

Outbreak of Peasant Unrest in Bolivia



BARRIENTOS: Stoned by angry peasants.

**Zambia Mystery—
Dr. Abrahams Disappears**

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ZAMBIA MYSTERY -- DR. ABRAHAMS, VICTIM OF KENNETH KAUNDA REGIME?

[Below, we have printed the text of three newspaper reports from Lusaka, Zambia, telling about the disappearance of Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, the exiled South African freedom fighter.

[The clippings, which we received in a roundabout way, did not include the names of the newspapers or the dates of the issues in which they appeared. We would guess that Dr. Abrahams disappeared December 5.

[A fourth report, which appeared in the January 1 Standard of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, adds further information.

[Dr. Abrahams joined Dr. Neville Alexander in 1961 in founding the Yu Chi Chan Club in South Africa. This was a political discussion group that studied Marxist theory and revolutionary history. In July 1963 Neville Alexander and ten others were arrested and later sentenced to terms of up to ten years in the notorious Robben Island prison camp. Abrahams managed to escape this fate only by fleeing to South West Africa. There he was arrested, but escaped and made his way to Bechuanaland (now Botswana). There he was kidnapped by Verwoerd's secret police and dragged back to Capetown.

[A widespread defense effort on his behalf succeeded in getting the British government to request his freedom, and Abrahams subsequently went into exile in Zambia with his wife Otilley and their two children. In Zambia, Abrahams worked as a doctor and published the newspaper Unity, opposing the fascist-like regime in his native South Africa.

[On November 22, 1968, Otilley Abrahams sent a letter to the Alexander Defense Committee in West Germany. "Kenny has been declared an undesirable foreigner," she wrote, "and must leave Zambia within forty-eight hours....As you know, we have no paper (i.e., pass, identity cards, or visa). I assure you that we have done nothing which could cause the Zambian regime difficulty. They have left us entirely in the dark as to the reasons for our expulsion. Even the minister of justice refused to give us an explanation. More than 2,000 Zambians signed a petition to the minister of justice on Kenny's behalf. The minister declared that this case did not concern him."

[Defenders of elementary civil liberties everywhere will be concerned at this violation of the rights of political asylum and the moves of the Kaunda

regime to force Dr. Abrahams and his family to return to South Africa where both he and his wife would face prison for their opposition to the apartheid system.

[It should be noted that after the disappearance of her husband, Mrs. Abrahams, and presumably her three children, one of them less than a year old, were ordered to leave the country within two weeks, according to one of the dispatches. We do not know what this date was, whether Mrs. Abrahams succeeded in getting a visa to a friendly country, whether she is being held in prison, or has been possibly pushed across the border into the hands of the racist police of Ian D. Smith of Rhodesia.

[Protests should be sent to President Kenneth D. Kaunda, Lusaka, Zambia, or his local diplomatic representatives.]

* * *

By Staff Reporter

Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, the Lusaka GP declared a prohibited immigrant some weeks ago, has vanished. And as the mystery surrounding the case of the doctor-freedom fighter deepened yesterday, a Ministry of Home Affairs spokesman confirmed that the doctor's wife had been arrested on Friday night.

Now police are on the lookout for the doctor and his white Volvo saloon, in which he disappeared.

The Home Affairs spokesman said last night: "This man's stay in Zambia was due to end on Friday. If the police see him now he will be arrested. We just do not know where he is."

A servant at the doctor's Lilanda house-cum-surgery was equally mystified. "The doctor went out in his car early on Thursday morning and said he was just going to town and would be back soon. Nobody has seen him since. He didn't take any suitcases."

The next round in the drama came when a squad of police, including some Special Branch, arrived at the house at 11 p.m. on Friday and took the Doctor's wife, Otilley, with them. It is believed she is now in the remand prison. With her she took her nine-month old baby son. The other children, Yvette aged five and Kenneth aged six, are believed to be staying with friends of the Abrahams in Roma township near Lusaka.

The Home Affairs spokesman could

not say what charges Mrs. Abrahams is facing nor how long she would be detained. "We will know more about this matter when we find Dr Abrahams," he said.

* * *

By Steve Valentine

Doctor Kenneth Abrahams, the man police all over Zambia are looking for, is out in the bush making a desperate bid to reach Tanzania and the capital of Dar es Salaam. With him he has a ruck sack, enough food for several days and the determination to escape almost certain detention in Zambia if he is caught. Once across the border he plans to claim political asylum.

The story of the missing doctor's freedom bid was told last night by his wife, Otilley, who was released from jail late on Monday night after being arrested on Friday. "Kenny is heading for the thicker part of the bush on the Zambia-Tanzania border," she said at her Lusaka home. "He has no travel documents, but he has got to make it somehow. If he had stayed in Zambia he would have been locked up in prison, and he couldn't stand that."

The escape plan by Dr. Abrahams, declared a prohibited immigrant a few weeks ago, was put into action on Thursday last week -- the day before the deadline for him to leave Zambia. "If we returned to our native South Africa we would both be in jail," said Mrs. Abrahams last night. "We had applied to other countries to have us, but it was no use. Every country demanded that the Zambians give the reason for the deportation and Zambia refused to do that. We spent days and weeks trying to get an interview with President Kaunda to explain our predicament, but officials blocked us at every turn.

"Finally, on Thursday night, the day before I was arrested and the day before the deadline, we agreed that he must escape the best way he could."

The couple laid plans. They obtained a car, filled the boot [trunk] up with all the doctor would need in his escape bid. Then the doctor drove off in his white Volvo saloon, abandoning it in a position where police were bound to find it to gain vital hours. Then he set off to drive as far as he could towards Tanzania before ditching the car and setting out on foot.

"It was the only thing he could do," said Mrs. Abrahams. "No country would have us without a reason for our deportation. The Zambians wouldn't give one. It seemed as if they wouldn't let us stay, and wouldn't let us go. My husband would undoubtedly have ended up in

prison."

Meanwhile, immigration officials yesterday failed to serve a 48-hour deportation order on Mrs. Abrahams who is the mother of three children. "I just refused to sign the thing," she said. "How can I wrap up five years of life in Zambia in 48 hours?"

"We were stunned when we suddenly realised that we weren't even going to get a chance to appeal to the President."

* * *

By a Times Reporter

Dr. Kenneth Abrahams, the Lusaka doctor who set out on foot to reach Tanzania and freedom, is "alive and well" and out of the country. News that the doctor had slipped through the Zambian police and won his way to freedom came yesterday from his wife, Otilley, who has been given 14 days to quit the country.

"My husband is alive and well. I will not say where he is or how I know, but he's made it," she said. And she added: "I want people to know this to end a rumour campaign that has been mounted against us. Nearly all my friends have been telephoned by an anonymous caller who says that my husband has been found dead in the Kafue River. This has been a horrible campaign and it has caused a lot of trouble. It has to stop."

Doctor Abrahams set off on foot for Tanzania the day before his stay in Zambia under an extended prohibited immigrant order that was due to expire. Mrs. Abrahams was given 14 days to leave last week. It is understood that the United Nations in Lusaka, under which both she and her husband are registered as refugees, is taking an interest in her case.

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From the Standard, Dar es Salaam, January 1, 1969, Lusaka, Sunday.

A coloured South African born doctor, Kenneth Abrahams, has been captured by police after disappearing before he was due to leave the country under a Government order, according to a newspaper report today. The national Sunday paper, the Zambia News, said he was being held at Isoka in Northern Province, according to his wife, Otilley. So far there has been no confirmation of the report from police headquarters here.

Two months ago Dr. Abrahams was declared a prohibited immigrant for still undisclosed reasons. The day before his time limit expired last month he disappeared from his home and his wife said he was making for Tanzania to seek political asylum.

OUTBREAK OF PEASANT UNREST IN BOLIVIA

By M. Vallejos

La Paz

The instability of the political situation in Bolivia, where the military dictatorship maintains itself solely by means of terror, has now been compounded by ferment sweeping the peasantry. In some districts, this unrest is assuming the characteristics of outright rebellion, making the situation of the Barrientos government still more precarious.

This turbulence has a double origin -- the discontent and dissatisfaction among the peasant masses over a limited and inconclusive agrarian reform that has not changed the technical backwardness and impoverished living conditions they suffer from; and the current attempt of the Barrientos government to impose its so-called Single Tax on Farm Products [Impuesto Unico Agropecuario], which will only aggravate the peasants' poverty.

The peasants are hostile to all taxes on agriculture and they have always reacted violently against attempts to impose such taxes. Under Victor Paz Estenssoro's administration, the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario -- Nationalist Revolutionary Movement] also tried to impose an agricultural tax, which was then called the Rural Property Tax [Impuesto Predial Rústico]. This touched off a national peasant strike which paralyzed the entire country, blocking the supply of basic staples. Paz Estenssoro had to abandon the attempt.

Well aware of the peasants' political strength, the military dictatorship was careful to avoid direct conflicts with them. In order to neutralize the peasants and bring them under control, the government mounted a tremendous propaganda campaign to convince them that they could count on the army to guarantee the agrarian reform and peasant ownership of the land. Barrientos himself visited almost all the villages in the country, distributing gifts and small sums of money in places where no president had ever gone before. Later he sent the army into the countryside with the promise that it would build public works. Finally, he created a well-paid peasant bureaucracy, which signed an army-peasant pact in the name of the peasants.

In this way, the countryside was virtually paralyzed. And when Barrientos' honeyed speeches did not suffice to assuage the peasants, then the armed bureaucracy moved in, and finally the army. Having immobilized the countryside, the Bolivian "gorillas" had a free hand to strike at the miners first, later the factory

workers, and finally the students and teachers.

However, the quiescence of the peasants, their alliance with the army, and the pro-Barrientos peasant parties led by military officers were only fictions to deceive foreign and domestic public opinion. In reality, the peasant masses were against the military junta from the beginning. In February 1965 the Peasant Congress of the Department of La Paz, under Trotskyist influence, approved a document which, among its six points, included the following resolution:

"To adopt a position of independence and no confidence toward the military junta and to wage a determined and resolute struggle against all its acts contrary to the interests of the peasant masses.

"Because of their historical experience the peasants look with distrust on the recruitment of 20,000 soldiers who, led by officers trained in the USA and Panama, can only be used against the people -- against the workers and students in the cities, the miners, and the peasants.

"We peasants can take no other stand than opposition to such an army which the reactionary circles have cast for the role of police against the Bolivian masses."

The fears of the peasant vanguard were soon confirmed. The mercenary army spread death throughout the country. And now it is turning against the peasant masses.

The Agricultural Tax and the Peasant Economic Conference

The Barrientos government needed money to maintain its gigantic repressive machine. And so under imperialist pressure it revived the agricultural tax. The government's tax collectors thought that, with the countryside controlled by the army and the bureaucracy, this was the opportune time to institute the measure. Cautiously they began a propaganda campaign vaunting the benefits of this tax for the peasant masses. Barrientos said that by paying taxes the peasants would guarantee their ownership of the land and would receive credits, many public services, etc., etc.

This softening-up campaign culminated with the First Peasant Economic Conference in the first week of December 1968. Barrientos wanted the peasants

themselves to sanction the tax and recommend it to the government. He thought that in this way he would have no difficulties in collecting it in 1969. However, he made a mistake. At this point the peasants' real feelings boiled over. The delegates brought to the conference to endorse the tax declared against it. The government had to replace nearly all the delegates and mobilize police and soldiers to prevent rank-and-file peasants from coming into the conference. Those who, surrounded by the army, finally approved the tax were not peasants but government employees.

However, some of the delegates who were barred from entering the conference went to the university and hunted up the student leaders. Meeting under protection of the students, they passed resolutions calling for organization of a Bloque Campesino Independiente [Independent Peasant Bloc], disavowed the Peasant Economic Conference, repudiated the Single Tax on Farm Products, disavowed the Confederación Nacional Campesina [National Peasant Confederation] organized by the government, rejected the fake Army-Peasant Pact, and finally voted to establish a peasant-student alliance.

The Peasants Mobilize; Barrientos Stoned

The news about the tax and the incidents occurring around the Peasant Economic Conference spread through the country like wildfire, setting off a general mobilization of the peasants in opposition to the tax. Where the peasants are most densely concentrated and the government's control weakest, mass meetings occurred which resulted in actual rebellions.

On Friday, December 13, peasants from the northern part of the Department of Santa Cruz* (Cuatro Ojitos, Yapacaní, Puerto Fernández, Colonia Aroma, Totoral, and other villages) invaded the city of Santa Cruz to protest against the tax. The government did not dare confront this mobilization. However, after the demonstration, the leader of the peasants in Cuatro Ojitos, Tordoya Argote, was arrested.

In reply to this action, the local peasants seized two hostages -- Major Arturo Simons and Felipe Rodríguez, a bureaucrat in the Barrientos machine who attended the Economic Conference in La Paz as the representative of the Peasant Federation of Montero, a sugarcane-growing region in the northern part of the Department of Santa Cruz.

On Monday, December 15, about 5,000

peasants in Achacachi, the most militant center in the Altiplano,* met in a mass meeting. After discussing the tax and rejecting it, they stoned the Sub-prefectura, the city hall, the army barracks, and the police station. They freed all the prisoners and drove out the authorities, who fled to La Paz, leaving the peasants absolute masters of the town.

These explosive peasant demonstrations touched off a chain reaction of similar demonstrations all across the country. The entire countryside was in ferment. In the valley of the department of Cochabamba, where Bolivia's population is most heavily concentrated and the strongest peasant unions have their headquarters -- as in Ucureña and Cliza -- and where the army maintains strict vigilance, peasant protest activity was of an underground nature.

