organize an independent demonstration of their own from the Place de la République to Denfert-Rochereau.

The heads of the CGT had to assent, just as the evening before, the government had to assent. On top of this they likewise had to accept the leader of the "March 22 Movement," Daniel Cohn-Bendit, who only on May 3 had been called "the German" by l'Humanité. The marshals had to be made up of one-half workers from the unions and one-half students from the student organizations.

It should be added that on that Sunday, the heads of the Stalinist organizations, particularly the marshals, who, up until then had never been used against the police (the organizations bowing to police orders) but against the "leftists," were warned by their chiefs that they must not do anything against the "leftists," even if they were insulted by them. It was noted that they had to restrain themselves many times during the demonstration. But it would be a mistake to conclude that the Stalinists will be inclined to respect workers democracy from here on out. They staged this demonstration against their will, and one can be almost certain that they will seek revenge at an opportune moment.

It is impossible to describe the demonstration in a few words. We can only indicate a few features. Most of the workers who marched with the unions were certainly not up to the political level and militancy of the groups assembled around the students and teachers where the slogans were predominantly anticapitalist, revolutionary, against the bourgeois state, for the socialist revolution, for workers power, for internationalism ("Rome, Berlin, Warsaw, Paris!"). But the level of the workers was considerably higher than in the past. No longer were there unworthy slogans like "des sous, Charlot" ["some pennies, Charley"].

The main feature of the demonstration was its anti-Gaullism. Inasmuch as the demonstration took place exactly ten years to the day since the military coup in Algiers that brought de Gaulle to power, a slogan heard everywhere was "Ten years, that's too much."

The leaders of the political parties (Fédération de la Gauche Démocrate Socialiste and Parti Communiste Français), who were excluded from the front ranks upon the insistence of the UNEF and the SNES, marched in the ranks of the crowd. They were hardly applauded.

For the revolutionary militants it was a day that aroused great hopes. Their groups swelled in size as the demonstration progressed through the city. They did not even have to suffer the tricolor in the demonstration. Even more -- a demonstrator climbed up the annex of the Préfecture of the Police to pull down a flag floating from the windows. Likewise at the Palais de Justice, a demonstrator tore down the tricolor and replaced it with the black flag of the anarchists. The effigy of a member of the CRS suspended from a rope was carried by the Surrealists.

There were only revolutionary slogans and spectacular actions. At the Place Denfert-Rochereau, the CGT leaders called through the loudspeaker for the crowd to disperse. The vanguard groups (March 22 Movement, JCR, etc.) decided to continue the demonstration. Some groups under the leadership of sectors like the anarchists went toward the Elysée -- something that was both utopian and adventuristic. But most went to the Champ de Mars where a meeting was held of some 20,000 to 25,000 persons.

This meeting was by far the most important happening on May 13, 1968. It was in a certain way, on a much bigger scale, a continuation of the discussion that took place May 9, first on the Boulevard St. Michel, then at the JCR meeting. When the groups, some of a dozen persons, others of several hundreds or even some thousands, went from Denfert-Rochereau to the Champ de Mars, packing the sidewalks for several kilometers, bystanders thought that another uprising was under way.

The truth was that most of the participants knew that this was not the time for new battles, but the time to draw the lessons of the events and to decide what to do the next day. For more than two hours there was a democratic tossing about of ideas, of proposals, prefiguring a kind of soviet assembly functioning democratically. Finally it was decided to continue the student strike and to occupy the Sorbonne the same evening, which was done.

This is where things stand as this

is written. The university student movement has entered a new phase about which we will write later. It is not yet possible to draw a complete balance sheet on what has happened, but a few conclusions can be made.

A New Period

We are not dealing with incidental events but with a break in the political equilibrium in France and the opening of a new period. It is possible, of course, to list the "errors" committed by the government (occupation of the Sorbonne, excessive repression, underestimation of "grouplets" in the pattern of the Stalinists, etc.), but the movement would never have taken on the breadth it did, excited such sympathy, touched off a general strike by the unions (CGT, CFDT and FO) who were not even dreaming of something like that only a few days before, if a situation had not developed in which many social contradictions had already reached a rather advanced point.

In comparison with the similar student movements in other countries, this one came late, but the delay, far from being due to the slower evolution of the French students, corresponded to the greater explosiveness of forces accumulating at a much higher political level than elsewhere.

With a certain feverishness, the government is at present getting ready to take various measures. "Today, I am appealing for everyone's cooperation, above all the students, and I will take the necessary steps," Pompidou said before a parliament which showed a little life precisely because the succession to Gaullism has been posed to a certain degree by the events.

