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CHICAGO CONFERENCE CALLS FOR APRIL 6 DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST VIETNAM WAR

A national conference of U.S. soldiers and antiwar civilians met in Chicago December 27-28 to plan demonstrations in the spring against the Vietnam war. The "GI-Civilian Antiwar Conference" voted to call antiwar marches, to be led by active-duty GI's, in half a dozen key U.S. cities on Easter Sunday, April 6. Sites named included New York; Chicago; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; San Francisco; Seattle, Washington; and possibly Los Angeles. All have large concentrations of troops.

More than 300 persons attended the gathering despite storm conditions that closed Chicago's airport during most of the meeting. The attendance included at least thirty servicemen.

The conference created a liaison-coordinating committee to begin building the spring action. Initial members of the committee represented a broad spectrum of the antiwar movement, including Sidney Lens, cochairman of the National Mobilization Committee; Fred Halstead, Socialist Workers party candidate for president in 1968, currently on the staff of the New York Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee; Howard Petrick of the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam; Jack Spiegel of the Chicago Peace Council; Syd Stapleton of the Chicago GI Weeks Committee; Ken Shilman of Task Force newspa-

per; and GI's stationed at Fort Dix, New Jersey; Fort Jackson, South Carolina; Fort Hood, Texas; and Fort Sheridan, Illinois.

The conference took note of the growing number of victims of military injustice resulting from the efforts of the authorities to stifle antiwar sentiments in the army. A resolution presented by Leroy Wolins of the Chicago Vets for Peace to establish an organization to defend the civil liberties of soldiers -- the GI Defense Organization -- was adopted unanimously.

The new group plans to establish a headquarters in New York.

The April 6 demonstrations, it was decided, would be organized in such a manner that soldiers could participate without jeopardizing their legal rights. Individual acts of "civil disobedience" and planned confrontations with police are not to be sponsored.

A meeting of the Student Mobilization Committee following the conference, the evening of December 28, voted overwhelmingly to support the April 6 demonstrations. The SMC plans to appeal to organizations in other countries opposed to the war in Vietnam to schedule similar demonstrations on that date.

KURON AND MODZELEWSKI CHARGED WITH TIES TO FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

The long-awaited trial of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski opened in Warsaw on January 3. The two revolutionary Marxist student leaders were accused of playing the leading role in the March 1968 student demonstrations in Poland and of having received material aid from the world Trotskyist movement.

Kuron and Modzelewski are the principal defendants in the mass trial of students arrested after the student demonstrations which shook the Gomulka regime and gave powerful encouragement to the development of the "Czechoslovak spring."

The specific charges, according to a Reuters dispatch of January 5, were as follows: (1) that they received a duplicating machine and stencils from the Fourth International, allegedly sent from Belgium in a box of medical supplies; (2) that they formed an organization for the purpose of instigating demonstrations; and (3) that the March demonstrations were planned in Modzelewski's home.

This is the second time that the two revolutionary socialists have been

placed on trial because of their political opposition to Gomulka's bureaucracy. In July 1965 Kuron was sentenced to three years and Modzelewski to three and one-half years in prison for distributing an "Open Letter" in reply to their expulsion from the Communist party and its youth organization. Released a year before their sentences were up, they were arrested once again in the purge that followed the March demonstrations and have been held in jail since then.

In their "Open Letter" the two student leaders called for the overthrow of the bureaucracy in Poland, the establishment of a government based on democratically elected workers councils, and the adoption of a revolutionary internationalist perspective. In many points, the appeal paralleled positions long advocated by the world Trotskyist movement.*

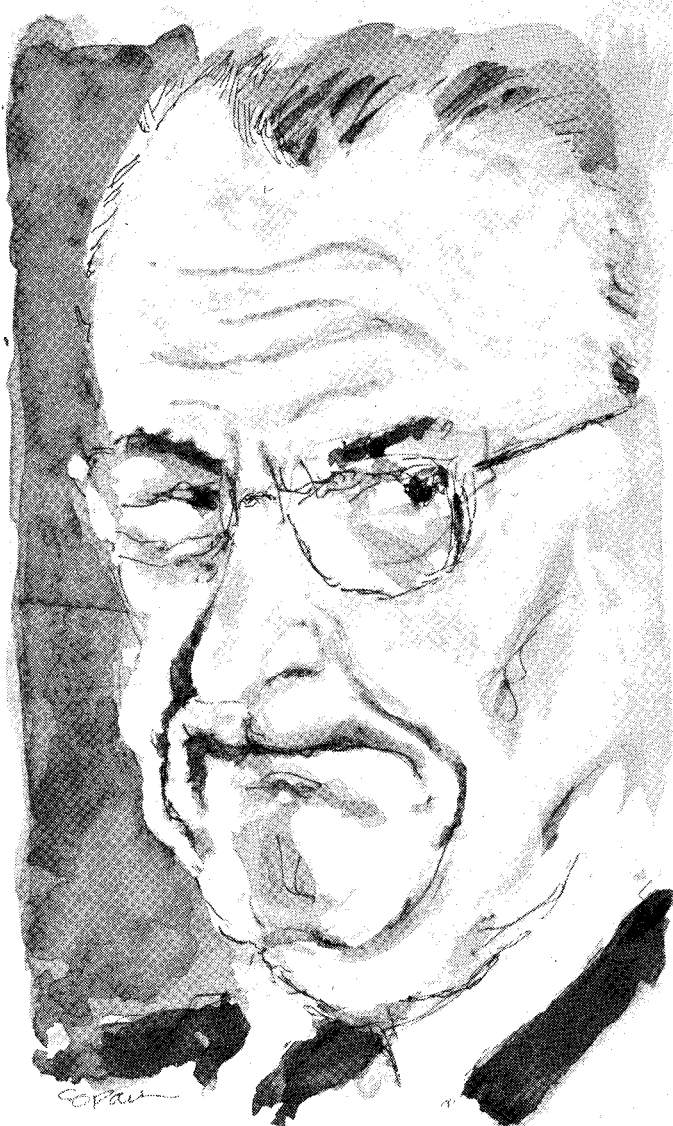
* The text of the "Open Letter," together with related documents, is available in Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out (1964-1968), Merit Publishers, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. \$1.25.

NIXON INHERITS JOHNSON'S HEADACHES

By George Novack

Nixon's team has been given maximum cooperation by the outgoing Johnson administration to smooth its assumption of office. This warm collaboration is a sign of the fundamental agreement between the two parties on how to handle the affairs of the capitalist ruling class and the narrowness of their differences on the main lines of foreign and domestic policy.

However much the Republican return to the White House has been eased, Nixon will head into rough sailing once he starts to exercise the prerogatives of power. For, along with the occupancy of the White House, the president-elect is receiving a formidable package of unresolved problems from his Democratic predecessor.



Nixon has appointed a cabinet made up of bankers, corporation lawyers and millionaire businessmen to help him cope with this assortment of difficulties. In addition, he has retained the services of such perennials as FBI chief J. Edgar Hoover, CIA director Richard Helms and Federal Reserve chairman William McChesney Martin Jr.

The head of the New York Times Washington bureau, Tom Wicker, has emphasized the underlying continuity between the two governments in the following comment: "...the political coloration of the Nixon central staff suggests...that, despite the campaign rhetoric and the conservative cast of the Cabinet, less fundamental change of direction might result from the new Administration than first expected. Mr. Nixon, after all, will be operating under much the same pressures that worked on Mr. Johnson, and it now appears that he will be hearing much the same sort of counsel from much the same kind of adviser, with much the same ease of access." (New York Times, December 12.)

Moreover, Nixon's capacity for innovations in the field of legislation will be considerably cramped by the fact that Congress is controlled by the opposition party.

As he pores over the digested dispatches from around the world every morning after January 20, Nixon's mind is bound to be preoccupied with four major foreign problems. In the forefront of his attention is the nettlesome question of what to do about Vietnam.

New York Times diplomatic correspondent C.L. Sulzberger cabled from Paris January 3 that "Washington's policy shift on Vietnam now aims at the least bad peace that can be swiftly obtained." Nixon has indicated, less by what he has said than by what he has refrained from saying, that, if possible, he would like to liquidate the Vietnam adventure which proved to be Johnson's undoing. Large sectors of capitalist opinion, not to mention the bulk of the nation, insist on a prompt end to the most unpopular war in America's history.

What bothers the Republican high command is whether they are prepared to pay the heavy price disengagement demands. That would involve a tacit avowal of the defeat of the U.S. colossus at the hands of a small and heroic colonial people, exposing the Saigon puppets to destruction and spreading anxiety about relying on Washington among the anti-Communist Asian "client" governments. The new secre-

JOHNSON: If it hadn't been for Vietnam...

his personal envoy to that area, Nixon intimated that he would like to improve U.S. relations with Egypt and other Arab states. The Israeli government's commando raid on the Beirut airfield, which was condemned by the U.N. Security Council, has not enhanced its credit in Washington.

However, the State Department is caught between its support to a not always restrainable Zionist Israel, its complicity with the oil cartels to keep that precious commodity under U.S. control, its desire for friendlier ties with the more moderate Arab regimes, and its apprehensions about the activities of the popular revolutionary forces and guerrilla movement in the Middle East. For the time being, the diplomats of both Washington and Moscow are equally at a loss on how to proceed in that troubled region.

Johnson was reportedly all set to announce a summit conference with the Soviet Union on August 21, the day after the Warsaw Pact armies invaded Czechoslovakia. Nixon has made it plain that he would like to resume negotiations with Moscow on a number of unsettled issues, beginning with nuclear arms control. At the same time, as the December 15 New York Times pointed out, "his goal of negotiations with Moscow and his conviction that Moscow must be dealt with from strength raises the competing pressures for arms control and an arms buildup."

Even if Nixon arranges some degree of de-escalation in Vietnam and makes some overtures to the Soviet chiefs of state, he is unlikely to favor any de-escalation of expenditure on armaments. The front ranks of his cabinet, drawn from the midst of "the industrial-military complex," is one guarantee of that.

Finally, for the first time since 1950, official Washington sees some slight chance of a shift in attitude toward Communist China. It is taking quite seriously the November 26 statement issued by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the possibility of "peaceful coexistence" with the United States. Nixon will probe Peking's intentions when the diplomats of the two countries resume their long interrupted discussions in Warsaw on February 20. Prominent Washington spokesmen have already been dangling the bait of dropping the trade embargo if Peking's move should turn out to be a signal for closer diplomatic and economic contacts with the U.S.

With so much instability in the world today, the president-elect might well be confronted, before too many months have passed, with a critical situation calling for instant military intervention in some wholly unexpected



ROGERS: Thanks to Dean Rusk...

tary of defense, Melvin Laird, has told newsmen that he hopes the war can be ended within a year. This hint of compromise is a far cry from the days when McNamara and his general were predicting "victory over the Vietcong" from month to month.

Meanwhile, the war hawks are exerting strong counterpressures on the president-elect. On New Year's eve, CBS correspondent Marvin Kalb disclosed that at a meeting of Pentagon, CIA and White House officials three weeks before, the chief military men asserted that the enemy could still be beaten in the field if the incoming administration could politically stand a weekly loss of 300 soldiers, which has been the average number killed over the past year.

What course the Nixon administration will actually take remains uncertain. But it will soon have to make a firm decision whether to seek a cease-fire or fight on.

At the moment the Middle East is the tinderbox of world politics. In sending Governor Scranton of Pennsylvania as

place, as in the case of the popular uprising in the Dominican Republic in 1965. However, with the American people as sensitized by the Vietnam experience, any new move of this kind would provoke an unprecedented roar of protest.

* * *

At his 1965 inaugural Johnson hoisted a bright banner proclaiming the advent of "the Great Society." This was torn to tatters by the end of his term. The sailing orders of the Nixon administration at the beginning of its voyage are much more modest: "Don't rock the boat." The constituency that put him in office yearns most of all for an end to convulsions at home and abroad and the restoration of capitalist "law and order."

But it is one thing to want a cessation of crises and conflicts and quite another to produce the conditions that can forestall and prevent them. For all the power and resources it commands, the new administration is pitifully deficient on that score.

Most flagrant is its timidity and inadequacy in tackling the most pressing of all domestic problems, the demands of the 22,000,000 Afro-Americans. At a time when their needs are greater and their patience thinner, Nixon promises less than the two Democratic presidents of the 1960's, who so conspicuously failed to improve their lot.

His sole recipe for dealing with such matters is an infusion of "black capitalism" in the ghettos. Through loan guarantees and tax incentives, he proposes to encourage capitalist private enterprise to shoulder the task of removing the terrible poverty, inequality and misery that the profiteering system has created and thrives upon.

What such a program looks like in reality and how little it amounts to is shown by the record of the Continental Illinois Bank under the guidance of its head, David M. Kennedy, chosen by Nixon to be his secretary of the treasury. The Wall Street Journal writes that "in cooperation with the National Alliance of Businessmen, he [Mr. Kennedy] reported recently, the bank has agreed to take on 80 hard-core 'disadvantaged' jobless. As early as six years ago, it started hiring and training dropouts, provided they returned to high school. The bank takes credit for spurring the Small Business Administration to streamline financing for black businessmen and on its own has committed \$65 million for loans for low-cost housing construction and rehabilitation. It's helping line up young black professional men to coach Negro entrepreneurs, and it has a hand in a promis-



RUSK: Thanks to Bill Rogers...

ing prefabricated-housing experiment."