The response of the peasants surprised the government. The violence and speed of their reaction upset its calculations. Barrientos was the most surprised of all and began leveling the charge that the unrest was the work of a few extremists and malcontents, because the peasants were with him. To prove this, he decided to make a grass-roots tour, beginning with Achacachi and Cuatro Ojitos, in the west and east of the country respectively.

On December 18, Barrientos went to Belén, a small peasant town about a mile from Achacachi, which is the site of an experimental farm run by the American Point-Four program. He was accompanied by a big delegation including the ministers of agriculture, peasant affairs, culture, the director general of cooperatives, and leaders of the Confederación Campesina. An impressive program had been arranged, featuring the presentation of agrarian-reform land titles and cooperative charters. This blue-ribbon delegation planned to awe the peasants.

About 3,000 peasants congregated for the ceremony and patiently sat through the presentation of the titles and charters. But when the peasant leader Eliseo Gutiérrez, an old bureaucrat of the days of Paz Estenssoro and now a Barrientist deputy, began to speak, the crowd reacted violently. Barrientos tried to quiet them. He addressed the peasants as "brothers," appealed for calm, and tried to explain the benefits of the tax. But he only managed to bring the peasants to the boiling point.

After whistles and hisses, stones began to land on the platform. The soldiers, police, and Barrientos' personal guards fired over the peasants, covering

* In the eastern part of the country.

* The high plateau of western Bolivia.

the president's retreat to a car which took him to the La Paz airport, without going through Achacachi where outraged peasants had also gathered.

The cars in which Barrientos and his ministers fled were continually attacked and stoned. Many peasants used slings to hurl rocks.

During the night and the following day, troops from the army and the National Guard took Achacachi without meeting any resistance. Most of the peasants had dispersed and vanished in the surrounding mountains. But the peasant protest and mass meetings continued like a brush fire.

The events in Achacachi occurred in the morning of Wednesday, December 18. That afternoon Barrientos was scheduled to visit Cuatro Ojitos in Santa Cruz to the east.

After the lesson he learned in Achacachi, Barrientos appeared there heavily guarded, with an impressive escort of troops from the Manchego Ranger regiment. But, at the same time, he brought with him the peasant leader Tordoya, who had been arrested on December 13, and exchanged him for the hostages taken by the peasants, Major Simons and the Barrientist leader Felipe Rodríguez.

Barrientos explained that the tax was still only under study, that it had not been definitely decided on. He explained that the experts had deceived him and that therefore he was going to talk over the matter with the peasants throughout the country. That is, he ate humble pie and made a prudent retreat.

Frightened by the militancy of the peasants, the released prisoner Tordoya and the local priests, who had previously participated in the protest demonstration against the tax, also adopted a conciliatory position of compromise.

The bourgeois press said that Barrientos had lost in Achacachi and won in Cuatro Ojitos. Nonetheless, the peasants in the east feel the same way as those in the mountainous and high plateau region in the west. The government is seeking to divide the peasants and find a sector of them on which to base itself, but without any success.

Why the Peasants Oppose the Tax

The peasants oppose the tax for political as well as economic reasons. Their hopes for liberation were frustrated by the MNR with its incomplete and limited agrarian reform. With the military dictatorship, the peasants found themselves more tightly bound than ever to a social-ly and racially inferior status. In addi-

tion to poverty and backwardness, the peasants are suffering from stifling oppression.

Consciously or unconsciously, the peasants perceive that this oppression would be aggravated by the agricultural tax. The per capita annual income of the peasants is barely \$100 and the tax would force them to turn from 30 to 50 percent of this over to the state. The tax could be paid only by resorting to loan sharks, either private individuals or the banks. Sinking in debt, the peasants would be forced to sell their land or would lose it through foreclosures. On the ruin and liquidation of the peasantry a new landlordism linked to imperialism would arise and the peasants would revert to the status of sweated peons. These political implications were understood by the peasants and this is the reason for their violent and unanimous response throughout the country.

The government and its supporters are trying to reason with them that it is the duty of every citizen to pay taxes, that there are no rights without duties, that the peasants always paid taxes under the Incas, in colonial days, and during the republic. The peasants turn a deaf ear to all these arguments and they are right.

The Aymara and Quechua masses look back on the Inca period as a lost paradise. Political tendencies frequently arise projecting some kind of "Inca communism." For the peasants, Inca rule means abundance and freedom based on peasant control of the land.

On the other hand, the idea they retain of the colonial regime, which has been transmitted from generation to generation, is that of rape and looting, of taxes and feudal levies, which continued only slightly attenuated under the republic until the agrarian reform. In the peasant tradition, taxes and obligations are a synonym for robbery, iniquitous exploitation, and humiliating degradation. Anyone who tries to convince the peasants to pay taxes will unquestionably be rebuffed.

You cannot tell the peasants that taxes on the land will support public services because they have paid heavy taxes for centuries and they still have not seen any such benefits. Abandoned in their districts, they have no telegraph or mail service, no medicine or hospitals to save their lives or preserve their health. Roads are very rare and they still use llamas, burros, and mules to transport their products. Electric lights, water that is safe to drink, sewage systems, and paved roads are still luxuries enjoyed by some but not all Bolivian cities.

The Struggle Against the Agricultural Tax

Up to now the peasants have reacted spontaneously. Telling the peasants they ought to pay an agricultural tax was like rubbing salt in a wound. In this first violent reaction, even priests and professionals, like Tordoya in Cuatro Ojitos, who is an agronomic engineer, and Father Serrate, appeared in the lead. But they later became frightened and agreed to compromise with the government.

Also the PDC [Partido Demócrata Cristiano -- Christian Democratic party], the FSB [Falange Socialista Boliviana -- Bolivian Socialist Falange], and the MNR will try to utilize the power of the peasantry for their own ends, either in elections or attempted coups d'état. But such diversions will be ephemeral because no bourgeois solution, whether conservative or reformist, can satisfy the peasant masses.

The peasants, instead, will respond to revolutionary Marxist proposals like those advanced by the POR [Partido Obrero Revolucionario -- Revolutionary Workers party -- the Bolivian section of the Fourth International], which has a long tradition among the peasant masses. Today, the POR calls for armed struggle against the agricultural tax, its position being identical to that of the ELN [Ejército Nacional de Liberación -- National Liberation Army -- the guerrilla force formerly led by Che Guevara].

In its first acts of opposition to the tax, the peasantry has already drawn a line of direct, militant confrontation. Driving the officials out of the towns and occupying them, stoning the president and his ministers, taking hostages to exchange for peasant prisoners, and marching on the cities are expressions of a high level of consciousness and militancy. If today the peasants throw stones and use slings, tomorrow they will talk with guns.

All this is happening in Bolivia with the memory of the guerrillas of Nancahuazú and the heroic sacrifice of Che Guevara still fresh and with the Ejército de Liberación Nacional as the real armed force of the Bolivian revolutionists. The ELN joined in the peasant protests, projecting the armed struggle road for op-

position to the tax. ELN flags have been raised in La Paz, Cochabamba, and in important peasant centers along with placards repudiating the agricultural tax and calling for guerrilla fighters. An ELN manifesto signed by Inti Peredo is circulating in numerous copies throughout the country.

The Government Retreats

In view of the unanimous reaction of the peasantry, the government has decided to delay enforcement of the agricultural tax. But at the same time it has reinforced all its military units in the countryside.

But these measures cannot halt the process already begun. The peasants have gotten a close look at the danger represented by a military government. A peasant-military confrontation on various levels, from the simple imprisonment of peasant leaders opposed to the government -- which has already started -- to an armed confrontation, is developing. The agricultural tax was the final straw. The passive discontent of the peasants was transformed into armed rebellion.

In this new period, the guerrillas will have the active collaboration of the Bolivian peasantry. The peasants will find the guerrillas a necessary ally to combat the army which oppresses them. In turn, the peasants' sympathy and support will create the conditions for the reinforcement of the guerrilla struggle, conditions far superior to those Che Guevara faced in Nancahuazú and La Higuera in 1967.

The year 1969 will be a year of great struggles for Bolivia. We Bolivian revolutionists are confident that the struggle which Che began for the liberation of Latin America will continue with greater vigor and will win important victories.

In 1969, the cry "Victory and Socialism!" will resound in the mountains of Bolivia and be taken up by the entire continent, uniting all Marxists in a force powerful enough to bury the ignominious imperialist system.

Fourth Week of December 1968

PHILIPPINE GUERRILLAS SUFFER LOSSES IN GUN BATTLE

The Philippine Constabulary announced January 13 that it had killed four members of the Hukbalahap movement in a gun battle the night before near Santa Rosa, about sixty miles north of Manila. This was the second clash in a week.

Among the victims was a regional commander of the Huks, Estiquio Punsalan, also known as "Commander Liwanag."

Three other guerrillas, wounded in the fighting, were captured.

THE POLITICAL MEANING OF THE MEXICAN STUDENT STRIKE

By Ricardo Ochoa

Mexico City

By early December when the Consejo Nacional de Huelga (CNH) [National Strike Council] announced the conclusion of the student strike that began in late July, four months of political convulsion in Mexico City (with repercussions in the interior) had totally changed the picture in Mexico for all the social strata making up the nation.

The most diverse classes, parties, and leaderships were affected. All responded to this struggle and lined up according to their interests. The student movement gave the initial thrust necessary to start a genuinely revolutionary mass movement in Mexico. It politicalized and radicalized broad strata of the population. But it did more than this. As will be seen, the student movement so deepened in character that it also began the phase of laying the organizational groundwork for a revolutionary movement of the working class in this country in the not too distant future.

The revolutionary perspectives that were opened up by the student movement can be summed up under two main headings:

(1) For thirty years the political life of the country was totally dominated by the government, electoralism, political manipulation of the big mass organizations, and, last but not least, the big economic interests. Now, for the first time, the ruling group in the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) [Institutional Revolutionary party] (which was formerly the Partido Nacional Revolucionario [National Revolutionary party]), has seen a cohesive mass opposition at a high political and organizational level.

(2) With its great dynamism and vigor this mass opposition, primarily students, succeeded in four months in exposing the last vestiges that may have remained of the regime's vaunted "revolutionary character." As a logical corollary, the students revived for the first time in a generation the real elements of revolutionary action. This political fact holds decisive importance for the future. Up to now the great obstacle to the work of the Marxist groups was the masses' skepticism toward anything having to do with "revolution," which they identified with the practices and propaganda of this government of the "revolutionary family."

By taking off its reformist mask,

the government shocked the masses, bringing their frustration and alienation -- unconscious before July 1968 -- into active expression. The abrupt awakening of political consciousness introduced a new factor into the national political scene. This factor can be broadly defined as a mass opposition movement in the first stages of politicalization and radicalization and on the threshold of taking an authentically revolutionary attitude. Of course, this definition is not adequate for the student movement. Clearly defined socialist and Marxist views are already predominant there.

In a country like Mexico, the political awakening and mobilization of the masses is an event of the first magnitude. As I have said, up till now the regime had been accepted, whether actively or passively, by broad layers of the population. That is, despite the appearance of opposition groups over the last thirty years, the government had never been confronted by a radical mass opposition led by independent groups. Up to now, the government faced a sporadic opposition localized in one or another area in the republic (the most notable cases have involved problems coming to the fore in state elections). In general these mass mobilizations have been carried out under the leadership of the local bourgeois leaders and without any revolutionary perspective. Up to now, these struggles have been waged for minor local objectives without challenging the system as a whole.

Finally, and of course not least important, the broad masses in Mexico City (population 6,000,000) did not participate in these movements. The last time we saw large masses of workers and students struggling in Mexico City was in 1958-59. Except for the railway unions and the teachers, the leadership and objectives of that struggle were purely reformist. Only in 1968 did we see the development of militant opposition among the urban masses in teeming Mexico City on the scale that occurred in August and September when hundreds of thousands of persons marched in the streets.

The bourgeoisie were confused and worried. Before 1968, most sectors of the capitalist class were lined up solidly behind the PRI government. Opposition was the exception. Today the situation has changed. Deep contradictions have arisen within the bourgeoisie, so that today there is talk of several blocs within the regime itself. This conflict among the sectors of the bourgeoisie, in turn, has

avored the extension of appreciation of the system's enormous contradictions. In general this breakdown of bourgeois monolithism has stimulated opposition at all levels, which of course will facilitate the task of the revolutionary opposition.

Without any doubt whatever, we can already speak of a crisis of leadership in the top circles of the bourgeoisie and its government, with a pronounced tendency toward reinforcement of the ultraright currents closest to imperialism. If this situation already existed before the student conflict, it is obvious that this struggle exacerbated it.

The basic strength of the traditionalist sectors of the PRI lay in a kind of bonapartism sui generis. Up to now the PRI could commend itself to its class and especially to imperialism by the fact that it enjoyed popular support -- although all this meant in fact was that its control over the masses had not been seriously challenged. Certainly up to now the national and imperialist bourgeoisie considered the PRI regime an effective one. They supported it, flattered it, and protected it. Today, primarily as a consequence of the student movement, the crisis of the PRI is clear and obvious to even the most apologetic sections of the party.