Let us disregard the Gaullists who are waiting for de Gaulle to speak on May 24 and say a few words about the democratic and Social Democratic opposition. These gentlemen of the FGDS, together with the Communist party, will without doubt be the major beneficiaries in any elections that might be held in the near future. They would be carried into power "legally." During the past week they hardly gave a sign of life. Now, on the parliamentary level, they are making all kinds of noise, without insisting on the fact that they have the possibility of coming to power via pressure from the streets.

The Communist party is of particular interest. It is sounding literally all variations every day in order to "recover" its leadership of the movement, as the students themselves put it. On the day following the demonstration, it acted as if nothing unpleasant at all had been experienced by the bureaucrats in the

march. It said not a word about the meeting at the Camp de Mars. A Political Bureau declaration, still based on unity with the democratic bourgeoisie, warned "the workers and students against any adventurist slogans capable, under present conditions, of disrupting the broad front of struggle that has been constituted and giving the Gaullist regime an unlooked-for pretext to consolidate its shaky domination."

These are not the words of other days, but the spirit has not changed. It is no longer a question of "provocateurs" but of the danger of an adventure. The politics of peaceful and parliamentary roads to reestablish a democracy which is supposed to develop gradually into socialism still lives on.

Nevertheless it would be rather surprising if the present events did not shortly have some consequences within the Communist party. The policies followed by this party among the youth are completely bankrupt. For around six years, the CP leadership expelled from the organizations and demonstrations under its control -- often in a violent way -- these "leftists" who have now returned at the head of tens of thousands of youths. By an action that had nothing in common with parliamentarism or pacifism, these "leftists" forced the government to capitulate, and all the bureaucratic machines set up in bourgeois society to stage a 24-hour general strike.

For months the leadership of the Communist party has been engaged in preparing for a new political combination with the factions of the bourgeoisie aimed at assuring an alternative to take over from Gaullism. The role assigned to the CP was to provide a guarantee for the next regime against being bowled over from the left. It played this role to perfection in 1936 and in 1945-47. It certainly does not doubt its capacity to do it once more.

In 1936 and in 1945-47, "grouplets" (the term was accurate at the time) existed to the left. The leaders enjoyed great prestige. (The Social Democrats were being challenged but for a rather long time they were supported by the Stalinist leaders, which helped to smother the protests.) Without being unimportant, the development of the left at no time reached such a level as to offer a practical challenge to these leaders.

The situation is quite different today. Even before the FGDS-PCF combination was worked out, a force existed to the left that could not easily be handled owing to the fact that it had grasped the essence of classical reformism and post-Stalinist reformism.

All the problems of French society, a combination of old problems resulting

from worm-eaten structures dating back to the nineteenth century and new problems resulting from the modernization following the second world war, became posed in an urgent way. The contending camps will have to define themselves, get organized and decide on their policies. The initiative taken by the students opened the way for a big mass movement in the direction of socialism. One can be sure that to the right, political regroupments will take place and profascist forces will be organized before long to defend the capitalist regime.

Under such conditions, the construction of a mass revolutionary Marxist party acquires decisive importance. Con-

siderable forces are at hand to carry out this task, but they are fragmented politically and organizationally. Efforts must be made to overcome this state of affairs in order to succeed, as rapidly as possible, in attracting the numerous militants appearing among the youth as well as the many older ones who for years have been awaiting better days.

We will return to all these problems, as well as to the consequences which this turn in the political situation in France cannot fail to have internationally, in western Europe in the first place.

May 16, 1968

TARIQ ALI THREATENED WITH DEPORTATION FROM BRITAIN

A high-ranking member of the British Labour party has threatened Tariq Ali, a prominent figure in the British movement against the war in Vietnam, with deportation. Robert Mellish, minister of public building and works, and London chairman of the Labour party, demanded in a letter to Home Secretary Callaghan that Ali be deported to Pakistan for his part in organizing the massive March 26 demonstration in Grosvenor Square.

Mellish has a well-deserved reputation as a racist. The May 8 Sun, in commenting on the interchange with the home secretary, noted ironically that Mellish "has been in trouble with the party before now for showing less enthusiasm for immigration than was then thought proper." In the present case he had commented to Callaghan that Ali was, in his opinion, "abusing British democracy."

Callaghan's reply, coming as it did from a more liberal champion of British "democracy," was equally alarming. "I fully appreciate your feelings," he said to the advocate of deportation, "...But I have no power to deport Mr. Ali unless he is recommended for deportation by a court of law following conviction of an offence punishable by imprisonment. The possibility of taking proceedings against the organiser of the Grosvenor Square demonstration has been considered but no proceedings are to be taken."