Piddling measures of this sort can only lead to further and fiercer explosions of protest in the heart of the urban centers by the black masses, who are tired of tokenism and who are clamoring for relief.

Nixon's determination to hold down large-scale federal expenditures for such purposes will frustrate the plans developed by his Urban Council and other departments to deal with overcrowding, housing, mass transportation, air and water pollution and other problems of the cities. The agents of the monopolists and militarists are ready to spend heavily on armaments while short-changing social welfare. The priorities of the Republicans, like those of the Democrats, are dictated by the interests of the rich, not the necessities of the poor.

The new administration must wrestle with a choice of evils in deciding what economic policy to implement in 1969. Nixon inherits from Johnson a rate of inflation that is more menacing and rapid than at any time in seventeen years, and as of last June 30 the federal budget showed a deficit of \$25 billion. The Chicago banker Kennedy, the incoming secretary of the treasury, has declared with dismay that these factors have generated "an explosive combination of easy money and the highest long-term interest rate in memory."

The dilemma he is called upon to solve is how to impose financial restraints that can curb the mounting inflation and bring the budget into balance without precipitating too much slackening in business and investment activity. Almost as soon as they take office, Nixon's appointees will have to choose whether to extend the 10 percent income-tax surcharge beyond its expiration date of June 30.

Less inflation will bring more unemployment. The administration can envisage the likelihood of increased unemployment with more equanimity than a slowdown in the economy soon after it takes office.

In the long run Nixon will also have to cope with the balance of payments problem and the continual weakening of the dollar which plagued Johnson's treasury officials. These two difficulties were temporarily eased in 1968. But the increase of imports over exports and other maladjustments threaten to render them again acute at some point in his administration.

Some liberals and radicals were fearful that a Nixon victory at the polls portended a new period of extreme repression, a reversion to McCarthyism which might be a prelude to "fascism." This kind of hysteria was used by political opportunists of the left to stampede gullible people into supporting Humphrey and other liberal Democrats as a "lesser evil."

There are certainly no grounds for

expecting Nixon and his attorney-general to respect the civil liberties of the American people any more than the Johnson administration did, as its conduct in Chicago last summer, its brutal suppression of the black uprisings and its treatment of the antiwar activists demonstrated. The degree of their repressiveness will depend upon the intensity and scope of the social conflict they encounter. But neither the relation of class forces in the country nor the disposition of the ruling class are conducive to the launching of an all-out crackdown against dissidence that can abruptly transform the political climate in an ultrareactionary direction.

Nixon would prefer to reproduce the sedative conservatism that prevailed during the latter years of Eisenhower's tenure by reducing military action in Vietnam as the General did in Korea and proceeding with a cautious domestic policy that will keep his supporters happy and discontent under control.

This agreeable prospect is not in the cards. The world of the late 1960's differs in too many respects from the late 1950's. The international arena is more explosive; the domestic scene is highly unsettled.

Nixon does not start off, as Johnson did, with a large fund of confidence among the American masses. His administration will have to contend from the first with a vast amount of distrust among the youth, alienated from bourgeois society, the black militants and the masses behind them, the critical intellectuals as well as the growing sentiment against the war in the armed forces. Most working men and women do not anticipate any gifts for themselves from Washington -- and they are right in that.

So, whatever the weather is on inauguration day, the political prognosis for 1969 reads: storms ahead for the Republican regime and good growing conditions for American radicalism.

January 4, 1969

MIGHT NOT BE A BAD IDEA

London

duced in the Commons by Stephen Swingle, minister for health and social security.

Under-secretary Hattersley, in summing up the debate said:

"Employers would become responsible for guaranteeing payment to workers temporarily suspended through no fault of their own."

The Times, ever alert to the main interests of the ruling class, put the following warning headline over its parliamentary report in the December 19 issue: "Gov't Wants Employers to Pay Laid-Off Workers."

The report was about a bill intro-

TOWARD A NEW REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE IN EUROPE

By Ernest Mandel

After twenty years of ebb, the socialist revolution is again on the rise in Western Europe. This is the main lesson of 1968 for our continent. Almost exactly two decades after the Western workers' last great revolutionary action -- the Italian general strike of July 14, 1948 -- the French workers and students have opened the way for a revival of revolutionary action throughout the continent.

Of course before this there were the spectacular mobilizations of the Belgian workers in December 1960-January 1961 and of the Greek workers in June-July 1965. But these were in small countries and the explosions soon subsided into a retreat of the mass movement.

France, however, is one of the key countries on the continent. And many signs indicate that there is not the slightest danger that the French movement will quickly fade. Furthermore -- and this is the essential thing -- the situation in several other countries in West Europe is rapidly approaching a point similar to that of the January-April 1968 period in France (a "pre-May" climate). This is what enables us to look forward to a new revolutionary upsurge sweeping Europe.

What is the source of this new upsurge? What are the contradictions giving rise to it? What are the precipitating factors?

The General Slowdown of Imperialist Economic Growth

Among the long-run contradictions stimulating the radicalization, a key role has unquestionably been played by the slowdown in imperialist economic growth which began to appear in 1966. This slowdown has taken different forms -- recession in West Germany, Great Britain, and several smaller countries in the imperialist world, a slowdown followed by quasi stagnation of production in the United States; and inadequate expansion in France (a quarter of French productive capacity was unutilized on the eve of May 1968). Only Italy and Japan have escaped this general tendency owing to the fact that they went through a deeper recession a few years earlier.

This general slowdown in the growth of the imperialist economy is not the immediate cause of the pronounced rise in the combativity of the masses noted in France, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, and elsewhere. But it created an economic climate favorable to the outbreak of pre-revolutionary crises.

By reducing the margin for maneuver available to the bourgeoisie in each imperialist country, by sharpening inter-imperialist competition and aggravating the crisis of the international monetary system, this slowdown stimulated a general offensive of the bosses against the positions won by the workers movement. The Gaullist "ordinances" cutting social security benefits; the "incomes policy" which Wilson imposed on the British unions; and the "harmonized economy" which the "grand coalition" in Bonn is trying to force on the West German unions are the most striking manifestations of this general tendency.

The most important consequences of the bosses' offensive have been a reappearance or increase of unemployment and a slowdown or halt in the rise of real wages (in some cases even temporary declines in real wages). This created a climate of heightened social tension which has eroded the gradualist, electoralist, and reformist illusions which the masses had accumulated in the preceding phase.

The case of Spain is particularly characteristic. During the years of accelerated expansion, wages rose, unemployment declined, and the "liberalization" of the regime could promote illusions. Since the West German recession, Spanish income from tourism has stagnated for the first time in more than a decade and the emigrant workers are returning. Illusions about a "gradual liberation" have abruptly vanished. The regime has tightened its repression. The workers struggles have rapidly taken on a political character.

The Radicalization of the Worker and Student Youth

Radicalization of the youth is a universal phenomenon throughout the imperialist world and the student radicalization is only one aspect of it. The general cause of this phenomenon is to be found in the fact that the growth of the productive forces during the last fifteen years also stimulated a proportionate if not greater growth of new needs among the youth.

Accelerated technological innovation has created a real "generation gap" in the realm of needs. The older generations measure their present standard of living against what they had in 1937 or 1947 and are partially satisfied. The new generations measure their standard of living -- which does not include just material consumption goods -- against the possibilities of science and technology

today. The gap is a vast one. That is the essential source of the "challenge" from the youth -- neocapitalism's incapacity to satisfy their new needs.

In different strata this general cause is reenforced by specific causes -- for the students, the "university explosion" and the patent failure of the bourgeois university; for the young workers, increased unemployment and exploitation of youth; for the high-school students, the threat of finding themselves shut out of the universities and the sort of jobs they aspire to, etc., etc.

There is a clear interaction between the slowdown in economic growth and the general youth radicalization. At the very moment the bourgeoisie found it necessary to push through the Fouchet law,* the additional financial means needed to extend concessions to the students were lacking. Because the rate of productivity continues to grow faster than the development of production, youth unemployment is tending to rise.

The Development of a New Youth Vanguard Independent of Reformism and Stalinism

We again find ourselves at the intersection of two tendencies. The general youth radicalization has progressively reduced the impact of the traditional bureaucratized organizations on young people. Identification with the only revolutionary struggles of the last decade -- Algeria, Cuba, Vietnam -- has favored the development of organizations among the youth vanguard tempered in confrontation with reformism and Khrushchevite neoreformism and in clashes with the bourgeoisie and its state apparatus and police. And these organizations are firmly rooted in one segment of society -- the students.

That is the crucial new fact. Numerically the French, Italian, West German, and British "splinter groups" were not qualitatively stronger at the beginning of 1968 than at the beginning of 1960. But in the past the revolutionary groups functioned without a social base. They acquired a basis of support as a result of the student radicalization insofar as they worked correctly to establish roots in this stratum. It was this that enabled them to play the role of detonator.

The workers will not react to a brawl between 500 young revolutionists

and the police. But 15,000 students building barricades and facing the attacks of the CRS [Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité] throughout the night touched off an avalanche in working-class opinion.

Impact of the World Revolutionary Upsurge -- the Tet Offensive and the Revival of Mass Struggles in the Bureaucratized Workers States

These struggles throughout the world exerted a subjective influence on the formation of a new revolutionary youth vanguard in Western Europe, thereby helping to prepare the way for a revival of revolutionary struggles in the West.

The example of the Tet offensive of the South Vietnam National Liberation Front was particularly eloquent. There was a direct link connecting the enthusiastic response to this offensive in West Germany and France, the unleashing of the first mass battles of the West German far left (the Vietnam Congress on February 17-18, 1968, in Berlin; the struggles against the Springer monopoly over Easter), and the precursory stages to May 1968 in France (the Nanterre revolt was touched off by the arrest of militants demonstrating against the war in Vietnam; the example of the West German students played a definite role).

The influence of the rise of the political revolution in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic should not be underestimated either. The happenings in Czechoslovakia, while of short duration, offered a glimpse of what a socialist democracy, a democracy of workers councils, could be in the industrialized countries. That greatly helped to revive hope in an authentic socialist revolution, just as the occupation of Czechoslovakia by troops under orders from the Kremlin helped to discredit Stalinism and weakened its control over sections of the working masses in West Europe.

Possibility that the Radical Spirit of the Youth Will be "Transmitted" to the Adult Workers Through the Intermediary of the Young Workers

This is the vital link in the chain. Without the entry of the broader working masses into the struggle, the battles or uprisings of the youth are condemned to failure. But through the intermediary of the young workers, the battles of the youth can bring a sharp turnabout in the mood of the working masses.

The new fighting style of the vanguard students and the revolutionary youth organizations has impressed and attracted

* The educational reform voted by the Gaullist parliament after the May-June upsurge.

the young workers. This was seen during Easter 1968 when the West German SDS [Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund] engaged in a confrontation with the police. While the older workers rejected "violence no matter who resorted to it," the younger workers instinctively sympathized with the students. May 1968 in France accentuated the same tendency. And we have recently seen striking illustrations of it in two countries, Great Britain and Italy.

In Great Britain, despite the exclusively student and intellectual nature of the movement which launched it, the October 27, 1968, demonstration was swelled by tens of thousands of young workers. They came out not so much to shout their support for the National Liberation Front as to demonstrate their hostility to the establishment, Wilson's policy, and their desire to take on the cops.

In Italy during the December 5 general strike of a million workers in the Rome region, the sympathy of the young workers for the students was so patent that the trade-union bureaucrats had to let student speakers address the strike rally. And these same bureaucrats did their utmost to sabotage the rally, fearing a meeting between thousands of workers and thousands of students.

It should be noted that in Turin the fraternization of young FIAT workers and "challenging" students in previous months helped to change the social climate radically, bringing back a "hard" style of mass strike picketing which had not been seen in this working-class city since the postwar struggles.

A radicalization of the vanguard strata of the working class can, moreover, be produced by a phenomenon intrinsic in the productive process today. The capitalist "rationalization," the speedup, the advances in automation, neocapitalist economic "programming," and the concentration and accelerated fusion of enterprises all tend to shift the center of gravity in the class struggle from disputes over the division of newly created value between capital and labor toward disputes over the control and organization of work and of the productive process itself. This is why the spread of the campaign for workers control among the shop stewards in Great Britain assumes a crucial importance, as does the renewed struggle toward this goal in Belgium, Italy, Sweden, and even West Germany.

The Crisis of the European Bourgeoisie

To complete the picture it must be

pointed out that this sharp radicalization of the youth and sections of the West European working class goes hand in hand with a sharpened crisis of the traditional bourgeois and bureaucratic leaderships in several key countries.

The most typical case is certainly that of Great Britain. The Labour party and the Conservative party have been rocked by a crisis of graver nature than the one they went through in the thirties, while for the first time in a century an important extraparliamentary current has spread to the left of the workers movement.

The same tendency toward a breakup of the traditional bourgeois leaderships is apparent in Spain, Belgium, and even Denmark. And Italy is no exception to this rule, as the difficulties encountered in attempts to refurbish the center-left coalition and the factional tensions ripping apart the three big parties -- the Christian Democracy, the CP, and the SP -- attest. The crisis in the Common Market also contributes to this tendency.