The most enlightened wing of the bourgeoisie has grasped this danger. It is well aware how useful the PRI has been as an instrument to assure undisputed domination over the masses. The PRI, we might say, represents the essential difference between the underdeveloped bourgeois regime in Mexico and the other bourgeois regimes in Latin America. For the Mexican bourgeoisie, the attrition of the PRI portends dangers and predicaments like those faced by the bourgeoisies south of the republic. From the beginning of the student conflict, this most enlightened section of the bourgeoisie, through the daily Excelsior, has unceasingly warned the "hard" elements in the government of the situation they are promoting by their actions. One warning after another about the excessive use of the army has come from this daily. It is no accident that it has placed great emphasis on the problems of the military regime in Brazil. It is trying to throw a scare into the most proimperialist sectors by holding up a picture of their future -- if they continue in that direction.

But problems of the Brazilian type are inherent in the current situation in Latin America. The Mexican bourgeoisie reached this point later but everything indicates that it will undergo no less virulent a crisis because of that.

The Mexican masses, especially the urban masses, have given this crisis its particular characteristics.

Thirty years of bourgeois industrialization in an underdeveloped country where a series of reforms have been carried out, especially in the countryside, have not attenuated social conflicts, as the main bourgeois sociologists in Latin America claim. Mexico -- supposed to set the example for Latin-American countries threatened with imminent social revolution -- has joined in the general movement toward revolution. Naturally, the dynamics of the revolutionary course in Mexico cannot be equated with that of the countries to the south.

The cities in Mexico have been modernized on comparatively sounder bases than is general in Latin America. The grossly inequitable distribution of the national income does not primarily reflect an agrarian structure based on large estates. To the contrary, it reflects the poverty of the Mexican small peasant proprietors and communal farmers. Moreover, the industrializing tendency of a reformist, and not openly oligarchic, government has led to the formation of a broad layer of bureaucrats and technicians (called the "middle class") which is more numerous than its Latin-American counterparts. At the same time this sector is necessarily more impoverished than the average in Latin America. And this explains why it is more radical. Many observers have spoken of the apparent contradiction whereby this "middle class" has shown greater radicalism and militancy than the working class itself. And in fact the students found their primary support in this layer of office workers (government and private). I would only add that this sector is less well paid than the upper and middle layers of the manual workers.

The development of the capitalist system in Mexico has produced greater proletarianization of the urban populations than elsewhere in Latin America. The rhythm of struggles has been dynamic and feverish. Although they lacked the most elementary political education, the masses of students and their allies learned lessons in the course of a few months which the revolutionary forces took years to learn.

This movement encountered a complete vacuum in the "serious" political organizations. The only party able to carry out a certain amount of political work in the movement was the pro-Soviet Communist party. But instead of coming out of the struggle strengthened, its opportunistic and reformist line came

under strong attack from its own leading members. As a result, several of the most important leaders in the movement belonging to the PCM [Partido Comunista de México -- Communist party of Mexico] publicly disavowed its line and split from the party (the group led by Valle, a delegate to the CNH from the School of Economics of the University of Mexico and a political prisoner in Lecumberri).

Among the "splinter groups" -- the revolutionary Marxist groups -- the movement came to be a vital testing ground for theories and tactics.

First of all, the view very widely held in some groups of the incapacity of the urban masses to engage in revolutionary mobilization was refuted in practice.

The exaggerated conclusions of some Guevarists (influenced by Debray's "foco" theory) about the effectiveness of guerrilla warfare were also refuted. Far from discounting urban struggle, guerrilla warfare, correctly understood, assumes an overall strategy. The urban contingents are the decisive ones. But, because of their enormous weight, it is more difficult to set them in motion. But once they begin to move the urban masses demonstrate their importance irrefutably.

The students also found the answers in practice to many tactical and strategic questions which they could only speculate about previously.

The first lesson was on what the objectives of struggle were.

The movement raised its aims from elementary defense against police repression to a coherent platform of democratizing the methods of government, involving above all respect for the free expression of ideas (stated inversely in the demand to "Release the Political Prisoners," the victims of official intolerance). Any revolutionary struggle will have to start from the desire of the masses for greater political freedom.

The second lesson concerned the forms of organizing the struggle.

In one of the most brilliant examples of the initiative of masses in movement, the students quickly solved the organizational problem. The creation of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga, a real embryonic soviet, was unquestionably the students' most important contribution to the popular movement in Mexico. This militant, independent, broad, and democratic formation was a model from which the work-

ers and peasants will draw inspiration in the days to come. It is no exaggeration to speak of future "national councils" of the workers and peasants of Mexico.

The initiative of the ranks was expressed in the formation of brigades and the Comités de Lucha [Struggle Committees] which supported the work of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga. In these bodies, as in the CNH, democracy in action determined the course to be followed.

The student movement ended the strike at the University of Mexico and in the Polytechnic Institute after four months (the longest student strike in the history of Mexico) and with it one of the movement's most difficult phases. But the struggle continued, as the November 13 demonstration (blocked by the army) showed.

In the new phase, which began with the return to classes, there will have to be deep-going discussion of the new situation and planning of new methods of struggle and new organizational forms, because the movement is no longer the same movement it was on July 26 when it began, primarily through the spontaneity of the masses.

Today this experience itself compels the students to start from a higher level in waging their coming struggles. The ferocious repression faced by the movement has forced it to raise its level of organization and political consciousness.

The transformation of the Consejo Nacional de Huelga into the Consejo Nacional de Lucha (CNL) [National Struggle Council] was a great step forward in consolidating the movement. But in order for this step in turn to take the student struggle to a higher level, the CNL cannot be a mere mechanical extrapolation, a mere repetition of the former CNH. In order to live up to its possibilities and to avoid the risk of disappearing, the CNL must be a center bringing together the revolutionary forces most representative of the students. In short, as the logical arena for political confrontation, the CNL must be a center for the formation of real Marxist political groupings. Confrontation of this kind is as necessary to the Consejo as steam is to an engine.

This is where the student movement ties in with what its most farsighted sectors have been doing since last May as part of their efforts to resolve the crisis in revolutionary leadership faced by the Mexican masses.

14 POLITICAL PRISONERS IN IRAN GIVEN LONG PRISON TERMS

The fourteen intellectuals on trial in Teheran for "subversion" were convicted and sentenced by a military tribunal January 15 to terms of up to fifteen years in prison. It had been widely reported that eight of the defendants had faced possible death sentences. A world-wide campaign carried out by the Iranian Students Association with the support of such figures as Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre succeeded first in having the trial made public, and finally in staying the shah's executioners.

The fourteen were accused of "plotting against the security of the state." Bijan Jazani, 29, director of a film distribution society, was sentenced to fifteen years at hard labor. He was accused of being the leader of the group. The military court announced that Jazani was being given an especially harsh sentence because he had been convicted of "similar activities" in 1966.

Seven of the other prisoners were sentenced to ten years at hard labor. The six remaining defendants were given sentences ranging from three to eight years. During the trial, which began December 30, ten of the accused testified that they had been tortured by the Savak [secret police], and some retracted the confessions they had made under torture.

On January 12 the three principal defendants, Jazani, Abbas Sorki, an employee at the Iranian National Bank, and Hassan Zarifi, a lawyer, told the court: "Our only aim was to reestablish a real democracy in Iran under which all indi-

vidual liberties would be respected."

A January 13 Agence France-Presse dispatch said they also proclaimed their loyalty to the Iranian monarchy while pointing out that individual liberties and free elections were nonexistent in the country.

The three reportedly disclaimed being partisans of "Communist ideology" and said they had never violated the constitution.

Jazani declared, "To condemn people for their speeches is not worthy of the Iranian people or of the present stage of human progress."

The previous day, ten of the defendants told the court they had been subjected to "physical and mental torture" during the more than six months they were held before being brought to trial.

Heshmatollah Shahrzad asked, "How could I have produced a twelve-page confession in answer to a single question if I had not been submitted to torture?" He declared that he and his codefendants regarded the depositions extracted from them under these conditions by the Savak as worthless.

Mashouf Kalantari, 27, a television technician, described the way he had been tortured. He repudiated his confession to a charge of plotting to assassinate the shah. He said the idea had been suggested by the police who interrogated him.

MORTON SOBELL, VICTIM OF THE COLD WAR, FREED AFTER 18 YEARS

Morton Sobell was released from prison January 14 after serving more than eighteen years on a charge, concocted at the height of the McCarthy era, of "conspiracy" to commit espionage. Sobell was tried in 1951 along with Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were accused of transmitting the "secret" of the atom bomb to the Soviet Union. The Rosenbergs were sentenced to death and executed on June 19, 1953. Sobell, who was not accused of having any connection with the atom bomb, was sentenced to thirty years in prison. He served the full sentence with time off for good behavior.

The trial was a political show in which the evidence had little to do with the verdict. It was aimed as a blow at the left, calculated to demonstrate that the movement for socialism was a sinister "conspiracy." No evidence of actual espionage was ever produced against any of

the defendants. The chief government witness was reputed to be a psychopathic liar. The "secret" of the atom bomb was supposed to have been transmitted to the Soviet Union in a drawing made on a single sheet of paper by a machinist with only a high-school education and no knowledge of nuclear physics. Nuclear scientists who have seen this piece of "evidence" produced by the government have declared it totally valueless in constructing an atom bomb.

The need to find a scapegoat for the Soviet development of nuclear arms led the witch-hunters to frame and execute the Rosenbergs and take from Morton Sobell eighteen years of his life. At the same time the case drew the widest support of any defense effort in the last two decades in the United States and went far to discredit the witch-hunters and political system that produced them.

PUERTO RICAN INDEPENDENCE LEADER IS TARGET OF BOMB ATTACK

A bomb planted by Cuban emigré terrorists went off in front of the home of Juan Mari Bras, secretary general of the Movement for Puerto Rican Independence (MPI), in Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico, January 7.

The bomb wrecked the independence leader's car, but no one was injured. Mari Bras was at home when the explosion occurred. Later in the day a press release was received at local radio stations saying, "We will do all we can to bar the incursions and development of the Movement for Puerto Rican Independence (MPI) and its affiliated organizations." The threat was sent by the "Cuban Power" group of exile terrorists. This group was reportedly responsible for a series of bombings in the U.S. last year, including the bombing of the Socialist Workers party headquarters in Los Angeles last October.

When asked by reporters if he had any enemies, Juan Mari Bras replied, "My only enemies are the enemies of the independence of Puerto Rico."

He told a reporter for the New York weekly Guardian that he believed the attack was an attempt, possibly involving the CIA, to divert the attention of the MPI into a marginal struggle with Cuban exiles. "We will not fall for such a trap," he said, "...groups of counter-revolutionaries which are not able to stop the revolution in their own homeland, are not going to make us stop our struggle and dedicate ourselves to fight them. They are too insignificant."



JUAN MARI BRAS

THE BATTLE AT TOKYO UNIVERSITY -- "DRESS REHEARSAL" FOR 1970

Nearly 9,000 police laid siege to barricaded students at Tokyo University for two days before retaking the stronghold January 19. Police ringed Yasuda Hall on the campus with barbed wire, shut off water, gas and electricity, and bombarded the defenders with tear gas and fire hoses to break the year-old strike at the prestigious university.

The students replied to the police attack by barricading the fortress-like hall and hurling stones, Molotov cocktails and bottles of acid. Elsewhere in Tokyo 1,500 youths built barricades in the streets and battled police. The students were forced to retreat to two private universities.

Police arrested more than 500 students at Tokyo University when they final-

ly succeeded in capturing Yasuda Hall. The students were demanding an end to the élitist character of the university. They were led by the Kyodo Kaigi, or Joint Struggle Conference, a coalition of radical student groups. This coalition was opposed by the Minsei, or Communist party youth, who insisted on nonviolent methods of struggle. Campus buildings held by the Minsei were surrendered peacefully.

The strike began January 29, 1968, when medical students protested changes in regulations governing interns. The issues soon broadened to include student-professor relationships and the connection between the university and society. Students announced that the Yasuda Hall battle was only a "dress rehearsal" for the struggle against the renewal of the U.S.-Japan Security Treaty in 1970.

IRISH DEMONSTRATORS RAISE THE BANNER OF "FREE DERRY"

By Gerry Foley

Challenge to the reactionary structures of English rule in the imperialist enclave of "Northern Ireland" mounted explosively in the first three weeks of this year. Civil-rights demonstrations calling for an end to disfranchisement of the poor and an end to political and religious discrimination inspired an unprecedented mobilization of the most disadvantaged section of the population.

The press has continually referred to clashes "between Catholics and Protestants" but has not explained the real basis for the antagonism. The truth is that it is a vestige of Ireland's colonial past. The generally pro-English Protestants were originally colonized in the North. Over the centuries they were given special privileges to assure their loyalty to the crown.

Out of this arose an attitude toward their Catholic countrymen resembling racism, Catholics being considered lazy, dirty, treacherous, and inclined to an excess of "sensuality." The majority of Protestants in Northern Ireland are convinced that they need English protection against the Catholic majority.

This background indicates one of the sources for the lynch-mob spirit shown in the attacks on demonstrators.

Violent clashes between police and nationalist crowds, who had gathered to welcome civil-rights marchers into Derry City on January 4, led to the virtual secession of the nationalist Catholic ghetto. For over one week this part of the city was blocked off by barricades and patrolled by nationalist marshals. The police were not allowed to enter.

The leader of the right-wing extremist Loyal Citizens of Ulster,* Major Ronald Bunting, lamented: "There is an absolute state of anarchy. Revolutionaries have occupied a part of the United Kingdom and refused entry to the forces of law and order. Their next move will be to get a state of anarchy in other border towns. If there are any more attacks on Protestant people, the police should deal with it. If they don't do so, there are people who can and will."