A statement of protest signed by a number of well-known figures including Tamara Deutscher and Bertrand Russell, said of Callaghan's reply: "We view it as an open invitation to any policeman

to put Tariq Ali in the dock to be deported. In the event of an arrest of Mr. Ali, everyone will understand it in this light.

"But, more ominously, it is an incitement in the present situation, to any racist to commit an act of physical violence against Mr. Ali."

The statement also said: "That the leaders of the Government should seek to rid themselves by such crude methods of one of their most active and vocal critics of their Vietnam policies, must cause even the most loyal supporter of the Labour Party to wonder where this Government is taking us."

Another strong protest was made by the Movement for Colonial Freedom. The May 14 Guardian said it was signed by Lord Fenner Brockway, Stan Newens, M.P., Lord Anthony Gifford, and Dr. Leon Szur. The signers declared, "At the time when a deplorable outbreak of racial feeling has been sparked off by Mr. Enoch Powell's disgraceful speech it is utterly shameful that the chairman of the London Labour Party and a Minister in the Government should select for attack one member of the anti-Vietnam war movement on the grounds that he is a Commonwealth citizen.

"We believe in full political freedom for all citizens, whether they come from Britain or the Commonwealth. We shall accordingly fight to the full extent of our powers against any move to deport Mr. Ali on any political grounds whatsoever, including those arising out of his possible arrest for political offences."

"ARMED CAMP" ATMOSPHERE AT TRIAL FOR H. RAP BROWN

H. Rap Brown, chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, went on trial in New Orleans, Louisiana, May 13 on trumped-up charges of violating the National Firearms Act.

The militant black leader is accused of transporting a rifle on a plane, while under indictment for another charge. The obscure law under which he is being tried was passed in the 30's to deal primarily with John Dillinger, the bank robber. Brown insists that he had no knowledge of an indictment against him in Cambridge, Maryland, at the time he flew to his home town in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, in August, 1967.

William Kunstler, the noted civil-liberties attorney who is defending Brown, has charged that federal and state governments conspired to silence the black power spokesman and planned his entrapment under the little-known law.

In the first days of the trial it was revealed that Brown was kept under constant surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other police agencies.

The Justice Department announced before the trial that it had "accidentally" obtained secretly recorded conversations involving Brown. In order to prevent the defense from having the right to examine them, it asked the judge to read a transcript of the conversations, rule that they were not "relevant" to the case, and order the transcript resealed.

This scandalous procedure was denounced by the defense, which submitted a counter-motion, asking the judge to order the transcript opened to inspection or dismiss the case.

The judge ruled in favor of the government, thus sanctifying the illegal wire-tapping and other electronic surveillance carried out by the FBI, which had provided the transcript.

Kunstler also protested the "armed camp" atmosphere in which the trial was being conducted. A special police guard of forty men patrolled the court building. Kunstler asked for a mistrial and a



H. RAP BROWN

change of venue. His protests were overruled.

A Baton Rouge policeman testified May 17 that he had Rap Brown under surveillance while Brown was in Baton Rouge on August 17. Kunstler told the court that was part of "the whole process of getting Rap Brown."

During the first few days of the trial, police sought to intimidate people attending by taking their pictures and forcing them to sign their names and state their business before entering the building. The judge finally ordered the intimidating procedures to be discontinued.

BOLIVIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS DEMAND IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Repression continues rampant in Bolivia. Minister of the Interior Arguedas recently announced the arrest and arraignment of persons accused of having participated in supporting the guerrilla movement.

At the same time, political prisoners are being kept in prison without trial in absolutely illegal circumstances. The following is the text of a letter signed by prisoners in the Panoptico Nacional, the La Paz prison. The text was published on April 20 in the La Paz daily Presencia.

* * *

To the Chairman of the
District Supreme Court:

Your Honor,

The signers of this memorandum have been held in the Panoptico Nacional since August 1967. This imprisonment is unjustified in every respect and cannot be allowed to continue. For, the accusation lodged against us has its origin in political questions, in which the judicial branch has lamentably involved itself.

We are suffering economic losses and difficulties in supporting our families. It is unjust for us to be accused of an alleged crime when we were absent from the scene of these events; and we reject this accusation.

For, it is common knowledge that we were held in confinement from January to August 1967. And promptly in the month of August we were transferred to the Panoptico Nacional, that is from confinement to prison. How can your honor and the members of the district court suppose that we were in the Siglo Veinte [mine] for the bloody events of St. John's Day in June?