Two factors are lacking for a transformation of this revolutionary upsurge into a revolutionary victory. The level of consciousness and the ideological preparation of an important section of the workers, even including the most combative, is still inadequate and there is no revolutionary leadership with sufficient authority among the working masses to be accepted as an alternative leadership by a broad vanguard in the struggle. May-June 1968 in France, December 1968 in Italy, and the most recent months in Spain have sadly underscored this negative side of the situation. Excellent opportunities are still being lost for lack of an adequate leadership.

The construction of revolutionary parties well rooted in the youth and the working class -- using the successes won among the youth as a springboard to win a base in the working class -- is the only way to fill this gap. Politically (on the level of propaganda as well as agitation and action) such a party would educate the masses in the spirit of continually questioning the authority of the bosses and the structures of capitalist economy and the bourgeois state. Organizationally, the construction of such a party would bring together new leaders of the working masses capable of extending actions like those of May-June 1968 in France into a general confrontation with capitalism and the emergence of dual power. This task has been on the agenda for a long time, but now for the first time we can see a start toward carrying it out.

December 15, 1968

THE UPSET IN THE VENEZUELAN ELECTIONS

By Antonio Galán Velarde

Caracas

I begin by acknowledging the error I made in my forecast of the election. I held that Rafael Caldera, whose chances of winning looked very good at first because of the split in Acción Democrática [Democratic Action -- the party of Rómulo Betancourt], could not make it after Miguel Angel Burelli decided to run.*

What was confirmed in my forecast was the grave decline of the three parties backing Burelli -- Larrazábal's Fuerza Democrática Popular (FDP) [People's Democratic Force], whose setback foreshadows its departure from the scene as a significant force; the Fuerza Nacional y Democrática (FND) [Democratic National Force] of Uslar Pietri, who refused to accept any leadership position in his own party; and Jóvito Villalba's Union Republicana Democrática (URD), which is not as played out as the other two parties but nonetheless has become a second-rate political force. These three parties were as unsuccessful collectively as individually. And their bloc failed to achieve its purpose, which was to prevent Caldera's victory.

On the other hand COPEI [Comité Organizado por Elecciones Independientes -- Committee Organized for Independent Political Action -- the Christian Democratic party] and Acción Democrática represent the Venezuelan version of the Democratic and Republican parties in the United States. Together they fondly expect to succeed each other in power every five years without any need for a written agreement, like the one in Colombia between the Liberals and Conservatives.

In reality, these advocates of representative democracy should not be so optimistic about Venezuela, because the combined strength of these two parties amounted to only about 55 percent of the vote (Caldera got 1,082,941 votes, while Barrios got 1,051,870 votes). The remaining 45 percent was divided between Burelli's three-party front (829,397), and the demagogic leftist electoral combination of Luis Beltrán Prieto (719,733), as well as two minority candidates who together got 40,000 votes.

Despite the fact that Caldera got 31,000 votes more than Barrios, Acción Democrática ended up with three more senators and six more deputies than COPEI. How can this be explained? It was the big

surprise in the elections. Some who voted for Caldera for president split their ballot and voted for the parliamentary slates put up by ex-dictator Marcos Pérez Jiménez's party.

What makes this surprising is that no one in Venezuela -- neither the political organizations, the newspapers, the news agencies, nor even Pérez Jiménez' followers -- thought that his party would manage to get 400,000 votes. There were cases in which some of the slates put up by the Perezjimenistas ran fewer candidates than could have been elected. There are many anecdotes about friends and supporters of Pérez Jiménez refusing to run for senator, deputy, or councilor because they considered it ridiculous to appear on slates doomed to certain defeat. Likewise, there are cases of persons elected on the Perezjimenista slates just because they accepted nomination the way one accepts an invitation to dinner.

As a result, the mental level of the parliamentary fraction devoted to the ex-dictator will be one of the lowest ever seen in the Venezuelan Congress... which is something. If Pérez Jiménez had had an inkling that this success was in the cards, he certainly would never have run for senator. He would have run for president.

This phenomenon has given rise to many theories and encouraged much sociological speculation. It has been said that the votes came from those who benefited from Pérez Jiménez' regime, above all the nationalized foreigners who made their fortunes in the freewheeling economy that prevailed under the dictatorship. One also hears that those who voted for him were nostalgic for the law and order of Pérez Jiménez's time, which prevented the crimes against property and persons so common today. In any case, both the first and second categories are a tiny minority in comparison with the flood of votes that swept four senators and twenty-one deputies into the parliament.

Despite these very partial explanations, all the parties (except Pérez Jiménez's) agree that these 400,000 votes were an expression of protest not only against the Acción Democrática government but against the prevailing social system. (All the parties are coming up with plans for correcting their failings and capitalizing on this vast discontent.) This explanation is valid because the votes for Pérez Jiménez (to call his followers a party is stretching the word a bit) came mostly from the poorest neighborhoods in Caracas.

* See "Venezuela Prepares for the December Elections," Intercontinental Press, September 9, 1968, p. 716.

These were the neighborhoods that fought hardest on January 23, 1958, to oust the dictatorship -- like the neighborhood which used to be called the Second of December District but which, because of the tremendous mass struggle waged there, came to be known as the Twenty-third of January District. In fact, when Larrazábal (who headed the government that replaced Pérez Jiménez's regime) announced his retirement from politics recently, he declared bitterly that this neighborhood should start calling itself the Second of December District again, which was the date when the ex-dictator consolidated his power.

Of all the competing parties, the one that campaigned the least was Pérez Jiménez'. And that was one of the main reasons for the general surprise at the outcome. The election campaign surpassed anything yet seen in Venezuela. Caracas and many other cities were turned into carnivals of multicolored posters. In proportion to the number of voters, the money spent on newspaper ads, radio and television announcements, posters of all sizes, sound trucks, transportation of crowds to public rallies, etc., was probably in excess of that spent in an American presidential election.

The government coffers were a cornucopia for Gonzalo Barrios. And from West Germany, Italy, Chile, Opus Dei, and the Jesuits a flood of millions poured in to pay for publicity for Rafael Caldera. Uslar Pietri complained about his candidate Burelli's meager assets (he meant his economic ones), which in all were not insignificant. And Prieto will have to agree to participate in Caldera's government in order to pay off the obligations he contracted in his electoral campaign.

In general, it can be said that the election registered the consolidation of a strong middle class in the cities which allocated its votes indiscriminately among the four major candidates -- Caldera, Barrios, Burelli, and Prieto.

The majority of the peasants (approximately 33 percent of the Venezuelan population) continued to support Acción Democrática, except the peasants in the three Andean states. The latter are almost all small proprietors and are still very much under clerical influence, which has led them for twenty-three years to vote for COPEI. But the peasants employed by agricultural and fishing enterprises of a capitalist type, which have increased in number and strength, and the peasants who have acquired land or stock in the agrarian reform cooperatives are Acción Democrática's firmest bulwark.

The workers employed by the oil companies as well as the skilled workers in construction and other branches of in-

dustry are the aristocracy of our working class, and their electoral sympathies follow the pattern of the middle class. But the unprivileged workers, who are the majority, joined the class inhabiting the slum belts in expressing discontent with the existing social order. They voted for the slate of the only politician whom all the parties consider to be their enemy.

It was not that these 400,000 people who voted for Pérez Jiménez are unaware that he looted the public till, murdered many of his political opponents, abolished civil liberties, and handed out favors to a coterie of friends while the masses lived in poverty. These voters know that the public coffers are still being tapped, that opponents of the regime are still being jailed and murdered, that such freedoms as do exist are only enjoyed by the legal parties.* They know that while their poverty is now called "democratic" it is still poverty. And what can you say about freedom when the poor, who live in the shanty towns around the cities, have to endure continual harassment from the country's five different police forces! This time the most dispossessed masses were shrewd enough to use the vote granted them to give an assist to the enemy of their enemies, knowing all the time that he is no friend of theirs either.

These votes were cast on a red ballot, the same color as the ballot used by the Communist party, which chose the name UPA [Unión para Avanzar -- Union for Progress] in order to gain legal recognition. (The difference was that the Perezjimenista ballot used an Indian as the insigne and the UPA ballot a cock.) So Gustavo Machado, the elderly pope of Venezuelan Communism, declared that many of the CP's supporters made a mistake and put the red ballot with the Indian on it into the ballot box when they wanted to use the one with the cock.

This is one of the major points in the PCV's [Partido Comunista Venezolano -- Venezuelan Communist party] analysis of its defeat. Machado does not seem to mind implying that his followers are abysmally ignorant. He does not seem concerned either over the fact that these votes ought to have gone to the extreme left instead of the extreme right since they expressed rejection of the entire established order.

Logically, these discontented voters ought not to have voted for the UPA for the simple reason that the UPA offered them nothing fundamentally different from the other parties. Nevertheless, the Communists found their vote cut by

* All the left parties have been outlawed. -- I.P.

one-third. No more than 103,368 persons still believe in them in Venezuela. The PCV is so discredited that Prieto lost part of the popular support he used to have in the days when Betancourt and the Acción Democrática leaders proclaimed throughout the country that he was being backed by the Communists.

The red ballot with the cock was for legislative candidates, since the Communists (the same as Pérez Jiménez) ran no presidential candidate of their own. They decided at their last plenum to vote for Prieto. However, at his request they agreed not to publicize their decision. As Machado said (he supported Burelli at the plenum but was outvoted in favor of backing Prieto), the Communist votes went to Prieto via the back door.

This detail shows the depth of hypocrisy to which the PCV has sunk. How can a party be revolutionary that is afraid to tell the masses what it thinks! In fact Gustavo Machado was elbowed out of the PCV leadership by Pompeyo Márquez because the latter excelled him in this fine art of casuistry learned in the school of Stalinism, the school which substitutes adaptation to everything for dialectics, submission to the Soviet Communist party for strategy, and the most vulgar wheeling-and-dealing for tactics.

A genuine communist party would have utilized the elections to cut through all the hypocritical lauding of representative democracy and speak for the most elementary demands of the impoverished masses that have no bread, no homes, and no jobs. At the same time, a genuine communist party would have exposed the so-called "democratic game," in which a privileged group, under a façade of democracy, enjoys all the rights and advantages and another group has all the obligations and suffers all the disadvantages.

The PCV did none of this in the elections, nor has it ever done so in its entire forty-year history. Why then did no other forces on the left assume these tasks?

The PRIN [Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista -- Revolutionary party of the Nationalist Left], a fusion of former members of Acción Democrática headed by Raúl Ramos Giménez, former members of the MIR [Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria -- Movement of the Revolutionary Left] led by Domingo Alberto Rangel, and former members of the URD and the PCV led by José Vicente Rangel and Luis Miquilena, is torn by insoluble contradictions, as the election showed.

The PRIN succeeded in winning

85,694 votes and four seats in the Chamber of Deputies, thanks to the so-called electoral quota which makes it possible to total the votes gained in different states in the country.

On the basis of the results, José Vicente Rangel advocates closer connections to the middle class, since it has shown its vitality. However, Domingo Alberto Rangel calls for the formation of a strong workers party as a means to prevent the threatened establishment of a two-party system by COPEI and Acción Democrática. This is the first time Domingo Alberto Rangel has proposed this. However, it appears to coincide with his apparent withdrawal from politics.

The MIR faction fighting in the mountains, as well as Douglas Bravo and his group, decided not to take part in the elections but not to sabotage them either. In reality, their forces are concentrated in small rural zones and they lack the necessary means for action in the cities, where the bulk of the population lives. There are periodic skirmishes in remote villages. And the government itself keeps the armed struggle from being forgotten, as when it cooked up the absurd stunt of capturing a Cuban fishing boat.

The best evidence that the Venezuelan revolutionists have wandered off the road is that the 400,000 votes which Pérez Jiménez received all came from the cities, the most heavily populated ones in particular. The densely populated urban areas have been abandoned both by the government and the revolutionary opposition. But in order to penetrate these areas it is necessary to organize the working class politically. The unions where the workers have found refuge are corrupt, like their old leaders. In this situation it is hard to choose between COPEI, Acción Democrática, or pro-Prieto trade-union leaders, since all of them insist that the status quo with the bosses must be maintained.

The immediate perspectives are not rosy. Caldera based his campaign on the promise to carry out a complete change, taking the form of a program with a fascist coloration. It will not be easy for him to push through this program because the same people who supported his candidacy do not go along with him on his announced reforms. Moreover, the majority of parliament will be opposed to him.

In the economic sphere, imperialism and the big national bourgeoisie will be able to increase their profits under the new regime. And in the political sphere, restrictions on civil liberties will certainly increase, making revolutionary struggle more difficult.

December 26, 1968

THE CHOICE BEFORE BRAZIL -- MILITARY DICTATORSHIP OR REVOLUTION

[The following article appeared in the December 21, 1968, issue of the Belgian socialist weekly La Gauche. The translation is by Intercontinental Press.]

* * *

The Western shapers of public opinion have been upset, or have pretended to be upset, over recent events in Brazil. A coup in Brazil! Marshal Costa e Silva dissolved the parliament and assumed full powers. He suspended the congress and (worst of all) arrested former President Kubitschek as well as the editor of one of the papers which, although stoutly conservative, maintained a certain critical attitude toward the regime.

This is what has upset the Western press -- the disappearance of the traditional democratic opposition. As a result the papers are denouncing a dictatorship with which their governments intend to keep up the best relations. This is what is awkward!

They regret that the marshal had to take off the mask of "natural good-heartedness" and so rudely contradict his "professions of faith in democracy." After all, the marshal is one of the good friends of the United States. He, too, is fighting subversion. And he, also, has had his share of difficulties with the students.