* Northern Ireland includes the six northeastern counties of the Irish province of Ulster; the other three are in Eire. Loyalists sometimes call Northern Ireland "Ulster" in order to establish a historical identity for the area under their control and conceal the fact that it is an artificial creation of English policy.

Mary Holland, correspondent for the English weekly Observer, described the situation in the blockaded sector this way: "At the entrance to the Bogside area this week the signs on the walls said: 'You are now entering Free Derry.' All the week there were men armed with clubs organised into divisions by street committees, policing the neighbourhood. It was all very reminiscent of a dotty Ealing Studios comedy..."

A civil-rights radio transmitter, Radio Free Derry, rallied the people of the besieged district. "Radio Free Derry sits neat and portable in a small terrace house, its aerial curled over a crucifix," the same Observer correspondent wrote. The English press played up the religious angles in the conflict, missing no such suggestive details.

However, Mary Holland's own description of Radio Free Derry's broadcasts indicated their true nature: "Each half-hour programme is a witty mixture of politically apt pop songs, pointed political comment on the events of the day in Ulster, and standard revolutionary socialist dogma on the lines of 'violence is a child dying in a tin caravan in Derry because the family cannot get a house.* This is an act of murder by the state.'"

In the days leading up to the January 4 outburst, the temper of the nationalist population had been continually fanned by reports of attacks on the civil-rights demonstrators marching from Belfast to Derry (a seventy-three mile distance). The civil-rights marchers were followed by Loyalist extremists led by Major Bunting, who ambushed the protesters. Six miles outside Derry, the marchers were showered with fire bombs. As they entered the city they were stoned by a thousand Loyalists gathered on a hill singing "God Save the Queen."

The attitude of the police escorting the march was not such as to reassure the nationalist population. As the English left Labourite weekly Tribune put it: "At Antrim, the Royal Ulster Constabulary failed to ensure the processionists a right of way. In fact they manhandled some of the students while allowing the

* Housing is one of the worst areas of discrimination in Northern Ireland. Most of the public housing goes to Protestants. Catholics are cramped into packed high-rent ghettos.

Orange* extremists to block the public highway. Policemen standing beside these obstructionists made no effort to arrest any one of them. In fact the police officers had a parley with Bunting on the highway."

When Bunting and the Reverend Ian Paisley, the two most prominent rightist leaders, tried to hold a rally in Derry City on the night of January 4, the anger of the people boiled over. They gathered around the hall where the Loyalist demagogues were scheduled to speak and charged the police lines. Later they burned Major Bunting's car. Violent fighting broke out, lasting through the night. In the course of street battles, drunken police staged a pogrom in the Catholic neighborhood, causing its inhabitants to blockade the area and establish their own control there.

Two days after the Derry fighting, on January 6, the Northern Irish government ordered a call-up of the ill-famed, black-uniformed "B Specials." This outfit was created in the early twenties as a counterrevolutionary force for use against the Irish Republicans. Its character was described by the English daily Guardian of January 7 as follows: "Unlike the regular police force, which has Catholics in much the same proportion as in the general population, the B Specials are Protestant to a man. The circumstances of their origin made this almost inevitable and, in the words of one Ulsterman: 'This country runs on a series of gentlemen's agreements. There are some jobs a Catholic just doesn't apply for.'..."

"The Specials' strength lies mainly in the country areas and though no official would ever admit it, informed opinion here accepts that they attract the Protestant bigot element."

A second major outbreak of fighting came on January 11 in Newry, a town of about 18,000 in County Down. Civil-rights marchers were halted by police and told to divert their procession away from the Protestant section of the town. After

* The Loyalist Protestants are called "Orangemen" for William of Orange who defeated James II of England and his Irish Catholic supporters at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. William is the great hero of the Protestant Loyalists and they march on July 12 every year to commemorate his victory. Ironically, the Protestant victory on the Boyne was greeted by the then reigning Pope with a mass of thanksgiving. James was allied with the French whose power and independence the Pope sought to curb. (James Connolly, Labour, Nationality and Religion, New Books, Dublin, 1962, pp. 7-8.)

a heated controversy between the moderates and militants on the march, the majority of the demonstrators voted to charge the police lines. They stormed the police busses, setting them on fire and using them as battering rams against the cops. Most of the crowd dispersed before massive police reinforcements arrived.

The conflict that developed among the marchers in Newry may indicate divisions between moderates and militants in the Northern Irish civil-rights movement. But so far the militant unity in action of large numbers of Northern Irish freedom fighters is notable.

This marks a new turn in the history of the region. Although perhaps a substantial minority supported more radical forces like the Irish Republican movement, notably in Derry City, the majority of the Catholic population has been under the control of the clericalist, moderate Nationalist party, whose grip seemed unshakeable before the current wave of demonstrations.

Now a new militant mass struggle seems to have emerged. Organized along nonsectarian lines, this movement includes liberal and radical Protestants. It has apparently overshadowed the conservative Nationalist party led by Eddie McAteer, thereby preparing the way for a powerful shift to the left in Northern Ireland.

The sudden upsurge in the North is shaking all the reactionary institutions which have contained the revolutionary energies of the Irish people since the thwarted revolution of 1916-22 -- the Nationalist party and semipolice state in the North; the capitulationist bourgeois rump state of Eire.

Before the upsurge in the North, the Eire government appeared to have convinced the Irish people that their only hope for progress lay in reconciliation with England and its Northern Irish cat's-paw. The Belfast prime minister Captain Terence O'Neill was touted as the representative of a new moderate, "modern" Orangeism with which the practical politicians in Dublin could maintain a gentlemanly understanding.

The English establishment, for its part, had hoped that the creation of a liberal face in Northern Ireland would establish the permanence and respectability of its rule over the enclave. It had hoped that the Eire government's "Hands Across the Border" policy would pave the way for reintegration of the entire island into the empire through the final liquidation of Irish national claims.

Now both the English and Irish cap-

italist press are expressing fears that O'Neill will be swept away by a rising tide of Orange vigilanteism. In fact, without the complete submission of the oppressed Catholic population, there seems to be little room for liberal concessions in Northern Ireland.

This enclave is economically unviable, cut off from the rest of the island. It has a catastrophic unemployment rate, especially among Catholics, and it is kept financially afloat only by English subsidies. The nationalists are in a majority in most places outside greater Belfast, and conceding them effective political rights would drastically erode the authority of the Belfast regime. Moreover, an extremely backward and super-exploitative social system has been kept in place in Northern Ireland for generations by fostering the religious division among the workers. Any effective weakening of the power of bigotry would threaten dangerous explosions.

The outbreak in Northern Ireland has rocked the hopes of both Dublin and

London by putting a spotlight on the reactionary essence of the English-ruled statelet. Great struggles in the North cannot help but revive the national will to fight for a united and liberated Ireland in the other four-fifths of the island, to accomplish the goals of the founders of the Irish Republic. Based as it is on an utterly dependent pro-imperialist bourgeoisie, the regime in Eire cannot respond to such pressures.

Furthermore, the battles in Northern Ireland come in the midst of signs of incipient radicalization in Eire -- numerous militant strikes and the development of a left wing in the Irish Labour party. Finally, the closing of the traditional emigration routes, owing to hard times in Britain, and a drastic reduction of the Irish immigration quota in the U.S. may keep a larger proportion of Irish youth in Ireland than formerly.

In all, the crystallization of the essential objective conditions for a revival of revolutionary struggle throughout the island seems likely.

LONDON BLACK POWER DEMONSTRATORS MARCH ON RHODESIA HOUSE

A march of more than 4,000 demonstrators protesting racism in Great Britain and the racist regime in Rhodesia ended in violent clashes between protesters and police in London January 12. The demonstrators, organized by the Black Peoples' Alliance and the Zimbabwe* Solidarity Action Committee, marched eight abreast to the prime minister's residence chanting, "Black People Unite and Fight!" and "Long Live Black Power!"

At No. 10 Downing Street a delegation headed by Jogmohan Joshi, the convenor of the Black Peoples' Alliance, handed Wilson a memorandum demanding that his government stop capitulating to racism. The memorandum declared:

"Time is running out for British democracy. Before it is too late stop playing into the hands of racialists by: (1) repealing the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962 and 1968 [which restricts immigration to Britain from the Commonwealth countries whose citizens have traditionally been considered British subjects]; (2) enforcing the equal treatment of all peoples living in Britain by Government departments; (3) protecting the lives and property of black people; (4) enforcing a strong race relations law that will have the backing of strong punitive sanctions."

Another statement distributed by

the organizers of the march strongly attacked the Wilson government: "The Tory and Labour parties vie with each other in their racialism. Their styles may differ, but while Tories shout abuse the Labour government implements Tory demands. As the British economy faces mounting difficulties both parties are out to use black people as scapegoats."

Held back by a double cordon of police outside No. 10 Downing Street, the demonstrators chanted "Disembowel Enoch Powell!" as they burned an effigy of the right-wing Tory racist spokesman.

Leaving the prime minister's residence, the demonstrators marched on Rhodesia House,* where they were met by a double cordon of cops backed up by mounted policemen. A reported 500 marchers stormed police lines trying to break into the building, but they were held back until police reinforcements arrived. Fourteen demonstrators and four cops were hospitalized as a result of clashes. Thirty demonstrators were arrested.

* Before the racist Smith regime in Rhodesia declared its independence, the Rhodesian high commissioner had his offices here. Now only a skeleton crew is maintained. But anger was stirred recently in London when the occupants of the Rhodesian offices raised the flag of the Smith regime over the building.

* The African name for Rhodesia.

KURON, MODZELEWSKI SENTENCED; "FOURTH INTERNATIONAL" CHARGE DROPPED

Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, the left-Communist Polish student leaders, were sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison by a Warsaw court January 15 for their alleged role in student demonstrations in March 1968. The prosecution had demanded an eight-year sentence for Modzelewski and seven years for Kuron. The two were convicted on a tendentious political charge of having "taken part in a movement -- founded on a political program drafted by them and hostile to the Polish People's Republic -- which sought to foment public demonstrations against the state."

They were found not guilty of the charge of collaborating with the world Trotskyist movement, a "crime" under the Gomulka regime which carries a mandatory sentence of five years in prison.

The two were free on parole at the time of their arrest last March 8. They had been released shortly before, after serving two years of sentences imposed in 1965 for their political opposition to the Gomulka regime. In the current trial they were each sentenced to three-and-a-half years. The ten months they had been held awaiting trial were credited as time served.

The court decided, however, to add the time that had been deducted from their previous sentences for good behavior. The full terms that each of them now face are three years and eight months for Kuron and three years and ten months for Modzelewski.

The specific activities the two critics of Polish Stalinism were accused of in the thirteen-day trial included having "masterminded" a student group called the "commandos," apparently the "illegal organization" referred to in the charges. The group was said to be composed largely of radical Jewish students. The prosecution pictured the group as being composed of "Zionists, revisionists and Stalinists." This is the standard formula used by the Gomulka regime in replying to left-wing critics. These accusations, intended to arouse prejudice against the defendants, bear no resemblance to the well-known political views of Kuron and Modzelewski, who are revolutionary socialists.*

A Reuters dispatch from Warsaw during the trial detailed the charges on

* See their "Open Letter" in reply to their expulsion from the Polish Communist party, in Revolutionary Marxist Students in Poland Speak Out (1964-1968), Merit Publishers, 873 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10003. \$1.25.

Kuron and Modzelewski's alleged ties with the Fourth International:

"In the first Polish press account of the activities of Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, the official news agency PAP said the indictment alleged they received propaganda material and technical equipment from an organization known as the 'Fourth International.' The material included a duplicating machine and stencils 'illegally brought from Belgium in a box with medicines marked with a Red Cross sign,' PAP said....

"It added that the two men also established contact with the Fourth International -- a foreign organization -- for the purpose of acts to the detriment of the Polish state, PAP said. The indictment said Messrs. Kuron and Modzelewski supplied this organization with much information on the political, social and economic situation in Poland through direct contacts and correspondence.

"They also helped an agent of the Fourth International organize meetings and recruit collaborators, the indictment said."

No public explanation was offered as to why the bureaucracy decided to drop this charge while imposing prison terms for the other. It is rather difficult, of course, to convince people that "old-line Stalinists" are at the same time "agents" of Trotskyism. It may also be that Gomulka, already faced with an alienated student movement, decided not to call further attention to the Fourth International, thereby presenting the world Trotskyist movement in a very favorable light to revolutionary-minded Polish youth.

Finally, the bureaucracy evidently weighed the impact of handing down the harsh sentences mandatory under this charge upon conviction and decided it would be taken by the mass of Polish students as a provocation.

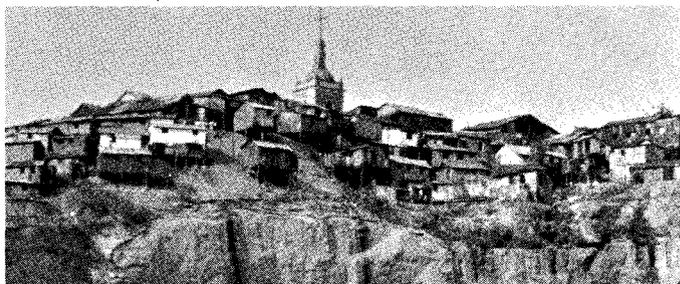
There is evidence for this view in the whole organization of the student trials. The government decided not to stage a mass trial of the student demonstrators being held in Polish prisons. Instead, the trials are scheduled to be spaced so that two or three defendants at a time are brought into court. In addition, the sessions are closed to the public. The Paris daily Le Monde reported January 17 that two other Warsaw student leaders, Adam Michnik and Henryk Szlaifer, will go on trial on January 21.