Without waiting for a general prison inspection, we ask that this tremendous injustice against our persons be remedied without delay by restoring our freedom.

Very truly yours,

Oscar Salas Moya, confined March 7, 1967; imprisoned July 3, 1967.

Alberto Jara, confined January 7, 1967; imprisoned August 3, 1967.

Victor Carrasco, confined March 2, 1967; imprisoned August 3, 1967; his trial has been postponed and he remains a prisoner.

Filemon Escobar E., confined February 21, 1967; imprisoned August 3, 1967.

Justiniano Ninavia, confined March 23, 1967; imprisoned August 3, 1967.

René Olivares, confined January 18, 1967.

REPORT FROM THE "EZEQUIEL ZAMORA" GUERRILLA FRONT IN VENEZUELA

By Eduardo Vicente

Augusto Velardo, a Peruvian journalist, recently visited the "Ezequiel Zamora" guerrilla front in the mountains of El Bachiller in the state of Miranda, about 200 kilometers from Caracas, and was granted some very informative interviews by the freedom fighters.

It should be explained that the "Ezequiel Zamora" front was set up by the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria [MIR -- Movement of the Revolutionary Left] along with another front in the eastern part of the country (the "Antonio José de Sucre" front).

These fronts should not be confused with those established by the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional [FALN -- Armed Forces of National Liberation] and the Frente de Liberación Na-

cional [FLN -- National Liberation Front] which are led by Douglas Bravo and Elías Manuitt, who also pursue a line of armed struggle. The FALN-FLN have likewise stabilized two guerrilla fronts, making a total of four in the country as a whole.

Although the MIR and the FALN-FLN act independently of each other, the leaders of both organizations have recently indicated that in principle a unification of the two tendencies would be in the interest of the Venezuelan revolution.

Velardo's report, including the texts of the interviews granted to him, photographs, and background material, has been published in two recent issues of the new Mexican magazine, Por qué? [Why?].*

* April 24 and May 8, 1968, issues.

This is the magazine founded and edited by Mario Menéndez Rodríguez, formerly editor of the weekly Sucesos (which published his report on the "Leonardo Chirinos" guerrilla front led by Douglas Bravo in the state of Falcón).

The first interview in the Por qué? reportage is with Eduardo Ortiz Bucarán. It describes a landing of eight important cadres of the MIR on an isolated beach near Machurucuto, north of the Bachiller mountains. This was called "Operación Comandante Bejuma" in memory of the late commander of the "Ezequiel Zamora" front (whose real name was Hugo Daniel Castillo), who was killed in an encounter with government troops early in 1967.

The landing was a success, the eight MIR revolutionists finally reaching the guerrilla front.

The Cuban internationalists who accompanied the MIR fighters as far as the beach, left in their boat but were later captured by government forces. Ortiz believes this may have resulted from the failure of the boat's engine.

One of the three, Antonio Briones Montoto, was killed outright. Manuel Gil Castellanos appears to have been spared. Pedro Cabrera Torres was brutally tortured and then assassinated by the SIFA [Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces]. (See World Outlook, June 9, 1967, p. 592.)

The first group of MIR revolutionists, who founded the guerrilla front in the Bachiller mountains early in 1962, was led in that pioneering effort by Ortiz Bucarán.

The going was especially difficult at first, and the nucleus succumbed in April, 1962.

In Ortiz' opinion, the setback was caused by lack of experience in guerrilla warfare, "and the erroneous general policies of the Venezuelan revolutionary movement at that time..."

Today, according to Ortiz, the front in El Bachiller is fully stabilized despite repeated attempts by the army to encircle the guerrillas, who are able to count on the support of the peasants in the areas where they are operating.

Reviewing the history of the MIR and its birth as a left-wing tendency within Acción Democrática [AD], the present government party of Leoni-Betancourt, Ortiz describes the early internal struggles inside the MIR after its definitive break with the AD in 1960.

By 1961, under the influence of the advancing Cuban revolution, the MIR

considered itself to be Marxist-Leninist in outlook. Even then the MIR leadership, which had been formed independently of the Venezuelan Communist party [PCV], developed a critical attitude toward many of the negative manifestations of CP policies.

The crucial difference centered around the CP policy of seeking a parliamentary, peaceful road to political power and of using the guerrilla movement as a means of pressure in bargaining with the bourgeois parties. This early opposition in the MIR to the CP leaders was politically weak and contradictory. Since then it has taken more definite shape and come to understand the key problems better.