The time has passed for talk about coups. The army seized power long ago. On April 1, 1964, the reformist government of João Goulart (they all call themselves reformist!) was overthrown by officers trained by the Pentagon and supported and guided by the CIA and the State Department.

The liberalism of the Goulart government was considered mischievous and purely demagogic. The interested circles were convinced that only an alliance between a military government and the big capitalists could get the country out of the impasse in which it had landed -- that is, an economic crisis with rising prices and raging inflation.

The army intervened to defend the privileges of the Brazilian big bourgeoisie and landowners, and likewise the interests of the imperialists. Under guise of safeguarding democracy it established dictatorial control. It claimed, moreover, to be inspired by a revolutionary ideal, that is, "revolutionary" in quotes.

The theory voiced by the most militarist-minded sector of the officer caste was that of an "all-out war on subversion" with "science as the method of

action, democracy as the form of political organization, and Christianity as a higher ethical model of social coexistence."

So, in April 1964 Marshal Castelo Branco became president of the republic. He kept only the trappings of democracy, and they were meager trappings.

There was no question of fundamental reforms. Agrarian reform would create too many problems. All the more so because the government had no desire to give the peasants a plot of land. Instead, they wanted to sell the national territory to American companies. The minister of justice himself recently declared that one-fifth of Brazil had been sold to foreigners. In short, the officers had few grounds for boasting of their revolution, while the population had every reason to complain of dictatorship.

In 1965, this regime, which sought to present itself as "moderate," experienced some days of crisis as a result of the elections that were staged. On the basis of a direct vote, the opposition won five states out of eleven. The "revolution," in the person of General Costa e Silva, Castelo Branco's minister of war, reacted sharply.

As in 1964, the government resorted to emergency measures. It modified the constitution by a basic law which streamlined the appeal process, empowered military judges to try civilians, decided that the president would be elected indirectly by the congress, and permitted the president to declare a state of siege for 144 days. Finally, Basic Law No. 2 dissolved all existing political parties as of the date of enactment.

In addition, Castelo Branco passed the mantle to Costa e Silva by setting the date for the presidential elections and declaring himself ineligible. From then on the regime hardened its policies.

Of course, an opposition party was recognized, the MDB [Movimento Democrático Brasileiro -- Brazilian Democratic Movement]. It opposed the government formation ARENA [Aliança Renovadora Nacional -- the Alliance for National Renewal]. And freedom of the press was tolerated to a certain degree, but the army reserved the right to intervene whenever it pleased to restore order. And all it has done now is put a stop to the protests of some impertinent personalities who lacked sufficient respect for the dignity of their station or adequate reverence for the army.

In fact, nothing has changed in Brazil, except that even the most moder-

ate liberals have finally joined the opposition, ending the illusory ambiguity surrounding a regime dictatorial in nature from the beginning. As a writer put it in the paper *O Pais*: "The parliament said no! The judiciary said no!" (by freeing the student leaders arrested by the army in São Paulo last September). "The Church has said no!" (by refusing to compromise in the matter of the clerics arrested in Belo-Horizonte).

This opposition, however, spoke out rather late and it must be said that it let many opportunities go by to express its disapproval of the regime.

In 1964 the struggle of the Brazilian people began and today its path is more clearly delineated than ever. Already the real revolution is on the march, the revolution in which the workers, peasants, students, and intellectuals are united. And a part of the clergy has also joined in the battle.

The Brazilian Bishops

On July 23 at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro, where they criticized the dictatorship, thirty-three bishops led by Mons. Helder Câmara, the archbishop of Recife, decided to form a movement. Although the meeting was held under the aegis of non-violence, the two documents adopted recognized the state of violence reigning in the country.

In one of the documents presented at their Rio de Janeiro meeting, the bishops declared among other things: "Just as in the time of Nazi Germany some Christians accepted the provisions of the regime without realizing that they were contrary to the profound demands of Christianity, so today not all Brazilians see that the doctrine of national security does not correspond to the spirit of the Church and cannot be adjusted to a truly Christian society..." "All of the state structures have been put to the service of an overall planning policy dictated by total devotion to the security of the West. And the postulates of this doctrine are to be transformed into institutional and constitutional principles." "The source of this doctrine," the document stresses, "is the War College Group which holds supreme power."

"The image of Christian Western civilization thus presented will not stand careful comparison with the message of the gospels, because in it the fundamental rights of the human person are restricted and democracy here is only a word covering up the reality of military totalitarianism."

Attitude of the Brazilian CP

Three months after the 1964 coup

d'état, the Brazilian Communist party spoke out on the national level for the first time through a letter signed by the party's general secretary Luiz Carlos Prestes. This letter was a short document denouncing the climate of terror prevailing in the country and calling for the "defeat of the dictatorship." Without commenting further on the events which had occurred shortly before, this document announced vaguely that the party would have to modify its methods of action in view of the new national situation.

In 1966, Basic Law No. 3 abolished direct election of state governors and the mayors of capital cities. Although the Central Committee denounced this as another "crime" against democracy, it still did not believe all was lost for a peaceful road... In June 1966 a political resolution of the Central Committee drew a euphoric picture of the possibilities for "defeating the dictatorship and restoring democracy."

Here is what the resolution said (the text was reprinted by the Foreign Section of the Central Committee): "Reflecting the interests of the national bourgeoisie and ever growing popular discontent, a movement of opposition to the dictatorship, emerging from the ruling classes themselves, has developed in the most recent period. In some states the deputies and senators of the MDB (the "official" opposition party instituted by the military government to "oppose" the government party ARENA) are presenting a program of struggle which corresponds to the demands of the democratic forces. Thus, the isolation of the reactionary and pro-imperialist group in power is increasing... Its social and political base is narrowing... We must struggle together with these organizations which unite forces opposed to the dictatorship."

In other words, once "parliamentary life" had been reduced to a minimum, the CP concentrated its hopes on the last vestiges of bourgeois opposition which was "more than authorized" by the dictatorship itself -- the deputies and senators of the MDB!

A New Vanguard

The tendencies which underestimated working-class struggle (by obscuring it with vague slogans) have now been bypassed by events. A regroupment is taking place around the forces which were able to understand the class nature of the revolutionary process in Brazil. *Ação Popular* [People's Action -- a Castroite-type formation] has lost its majority in the UNEB [União Nacional dos Estudantes do Brasil -- National Student Union of Brazil] to the dissident CP

youth and the POC [Partido Operaria Comunista -- Communist Workers party].

The POC is the product of a fusion between several CP dissident groups and the revolutionary Marxist organization POLOP [Politica Operaria -- Workers Politics]. The POC has proposed a front with the other organizations of the revolutionary left, the FER [Frente d'Esquerda Revolucionária -- Front of the Revolutionary Left].

Recently sections of the AP as well as the "red wing" of the pro-Chinese CP have moved close to the POC. Among the students, Wladimir Palmeira is aligned

with this current in the Brazilian left.

The other pole is the Partido Comunista Brasileiro Revolucionário [Revolutionary Brazilian Communist party] and the Mariguella group. They are known as the "Current."

It is not worth the trouble to deal with the remnants of the reformist forces and the orthodox CP. This tendency has remained on the sidelines of all the real mass struggles. After the death sentence it received in 1964, reformism has continually lost ground to the young vanguard.

KHALIL TOUAME RESTRICTED TO VILLAGE BY ISRAELI COURT

Khalil Touame, the Arab student leader at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was released from an Israeli prison in mid-December after serving nine months on a trumped-up charge. Now, even though his sentence is completed, he has been restricted by a military court to his native village of Rama.

Touame is a member of the Israeli Socialist Organization, which has both Arab and Jewish members. He was convicted by a military tribunal March 13, 1968, for allegedly harboring Ahmed Khalifa, a political leader of the Palestinian Arabs.

Khalifa, who is serving a two-year sentence for writing leaflets opposing the Israeli occupation of the West Bank area in Jordan, stayed in Touame's apartment for several weeks. This was no secret at the time as both took part in many student meetings and other public activities.

A worldwide campaign was mounted on behalf of Khalil Touame when he was put on trial. Figures such as Bertrand Russell, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beau-

voir, and the German-Jewish poet Erich Fried demanded his release.

As Israeli citizens who oppose Zionism and imperialism, the Israeli Socialist Organization has been persecuted by the Zionist regime. Despite this, the ISO has reportedly experienced a considerable growth since the June 1967 aggression by the Zionists against the Arab states.

Three other activists of the ISO were arrested at the beginning of October for allegedly painting slogans on buildings in Jerusalem denouncing Zionist chauvinism. (This was said to have included the house of Foreign Minister Abba Eban.) When tried a week after their arrests, the three were given relatively light sentences. The prosecution appealed and recently won stiffer sentences.

Bober and Hoffman received suspended sentences of a year in prison and fines of 1,500 Israeli pounds [US\$500] each. The third defendant, Cohen, was fined 750 pounds [US\$250] and given five months in prison, suspended.

PALESTINE GUERRILLA ORGANIZATIONS REPORTEDLY UNIFYING ACTIONS

The two largest Palestinian resistance organizations, Al Fatah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, have decided to coordinate their activities, according to a "well-informed source," Agence France-Presse reports in a January 4 dispatch from Beirut.

A conference of the main leaders of both groups is reportedly being held "somewhere in the Middle East." The purpose of the meeting is "to unify the actions of the two movements on the military level. The conference is also study-

ing the political evolution of the Palestine question during recent weeks and working out the position of the Palestinians in regard to proposals which may be made by the Big Four for a peaceful settlement of the crisis."

The AF-P dispatch adds:

"The meeting of the two movements constitutes a sort of prelude to the Palestinian congress scheduled to be held in Cairo in the early part of January."

THE ISRAELI ATTACK ON THE BEIRUT INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

By Les Evans

On December 26 two commandos of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine attacked an Israeli airliner at Athens airport, killing a retired Israeli naval commander and wounding a stewardess. As an individual action by one of the many Palestinian guerrilla organizations, the incident drew relatively little attention from the world press outside of Israel and the United States.

Two days later the government of Israel "retaliated," with a military assault on the Beirut International Airport. Thirteen civilian aircraft valued at nearly \$50 million were destroyed, nearly half of the civilian air transport at the largest airport in the Middle East.

This act of war, evidently planned much more than two days in advance and carried out by the regular armed forces of a government, threatened to plunge the whole area into a renewal of the June 1967 fighting. The timing was particularly embarrassing for Washington, coming one day after the announcement that the U.S. would supply fifty Phantom jet fighter-bombers to Israel beginning in 1969.

Since the American invasion of Lebanon in 1958, the Lebanese ruling class has maintained close ties with American imperialism. Lebanon played virtually no role in the June 1967 war. Of all the Arab states it has been least involved in the struggle against Zionism. The Palestinian guerrillas have not been allowed to train or to carry out raids from Lebanese soil. The flagrant attack by Israel and the thinness of its pretext forced even the closest allies of the Zionist regime to condemn the action.

The December 31 Christian Science Monitor reported widespread disbelief among American capitalists in the Israeli government's stated reasons for the attack. "Western business circles here generally reject the Israeli contention that the raid was simply a reprisal for the attack by Palestinian Arab guerrillas on an Israeli airliner at Athens Dec. 26," the Monitor said. "They look upon destruction of 13 commercial aircraft as an act of commercial warfare, designed to cripple tourism and commerce in a country that depends largely on these for its survival."

Even Washington felt compelled to join the chorus. Walt W. Rostow, President Johnson's special assistant for national security, declared in a December 30 television interview: "We think it is a grave matter for regular forces of the Government of Israel to attack a civ-



ISRAELI WAR HAWK

il international airport in a country which has been striving toward moderation in the Middle East."

The Security Council of the United Nations voted unanimously December 31 to condemn Israel's "premeditated military action." The U.S. representative voted for the resolution in order to head off an attempt to impose sanctions. As it was, the resolution said that Lebanon "is entitled to appropriate redress for the destruction it suffered, responsibility for which has been acknowledged by Israel."

The "responsibility" that Israel acknowledged, however, included no apologies. Shortly before the incident, Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan defended his policy of "reprisals" to reporters in New York after a private meeting with president-elect Nixon. The December 16 New York Post reported his statement: "There is no other way to restrict,

if not really to finish, the attacks than to let them know they have to pay the price; otherwise they will just go wild."

The universal outrage after the Israeli attack had little effect on the general. The December 31 Le Monde reported that the night after the raid "General Dayan explained to the members of his party the new Israeli strategy of reprisals of which he appears to be the promoter. This strategy was begun last October with the raid against the region of Nag-Hammadi in northern Egypt. According to the Israeli minister of defense, this strategy will force the Arab countries either to take part in the war of the Palestinians or to prohibit it on their territory."

Le Monde commented, "It appears, however, that the experience of the last twelve months has shown that the Israeli operations such as that of Saturday night have mobilized the Arab population and increased the pressure of public opinion on the Arab leaders."

On December 31 Dayan continued to rattle his saber, criticizing even those Israelis who accepted the commando attack but felt it had been too severe. The January 1 Le Monde quoted him: "We could not content ourselves, as some people suggested, with destroying one or two planes at the Beirut airport. In that case, the Arabs would immediately have made it out to be a victory for them and pretended that their forces had prevented the successful completion of our operation."