The defense and the prosecution in the Kuron and Modzelewski case both plan to appeal the verdict.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF FAVELA HILL

A group of poor people, who lived in Rio de Janeiro's original "favela," unexpectedly made the news internationally as 1968 ended.

Above the central railway station in the city is a high outcropping of rock. On top of this is a shanty town, founded in 1897, whose name has since been extended to similar slums as they multiplied.



outer lip of the famous cliff gave way. Twenty shacks, along with the inhabitants, went down, plunging 600 feet into the abyss, to be buried by tons of rock.

The authorities rushed in heavy earth-moving equipment. Eight bodies were soon found. To recover the bodies of forty to seventy more trapped in the rock fall might take several weeks. The only known survivor is a one-year-old child.

"Jorge dos Santos Generoso, an inhabitant of the Favela of My Loves [as the slum is also known], was brushing his teeth," Paul L. Montgomery of the New York Times reported. "'It sounded like a gunshot,' he said, 'and then everything was falling.' He watched the home of his sister and her eight children go over the brink.

"A policeman, Mário Matins Taveira, was chatting with a neighbor known as Doña Augusta when her shack fell. Both are presumed dead. The policeman's wife, Ismenia, saw them go over and tried to jump after her husband, but was restrained."

Out of Rio de Janeiro's 4,200,000 inhabitants, more than 800,000 are estimated to live in similar slums. Many of them are recent arrivals from the rural regions where the poverty is even worse.

Like their counterparts in all of the other Latin-American cities, they live in semistarvation, largely unemployed, and with a hopeless perspective under capitalism.

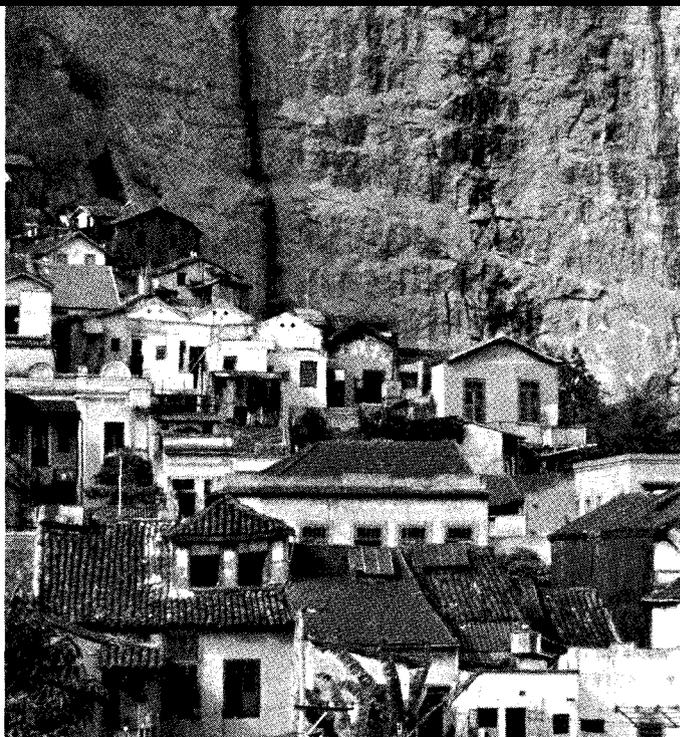


Photo by Joseph Hansen

FAVELA HILL. Despite the outstanding view, the lip of the 600-foot cliff is not considered by people in the upper brackets to be the choicest location in Rio de Janeiro for a home. Nevertheless, the dark stains on the rock, as the city fathers can point to with pride, show that at least in efficient disposal of its sewage "God's Hill," another name for the precinct, measures up well to the standards observed in much richer countries.

COLOMBIAN WORKERS THREATEN GENERAL STRIKE

The Lleras Restrepo regime put the army in a state of alert January 13 after several days of clashes in Cali between police and workers and students demonstrating against the high cost of living and an increase in bus fares. The army took over in Cali and more than 300 persons have been arrested there, according to Agence France-Presse.

Workers organizations in the region called for a general strike on January 22. The Colombian General Confederation of Labor said that it would support the action.

The government accused "elements of the extreme left" of being behind the worker and student unrest.

A CZECH ANSWER TO MOSCOW'S WHITE BOOK

[According to reports from Prague, precensorship is to be imposed on Czechoslovak publications inclined to be independent in their thinking. The most prominent of the journals singled out for such treatment is Reportér, the weekly magazine of the Czech journalists' union, which was already banned once from November 8 to 27, 1968.

[Precensorship may spare the Kremlin interventionists and the conciliatorist Dubček regime embarrassing incidents. For example, a comment in the October 9-16 issue of Reportér that dealt with the Soviet brief in defense of the military invasion, On the Events in Czechoslovakia, was suppressed only after the magazine had appeared. Thus, two issues of Reportér for that date were distributed to the newsstands, one containing the offending article and the other a replacement -- a study of currency convertibility.

[This hastily suppressed article, "What Is It?" by Jiří Hanák, is a good example of the "anti-Soviet poison" in the Czech press and of the "imprudence" which so infuriates Moscow and which the Czech liberal bureaucrats are so anxious to avoid. We are publishing it below. The translation is by Intercontinental Press.]

* * *

Published last month in Moscow in an edition of 300,000 copies, it is entitled On the Events in Czechoslovakia and costs 60 kopeks a copy [100 kopeks = US\$1]. More than anything else it reminds one of an anonymous letter. Out of good will, however, let us consider it a book, even though the authors "forget" to put their names on it -- which, after a careful reading, is hardly surprising.

If we assume that it is a book, then the question arises, "What kind of book is it?" At any rate it is a cheap one. When for 60 kopeks you get 159 pages of text and 32 pages of pictures, you can call it a good buy. It is a lot of reading for the price, and to top it off the book is printed on high-quality paper.

But then the question arises: "How should we categorize On the Events in Czechoslovakia as to genre?" Its seriousness and solidity cannot be encompassed by any one genre. However, it might be most correctly classed as science fiction. There is some basis for such a classification.

The book apparently sets itself the task of proving the existence of a counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia. Trudnaya rabota, naverno trudnaya [hard work,

really hard work]. And so it is not surprising that in their introduction, articles (divided into eight chapters), and conclusion, the authors had to incline to fiction. The Czech term "fikcia" [fiction] would be the most appropriate, the broad meaning of the word, however, the most precise.*

Therefore, let us say fictions, and these fictions are varied in their uniformity, because the authors used the most diverse methods to prove the existence of a nonexistent counterrevolution -- taking statements out of context (the most common), pure invention, and the method summed up as "X said so and so to Y and if he did not say it that was only for tactical reasons." The latter method inevitably recalls Vishinsky's "the accused cynically admitted," or "the accused cynically denied" used to fit the circumstance.

Not even the capitalist press is neglected. It frequently is the Soviet journalists' star witness in testifying to the existence of a counterrevolution here. Favorite reading in particular for the authors of this book was the British Sunday Times. There, among other things, is where they got their figure of 40,000 counterrevolutionaries, because some "unnamed counterrevolutionary leader" declared in the Sunday Times that there were 40,000 people in Czechoslovakia armed with automatic infantry weapons. And with that, the proof of counterrevolution is almost complete.

After the fictionalized facts are presented, then science takes over. Science appears in the book especially in the form of some chapters with a scientific stamp and scientific names -- "Discrediting of the KSC [Komunistická Strana Československa -- Communist party of Czechoslovakia] and the Undermining of State and Social Institutions"; "Revision of the Basic Principles of Marxism-Leninism and the Ideological Preparation for Counterrevolution"; "The Slogan 'Freedom of Speech' in the Hands of the Counterrevolution"; "The Counterrevolution's Road to Seizure of Power"; "An Attack on Socialist Foreign Policy"; "The Counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia Supported by International Imperialism"; "The Counterrevolutionary Underground Exposes Itself"; "Nations Will Not Let Themselves Be Slandered."

All this for 60 kopeks.

Then after the invented facts are

* The main meaning of "fikcia" in Czech is fakery.

arrayed scientifically and it has been proved in this way that some dozens of our leading journalists, publicists, writers, and scholars are counterrevolutionaries, the authors document their statements with pictures of weapons belonging to the People's Militia.* Naturally, the pictorial part is produced with the methods used in the books featuring Unidentified Flying Objects.

Unfortunately, the book does have some slight inadequacies. For example, the authors failed to grasp the principle that when you want to defame someone, or accuse him of something, you at least have to remember his name. Thus, for instance, the authors write, "Ivan Sviták published a comprehensive treatise in the magazine Reportér laying out an entire program for gradually removing the Communists from power and the seizure of power by antisocialist forces."

Regretfully, I cannot corroborate this statement. Ivan Sviták never wrote a line for Reportér, much less a comprehensive treatise. Likewise no comprehensive treatise planning the ouster of the Communists from power was ever published in our magazine. Such an essay could hardly have been published since 90 percent of Reportér's editors are Communists. But, of course, that is no argument for the authors of this Soviet publication.

Perhaps it will help this book's authors in their future work if we evaluate the assertion they make on page 122. There they note that "in the headquarters of the Prague journalists' union, whose leadership has recently been in the hands of reactionary elements, 13 machine guns, 81 submachine guns, and 150 munitions belts were found."

The truth is as follows: Before August 22 of this year, before foreign troops armed with submachine guns came to the journalists' union headquarters, there were in our editorial offices, which are in the same building, three transistor radios, three tape recorders, one television set of Hungarian make, one umbrella, one hunting cap, one wool sweater, one moth-eaten briefcase, plus two liters of first-rate cognac.

After our office and the rest of the building were taken over, none of these things could be found. There were, however, one chewed-up office eraser (too many mistakes?), two French couches, two quilts, one embroidered bedspread, and a foreign-make stamp album with perhaps ten postage stamps from the time of the Third Reich bearing the portrait of

Adolf Hitler. The report about weapons then is of course correct, insofar as the foreign troops who occupied the journalists' union building on August 22 brought these weapons with them.

I confess that after reading these two pure inventions, I doubted the reliability of the rest of the book. But just because a man (a journalist, note) lies once, that does not mean he has to lie ten or a hundred times. And it is difficult to separate the lies from possible truth in the book On the Events in Czechoslovakia.

This difficulty arises also from the professional standard followed in the work. Quotations torn from context are mixed up with the authors' own assertions. Expressions are used which while convincing are a bit sweeping and imprecise, such as "as is well known," or "as the unnamed leader declared." The counterrevolutionary attitude of our youth is measured by the length of their hair, which is like judging the level of a civilization by the width of the citizens' trousers.* The professional standard is simply low, very low.

Moreover, the authors must understand that while you can always lie you must at least do it competently. You must at least study and know what you are writing about. Simply this ignorance led the writers into making the embarrassing assertion that there were illegal radio transmitters here called "Ceské Budějovice," "Hradec Králové," "Plzeň" and "Střední Čechy" [all names of Czech cities or regions]. It is not our fault, after all, if many radio stations were not occupied by the troops of the five Warsaw Pact countries because someone quickly put up a sign in crayon over the door that said "kindergarten." It is not our fault, after all, if broadcasts from the Czech radio building in Prague continued long after it had been invaded by foreign troops.

The same ignorance radiates from the photographic part of the publication. This is particularly true of the two-page spread with a picture of Vinohradska Street in front of the radio station showing burning automobiles and gasoline on one side, and on the other an idyllic shot of a park showing a baby carriage and a beaming mother surrounded by foreign soldiers. The text says they were taken the same day.

It is obvious, then, colleagues of the "Soviet Journalists Team," that you were not in Prague in those days. I was in Prague then and I can tell you that no

* A special armed force in the factories under direct party control.

* Russians have been wearing very wide trouser legs since the Stalin era.

mother would have ventured out to go to a park with her baby carriage. They were shooting with real bullets on the streets of Prague and people were often fired at without warning. Undeclared martial law reigned. Two people carrying food in a car fell victim to this stage of siege. It happened near the waterworks, and you surely know about it. Why then these idyllic photos?

The authors of the book On the Events in Czechoslovakia did not make the slightest effort to ascertain the objective facts. Thus, naturally, even 60 kopeks is rather too much for this book. Despite these little faults, I enthusiastically recommend this book to my readers. According to latest reports, it has already been published in Czech.

DEPTHS OF CZECH RESISTANCE SHOWN BY JAN PALACH'S SACRIFICE

A stark sign of the depth of the opposition to the continued Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia was Jan Palach's self-immolation in Prague January 16. The 21-year-old student died of his burns on January 19. Especially disturbing to the Cernik-Husak regime was the notification in the letter left by the young man that there were more "torches" to come.

The response was immediate to his sacrificial gesture. Many people sent flowers to the hospital where Palach was taken in critical condition. His act recalled the suicides by fire of Buddhists in the streets of Saigon to protest the American occupation of their country, or of American pacifists protesting their country's aggression against the people of Vietnam. Such parallels were highly embarrassing to Czech officials and to the Kremlin.

The students of the Philosophical Faculty of Charles University, where Palach was in his second year, issued a statement saying, "We accuse the Soviet leadership of adding by its policies yet one more victim of the 21st of August. We accuse the political leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist party of dragging, in the name of so-called political realism, the people of Czechoslovakia into this situation by the smallness of its policy and by treason of the previously proclaimed ideals.

"We accuse ourselves, that up to now we did not find enough force in ourselves for such actions that would force the political leadership to become the real representative of the people's opinion."