The struggle of tendencies was also reflected within the MIR. In 1964, Domingo Alberto Rangel, one of the founders of the MIR, split away, opposing the line of armed struggle.

Within the CP, likewise, a struggle took place, a revolutionary tendency developing there. This crystallized particularly among the militant youth, most of whom were attracted by the revolutionary example set by the Cuban revolution. In the Political Bureau of the CP, however, only Douglas Bravo broke with the line of "democratic peace," as the Stalinists called their national variety of "peaceful coexistence."*

In the process of polarization within the Venezuelan left, the MIR has been a step ahead of the Douglas Bravo group all along. Both groups agree on the need to center the revolutionary struggle around rural guerrilla actions, subordinating other forms of struggle to this. Both groups also agree on characterizing the CP leaders as "opportunists and capitulators." Nevertheless the unification of the MIR and the FALN-FLN has not been achieved to date.

Ortiz comments on this: "The same reasons that impelled Douglas Bravo to initiate this movement against the revisionist clique of the Communist party of Venezuela; the very training of these compañeros within the Communist party of Venezuela, in our opinion, has led them to adopt an incorrect position with respect to our party, to the MIR. These compañeros, then, in our opinion, have unfortunately inherited part of the sectarianism which characterized the Communist party of Venezuela in its relations with the Movement of the Revolutionary Left."

* See Mario Menéndez' extensive report on the FALN-FLN guerrillas in Sucesos, December 10, 17, 24, and 31 of 1966 and January 7, 1967.

Ortiz goes on to outline the efforts undertaken by the MIR, both nationally as well as internationally, to bring about a unification with the Douglas Bravo group. These moves have reportedly been turned down by Douglas Bravo.*

The most illuminating interview in the Por qué? reportage is the one granted by Moisés Moleiro, the main leader of the MIR today. Moleiro was among the eight who landed on the Machurucuto beach in "Operación Comandante Bejuma."

Moleiro reviews the main events of the revolutionary struggle in Venezuela since the January 1958 uprising in which dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez was overthrown. On this, Moleiro states that what the revolutionary movement needed, but didn't have, was "leaders who could see clearly, who could lead the people to take power."

The MIR leader, now a ripe thirty, recounts his own experiences in the struggle. He began participating actively in 1954 at the age of sixteen in the underground resistance movement against the Pérez Jiménez regime. Since then, he has been in prison three times. The last time, in 1962, he escaped.

Moleiro has lived through the entire evolution of his party, first as a youth in the AD, then in the left opposition, finally as a founder of the MIR in 1960. For some three years, he was general secretary of the MIR in Caracas.**

Moleiro proposes setting up a National Coordinating Committee composed of representatives of the FALN-FLN and the MIR. He leaves open the question of the proportional basis for representation on the proposed committee so as to avoid any implication that the MIR proposes to set preconditions that may not be acceptable to Douglas Bravo.

* The recent unification of the MR-13 Movement, led by Yon Sosa, with the FAR, led by Cesar Montes, in Guatemala, provides a worthy example for the Venezuelan revolutionists confronted with a similar situation. In Guatemala, the main obstacle blocking unification of the two revolutionary organizations was greatly reduced when the OLAS openly unfurled the banner of socialist revolution, the fundamental plank of the MR-13 program.

** The nominal general secretary of the MIR is Professor Simón Sáez Mérida, but he has been imprisoned since 1963. Acting General Secretary Américo Martín was arrested along with another MIR leader, Félix Leonet, last year and sentenced to twenty-seven years in prison. (See World Outlook, July 28, 1967, p. 687.)

The immediate objective would be to begin uniting the efforts of the two organizations along concrete lines, synchronizing their military actions, for instance.

Moleiro also discusses the opposition that developed within the MIR in 1964 (after the break with the Rangel group) around the question of putting more stress on the urban struggle. This tendency, known as the "Twelfth District" group, was defeated. It disintegrated in 1965. Nevertheless, it appears from the Por qué? interviews that the problem of how to reach the mass of urban working people, and how to win them to the revolutionary struggle, has not been examined in depth by the MIR.

A possible step forward in this direction is indicated in a May 7 Reuter dispatch from Caracas quoting Moleiro as having declared in a clandestine press conference that he is "radically opposed" to Douglas Bravo's line of pursuing armed struggle in the cities. Instead, Moleiro reportedly affirmed that revolutionists "must, when possible, carry on legal struggles as well. A revolutionary party has the duty of combining all the types of struggle."