Despite this attempt to present a united façade, differences over the wisdom of the action extended into the highest ranks of the Israeli government. The December 31 issue of the Jerusalem daily Haaretz revealed that six cabinet ministers strongly disapproved of the raid on the Beirut airport. According to Haaretz the six included Foreign Minister Abba Eban, Zalman Aran, and Pinhas Sapir of the Labor party (Sapir is the party's general secretary); Bentov and Israel Barzillai of Mapam; and Zerah Warhaftig, min-

ister of religious affairs.

Since this revelation Abba Eban has denied that he differs with Premier Eshkol and Moshe Dayan on this question. It is known, however, that Eshkol has applied heavy pressure on his cabinet to refrain from leaking any differences to the public.

In reaction to the Zionist storm-trooper tactics, Arab militants at once began stepping up guerrilla activities. Guerrillas launched a rocket attack on Kiryat Shmona, the urban center of Upper Galilee, January 1. Al Fatah, the largest of the guerrilla organizations, claimed responsibility for the attack, which, they said, was carried out from Israeli soil. The Israeli military shelled villages in Lebanon in reprisal.

In Lebanon the Zionist actions have had a powerful radicalizing impact. The government of Premier Abdullah Yaffi is being widely criticized as incapable of defending the country. At the same time the policy of collaborating with U.S. imperialism and Zionism did not exempt Lebanon from the struggles taking shape in the Middle East.

One of Yaffi's first acts after the Israeli attack was to ban all demonstrations, hoping to head off a mobilization of the Lebanese masses. Despite the decree, more than 25,000 students in Beirut went out on strike January 4. The students demanded punishment for those responsible for the lack of defense against the raid at the airport. They called for universal conscription and the removal of restrictions against commando organizations operating in Lebanon. The strikers included 3,580 students at the American University, 4,000 at St. Joseph University, 8,500 at Arab University, and 10,000 at Lebanese University.

The Lebanese army high command threatened to use force to suppress student demonstrations.

AL FATAH DECLARES: AGAINST THE STATE OF ISRAEL, NOT AGAINST THE JEWS

"Our aim has never been to drive the Jews into the sea, but to break up the State of Israel by stripping it of its racist character." This is the key statement made by Abu Amar, leader of the Palestinian guerrilla organization Al Fatah, in an interview published in the January 1 issue of the Cairo daily Al Ahram.

The guerrilla leader described the way his organization functions:

"Our operations began January 12,

1965, with attacks on Israeli installations for the diversion of the Jordan River. Our primary objective has not been to inflict losses on the enemy but to regroup the Palestinians around our action."

He added: "The proof of the growth of our movement can be seen in the way young Palestinians are deserting the refugee camps and in the number of members of our commandos who are no more than fourteen years old."

PAKISTAN: THE CRISIS AND ITS ORIGINS

By Ghulam Hussein

[The following article appeared in the January 10 issue of the London fortnightly The Black Dwarf.]

* * *

Karachi

Recent events in Pakistan have been reported in some detail by the bourgeois press in the West, but even now their interest seems to have been sparked off essentially by the attempted assassination of Pakistan's dictator, Ayub Khan. This sudden interest in Pakistani politics would tend to give the impression that this is the first serious opposition to the Ayub regime. The impression is a false one. Opposition to the regime has existed virtually from the start of this decade of tyranny. A tyranny which has oppressed the masses of Pakistan since October 1958. They have had the effrontery to call it the "October Revolution."

After ten years of dictatorship, opposition to the regime is widespread and embraces almost every sector of public life. Liberal-conservatives, conservative-liberals, social-democrats, Stalinists, socialists are all in opposition to the regime. All, that is except the extreme right-wing Jamaat-i-Islam (Pakistan's version of the Muslim Brotherhood) and a large section of those who call themselves Maoists, but of this last category more later.

The main purpose of the military takeover of Pakistan in 1958 by General Ayub was to circumvent the country's first general election which was scheduled for April 1959 and at which it was obvious that the political parties in favour of withdrawing from SEATO and CENTO would be elected to power. Ayub's own brother, Sardar Bahadur, talked at one stage of his "unshakeable conviction" that the CIA were involved in the coup. It seemed that bourgeois democracy was not meant for Pakistanis, President Ayub told the nation. "We must understand that democracy cannot work in a hot climate. To have democracy we must have a cold climate like Britain."

With this as its motto the new regime banned all political parties, imposed a vigorous censorship on the press and warned that any participation in politics by the masses would be dealt with severely. It would take an entire volume to give a detailed survey of the early iniquities of the Ayub regime. Certain facts, however, bear repetition. A well-known Communist militant from Karachi, Hassan Nasir, was arrested and taken

to Lahore where he was held in the infamous Lahore Fort -- a torture palace dating back to the fifteenth century. After weeks of torture, Hassan was murdered and his body disappeared. From the village of Kooli, near Quetta (in Baluchistan), 400 Baluchis were taken to a concentration camp. In this camp half-naked persons were hung by their feet and subjected to vile tortures. Seven Baluchis were hanged in Hyderabad prison. Their only crime was the demand for provincial autonomy. While these reports are still denied by the Ayub regime, there is no reason to doubt their authenticity and the time is not far off when they will be stated in public by the oppositionists.

In this atmosphere of repression the opposition remained silent. When it emerged it did so via the student community who by virtue of their place in society were the only organised force in Pakistan. Organised not in any political sense but organised because they could assemble in large numbers at their schools and universities. The first demonstrations in Pakistan were not civil-rights demonstrations. They were organised to protest against the assassination of Patrice Lumumba in 1961. The demonstrators chanted anti-U.S., anti-U.N. slogans. A few shouted slogans against the Ayub regime. The important point, however, was that students had defied a martial law regulation which forbade all political demonstrations.

The main force of the opposition was in East Pakistan (separated from the West by 1,000 miles of Indian territory) where the student community played a vital role in energising the masses, who have a tradition of militancy dating back to struggles against British imperialism. In 1963 after Ayub had promulgated a new constitution with sufficient checks and balances to safeguard his position semipermanently, there were protest demonstrations in East Pakistan. A cabinet minister defending government policies was manhandled at Dacca University for insulting the mass of militant students. Hundreds of students were arrested. The insidious University Ordinances were brought into force which made it a crime for students to "interfere" in politics and banned free elections in universities. In West Pakistan the government also made it a crime (maximum penalty two years rigorous imprisonment) for male and female students to talk to each other on university campuses. Theatrical performances with mixed casts were banned! Political and sexual repression reigned supreme.

The elections of 1964 (known in Pakistan as the "general's" election) again saw demonstrations against the regime. This time large masses of workers and peasants demonstrated in favour of Miss Fatima Jinnah, who was Ayub's main opponent and, more importantly, the sister of Mohd Ali Jinnah, the "founder of Pakistan." Hence she had to be treated with some "respect" by the dictatorship. Miss Jinnah succeeded in uniting the opposition parties behind her and if there had been direct elections on the basis of adult franchise she would have won. However the indirect method whereby 80,000 "basic democrats" elect the president worked in Ayub's favour. The "political parties" which supported Ayub, the army and the civil service, saw to it that the Boss won, but even in these circumstances 40 percent of the "basic democrats" preferred to vote for Miss Jinnah.

The present struggle should, therefore, be viewed both as a continuation of the struggle against the regime and as an advance. It has brought some of Ayub's erstwhile supporters into direct opposition against the dictatorship and it is necessary to put their "opposition" into its correct perspective. One should add that the decision of some of the leading members of the Ayub faction to oppose the Boss has had a traumatic effect on the masses. It is as if Khrushchev and other members of the Stalinist faction had come out in open opposition to Stalin just after World War II!

Sino-Pakistan Relations

It became clear in 1964 even to the most reactionary elements in the Ayub coterie that the United States was more interested in India than in Pakistan. This was true both militarily and geographically. Politically, of course, India was the "free world's" model against China. (How ludicrous that seems now.) It was also clear that the aim of the United States was to unite India and Pakistan militarily as a "base against Red China." And certainly Ayub played his part to perfection. He appealed to Nehru for "joint defence"! "Joint defence against whom?" retorted the Indian prime minister.

The United States had at that stage not convinced the Indian government of the need for a confrontation with China. Apart from that fact, the social-democrat in Nehru viewed the reactionary, Sandhurst-trained Ayub with ill-concealed distaste. After the Sino-Indian confrontation Ayub was still prepared in the early stages to "talk business" but was rebuffed. The Pakistan government then decided to cultivate "friendly relations" with the Chinese government. This was originally intended to "blackmail" the

United States. The latter, however, knew full well that if it ever came to the crunch Ayub would back those who fed him. "Friendship" with China was allowed progress. Chou En-lai visited Pakistan; Ayub visited China. Marshal Chen Yi on one of his visits to Lahore declared: "Basic democracy is very similar to our Peoples Communes."

This embarrassed even the Pakistani Maoists. Basic democracy is the name Ayub has given to the system now prevailing in Pakistan! One of the architects of "friendship" with China was the Pakistan foreign minister, Zulfiqar Bhutto. His anti-imperialist rhetoric was useful to the Ayub regime while they were playing the anti-imperialist card. During the Indo-Pakistan war, the Chinese were the only major power to give total support to the Pakistan position on Kashmir. It seems clear, and Bhutto has consistently maintained, that it was the threat of Chinese military intervention which prevented the Indian government from taking over East Pakistan. (And incidentally also frightened the Soviet Union and the U.S. into ending the war.) However what is also clear is that neither the United States nor the Soviet Union were prepared for any alteration in the status quo in the Indo-Pak subcontinent. For them the rights of the people of Kashmir or of India and Pakistan were completely irrelevant.

Chinese popularity in Pakistan increased tenfold after the war. Newsreels showing either Mao or Chou En-lai were greeted with massive applause in cinemas throughout the country. But the attitude of the government towards China began to cool considerably. Bhutto was forced to resign, as the American government refused to resume aid while he was in the cabinet. Bhutto's resignation resulted in the latter becoming a leading spearhead of the opposition against the dictatorship. Forgotten were the seven years he had faithfully served the dictatorship. He himself remarked in reply to Ayub's allegations that his biggest crime was accepting office under the dictatorship. The removal of Bhutto from the cabinet coincided with the removal of various like-minded officers from the armed services. Some of whom had visited Peking!

1966 Railway Strike

The economic situation deteriorated rapidly after the war. The price of flour and sugar rose phenomenally. A strict rationing was imposed and workers and peasants had to wait for hours in queues before they could be served. As a result some of them had to forego working days in order to collect their rations. This affected railway workers more than others because for them in many cases it meant

missing two days. The workers appealed to the authorities to set up special ration shops. The authorities refused.

It should be mentioned at this stage that the right to strike is not recognised by the Ayub regime. Workers are forced to seek redress through the governmental conciliation machinery and industrial courts. The railway workers union was/is a stooge union completely subservient to "national interests."

The "unofficial" union was controlled by the Maoist wing of the National Awami Party [NAP]. The latter were opposed to any strike action because of the "anti-imperialist nature of the Ayub regime." Any national strike would harm the regime and only serve imperialism! (Incidentally this line was laid down by none other than Chou En-lai himself when he went to see Maulana Bhashani, leader of the Maoist wing of NAP, who was being treated at a hospital in Peking in 1964!)

The result was that completely spontaneously, independent workers committees were set up and the call for a strike went out by word of mouth and a few scruffy, badly distributed leaflets. The strike action was a complete success. Train services throughout West Pakistan came to a complete halt. Veteran observers claimed that it was the first successful rail strike in the history of the Indo-Pak sub-continent. For two whole days not a single carriage moved on the tracks throughout West Pakistan.

The "Maoist" leader Mirza Ibrahim was summoned by the government and asked to call the strike off. He agreed on condition that his union be recognised as the official union. The government said that if he succeeded in calling the strike off, this particular demand would be granted. Mirza Ibrahim called a mass meeting of railway workers in Lahore and asked them to go back to work. The strike he claimed was "financed" by the CIA. When this was simply laughed off he became more theoretical: "The strike," he now argued, "was preventing grain from reaching the peasants."

Angry railway workers spat on him and told him in no uncertain terms to go home. But, alas, this was not to be. The Ayub regime suspected that Mirza Ibrahim and colleagues hadn't tried hard enough to end the strike and imprisoned them! There was no mention either of the strike or of the imprisonment of the Maoists (despite themselves) by either Peking Review or China Reconstructs. An oversight, one presumes!

Meanwhile the government used every form of intimidation to end the strike and finally it succeeded. There were mass dismissals and arrests without

trial. In Hyderabad when striking workers lay on the tracks to prevent blacklegs from driving trains the result was trains being driven over their bodies. Some workers died. Others were seriously wounded. The amazing thing about the strike was the level of organisation and spirit of solidarity displayed by the workers. The leadership of the strike was localised and restricted in the main to young workers. The coffee-house intellectuals hadn't even heard their names before and certainly have not since. The unions, both official and "unofficial," and their structures were completely bypassed!

The Present Crisis

The present crisis was sparked off by a government decision to ban all opposition public meetings and in particular those being addressed by Mr. Bhutto. The student community refused to accept this particular directive and the meetings went ahead as scheduled. When the police intervened, riots took place and in some instances the students emerged as victors.