The day before Palach's action 2,000 students and workers staged a rally in a Prague hall where a manifesto was adopted demanding the full restoration of national sovereignty, immediate internal political democracy, and an end to attacks on the press. Speakers at the rally included representatives of the 900,000-member Metal Workers' Union and the Union of Printers. The rally sent a message to Dr. Peter Colotka, the man picked by Moscow to replace reformer Josef Smrkovsky

as head of the new national assembly, asking him to refuse to accept the post.

At a Central Committee meeting held January 16, the same day that Jan Palach made his protest in Wenceslas Square, it was decided to endorse the demotion of Smrkovsky announced by the party Presidium earlier in the month.

The committee indicated it felt the pressure of the mass protest movement by making its decision through secret ballot, an unusual practice. The metal workers' union has demanded that the new national assembly also vote by secret ballot when this question comes up at its first session at the end of January.

Copies of Jan Palach's letter explaining his action were posted throughout Prague, apparently by members of his organization. It read as follows:

"With regard to the fact that our nations are at the edge of hopelessness, we decided to express our protest and awaken the people of this country in the following way:

"Our group is composed of volunteers who are ready to burn themselves for our cause. I had the honor to draw the first lot and I have gained the right to write the first letter and set the first torch.

"Our requirements are: (1) Immediate abolition of censorship. (2) Prohibition of distribution of Zpravy [published by Soviet occupation authorities].

"Should our requirements not be fulfilled within five days, that is, by January 21, 1969, and if the people will not come out with sufficient support (such as a strike for an indefinite period) further torches will go up in flames. (Signed) Torch No. 1.

"P.S. Remember August. Space has been created for Czechoslovakia in international policy. Let's use it."

The letter was confirmed by the Czech government as authentic.

THE SITUATION IN ITALY AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY LEFT

By Livio Maitan

Rome

It is certainly not easy to chart in a precise way the developments that may take place in the coming year -- and especially in the next few months -- in the Italian situation, which is marked by constantly increasing and deepening tensions and conflicts at all levels. It is essential, however, to try to grasp some of the basic tendencies if we are not to fall into empiricism and resign ourselves to living from day to day, thus exposing ourselves to a whole series of harmful turns.

Since October 1968 the workers have mobilized with a scope and intensity unprecedented in the last fifteen years. It is needless to recall how many times we have been prompted to write on this subject in the past. It is sufficient, moreover, to glance at the headlines for the last three months to get an impression of the power of the wave of revolt which has swept practically every region of the country, every branch of industry, and every layer of the working class.

At this writing, general or industry-wide strikes are in progress or threatened in a great number of provinces, and it can scarcely be doubted that they will be successful. If we take into consideration, moreover, the fact that contracts are coming up for renegotiation in important industries (metals first of all), the urgent problems persisting even where contracts are not about to expire, and the constant pressure of more general problems on which an all-out fight has begun (e.g., pensions), then the inescapable conclusion is that a new wave of great struggles may begin almost immediately.

Let us not forget that the general limits imposed by the economic situation allow the government and the employer class very little leeway for maneuver. According to recent estimates by Confindustria itself [Confederazione Generale dell'Industria Italiana -- General Confederation of Italian Industry], no change in the employment trend is possible. Thus, the new jobs created in industry or in the commercial and service sector will remain insufficient to absorb the manpower displaced from agriculture and the youth entering the job market. It is possible, in fact, that the inexorable process of concentration and rationalization will even reduce industrial employment, at least in certain branches. The social and political consequences of this may be easily imagined.

Moreover, given the logic of the system and the intensity of international competition (which it is more than ever essential for the Italian economy to meet), there cannot be even a minimal relaxation of the infernal rates of exploitation which are unquestionably a fundamental cause of the current outbreak of workers' struggles at every level.

It seems, furthermore, that in the present context it would be quite difficult for the unions to act in precisely the way they did, for example, in the 1966 metal workers strike. Antibureaucratic "confrontation" has now come to the factory gates, too. And among broad layers of the workers there is a spirit of clear hostility, if not always downright opposition, to the attempts of the bureaucrats to impose their authority.

The unions are facing an unavoidable dilemma. Either they must seek to apply the usual restraints (which in this case would have to be brutal) and risk sharply increasing the influence of the revolutionary antibureaucratic forces and tendencies; or they have to raise the ante themselves and yield to pressures from the ranks. And in this second instance, they would help to promote a process which they could not be sure of controlling. In either case, therefore, the objective possibility exists for broad struggles actively involving large masses of those categories of workers whose place in the productive process itself promotes firmness and decisiveness.

Moreover the extraordinary unrest which marked the intermediate social strata -- essentially the old and new petty bourgeoisie -- last year is by no means likely to exhaust itself. The most recent "confrontations," erupting in such an eminently reactionary sector as the legal profession, indicate to the contrary that the crises in these classes will continue and may even take the form of convulsions. Revolutionists will be extremely interested in following these developments closely, because measuring the fever of the petty bourgeoisie can provide very useful indications of the tendencies emerging and the outlets which the profound crisis of Italian society as a whole may take.

Needless to say, the course of the student movement will be a major factor. This is a growing social and political force, which can be classed as petty bourgeois only with all the qualifications and limitations that we have already had sev-

eral occasions to point out. Despite the decline in the university student movement, which has recently worsened over what it was two months ago, and despite the impasse which already threatens the high-school movement, the potentialities of the student movement remain vast. And under certain conditions, there can be renewed explosions in the educational system, and all the more so because the government's margin for demagogic reformist maneuvers is quite limited, if not nonexistent, here also.

Another essential factor is the instability of the government. The launching of the new center-left government was an attempt to stem the tendencies toward dissolution in the government coalition. It is significant that Premier Mariano Rumor sought to involve all groups and factions of the coalition parties in this operation. But this capturing of all potential internal oppositionists will only magnify the dangers if, as is probable, the new center-left experiment is not successful.

The most probable perspective -- to judge by the government's first acts and vicissitudes -- is alternating indecisiveness, hesitation, and arbitrariness, the objective result of which will be to increase the paralysis and confusion. The ruling class's political crisis seems insurmountable, and in fact a crisis of the political system can be considered to have begun.

The picture which I have outlined may seem, from the standpoint of forces opposing the system, too optimistic. But precisely because I am "optimistic" in distinguishing a whole series of objectively existing or underlying conditions and tendencies, I am -- or may appear to be -- "pessimistic" with regard to the realization of these possibilities, the actual outcome of the situation.

The working class mobilized impetuously in 1968 and there is every likelihood of an equal thrust in 1969. But the essential element in the dynamics of the situation is whether this mobilization can attain a more properly political level. It goes without saying that even an essentially economic movement, when it has assumed the proportions reached by this movement in recent months or to be anticipated in the near future, has a political content objectively and affects the overall social and political equilibrium.

But such a movement is inevitably condemned to exhaust itself once certain more or less satisfactory results are attained, unless it becomes more directly political, unless it assumes explicit political objectives. The mobilizations did not do this in 1968. Will they do so in

1969? That will depend on the intervention of the workers organizations and on the influence that the revolutionary vanguard groups can exercise. A political solution arising solely out of the spontaneous development of the movement is by far the least probable possibility, and it is well not to include such a hypothesis in a realistic outline of the prospects.

The PCI [Partito Comunista Italiano -- Italian Communist party], more than ever paralyzed by the contradiction between its now profoundly Social Democratic inner logic and the need to engage in demagogic maneuvers so as not to cut itself off from the living movement, will not and cannot take the needed course. And it is not worth bothering to discuss the possibility of any such action by the PSIUP [Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria -- Italian Socialist party of Proletarian Unity]. As for the revolutionary left, the fragmentation and lack of clear guidelines and orientation which it suffers from at present make it seem unlikely that it can respond in time to the demands of the situation.

More or less the same holds for the student movement (considering it here as a mass movement). Unless new orientations come to the fore in the universities -- unless inconsistent extremism (in the Leninist sense of the term) and destructive sectarianism, or spontaneity-worship poorly concealed behind a variety of masks are overcome -- it will be difficult for any new mobilizations around particular developments to achieve better results than in 1968. And the high-school movement itself, if it is unable to avoid the same dangers, will go into a decline or stagnate at the present level.

In recent weeks, above all after the episode in Focette,* a new danger has arisen which it would be absurd to ignore. For the first time in a long period, in any case since the start of the big upsurge of the students and workers, the reactionary forces have unleashed an offensive and shown clear intent to organize. In all likelihood, they have been able to achieve very little up to now, and I do not intend to raise impressionistic alarms. But the important thing is that these forces have begun to move and are seeking to promote certain incipient processes.

The ruling classes cannot passively accept new upsurges in the mass movement, ever deepening crises of the society, and progressive paralysis of their

* A place in Tuscany where a youth was shot when police opened fire on a student confrontation demonstration on New Year's Eve.

political institutions. They realize that they must act with caution, as their attitude after Avola* shows. And they are aware of the fact that they still have no alternative solution.

Certain sectors and groups, however, have now decided to prepare such an alternative and to create means for intervening directly. While not decisive, this could begin to affect the situation. The moves made after Focette; the propaganda being whipped up for full-fledged action squads; and certain moves by the police and Carabinieri [special riot police], such as the declarations of the police command in Lucca and the denunciation of the farm workers in Avola, point precisely in this direction.

These are some symptoms which indicate that certain conservatively oriented strata of the petty bourgeoisie are becoming attracted to such projects. If these tendencies crystallize we will see the beginning of a new fascist-type movement.

The revolutionary left must not only recognize this danger. It must take clear cognizance of its increased responsibilities. Despite its divisions, as a whole it is now a force which all must reckon with. Moreover, various groups in the revolutionary left may at certain times be capable of making moves that can have broad political repercussions. For precisely these reasons, the left must analyze the situation and its potential in depth and outline a strategy of action based not on a general need for confrontation or to express its own re-

* A town in Sicily where police fired on a crowd of striking farm workers December 2, killing two and wounding six. The government and the conservative press condemned this repression, trying to put the blame for it on individual policemen.

bellion (which was legitimate and necessary in less advanced phases) but on a realistic appraisal of what action is possible and productive at a given moment.

Clearly, the main line of defense -- and counterattack (leaving aside the special measures which can and must be taken in the event of attacks by fascist squads or the development of reactionary propaganda inciting to physical violence)-- must be to assure the greatest success and continuity of the proletarian mass movement.

Anyone can see that if the workers mobilize, the extreme right will disappear from the scene, at least as long as the present relationship of forces endures. The major effort, then, must be concentrated on preparing the way for and broadening and deepening the great movements shaping up for the coming weeks and months. Everything must be done to facilitate and politicalize these large-scale mobilizations. Everything that poses obstacles to these mobilizations, even other legitimate needs, must be rated as absolutely of secondary importance.

In this way we can minimize the negative consequences of the disastrous fragmentation of the revolutionary left. In this way we can create the preconditions for at least objectively convergent activity by these groups and, in the last analysis, for subjecting their positions to the test of reality. In this way we can pave the way for eventual regroupment aimed at organizing a revolutionary party, which remains the essential prerequisite for any social and political crisis to culminate in a decisive struggle for the conquest of power and the overthrow of the capitalist system.

January 13, 1969

NEW WAVE OF STRIKES HITS ITALY

Italy was hit by a new wave of strikes January 10. Tens of thousands of workers downed tools in textile mills, metal-working shops and other industries. In Rome a 24-hour public transport strike crippled the city.

The government of Premier Mariano Rumor, which was formed December 12, was faced with a difficult challenge as some 5,000,000 union members pressed for militant action to secure more favorable terms in the sixty major contracts due for renewal this year.

The special correspondent of the New York Times, Alfred Friendly Jr., re-

ported from Milan January 9 that both company and union officials are "nervous about the growth of spontaneous rebellions among workers."

The union bureaucrats fear the spread of the Unitary Base Committees, "such as the one that sparked a massive wildcat strike against the giant Pirelli Company...here last year..."

The anxiety among the union officials is shared by the men with whom they sit down to bargain: "Some company officials worry that the three major union organizations may be losing control of their men."

THE STUDENT UNREST IN UTTAR PRADESH

By R. N. Arya

Kanpur

forty minutes.

For some years now students of various universities in Uttar Pradesh have been going on strikes in the autumn months, almost as a routine exercise. The strikes point to some deep underlying causes which were summed up by Dr. Atma Ram, director of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, in his convocation address at Agra University in 1968, as the "generation gap." The "generation gap," he said, "is separating the leaders of tomorrow from those of today. Most of the trouble arises because there is no contact between the authorities and the students."

One thing is obvious: Students have no respect for tradition or authority. They have a questioning mind. Twenty years back, the student movement in India was imbued with nationalism and political ideologies. But students did not think of attacking teachers or damaging university property, which were treated as sacred even in 1942 -- during the Quit India movement -- when post offices and railway stations were burned down.

The difference between the movements in the past and now is that university buildings are now either burned down or damaged and teachers also become victims of brickbats and missiles.

Peaceful Beginning

Initially, the students' unions in every university in UP where the trouble erupted presented a charter of demands backed up with a hunger-strike of a few leading cadres. In every case there has been a demand for the readmission of the rusticated student leaders. The Lucknow University students, for example, demanded withdrawal of police cases pending against office-bearers of the union. The cases were instituted in connection with the pro-Hindi agitation in 1967.

New demands this year included one for student representation on university bodies and another for the withdrawal of the order to increase the university examination fees.