He emphasized once again the need to concentrate the armed struggle in the rural guerrilla fronts, and he questioned the effectiveness of the armed revolutionary actions in Caracas in the past few years.

Moleiro's statements indicate that the MIR leadership is beginning to seriously tackle the problem of reaching the urban proletariat through effective use of other types of struggle besides armed action.

Moleiro clearly reveals a political understanding and clarity above that shown by the Douglas Bravo group on many points. However, there are many crucial issues on which his stand is not indicated, or is indicated but dimly, in the interview.

Velardo's entire reportage, in fact, testifies to the need for the revolutionists in Venezuela to sharpen their theoretical and political tools in order to carry the freedom struggle through to success against U.S. imperialism and its national servants.

The most vital questions confronting the Venezuelan revolutionists concern (1) developing a full program for socialist revolution; (2) incorporating the urban proletariat in the revolutionary struggle; (3) tracing the causes of the CP's political bankruptcy; and (4) drawing from this historical and political analysis the necessary conclusions for strategy and tactics in the Latin-American revolutionary struggles of today and tomorrow.

BREZHNEV-KOSYGIN SHIFT THEIR POSTURE A BIT TO THE LEFT

By George Saunders

As the bureaucratic leadership of the Soviet Communist party [CPSU] intensifies its use of economic, diplomatic, and even military pressure against a variety of rival currents in the world Communist movement, it has adopted a new, more leftward stance (in phrases) to provide the theoretical smoke screen for whatever practical measures are to be taken.

The main item in the new drive is a call for unity and solidarity in the ranks of the world Communist movement, the slogan under which the various moves toward convening a world conference have taken place.

This theme was stressed in Brezhnev's speech at the April Central Committee plenum, titled "On the Vital Problems of the World Situation and the Struggle of the CPSU for the Solidarity of the World Communist Movement." Significantly, Brezhnev's speech was the signal for a new crackdown on dissident youth and intellectuals in the Soviet Union, as well as a blast at rival currents in the world movement.

The Soviet leaders singled out a series of dates in late April and early May to make several key policy statements adding to the general press campaign for the new line. These were: April 22, the ninety-eighth anniversary of Lenin's birth; May Day; May 5, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Marx's birth; and May 8, Victory Day, marking the fall of Berlin.

The April 22 speech of V.V. Grishin, first secretary of the Moscow party committee and a candidate member of the Politburo, as printed in the April 25 Pravda, contained a formulation that has since been repeated several times in the Soviet press. It represents a distinct shift from the "peaceful coexistence" line of recent years which stressed "building communism" in one country while maintaining the status quo with imperialism. The key passage is as follows:

"Our party sacredly fulfills the bequest of Lenin: to attain the maximum realizable in one country for moving forward and developing the cause of the world socialist revolution." (Emphasis added.)

The main task in this regard, says Grishin, is to strengthen the unity and solidarity of the "socialist" countries.

"An important event," said the Moscow official, "was the Dresden meeting of a month ago where leaders of the Communist

and workers parties and governments of six socialist states discussed problems of the international situation, and urgent matters concerning the political and economic development of the socialist countries."

Grishin took note of the imperialist offensive of recent years, especially as reflected in Vietnam, the Israeli expansion, and the Greek military coup.

"The facts of recent years," he said, "show convincingly that imperialism will not surrender its positions. In one place after another it carries out 'tests of strength,' probes for a 'weak spot' in our ranks.

"Having lost hope of gaining the upper hand over socialism by a frontal assault, by the so-called strategy of 'rolling back Communism,' the imperialists have not renounced their aims but merely changed their methods of struggle. They do not shrink from any means to weaken separate revolutionary detachments."

The Kremlin spokesman utilized the fact of imperialist aggressions, however, not to call for a redoubled counteroffensive by the revolutionary forces, not for two, three, many Vietnams. Instead, he used it as a scare tactic, charging that the increasing antibureaucratic tendencies within the workers states, including in the Soviet Union itself, are only additional expressions of imperialist assault.

"Not the least of the considerations in imperialist strategy," said the Moscow official, "are the plans for the so-called 'building of bridges' to the socialist countries, as the defenders of imperialism have christened their plans of ideological diversion against world socialism. Here they rely mainly on revisionist, nationalist, and politically immature elements. Bourgeois propaganda plays up such elements, praises and paints them as heroes. The ideologists of anti-Communism do not hide the fact that the aim of all this furor is to promote such activity as may lead to the 'erosion' of socialism, permit its decomposition from within, and in the end lead to the restoration of capitalism in socialist countries."