However if the "trouble" had only been sparked off by students the regime would have been able to deal with it. The students acted as a detonator and many workers came out onto the streets. This in its turn gave the "leaderships" of the various political parties a long-awaited opportunity to emerge in public at the head of demonstrations. The assassination attempt on Ayub is merely a symptom of the prevailing politico-economic unrest in the country. The arrest of Zulfiqar Bhutto is another. Mr. Bhutto is a petit-bourgeois nationalist politician with no political base in the country except the students. Seasoned political observers here argue that he is simply not interested in building a serious political base. Certainly the manifesto of his Pakistan People's Party is extremely confused. While talking about nationalising the key sectors of industry it can still talk in terms of:

"The private sector will play its own useful role in the kind of mixed economy envisaged, but will not be able to create monopolistic preserves. It must flourish under conditions proper to private enterprise, namely those of competition...."

Of the other opposition parties there is the National Awami Party which is split into pro-Peking and pro-Russian sections. We have explained the orientation of the first section. The second consists of liberals and former Stalinists, the same tradition as members of any Latin-American CP. Their vision seems to be restricted to Parliament!

The Muslim League is the party of

the more "progressive" landlords and sections of the rising bourgeoisie who resemble the radical Tory element in the British Conservative and Labour parties.

The pro-Peking wing of the NAP has some influence in the workers movements and peasants organisations. More in East than in West Pakistan. However as illustrated above they have used the Peking-Rawalpindi "relationship" to opt out of political opposition to the Ayub regime. At a recent demonstration in Lahore, over 2½ miles long, the Maoists stayed away! What they fail to realise is that in a right-wing dictatorship even the demand for "bourgeois democracy" has revolutionary undertones. There must be a limited freedom to educate and influence the masses before a revolutionary party can make any headway.

Conclusions

No one can deny that the Ayub regime is in a state of severe crisis. The students are in a state of virtual rebellion. For the first time young schoolboys have demonstrated with university students and have displayed exemplary heroism in the face of police brutality. Teachers are threatened with immediate dismissal if they take part in politics. A letter sent by the Ministry of Education to all principals of colleges and schools reads thus:

"...in regard to Educational institutions receiving financial assistance from the government, a condition of grant should be that the institution concerned will frame rules and regulations on their [sic] own initiative to ensure that the employees whether serving on whole-time or part-time basis will not offer themselves as candidates in any election...."

In a country with a population of 100,000,000 where there is a literacy rate of below 20 percent about 3 percent are women and owing to the existing circumstances they count for little. Of the remaining 17 percent about 7 percent are disqualified from politics because they are government employees and that includes teachers and journalists (in government service).

The teachers comprise the largest single body of "literate" people in the country. They are banned from politics.

It seems almost as though some Marxist had infiltrated the Ayub regime and was deliberately giving wrong advice to increase the political consciousness of the people.

The position of the workers and peasants is even worse. Despite the praise of the Financial Times for Pakistan's economic miracle, the actual wages of the

worker have gone down. The increase in per capita income recorded by the regime's apologists is a result of the massive increase of income recorded by the 1 percent (if not less) of the 20 percent literates who run the country. Pakistan is ruled by about twenty families amongst whom the leading family is Field Marshal Ayub's. His sons Gohar Ayub and Tahir Ayub even talk in terms of "the succession."

It is possible that with the emergence of Air Marshal Asghar Khan, an honest version of Ayub, as an oppositionist, the armed forces will not interfere if Ayub is overthrown. Whether that is true or not, the opposition parties should unite and fight for civil liberties. That is the most pressing need of the hour. Socialists should demand the release of all political prisoners, freedom of speech and press and one man, one vote.

And the Maoists must join this opposition; they should stop acting as the frontier guards of Chinese state policy and come out in a principled opposition to the dictatorship. Why, they should ask themselves, have the Chinese press ignored the struggle for political liberties in Pakistan? Why does Mao receive a military delegation from Pakistan headed by General Yahya, the commander-in-chief of the army, the same week as students are shot down in cold blood? They should demand of the Chinese comrades a little more display of internationalism in practice and a little less slogan-mongering.

At the time of writing I have just heard that a section of the left-wing NAP in East Pakistan has participated in a demonstration against the dictatorship. The demonstration took place in Dacca on December 7 and troops were called out to aid the police.

According to a government press release, two demonstrators have been killed and twenty wounded but the actual figures are bound to be considerably higher.

The occasion for this particular demonstration was Ayub's visit to East Pakistan. His regime has consistently treated East Pakistan as a colony and it is hardly surprising that the workers and students of Dacca treat him as they would the representative of an occupying power. This display of solidarity by East Pakistanis with the struggle in West Pakistan is of immense significance. The realisation that both parts of the country face the same problem could go a long way towards creating a united opposition!

Today the acid test is the struggle for civil liberties. Those who call themselves Marxists and Leninists must participate in this struggle. If they

choose to ignore this struggle they themselves will be ignored in time to come. Meanwhile all Pakistanis living abroad should set up action committees. They can give material and moral support to the movement inside the country. They can

write and distribute pamphlets explaining the situation to other Pakistanis. By so doing they can play an auxiliary, but nevertheless crucial, part in the struggle. Meanwhile at home the struggle continues...

REGIS DEBRAY LOOKS TO REVOLUTION TO FREE HIM

Régis Debray, serving a thirty-year sentence in Bolivia for having interviewed Che Guevara during his guerrilla campaign, told an American reporter in late December, "I was sentenced for political reasons, and when the political situation changes in Bolivia, I can be set free."

The imprisoned French revolutionary writer granted David F. Belnap an interview, which appeared in the December 29 issue of the Los Angeles Times.

Belnap, while clearly hostile to Debray's views, nevertheless gives a graphic account of the conditions under which Debray is being held.

In November when Debray was interviewed by a Reuters correspondent, he said that he considered himself to be a victim of American imperialism. At that time he called for "armed rebellion in Latin America against American colonialism."

The reporter for the Los Angeles Times tries to shift the blame for Debray's continued imprisonment to the revolutionary government of Cuba. Belnap approvingly cites a statement by dictator Barrientos that "Castro is pleased to have Debray sit in jail here as a spectacle calling attention to Castroism."

Debray said to Belnap, "Fidel still is my friend, and he has not deserted me." The talk of exchanging him for counterrevolutionaries imprisoned in Cuba, he said, had originated in reactionary Cuban exile circles. These emigrés, Debray continued, are "trying to use me to further their imperialist aims in league

with the Yankees who so strongly dominate this whole continent. Even if a genuine exchange were offered, I would have no part of it. I am not a piece of merchandise."

Protests throughout the world against the frame-up trial put heavy pressure on the military regime. Although they imposed the unjust sentence, they have been forced for the time being to modify the harsh prison regime usually imposed on political prisoners in Bolivia.

Debray is being held in a locked room at the Fourth Army Headquarters officers' club in Camiri. The window on the street side is sealed.

"Inside," Belnap writes, "it resembles a bedroom-study, with shelves and a work table piled high with books and writing materials....He exercises in the patio for an hour each day at dawn."

The prisoner is at work on several literary projects. "I spend a lot of time writing every day," he told the Times reporter, "to make the time go faster."

"His principal work in progress in prison," Belnap says, "is a book comparing the careers and works in divergent societies of French writer André Malraux and American author John Dos Passos.

"He's also writing a 19th century history of Bolivia, critical essays on modern French fiction and a series of philosophical essays, mostly dealing with metaphysics."

"NOT GUILTY!" 14 IRANIAN POLITICAL PRISONERS TELL COURT

The fourteen Iranian intellectuals who have been held incommunicado by the shah's secret police for more than six months were put on trial December 30. They are accused of "subversive activities" and "plotting against the security of the state."

All the defendants pleaded not guilty January 3. The January 4 issue of the Paris daily Le Monde reported:

"According to the public prosecutor, they were said to have sought to organize a guerrilla center in the country on the Cuban model, after having given up the idea of trying to assassinate the shah at the coronation."

Six of the prisoners, however, declared that they had signed the police investigation reports only under torture.

ANOTHER "NAXALBARI" IN KERALA?

By Kailas Chandra

Bombay

An incident that had the appearance of a stage-managed affair -- an attack on a police station in the coastal town of Tellicherry in Kerala on November 22 -- was followed by a rash of screaming headlines in the capitalist press suggesting that it was an attempt by "Marxist extremists" to ring up the curtain on a Maoist-type "armed revolution" in India. The whole affair sounded very much like the notorious Reichstag fire stage-managed by Hitler to crush the Communists in Germany.

In this case it was difficult to identify the forces that were at work. Supporters of the United Front government of E.M.S. Namboodiripad in Kerala* suggested the hand of either the American CIA or the (Indian) Central Bureau of Intelligence. Opponents of the United Front government suggested that the ruling CPI(M) and the police might have hatched a conspiracy to expose the "bloody intentions" of "extremists" breaking away from the party.

According to the newspaper account, a police station at Tellicherry in Calicut district was attacked by an armed gang numbering about 300 at about 3 p.m. on November 22, 1968. They carried spears, bottles of acid, home-made bombs and grenades, ground pepper, a good measure of Maoist literature, and a bundle of letters addressed to persons in China.

The reports said that they bore a red banner, along with the banners of the Muslim League and the Congress party. But the bloodthirsty gang, with its strange assortment of weapons, took flight when a sentry attached to the police station began shouting. All of them took to their heels, thoughtfully dropping their weapons, flags and literature, to the gratification of the police who only too often find it an onerous task to produce evidence for the prosecution in criminal cases.

Why it was decided to organize such an attack in a well-populated coastal town instead of a town in the hilly forest area of Kerala, and why, after having decided on the attack, the "revolutionists" beat a hasty retreat at the first outcry of a

sentry are points which have not been explained by the authorities so far.

The incident was flashed all over India as another "Naxalbari"* being rigged up in Kerala. Significantly, the state conference of the "breakaway extremists" -- who call themselves "Communist revolutionaries" -- was scheduled for two days after the attack on the police station. Leaders of the group, however, disowned any responsibility for the incident.

On November 24 another gang attacked a police wireless station in Pulpalli town in the Wynad forests of the northeastern districts of the state. They smashed up the set and killed a man in charge before escaping into the forest. This has given an entirely new complexion to the political situation in the state and posed a new problem for the Namboodiripad ministry, already faced with the revolt of a sizeable number of cadres against the CPI(M) leadership.

The Kerala police have made a large number of arrests in connection with the two assaults. Among them is Ajitha, a 25-year-old college girl, daughter of Kunnikal Narayanan, an expelled member of the United CPI, allegedly the mastermind. Narayanan's wife, Mandakindi, 40, a schoolteacher and once an activist of the United CPI, has also been arrested.

Kunnikal Narayanan himself surrendered to the police a few days later and allegedly confessed that his group was responsible for both the incidents. This has led to several other arrests, including his brother K.P. Narayanan and two others at Madras.

During the interrogations, according to some reports, the arrested persons were severely beaten by the police and forced to confess. In the name of law and order and security, the police force, technically under the charge of the CPI(M) chief minister, has behaved in precisely the same manner as under the Congress government. A trial of the arrested persons is to begin soon.

The Pulpalli area, where the police wireless station was destroyed, is notorious for the cruel injustice meted out to the Kurichians and other tribes, who have been deprived of their land and

* An opportunist alliance of the "left" Communist party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] with capitalist and communal parties in a "non-Congress coalition." The CPI(M) split from the pro-Moscow CPI in April 1964. -- I.P.

* Naxalbari, in West Bengal, was the scene of an armed peasant revolt in early summer 1967, led by a group that split from the CPI(M). -- I.P.

left without any means of livelihood. The similarity to the West Bengal Santhals in Naxalbari is pronounced.

Leaders of the "actions" at Telli-cherry and Pulpalli evidently are not a part of the group of "Communist revolutionaries" who broke politically with the CPI(M). This group, associated with veteran leaders of the party like K.P.R. Gopalan, Kosla Ramdas (both members of the State Legislative Assembly), and N.C. Sekhar, has not been linked with the incidents although the capitalist press has started labeling all the rebels from the CPI(M) as "Naxalites."

In pursuance of the stand taken by the all-India "Coordination Committee" of the "Naxalite" groups in different states, this group in Kerala has decided to withdraw its members from the legislature. Kosla Ramdas has in fact already submitted his resignation from the Kerala Legislative Assembly, while Gopalan continues to be a member.

The capitalist press throughout the country has mounted a big witch-hunt campaign against the so-called Naxalites, taking advantage of the incidents in Kerala. There is also talk about a possible central intervention in Kerala on the ground that the Namboodiripad ministry has failed to maintain law and order in the state. The allegation is that the Kerala police have been rendered impotent because of a directive by the chief minister not to be firm against "subversive" elements.

In Bombay city a couple of so-called Naxalites have been arrested on a phony charge of having painted slogans on walls -- "Long Live Mao," etc. The supporters of the Jan Sangh and the Swatantra party meanwhile have been allowed to burn an effigy of Mao Tse-tung in a public place in the name of fighting "Maoist subversion" in the country.

This appears to be a forerunner to a nationwide witch-hunt against all shades of revolutionary militants, taking advantage of the confusion in the ranks of the traditional working-class parties. The Congress government headed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi has rushed through parliament a bill banning strikes by government employees -- despite the strong opposition voiced by the entire trade-union movement.

Significantly enough, the CPI

(Dangeites) [the pro-Moscow CP led by S.A. Dange] in Kerala has come forward to organise the legal defence of Kunnikal Narayanan and his colleagues, although it has condemned their action as "adventurist." CPI leader S.A. Dange is said to have praised the participants of the Pulpalli raid for their "individual courage." This manoeuvre of the Dangeite CPI has irritated the leadership of the CPI(M), which is currently holding its national congress at Cochin, also in Kerala.