There were local variations, too. The students of Gorakhpur University presented a charter of twenty-six demands, twenty of which were later accepted by the vice-chancellor. They began not with a hunger-strike but with a formal "gherao"* of the vice-chancellor for

Agitations assumed a violent turn only when the police interfered. In Banaras and Allahabad, the students shouted slogans against the vice-chancellors of the universities whom they charged with siding with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu communal paramilitary organisation affiliated to the Jan Sangh party.

It is significant that the RSS-dominated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) at Banaras formed a "resistance committee" to oppose the agitation launched by the students' union for the withdrawal of the order of expulsion against the union leaders (Sinha, Majumdar and Ravi Shanker).

The RSS supporters among the students started a counter hunger-strike. Subsequent trouble that developed in Banaras has been due to the friction between these two groups in which the police and the Pradesh Armed Constabulary (PAC) came with a heavy hand against the strikers.

Even Dr. Triguna Sen, the central education minister, had to express dissatisfaction with the way in which the vice-chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University, Dr. A.C. Joshi, dealt with the situation. The minister had to admit that the RSS was carrying on "prejudicial activities" for quite some time on the campus.

Some students had received stab wounds, a students' union leader, Majumdar, was beaten up and handed over to the police, and another was thrown out of his room on the first floor of his hostel building -- all at the instigation of the RSS-sponsored ABVP.

At Allahabad, student leaders observed a peaceful hunger-strike. On November 7, 1968, the students' union held a meeting. But the union president was arrested while addressing it. This provoked the students to attack university buildings with brickbats. Some teachers were also injured.

At Lucknow, the state capital, first rumblings of the student unrest were heard when the deputy prime minister, Morarji Desai, was heckled by some students on November 23. The next day the students' union at the university held a

Indian workers. It is carried out by surrounding employers or confining them in their offices, demanding an immediate decision on workers' grievances. -- I.P.

* Gherao, or siege, is a tactic used by

meeting to protest against the arrests of secondary teachers who were agitating for an increase in pay, and for the withdrawal of cases pending against student leaders in connection with the pro-Hindi agitation of 1967. They decided to take out a procession to the official residence of the governor -- since there is no elected government in the state. The police stopped them and arrested a few leaders.

When the police did not keep the promise to release them, students marched in a procession to the police station and a clash with the police ensued. There was an exchange of brickbats from both sides for about four and a half hours. Strikes spread to all UP universities. Violent groups of students damaged buses, railway station cabins, etc., in Lucknow.

The conduct of the armed constabulary came in for general criticism. Everywhere, students were provoked to violence by the PAC. In Allahabad, the general body of students did not support the strike call, but students refused to attend classes as the PAC was stationed on the campus. Teachers refused to teach. Many senior professors went on leave. Twenty teachers of the Allahabad University accused the PAC of beating an innocent student and of abusing and threatening teachers.

The student leaders of Lucknow University called off their agitation following an advice by the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi with an assurance that their demands would be inquired into. Elsewhere, too, the students started trekking back to their classes. Their demands are still not met. But their fury has temporarily blown over. Probably the university authorities are wiser by the events. They might even meet some of their demands.

Politics of Student Unrest

Dr. Triguna Sen, the central education minister, has attributed the spurt in the student movement in UP last year to the midterm elections due in February 1969. Two main constituents of the Samyukta Vidhayak Dal (a front formed by non-Congress opposition parties which ran the now-dismissed government in the state), the Samyukta Socialist party* (SSP) and Jan Sangh, are supposed to be trying their strength against each other. The "charge" sounds plausible in view of the fact that the presidents of students' unions everywhere are SYS [Samajwadi Yuva-Jan Sabha -- the youth wing of the SSP] men.

* Samyukta ["United"] Socialist party -- a petty-bourgeois reformist party. In the thirties its leaders were an oppositional current inside the Congress party, critical of Gandhi. -- I.P.

At two places top SSP leaders came out openly in support of the student struggle. Raj Narain Singh, the SSP leader, has charged the vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University with openly siding with RSS elements. Saligram Jaiswal of the SSP has condemned the attitude of the vice-chancellor at Allahabad for not listening to the demands of the students' union. It may also be noted that the expelled student leaders are everywhere SYS men.

Dr. Triguna Sen also referred to RSS activities on the campus of the Banaras Hindu University. The RSS-dominated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad at Banaras formed a resistance committee to oppose the SYS-led students' agitation. In Lucknow, the RSS led a deputation to the vice-chancellor to assure him that it would oppose any agitation being launched by the president of the local students' union.

The organising secretary of the Vidyarthi Parishad, Surendra Nath Dwivedi, welcomed the formation of the "resistance committees" by Banaras students to resist the disturbances "created by professional politicians of Marxist, Communist and Socialist parties"!

When the chief organiser of the RSS in UP, Prof. Rajendra Singh, said that the RSS was ready to submit to any enquiry made into the disturbance caused by students at Banaras, he evidently meant the agitation launched by radical students. But reports have regularly appeared in the press about the RSS students beating up and even stabbing agitators.

There was truth in what Dr. Sen said that students supporting the SSP and other leftist elements were pitted against students following the RSS-Jan Sangh everywhere in UP. Many professors in the UP universities are supporters of the RSS. The teachers also were divided into two camps in the recent clashes.

The Jan Sangh did not have any influence among students in UP till a few years ago. The JS entry into the student ranks came in the wake of the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 when communal propaganda of the Jan Sangh and the RSS made itself felt.

Next came the disturbances in the Aligarh University, an old centre of Islamic teaching, following a proposal to change the "Muslim character" of that university. As a counterblast it was proposed that the name of the Banaras Hindu University should drop the word "Hindu." This was resisted by Hindu communal elements among students in 1966.

Then came the "Cow Protection" agitation which roused the communal passions of "Hindus."

In 1967 there was the Hindi agitation (aimed at retaining Hindi as the only national language and banning English), in leading which the SSP and the RSS vied with each other. They did the same thing in the "Kutch agitation" against transferring a small strip of land along the Indo-Pak border in Kutch to Pakistan.* Thus the division that obtains today in the students' movement in UP has certainly a political complexion.

The Communist party of India (CPI) has not had much influence among students in the state. The UP State Executive Committee of the CPI passed a resolution on November 30 expressing its sympathy with "the genuine democratic aspirations of the students." It also condemned police excesses. The resolution, however, has warned the students to remain vigilant against "anarchists and agents provocateurs who want to discredit and disrupt the movement by their activities."

"Destruction of property and incidents of arson do not help the movement at all. The student movement must take a more organised and disciplined form," the resolution said. Obviously the CPI had no organic contact with the movement.

The influence of the SSP and the RSS among students can explain at best some aspects of the agitation or some incidents in UP universities. But it cannot explain the general mood of students which brings them under the influence of these two political parties. The RSS is a militant revivalist organisation based on the concept of Hindu nationalism. It has all the qualities of a fascist movement.

It does talk of bringing down the present socioeconomic framework, a slogan which satisfies the rebellious mood of the youth today. Students are bitter against the present bourgeois society. When they are told that their economic miseries are due to Muslims, they find a focal point to which they can turn their wrath.

The SSP also believes in action, and though it is not communal, its nationalist chauvinism on the question of Pakistan and Hindi makes it an ally of the Jan Sangh.

As compared to these parties, the CPI and the Praja Socialist party [PSP -- another petty-bourgeois reformist party, closely related to the SSP in its origins] have remained detached, like debating societies rather than forums of action.

The limitations of the student movement, however, are that it is dominated by the SSP which is content with sporadic action without any national perspective. There has been no serious attempt by the SSP or the SYS to study the deeper socioeconomic problems of students and base their agitation on these problems.

Educationists on Student Unrest

It must, however, be admitted that those who are trying to study the problem objectively have pointed to several deep underlying causes of student unrest. Dr. Atma Ram, calling it a "generation gap," said:

"When the ripples of stir are felt in an otherwise peaceful environ, we all begin to look around.... Obviously the young generation is seeking to play their role in the society." He has stressed the need to have a closer look at our educational system, and wherever possible, to "reorientate it -- with a view to developing those skills and capabilities which are meaningful to production."

The problems of Indian colleges and student unrest were discussed in a two-day seminar at Princeton University, New Jersey, USA, on October 31 and November 1, 1968. Dr. T.P. Chandi, vice-chancellor of the Gorakhpur University from Uttar Pradesh participated in the seminar, which is said to have considered viewpoints expressed at the Commonwealth Universities Congress held in Australia.

Among the several causes of student unrest listed by the congress are:

(1) Students are dissatisfied with the present setup and want to reshape the world; (2) the system of education is irrelevant and does not serve any purpose; and (3) there is no electric contact between the staff and students. There are too many students in classes, rendering close contact between students and teachers impossible.

The National Herald of Lucknow has published several instances of bungling and nepotism in appointments of university teachers in Allahabad. Currently teachers in schools and colleges all over UP are agitating for better working conditions for themselves. Several thousand teachers in secondary schools throughout the state have been on strike for over three weeks at the time of this writing, demanding better pay scales.

A French delegate to the Commonwealth Universities Congress is reported to have described the conditions in France as follows:

"After five years of complete muddle, a student is adequately prepared for

* In accordance with the terms of an award by the International Court in the Hague.

unemployment."

We can describe the state of affairs in this country also in a similar manner. It is this bleak future that is a disincentive to study. A young person strains to change the entire structure of education to make education meaningful.

It is for this that he wants representation on university bodies. He feels angered when the elders deal with him as if he were a mere kid, and try to put him down with a heavy hand.

His rebellious spirit surges and becomes destructive. He wants to be heard and respected. The present bureaucratic structure of the setup of colleges and universities prevents it. Corruption in

administration of universities and private management of educational institutions is being exposed.

Students demand a better education through good and efficient teachers and better equipment. The bourgeois state cannot do anything about this and so it must find scapegoats in "politicians and outsiders." It can only use the police and the army to keep the students down.

The conflict in the educational field is fundamental. The youth cannot be beaten down. They will come forward to pose a real challenge to the decadent bourgeois social order.

December 30, 1968

TURKISH WORKERS OCCUPY SINGER SEWING-MACHINE PLANT

Police arrested 120 workers in Istanbul January 11 to end the occupation of a Singer sewing-machine factory.

The workers were charged with illegally occupying the building, opposing the forces of order, and seizing company employees.

Eight police and three workers were injured in the clash that took place when the police invaded the plant, according to Agence France-Presse.

The workers occupied the factory to protest the firing of three of their comrades. Their demands included the reinstatement of all workers, a shortening of the workweek, and dismissal of the American manager of the company.

Workers at the Turkish Maritime Transport Company went on strike January 9. Twenty-one cargo ships and oil tankers were tied up at various Turkish ports as a result of the work stoppage. The strike followed a breakdown of discussions on a new collective contract.

The action at the Singer plant was not an isolated incident. On July 4, 1968, nearly 1,000 workers occupied the Derby rubber factory in Istanbul to protest an attempt by the management to recognize a company union.

The workers maintained the occupation for six days and won substantial concessions.

The workers were members of the Turkish Rubberworkers' Union [LASTIK-IS], affiliated to the Confederation of Progressive Unions in Turkey [DISK]. When

the union contracts came up for renewal, the employers sought to sign agreements with another union more sympathetic to the problems of management.

They reportedly secured an agreement with the Confederation of Trade Unions in Turkey [TURK-IS] to set up a rubberworkers' affiliate, KAUCUK-IS, in competition to LASTIK-IS.

The Confederation of Trade Unions in Turkey is in turn affiliated with the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, set up during the cold war as an anti-Communist bulwark and a well-known conduit for American CIA funds in many countries.

The workers said that management had forged their names on membership forms for KAUCUK-IS in order to win recognition for the company union. According to labor legislation in Turkey, an employer can sign an agreement with a union that has been registered as the most representative by the director of labor.

When the workers discovered the employers' maneuver, they spontaneously called the occupation. When a vote was finally held, out of 950 workers, 6 voted for KAUCUK-IS, 930 for LASTIK-IS, with 14 votes spoiled.

The management was finally forced to accept the union. In addition the workers won an agreement that no one would be fired for having taken part in the occupation, full wages would be paid for the strike period, the factory manager would be removed, and the strikers would receive a wage increase of two liras [9.08 liras = US\$1].

GENERAL WESSIN Y WESSIN RETURNS TO SANTO DOMINGO

General Elias Wessin y Wessin, a former henchman of Trujillo who won international notoriety for ordering the bombing of civilian sectors of Santo Domingo during the Constitutionalist uprising in 1965, returned to the Dominican Republic January 10. The ultrarightist general has

let it be known that he will run for the presidency in the 1970 elections.

After the American invasion had succeeded in crushing the 1965 revolution, the political settlement imposed by Washington called for the banishing of Constitutionalist leaders. Most prominent of those sent abroad was Colonel Francisco Caamaño Deño, who was given a diplomatic post in London. As a show of impartiality, Gen. Wessin y Wessin was also persuaded to leave the country. He went to Miami after refusing the post of Dominican representative to the United Nations.

The general has maintained his ties with both the Dominican army and the Pentagon. His return has been rumored for several years, along with hints that he plans to take over the government whether or not he wins the 1970 elections.

The return of Wessin y Wessin raised the question of the return of Caamaño Deño, who might be expected to give leadership to the popular anger that is certain to greet any moves by the sinister general.

It may be that the Dominican dictatorship anticipated this problem, inasmuch as Caamaño Deño disappeared in October 1967 during a visit to the Netherlands and has not been seen since. Rumors have circulated that the leftist leader is in hiding, preparing a new uprising in the Dominican Republic. But there is equal reason to believe he has met with foul play.