These remarks are clearly directed as much against trends in the Czechoslovak party -- and to some extent, the Rumanian -- as against rebels and dissenters in the Soviet Union, Poland, and elsewhere. And what followed was obvious-

ly meant as a threat.

"There is no doubt that these aims of imperialism will also be defeated, as have all previous ones. The Soviet people and the peoples of the other socialist countries have firmly bound their fate to socialism and communism for all time. They will allow no one to turn them from this path."

Grishin blamed the fragmentation and differentiation within the bloc of workers states and the world Communist movement on imperialist conniving, rather than acknowledge it as one of the consequences of bureaucratic rule. He denounced differences as playing into the hands of imperialism. He blamed the Maoists especially for having promoted them.

"World reaction," said Grishin, "exerts enormous effort to weaken the solidarity of the countries of the socialist system and the world Communist movement. The anti-Leninist nationalist, splitting course of the Mao Tse-tung group has rendered special service to imperialism in this regard."

The Maoists represent the easiest target. Many other tendencies have to be fought, many other views countered, if the Kremlin is to maintain or restore its central influence in the world Communist movement. To the right are such parties as the Yugoslav, the Rumanian, and the Italian; there is the Czechoslovak party, now in deep crisis. To the real left, as opposed to the left phraseology of the Maoists, are the Cubans and those parties which to one degree or another share the Cuban view, particularly the Koreans and Vietnamese.

Then there are the many new, non-Stalinist revolutionary currents -- and last but not least, that enemy of long standing, Trotskyism.

Moscow's strategy is to wage an all-out campaign against Maoism, in hope of gaining sufficient momentum to flatten other dissident currents.

If other "revisionist, nationalist, or politically immature elements" can be tarred with the same brush as used against heretical Maoism, so much the better. A major contribution along this line is a small book produced by the Soviet Publishing House for Political Literature under the title "Petty Bourgeois Revolutionism: On Anarchism, Trotskyism, and Maoism." This 158-page "study," published in an edition of 70,000, went to press in late December 1967 and is being widely advertised and distributed.

Through many a contortion, including a special chapter on "Permanent Revolution," the "scholarly" author, one

B.M. Leibzon, tries to show that anything to the left of the Kremlin line smacks of one of these three fearsome heresies, which on top of everything, are really all the same.

Leibzon's arguments were echoed almost word for word in a May 5 speech by Politburo member Mikhail Suslov, as printed in the May 6 Pravda:

"There is a second front of struggle," said this high priest of Kremlin theory, "in defense of Marxism-Leninism -- the overcoming of a variety of 'left' opportunist distortions of revolutionary theory, the struggle against 'revisionism from the left,' petty-bourgeois 'revolutionism.' The forms of the 'left revision' of Marxism-Leninism are also many-faceted and various. The Trotskyists, for example, in their day, covered their capitulation and lack of faith in the inner forces of the Soviet Republic with left phrases, screaming about world revolution, the overthrow of imperialism simultaneously in all countries, but they ended up with anti-Sovietism and collaboration with the most reactionary forces. A crude expression of the pseudo-left, adventurist distortion of Marxism-Leninism is also seen in the activity of the Mao Tse-tung group. They began with screaming declarations about 'defending' Marxist theory from the 'revisionist majority in the Communist movement,' while in fact they abandoned Marxist-Leninist theory and passed over to positions of petty-bourgeois nationalism and chauvinism, proclaiming the book of Mao Tse-tung's quotations to be the highest truth."

Suslov's speech, like Grishin's included some militant-sounding phrases; for example, that the Communist revolution is "striding across the planet." He, too, stressed unity of the Communist movement as the main task; but he found time to attack at length the concept that the colonial revolution is the "epicenter of the world socialist revolution," thereby hitting at supporters of the Tricontinental organization as well as the Maoists.

The three-way combination of more militant phraseology, a call for unity, and a polemic aimed mainly at Maoism also featured a major article in Kommunist, the CPSU theoretical journal.

This was circulated in advance of publication on the eve of the April 24 gathering in Budapest to prepare the world conference of pro-Moscow CP's later this year. Here is a sample passage:

"The policy of Mao Tse-tung's group is doing great harm to the cause of socialism and revolution throughout the world, above all because it leads to

China's growth away from the socialist system and China's conversion into a force hostile to the Soviet Union and other socialist countries.

"It is doing great harm also because the activities of Mao Tse-tung's group in the international arena are increasingly playing into the hands of imperialism and reaction.