One of the major problems to be discussed at the national congress is the party's attitude to the "breakaway extremist" groups especially in relation to developments in West Bengal on the eve of the forthcoming midterm elections in that state, scheduled in February 1969.

The so-called Naxalite groups have made big inroads into the CPI(M) in states like West Bengal, Andhra, Uttar Pradesh, and now in Kerala. In West Bengal they have declared a "boycott" of the forthcoming elections for the State Legislative Assembly.

While the action of the Narayanan group has been dubbed as "adventurist and foolhardy" by major left parties, there are sections among the Communist ranks which admire the sincerity and dedication of the Narayanan family. Narayanan has been described by some as a "rare specimen of an Indian revolutionist." Unlike others who always keep their families safely out of the turmoil of politics, he has thrown himself, his wife and daughter into the thick of the fray, and that too is a dangerous adventure.

While this aspect of the episode has its own romantic appeal, Narayanan is regarded by many as a sectarian. Since his expulsion from the CPI(M) he has become an ardent supporter of the Maoist line.

Whatever the final outcome of the trial now commencing in Kerala, the Telli-cherry and Pulpalli episodes have provoked a new debate in the entire left movement. In opposition to the opportunist policies of the traditional left, a broad discussion has broken out about the new methods and tactics to be used in the revolutionary movement in India in the coming period. Sectarian adventurism is the price the working class is paying for the opportunist sins of its present leadership.

ARGUEDAS TO BE RELEASED ON BAIL

Antonio Arguedas, the former cabinet member who was imprisoned after sending Che Guevara's diary to Havana and revealing how the CIA runs Bolivia, is to

be released on bail, according to a December 24 Agence France-Presse dispatch from La Paz. The amount of bail, AF-P said, had not yet been set.

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY REGISTERS NEW GAINS IN KERALA

Calicut, Kerala

The Communist party of India (Marxist), the biggest political party in Kerala, issued a call for a one-day general strike on October 23, 1968. Barely 5 percent of the workers responded.

In the past thirty years the workers of Kerala have never given such a cold reception to a Communist call for action. A majority of the trade unions in the state are still controlled by the CPI(M). Not even the workers of the party's daily newspaper Deshabhimani, virtually all party members, joined the strike. The newspaper made its appearance as usual. This is an example of the disillusionment caused by the opportunist policies of the CPI(M)-led United Front government in Kerala.

There are continual signs of sharpening internal dissension in the party. K.P.R. Gopalan, a well-known militant, left the party after criticising the "United Front" tactics of the leadership. Namboodiripad and A.K. Gopalan, state leaders of the CPI(M), instead of replying to the criticism, began scandalising their opponent in the traditional Stalinist fashion. K.P.R. Gopalan, still a popular figure among the rural poor, was sentenced to death under the British regime. He was finally released from prison after a nationwide campaign on his behalf. He is now accused by the CPI(M) of being "an agent of the landlords."

K.P.R. Gopalan is the third member of the State Legislative Assembly to resign from the CPI(M). Contrary to the propaganda of the party leadership these rebels have not "joined the Congress," but are functioning as left critics of the United Front government.

The CPI(M) has been greatly weakened by these defections, but all the ele-

ments who are leaving the party are not joining the "Naxalite" group. Although most of the dissidents claim to be "Maoists," there are four or five different tendencies among them.

N.C. Sekhar, for example, the pioneer Communist in Kerala, recently expelled from the CPI(M), issued a statement to the press criticising the Naxalbari group.

In response to the new ferment on the left, the Kerala unit of the Socialist Workers party (Trotskyist) [SWP] has undertaken a program of expansion. Till recently the SWP functioned as part of the Marxist League of Kerala, which included dissidents from the CPI(M), the CPI, and the Revolutionary Socialist party [RSP]. Now the SWP has decided to act on its own in the state.

At a recent meeting of the Kerala committee of the SWP, led by M. Rashid, it was decided to establish a party youth organisation, the Young Communists (Trotskyists).

A meeting of the Young Communists at Kaipamangalam in Trichur district set up an organising committee with A.K. Madhavan, formerly a prominent member of the CPI(M), as secretary. Young Communist committees were set up in several other places, including Calicut. Secretaries of the Calicut committee are P. Nataraj and P.M. Koya, student leaders formerly of the RSP.

A number of active members of the CPI(M) have resigned from the party in Trichur district, including K.A. Mohamdeali, A.C. Vasu, T.K. Vijayam, and K.K. Gopalan. They issued a leaflet stating their differences with the right and "left" CPI's, as well as the Naxalite group, which they said were "different variants of Stalinism." They have decided to join the SWP.

STUDENT STRUGGLES FLARE IN TURKEY

Students at the Middle East Technical University in Ankara overturned and burned the car of U.S. Ambassador Robert W. Komer January 6. The students shouted "Down with the United States!" and "Kill-er Komer!" while the ambassador watched from a campus building where he was having lunch with the university president. Police did not interfere.

At the University of Istanbul eight students were arrested, according

to the January 1 Le Monde as "ringleaders" of a demonstration which occupied the administration building December 26. Authorities closed the university. The 300 participants in the demonstration shouted, "Democratize the university." The arrested students said their aim was not to occupy the building, but to protest the refusal of the professors' council of the faculty of letters to accept the doctoral thesis of a student known as a progressive.

THE TRIAL OF OBI EGBUNA

By Ernest Tate

London

Obi Egbuna, the Biafran novelist and playwright, and Nigerian artist Peter Martin were found "guilty" by an all-white jury here December 11 of "maliciously uttering a writing threatening to murder police officers in Hyde Park." The third defendant, Gideon Dolo, was found "not guilty." Egbuna, a leader of the Universal Coloured Peoples' Association [UCPA] and editor of the organization's magazine, Black Power Speaks, was sentenced to one year in prison. The sentence was suspended for three years.

In the ten-day trial the prosecution's case was clearly exposed as a frame-up. What was significant was not that racist hysteria could be used by the police to secure a conviction, but that the sentence for such a supposedly serious offence would be so light. Only a year ago another black power leader, Michael X, was sentenced to a year in prison -- and served it -- under the Race Relations Act for merely preaching black pride (allegedly "inciting racial hatred").

The outcome of the trial can be seen as a modest victory for the defendants and for the sizeable movement for their defence throughout Britain. Many marchers in the massive October 27 London antiwar demonstration carried signs protesting the fact that Egbuna and the others were held without bail from the time of their arrest in July. An energetic publicity campaign was carried out by the Committee for the Defence of Obi Egbuna on the eve of the trial.

The trial opened at the Old Bailey Central Criminal Court in London November 26. The three black militants had been held at Brixton Prison since their arrest.

The arrests caused considerable apprehension in the immigrant community, coming as they did in the midst of a new racist outburst by Enoch Powell and others. The double-standard of racial justice in Britain was highlighted by the refusal of the police to grant bail to the black prisoners. Two white fascists who were recently arrested in London for possession of machine guns, ammunition, and other weapons were granted bail.

The charge against Egbuna and his comrades was that between June 9 and July 25 they had given a statement to a Nigerian printer in London, Simon Davis, containing words which "threatened to murder" and "incited others to murder."

These threats, according to the prosecution, were in Egbuna's handwriting, headed, "confidential," and "to be printed and circulated to the membership of the Black Panther party" and to readers of Black Power Speaks.

All but two of the prosecution witnesses were police. Prosecutor E.J.P. Cussen sought -- unsuccessfully -- to establish that Egbuna had led a demonstration at Hyde Park June 9 that ended in a clash with police. This became an important point in the trial because the "statement," referred to as "Exhibit 13," contained a fictionalized reference to the Hyde Park incident. The prosecutor sought to "prove" that it was a "blueprint for riot and murder." Egbuna clearly established that it was part of a new novel he is finishing entitled Wimbledon Blues. Egbuna said the chapter in question had been inspired by the events in Hyde Park, but that obvious differences from the real incident should make plain that the piece was fiction.

The Nigerian printer Simon Davis and his wife were the only prosecution witnesses who were not cops. It was primarily on Simon Davis' testimony that the conviction was finally secured.

Davis at first claimed to be a law student. Later he admitted this was not so. In cross-examination it was established that he had acted as an informer for the police on at least two occasions, that he was heavily in debt, on the verge of bankruptcy in fact, and that the UCPA had taken Black Power Speaks to another printer because of Davis' incompetence -- which suggested a personal grudge against Obi Egbuna.

Davis frequently contradicted evidence he had given in magistrates' court or changed his story under cross-examination. He claimed, for example, that Gideon Dolo had paid him £50 for printing "Exhibit 13." His wife told the court the money had been paid for an entirely different job.

Although Egbuna and his codefendants were ostensibly being tried on the basis of what had appeared in the "statement," the real issue was black power. Defense witnesses were interrogated on the ideas of black militancy discussed in Black Power Speaks. Among the bits of "evidence" presented by the police were pamphlets on the black struggle in America, including speeches by Stokely Carmichael and Malcolm X. Each day the police carried a huge box of this material into the court. In prominent view on top of

the collection were large photographs of Che Guevara and other revolutionary leaders.

The most impressive figure during the trial was the chief defendant. Despite almost two days of intensive cross-examination, Obi Egbuna remained calm and self-possessed. He explained that he had been working on Wimbledon Blues since April. Its theme was the frustrations of a black man living in racist Britain. Because Davis had been an active member of the UCPA, Egbuna had once loaned him the manuscript of the unfinished novel.

Egbuna testified that the section of the last chapter was to have been printed as part of a future issue of Black Power Speaks. This was the only explanation, he added, for the heading, "confidential," on an article the police admitted was to be publicly distributed to readers of the magazine.

In his instructions to the jury, Sir Carl Aarvold, the recorder, virtually assured the conviction of Egbuna and his comrades by asserting that the police could have no motive for corroborating false testimony by Davis.

LABOUR PARTY PLAN TO "END THE GREAT SWINDLE ON WOMEN"

By T.J. O'Flaherty

London

Commenting on a plan "for basic changes in Britain's welfare state," announced by the Labour government in Parliament December 18, the Sun's political correspondent, Harold Hutchinson, writes:

"This plan will recognize all aspects of the social revolution that has taken place since the last war, including changes in the status and role of women in modern industry." [Emphasis added.]

The plan's purpose? "To recognize women as individuals and not primarily as dependents of men. To accord them the same rights and obligations as men, but with some special needs taken into account."

The "welfare" state, Mr. Hutchinson continues, "was created on the assumption of a fairly static standard of living." Women were expected, after the war, to return to their "natural" place in the home.

"Increasingly, however, women now work for a substantial part of their lives....[This] gives them a degree of independence unknown in the past. So the whole basic idea of a woman as an accessory to a husband must be scrapped....The social structure and the sex pattern within it are totally different from those of a generation ago....In Britain, for example, we have had abortion reform, the new divorce bill (certain to become law), and the undertaking by Mrs. Barbara Castle, Employment Minister, to put real power behind the drive for equal pay within seven years." [Emphasis added.]

"All these things," the Sun's columnist adds, "are aspects of the true emancipation of women which began with the suffragettes and what looks now like the incredibly blind response of govern-

ment and people only two generations agothe whole process became inevitable in a country like ours or in America with the invention of the typewriter, the growth of commerce, service industries and mass production....It is the least publicized function of government to recognize change in formal legislation." [Emphasis added.]

Mr. Hutchinson, long close to the Labour party leadership, reveals that "since 1964, a small group within the government had been working on a social security system" that would do this. Among this group was Douglas Houghton, chairman of the parliamentary Labour party [Labour members of the two legislatures, Commons and Lords]. Chairman Houghton, the Sun's reporter says, "regards the present system as a form of swindle perpetrated on women." [Emphasis added.]

The plan, after discussion as a White Paper published for information, will later be presented as a bill in Parliament. It is expected to be passed in 1972. The planners estimate that it will take another twenty years then for all anomalies, including adjustments in pensions to be resolved.

Lest it be regarded as an election stunt in a year or two, Mr. Hutchinson points out that the plan has been part of Labour party policy for more than ten years and figured in past manifestoes.

"Only a succession of sterling crises," he concludes, "stopped its coming into operation by 1969."

Be that as it may, strikes by women for equal pay at Ford's, demonstrations by women bus conductors to gain promotion as drivers and inspectors, etc., have pushed the plan ahead and will probably speed it up.

FRESH EVIDENCE PRECIPITATES CRISIS AMONG FLAT EARTH THEORISTS

The capacity of the human mind -- or at least some human minds -- to cling to theories which fail to explain the objective reality in an adequate way or which come into conflict with new facts, accounts for much of the staying power of institutions long doomed by history.

An almost perfect example of this ability to close the mind to facts lest they serve to damage a theory held in reverence was widely reported in the press following the flight of the Apollo 8 around the moon.

Samuel Shenton, 65, of Dover, England, responded vigorously as secretary of the International Flat Earth Society to the challenge of the new evidence brought to his attention. According to Reuters, he said that "the Apollo pictures we saw on television merely showed the earth as maps have shown it for several hundred years.

"It was round in the sense of being circular but not in the sense of being globe-shaped.

"The orbits of the earth were simply circular flights, like flying round the rim of a saucer.

"We are now slightly on the defensive, but we have a strong and challenging platform."

The Associated Press quoted Shenton as confessing, nevertheless, that the flight of Apollo 8 had become quite a headache for the Flat Earth movement, affecting its recruiting possibilities and precipitating an organizational crisis.

"We've lost a lot of members because of this absurd Apollo trip.

"I should think we're down to fewer than 100 members now."

He gave out no figures on the age level of the movement, or the age level of those who split away because of what they had seen on television.

Shenton scornfully dismissed the renegades who had buckled under the pres-

sure and gone over to the heretical theory that the earth is round:

"If their opinion can be swayed by such flimsy evidence, then they're no use to me or the society."

Asked why the photos showed a round earth, Shenton came up with considerations that proved he had not been caught unaware by this treacherous line of argument:

"I'm glad you mentioned that. That's where those Americans and Russians are so damned cunning. For some reason or other they obviously want us to think the world is round. Some of the pictures have been blatantly doctored. Studio shots, probably -- or distortion from the camera lens."

Shenton might more easily have confounded the reporters by asking them why their editors featured so prominently and with such emotion the way the three Christian astronauts read from Genesis as they hurtled around the moon at 3,643 miles an hour on Christmas Eve.

If the astronauts believed the theory expounded in Genesis as to the origin of the earth, and if the press agreed with them, as their acclaim would indicate, then why did the lot of them balk at accepting from the Holy Scriptures the equally authoritative theory that the earth is flat?

Perhaps the sturdy guardian of the principles of the IFES did call attention to this strange inconsistency. If so, the papers failed to report it. And none of them cared, on their own, to weigh the matter in their editorial columns. That might have spoiled the laugh they were having at the expense of the last representatives of a view once universally held as self-evident, and imposed with rope and fagot on those who dared question it.

After all, there are powerful interests around, who insist that no matter how spherical the globe may be this is still Flat Earth times and they intend to see to it that things stay that way.

46 INDICTED IN EGYPTIAN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS

Forty-six persons, including forty students, are to be tried in Cairo on charges of "advocating the overthrow of the government and destroying public and private property." They were involved in the massive student demonstrations in Alexandria last November. The indictment,

which was made public December 30, accused the defendants of belonging to a clandestine political organization of "free socialists." The alleged leader of the group is Dr. Ismat Zeineddin, assistant professor at the Alexandria Polytechnic College.

NEW ATROCITIES AT EL FRONTON

An Open Letter by Hugo Blanco and His Comrades

Only a few days have passed since military judges acquitted the guards who murdered the El Frontón prisoners,* the civilian judges having been "inhibited" by the authorities in their investigation of these crimes. Already, the usual practices in treating prisoners on this Devil's Island have been resumed.

This morning, in accordance with the usual procedure, some prisoners were brutally beaten without any excuse while they were being transferred from the El Sexto jail to this island.

Among them was a political prisoner, Gerardo Benavides Caldas. When the sadistic guards learned that he was a revolutionist, they began to work him over. At the jail in Lima, under the warden Roca, they started beating him.

Later they handcuffed him to a sick man and beat both of them as they took them to the car that was to bring them to the prison launch. They jeered the sick man because of the difficulty he had in walking while he was being beaten. They jeered Benavides' attempts to help him into the car and to shield him from the beatings with his own body.

Once in the car, the guards began clubbing them. The orders were the usual: "On the back and on the head!" "Hit the political prisoner harder!" "Let him have it for the 'Year of Human Rights'!" (The Comité de Defensa de los Derechos Humanos [Committee for the Defense of Human Rights] in Peru has designated 1968 the "Year of Human Rights").

"Ha! Ha! Don't be chicken, smash 'em. That's the way to give it to these bastards!"...And the one giving the orders "demonstrated" what he meant by not being "chicken." Comrade Benavides lost consciousness but the blows continued as his companions in the car told him later.

Since he knew about the brutality

of the guards and Roca's "recommendations," Benavides made the other officials at El Sexto take note that he was turned over to his escort in good condition. When he arrived on this island, we took him to the prison doctor, Dr. Lituma, and the warden of this prison. Both noted the visible evidence of his brutal treatment.

As usual, the repression has been directed not only against Gerardo Benavides but against his entire family. After torturing and jailing him, they also jailed his wife, his parents, and his sisters and brothers. They later got his father fired from his job.

When the authorities learned that Benavides helped support his family by working at projects in the El Sexto jail, they ordered his immediate transfer to this island. Despite the fact that El Frontón is supposed to be for convicts only, Benavides has not been sentenced and is "presumed innocent" according to the law. His two children used to visit him at El Sexto. They can no longer do so except on rare occasions. Children's visits are not permitted on this island.

We do not ask for justice; that would be absurd. We know that killers do not win promotions by displaying "love of justice."

Our duty is to inform our people of another side to the regime's "morality campaign."

We repeat our assurances that no "campaign of massacring political prisoners" can break us.

We know that the liberation of our people is a cause worthy of these sacrifices and many more.

Land or Death!

We Will Win!

Hugo Blanco, Eduardo Creus G., Juvenal Zamallón C., Vicente Dandado G. (El Frontón Island, December 13, 1968.)

* See "Hugo Blanco Denounces Murder of Prisoners in El Frontón" in Intercontinental Press, October 7, 1968, p. 838.

MAOISTS CALL FOR BOYCOTT OF ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

Maulana Bhashani, the leader of the Maoist wing of the National Awami party, called December 30 in Karachi for a boycott of the coming elections in Pakistan. He said that the NAP would not sup-

port any of the candidates opposing Ayub Khan. By cutting down the opposition vote, the boycott may help Khan, towards whom Mao is following a "peaceful coexistence" policy.

THE CRISIS IN ITALY

[The following conclusions on the crisis in Italy are from a resolution adopted by the National Secretariat of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Group), Italian section of the Fourth International, and submitted to the membership for discussion in preparation for a forthcoming national conference.

[The translation is by Intercontinental Press.]

* * *

The mid-November cabinet crisis exposed at the governmental level the deepening crisis which has been shaking Italian society at every level. And there is no reason to think that this crisis can even be moderated in the short run, much less solved.

Theoretically, there is an alternative to the center-left coalition which the dominant groups could choose and still remain within the framework of parliamentary democracy. It is collaboration with the Communist party and accepting it more directly into the regime. But this possibility is blocked by many obstacles difficult to overcome in the present situation.

First of all, still more than collaboration between the Christian Democrats and the Socialists, such an operation would presuppose the existence of a certain amount of room for concessions -- primarily economic in nature -- and an international situation that would de-emphasize certain questions (first of all in the renewal of the NATO treaty). Neither of these preconditions exists and it is difficult to foresee a development of that kind in the immediate future.

Furthermore, more than ever before in its entire history, the PCI [Partito Comunista Italiano -- Italian Communist party] is being exposed to attacks from left currents outside the party with a revolutionary orientation. Moreover, this left is composed not only of students but now also of workers. The PCI cannot risk making a decision which would not only obviously reinforce this left but in the present climate of social and political tensions would probably create grave problems within the party.

The most likely perspective seems therefore to be a progressive drift toward a crisis of the system. In a certain sense, in fact, this crisis is already in progress. Never has there been such a clear contradiction between the social reality in the country and the aspirations of growing strata of the working class

and the petty bourgeoisie on the one hand, and the political structures and the dominant political forces on the other. Never has there been this virtually total lack of serious perspectives.

A kind of void has been developing, in fact, in which the only ones who count and who really decide -- and decide ever more directly -- are the big economic powers and the state technocracy. Such a situation could endure and, in a certain sense, become chronic. However, the precondition for the continuation of this trend would be that no dramatic social conflicts develop and that mass mobilizations do not exceed present limits and endanger the functioning of the existing political system. If such conflicts and mobilizations occur, the ruling class will be compelled to make more drastic choices and resort to repression on a scale too vast for the present structures to support.

Nonetheless, even in the worst hypothesis -- that is, an aborted prerevolutionary situation and the imposition of a regime "in the Greek style" -- the outlook must be for profound and prolonged instability continually promoted by new conflicts and the entry of new sectors of the masses into struggle.

The salient feature of the most recent months has been the emergence and spread of challenge, of mobilizations, and revolt among the workers and strata of the petty bourgeoisie. This development has not been without clear analogies with what occurred among the student masses after late 1967.

What is new in contrast to previous mobilizations, of the worker masses in particular, is that the bureaucratic barriers have broken down or are tending to break down. And this has enormous implications for the functioning and the survival of the present system, since the opportunistic workers organizations have become an ever more decisive element in its makeup.

Bureaucratic control has been breaking down first of all because the contradictions inherent in capitalist society are tending to express themselves ever more directly and immediately. Secondly, because the center-left government (in which the CGIL [Confederazione Generale Italiana dei Lavoratori -- Italian General Workers Federation], and thus indirectly the PCI, was implicated) enabled the working class to experience concretely the pernicious role of the apparatuses and the bureaucratic organizations. And finally, despite their intentions and their class-collaborationist plans, the

traditional unions and parties are structurally incapable of assuming the leadership of movements which run counter to the deeper logic of their policy and, in the last analysis, conflict with their bureaucratic interests.

The exceptional depth of the Italian crisis is therefore produced by the accumulation and combination of international tensions, by the profound decrepitude of the system in Italy together with the irruption of social tensions and conflicts at many levels, and the breakdown of the traditional bureaucratic restraints.

In other words, we are facing a situation in which various lower social strata and groups are being driven by overpowering pressures to break out of the old patterns, to overturn the old taboos, to break all restraints and move "freely" in accordance with the logic of their most direct interests and most im-

mediate aspirations. From this, the tendency arises for the spread of spontaneous mobilizations, inasmuch as no political force is in control of them, functioning as a general catalyst. In this lies the strength of the movement which is tending to broaden and deepen (consider for example both the ferment among the workers and the extension of the high-school students movement in recent weeks).

However, this spontaneous character also sets a limit to the movement. Because in the absence of a unifying and coordinating force capable of projecting an overall strategy and thus of proposing a way out through a decisive political conflict, all the driving forces remain disparate. Centrifugal forces tend to prevail. And at times of generalized struggle (general strikes in cities or regions, etc.), the various movements fall under the sway of the bureaucratic apparatuses and thus do not get beyond the level of protest or pressure.

MOVE TOWARD UNITED LABOUR PARTY IN ISRAEL

London

Israel's next election should see a unified Labour party slate winning an absolute majority in the Knesset [parliament]. This likelihood has been brought about by agreement between the Israel Labour party [ILP] and the left-wing Mapam [Marxist Workers party], on a common electoral list.

Mapam reserves its right to vote independently in the legislature on constitutional laws (affecting marriage, divorce, burial, etc. -- at present controlled by the religious authorities) and electoral reform (giving the Arab citizens equal rights).

Mapam, despite its name, is Zion-

ist and was pro-Soviet (with Stalinist overtones) until the purge trials in the Soviet bloc during the early fifties or late forties. Its foreign policy is "dove" and critical of both camps in the "cold war," although "Western-oriented" because "the Soviet leadership, quite apart from the anti-Semitism it tolerates at home, arms the Arab countries regardless of their reactionary rulers, King Saud, Nasser, the Iraqis, etc."

Domestically, Mapam stands for equal rights for Arabs and Jews (it has four or five Arabs in its parliamentary contingent and intends to increase this number -- a point of contention in the negotiations with the ILP until the latter accepted Arab representation in the united Labour force).

FLU EPIDEMIC THE RESULT OF A PLOT?

Are Chairman Mao's overtures to the incoming Nixon administration already bearing fruit? Is Britain to be the first victim of the new axis?

A news item, prominently displayed in the London papers December 19, suggests an international conspiracy. The Sun, for instance, reported: "More than 180 soldiers who are potential Mao flu carriers will arrive back in Britain from America today. The men, of the First Battalion Green Jackets and the 15th/19th Hussars, have been training at Fort Carson, Colorado. In that area one person in eight has Mao flu. None of the soldiers has been vaccinated vs. the virus."

But maybe it's a British plot against the Nixon-Mao axis. In the U.S., the epidemic is called the "Hong Kong flu." That's where it came from -- the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong.

In China it may already be known as the "Harold Wilson flu." On the other hand, it may not have spread there, the Chinese now being immune to any "revisionist" virus. It's hard to tell because of Mao's secretiveness.

In any case, the British attempt to pin the flu on Mao is highly suspicious and sounds like a deliberate attempt to divert attention from the real plotters.

THREE SOVIET INTELLECTUALS SENTENCED FOR PROTESTING PRESSURE ON CZECHS

Three intellectuals were sentenced to long prison terms by a Leningrad court December 26 for protesting Soviet policy in Czechoslovakia. Lev Kvachevsky, 30, a chemical engineer, was sentenced to four years; Yuri Gendler, 33, a lawyer, was sentenced to three years; and Anatoly Studentkov, 33, an engineer, received a one-year sentence.

The three were arrested August 1 in Gendler's apartment. They were accused of drafting a letter to Soviet authorities protesting the Kremlin's campaign against the Dubcek regime in Czechoslovakia -- before the invasion. They were also said to have produced and distrib-

uted leaflets.

The Soviet press has not reported the trial, but friends of the defendants informed correspondents of Western newspapers a few days after it was over. The intellectuals were tried under Article 70 of the Russian Republic's criminal code, prohibiting "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda."

Gendler and Studentkov were said to have pleaded guilty, receiving reduced sentences. Kvachevsky confirmed the facts outlined by the prosecution, but vigorously denied that any of his acts constituted a crime under Soviet law.

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