"This rejection of unity of action with socialist countries, a policy of

splitting the revolutionary forces and aggravating international tension only makes it easier for imperialism to follow a policy of aggression and war."

The Kremlin leaders are showing redoubled energy, not without a note of desperation, in their effort to recoup their loss of dominance. But however strenuous their efforts, they have set themselves a hopeless task. The days of monolithism are gone forever.

AMERICAN MAOISTS SEE "FASCIST" TAKE-OVER IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

A curious editorial appeared in the June issue of Progressive Labor, organ of the American Maoists, the Progressive Labor party. Titled "Fascism Set in Eastern Europe," it begins with the announcement: "Current turmoil in Poland and Czechoslovakia has, essentially, two aspects. The first is that the political parties in power are consolidating their fascist control."

The Maoist theoreticians would have us believe that a "fascist" regime is consolidating its power in Czechoslovakia -- by increasing political democracy. Truly this is something unique in history.

Fascism is a governmental system adopted by capitalist countries in periods of extreme crisis. Its hallmark is the mobilization of the petty-bourgeoisie around a highly demagogic platform, the formation of extraparlimentary action squads and the smashing of all independent organizations of the working class. The combination of demagoguery, mobilization of the petty bourgeoisie, and destruction of the labor movement distinguishes it from more common forms of authoritarian rule in capitalist countries such as army dictatorship.

In Czechoslovakia capitalism was overthrown in 1948, as it was in the other countries of Eastern Europe occupied by the armed forces of the Soviet Union.

The capitalists were expropriated, the commanding heights of industry were nationalized, and a planned economy was established. These measures made these countries workers states. By the same token, Czechoslovakia, the other East European countries and the Soviet Union are still workers states.

In face of this reality, the Progressive Labor editorial asserts that "Naturally, the U.S. is happy to see the rapid development of capitalism in Eastern Europe."

If PL is right, then at some point between the late forties and today capitalism was restored in Eastern Europe. And by what a remarkable counterrevolution! This qualitative change in economic and social relations was accomplished without any bloodshed, without turning the means of production over to private owners, without the ousted capitalist class being reinstated, and -- even more peculiar, if that is possible -- without being noticed by the workers of Eastern Europe, or by their bureaucratic rulers, or by U.S. imperialism, or in fact by anyone except the theoreticians of PL. Even they appear to have come out of the chloroform only recently.

How do they explain the struggle which the students are putting up for socialist democracy in Warsaw and Prague? Very simply: "The students in Eastern Europe are being used by the reactionary ruling cliques to move to the right and unite with U.S. imperialism."

From this, it would have to be concluded that the students are fascist dupes if not fascists themselves! Still worse, through the use of democratic slogans, they are being mobilized by a fascist sector of a capitalist state to smash a democratic sector! A fascist coup is taking place...Or, if the regime was already fascist, then it is putting on a democratic farce to please the democracy-loving masters of U.S. imperialism, who, it is well known, will make an alliance with no country that does not put up a democratic front.

PL does not voice its slander against the students of Warsaw and Prague quite that brazenly, but the editors come close: "Action by youths, in and of themselves [sic], is not necessarily progressive....In the meantime, students in Poland, who singled out John Kennedy as their favorite statesman, can hardly be considered in the vanguard of anything but reaction." (What about students like Kuron and Modzelewsky who are not

admirers of John Kennedy and who have been imprisoned for advocating proletarian democracy and the rooting out of all vestiges of the cult of Stalin?)

After this hardly auspicious beginning, the Maoists come to the "second aspect" of the turmoil in Eastern Europe: "A second aspect is the breakup of the revisionist camp...The latest conference in Budapest was a farce."

"Revisionism," refers to currents within the world Marxist movement that advocate revising the fundamental ideas of Marx, or in practice substitute concepts that contradict Marx's fundamental teachings. The complete theoretical bankruptcy of the Maoists could hardly be better demonstrated than by their referring to "fascists" as "revisionists"; for they thus include "fascists" in the working-class movement.

Progressive Labor even spells it out: "National capitalists, aided by imperialism, will make a persistent effort to come back. Their chief route, today, has been through the communist party." They also refer to "the imperialists in Moscow."

Since the Maoists hold that fascism is so much worse than ordinary imperialism that it is justifiable to support a "democratic" imperialist country against a fascist imperialist country, we must assume they would support American imperialism in an attack on the workers states of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In brief, the logic of their theory would permit them to become allies of U.S. imperialism if the Pentagon were to open an assault on their factional opponents in Moscow and agree to a deal with Peking. Such are the absurdities that flow from Mao's thought.

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