President Balaguer, however, in announcing last December that Gen. Wessin y Wessin was welcome to return, piously added his hope that "all those who fought each other in 1965 will come back." He explicitly declared that the offer applied to Caamaño Deño, but seemed to have little fear that it would be taken up. The Constitutionalist leader's whereabouts, Balaguer said, "are a mystery."



COL. FRANCISCO CAAMAÑO DEÑO

U.S. CONTINUES "UNDERGROUND" TESTING OF THE BOMB

On December 8 a nuclear bomb was exploded underground at the Nevada testing grounds. The event and its aftermath received little publicity in the U.S. press, although it did not go quite so unnoticed elsewhere. The Canadian government announced January 7 that radiation sampling stations at Hamilton, Ottawa, Montréal and Toronto had recorded radioactivity levels ten to twenty times normal December 12 and 13.

Neither government has acknowledged that the test caused the radiation increase. The Trudeau regime has politely refrained from filing a formal protest. The January 11 *Le Monde*, however, revealed that the bomb, with the power of 35,000 tons of TNT, was exploded at less than 200 feet underground. The explosion formed a surface crater from which radioactive gas escaped into the atmosphere. Washington has remained silent.

MADRAS LANDLORDS PUT 42 FARM WORKERS TO THE TORCH

Bombay

On December 25, 1968, a horror of nightmare proportions was perpetrated in the backwoods of the Tanjore district in Madras State, now ruled by the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam [DMK].

A private army of thugs and riff-raff led by landowners surrounded a lone Harijan* hut in Kilavenmani hamlet, poured petrol over it and set it ablaze. Twenty women, nineteen children and three invalid old men were locked inside the small 96-square-foot shack.

The lynch mob, armed with revolvers and "bichuvas" (choppers), let no one escape. All forty-two persons trapped inside were burned alive.

This was by no means a display of "Naxalite"*** wickedness as suggested by a section of the capitalist press initially; it was plain bloody terror organised by landlords. They all belonged to the upper-caste Hindus and their terror was directed against defenceless, down-trodden Harijan farm workers and their families.

The only fault, if it can be called so, of the Harijans was that they dared to organise a trade union to secure better wages for toiling and sweating on lands which they do not own.

After the tragedy, the police leisurely set about arresting "suspects." A week after the atrocity, they had taken into custody 110 persons, most of them landlords who were known to be supporters of the ruling DMK, and their henchmen.

An intelligence officer from Madras was assigned to conduct investigations as a partial concession to the people's demand that the local police should not be entrusted with the task of conducting investigations.

A separate Commission of Enquiry by a retired judge, Ganapathia Pillai, has been set up to investigate "the problem of agricultural labour, the relationship between the labourer and landlord and connected issues."

The police have registered three

* The caste of "untouchables" who perform menial or heavy labor.

** Members of a group that split in 1967 from the Communist party of India (Marxist) -- the "left" Communist party -- to take part in an armed peasant revolt in Naxalbari, West Bengal. -- I.P.

cases, one in regard to the murder of farm worker Pakkiriswami, another in regard to the Kilavenmani arson, and the third in regard to use of firearms and rioting.

The capitalist newspapers have been spreading the lie that the Kilavenmani arson was some kind of retaliation by certain "misguided" landlord elements against the "Left Communist menace." This has been exposed as a total falsehood.

On the basis of the information given by the police on the spot, the inspector-general of police of Madras, Mahadevan, said that the arson followed a clash between Left Communist workers who were on strike and those "loyal" to the landlords, in which a "loyal worker," Pakkiriswami, was murdered. Later the police chief himself amended his statement to the effect that "no wage dispute had led to the clash which provoked the arson."

According to a correspondent of the Bombay weekly Blitz (January 4), who gave an on-the-spot account, the "Kilavenmani" arson was not the outcome of a sudden outburst of anger. A well-hatched conspiracy was behind it. In fact, for the past two years the private army of landlords has been functioning in the whole of the paddy-growing deltaic districts of Tanjore and Tiruchy, making systematic attempts to terrorize the landless workers into enduring their slavery and exploitation.

In the whole district, however, the dispute over harvest wages had been confined to certain pockets in East Tanjore. Recently, apparently as a result of the agitation launched by agricultural workers, the majority of smaller landowners had accepted the Mannargudi settlement of six measures of paddy as wages per quintal harvested. Things went smoother by and large. The so-called labour unrest has been played up in the Jute Press at the instance of a section of the landlords who could never reconcile themselves to bargaining with Harijan workers.

Reports Blitz: "One of the landlords alleged to be the principal organiser of black terror against Harijan workers has been collecting from every landowner in the district, by persuasion or coercion, 50 rupees per acre [US\$6.60] for the quid pro quo of sending his storm troopers to 'discipline or liquidate' troublemakers among farm workers.

"His extortionist collections constituting the mainstay of his black army are known to exceed several million ru-

pees. This big finance is used by him to hire goons and to obtain guns smuggled through coastal points of the district."

The arson took place around 9 p.m. Throughout the day the "landlordite" private army roamed the area, attacking Harijan workers and opening fire on them.

The police, always ready to rush to press about "Left Communist activities," pretended ignorance about the activities of the goonda army and the landlord who was masterminding its operations!

According to P. Ramamurthi, CPI(M) Member of Parliament, the goondas came to raid the hamlet in police lorries and private jeeps. This naturally created panic among the Harijan workers who have all along been initiated into the ways of wholesale arrests on the flimsiest of charges or even on mere suspicion.

They fled without offering any resistance. The field was laid wide open to the arsonists on the rampage. They proved merciless. They set fire to every hut they came by, committing women and children to the flames.

One of the trapped men made a feeble attempt to escape. He was shot and left bleeding on the soil, taken for dead. However, he survived -- to learn of the massacre of his wife and three children.

The chronology of events and warnings about the catastrophe in the making show the complicity of the local police and their bosses in Madras with the landlords.

We quote from the Blitz report:
"On May 14, 1968 -- that is more than seven months before the Christmas killing of Harijans -- hired goondas of certain landlords, including the one who had been masterminding the landlordite private army, raided Vipur hamlet in Nagapattinam Taluk, largely inhabited by Harijan workers.

"They burnt down every single hut in the hamlet. Forty-two persons had to be admitted into hospital for treatment of extensive burns. In that they escaped death, they did not make the sensational news, otherwise the Vipur arson was on the same proportions as the Kilavenmani tragedy.

"News of the arson was effectively suppressed by the police and the capitalist press, but on this score it could not become less serious than the recent tragedy the news of which just could not be suppressed because of the shocking proportions of its horror.

"Soon after the Vipur arson, the Kisan sabha leaders sent telegrams and

appeals to authorities seeking protection to farm workers. No action was forthcoming, but on a verbal complaint from a landlord active in the so-called Paddy Growers' Association, platoons of Special Armed Police were rushed to the district to terrorise workers. That this should happen in the DMK regime made it all the more strange.

"The Kilavenmani tragedy, however, had an immediate history of two months of conspiracy and organisation.

"First indication of the impending tragedy came into evidence on October 15. On that day, a local worker, A.G. Ramachandran of Kelkarai village, described by the police as a Marxist worker and by the village people as their leader, was murdered. He was stabbed to death.

"At 1 p.m. on the fateful day, Ramachandran had complained to the police about his life being in danger. A few hours later he was murdered within the limits of the same police station where he had complained about the impending catastrophe!

"On November 1, in Puducheri village, Harijans were beaten up, some of them stabbed and at least a dozen were admitted into hospitals. Gnanasambandam, the Marxist CP MLA, wired the Inspector-General of Police, seeking his intervention to stop the landlord terror and ensure protection of workers.

"Later, he submitted petitions to the Government in which he specifically made the allegation against a landlord conspiring to liquidate Harijan cheris [isolated colonies] in the whole of East Tanjore.

"On November 2, the MLA met the District collector and gave a petition to him making specific reference to a particular landlord's plans for organising an attack on Harijan cheris.

"On November 7, P. Ramamurthi told a press conference in Madras, after a tour of East Tanjore, that landlords were engaging goondas to attack farm labourers and there was no police protection to the victims. If this affair continued he would advise the landless workers to organise a volunteer force to protect themselves.

"Ramamurthi's statement was brought to the notice of the Inspector-General of Police. He took no time to dismiss all of Ramamurthi's fears and apprehensions as just 'a pack of lies.'

"On November 14, three Marxist CP MLAs, Gnanasambandam, Dhanuskodi and Barathi Mohan, met the Chief Minister and later the Law Minister of Madras, Madha-

van, and gave a memorandum to them on lack of security for farm labourers and about landlords' plans to attack Harijan hamlets. No action was known to have been taken on this serious representation.

"Just about this time, another kisan worker, Pakkiriswami of Sikkal, was murdered. The MLAs drew the Government's attention to the possible complicity of a particular landlord in this gruesome murder and urged immediate police protection to workers. Apart from registering a case, no action seemed to have been initiated by the authorities.

"On November 20, organised groups of goondas attacked Harijan workers in several villages of East Tanjore. Telegrams were sent to the ministers and top police officials by the local kisan leaders about the lawlessness created by the activities of the landlords.

"Again, on December 5, there were a series of raids on Harijan 'cheris' in several villages.

"The police were warned about the impending catastrophe, the Government was informed of it by responsible members of the Legislature and Parliament, yet nothing was done.

"Among the landlords arrested by the police for alleged complicity in the arson case is Gopalakrishna Naidu, president of the Paddy Growers' Association, the militant organisation of the landlords in the district. The DMK press describes him as a Congressman. The Congress has disowned him, saying he is a Swatantra [right-wing competitor of the Congress party] partyman."

The Kilavenmani tragedy poses the problems of the rural poor and the new class conflicts on the several areas between the emerging capitalist farmer and farm workers.

The DMK government in Madras (now called Tamilnadu) despite its pretensions of being a protector of "lower castes" has played the role of a staunch defender of capitalist-landlord property relations. In reality the DMK is a regional capitalist party which exploited linguistic chauvinism to gain popularity.

Chief Minister Annadurai of the DMK ministry has refused to institute a judicial inquiry into the atrocities, fearing that it might be thoroughly exposed in the process. Among the landlords arrested are supporters of the Congress, Swatantra party, and the DMK.

The agricultural workers, who are getting organised in Tamilnad for the first time, are led by the CPI(M) which till recently had an alliance with the DMK. The CPI(M) has walked out of the alliance and in the January 8 by-election to parliament from Nagercoil constituency it put up its own candidate as against the Congress and the DMK-supported Swatantra candidates.

The former Congress party president, Mr. Kamaraj, who lost even his assembly seat in 1967, has been elected to the Lok Sabha [lower house of parliament] defeating his Swatantra rival, Dr. Mathias, by a margin of 125,000 votes (249,000 against 121,236 votes). The CPI(M) candidate M.M. Ali came in third. Politically it is a big blow to the DMK's prestige.

The events in Tamilnad fit into a national pattern of atrocities perpetrated by upper-caste landlords against Harijan farm labourers in different states.

Last year a Harijan woman was paraded naked in the streets of Aurangabad town of Maharashtra by upper-caste Hindus, mostly Maratha (non-Brahmins) landlords, on the pretext that a Harijan teased an upper-caste woman.

A few months ago a Harijan boy was tied to a pole and burned alive in a village in Andhra after being falsely charged with theft because he had demanded his unpaid wages from the wife of a landlord.

In an Uttar Pradesh village, a Harijan boy was forced by local upper-caste landlords to commit incest with his own mother, to humiliate the Harijan farm workers agitating for their rights.

Although the Indian constitution considers the practice of "untouchability" a crime, it is still in force throughout the country, more virulent in the rural areas. The capitalist state indirectly encourages these practices.

Like the problem of the black-power movement in the USA, militants among the "untouchables" consider it necessary to create their own independent organisations to fight for social equality.

Unfortunately the traditional left or Marxist parties have not made much impact so far on the "untouchable" masses who still follow their own communal leaders. In some states like Maharashtra they have embraced Buddhism in hope of escaping the caste discrimination of the Hindu society.

JOHNSON PREDICTS "HARD FIGHTING" AHEAD IN VIETNAM

North Vietnam and the National Liberation Front agreed in Paris January 18 to procedures for expanded negotiations with Washington and the Saigon dictatorship. There were indications, however, that the war was far from over.

President Thieu of South Vietnam made a bid to the Nixon administration the same day by holding out the hope of a reduction of U.S. troops in Vietnam in 1969. It was rumored that he planned to propose a cutback of 150,000 to 200,000 men. After a hasty consultation with his superiors, he suggested a more modest figure of "under 50,000." The American military command corrected the president by lowering the figure still more, to "one or two divisions." A U.S. division contains about 15,000 men. Even this minimal reduction, it was explained, would not mean any reduction in the fighting. The troops would only be released when South Vietnamese conscripts could "effectively" take their places. U.S. military offi-

cial had let it be known a few days before Thieu's "proposal" that they were opposed to any U.S. cutback whatsoever before July.

The New York Times in a January 17 editorial chastised "some American military officials in Saigon" for continuing to promote "delusive dreams of military victory." But it was not in Saigon that the promise of a longer war originated.

Lyndon Johnson, in his January 14 State of the Union message, bequeathed the war to his successor. He made it plain that he envisioned no early resolution through the Paris talks -- because he still clung to the central aim of imperialist policy in Vietnam, the crushing of the Vietnamese revolution. "There may be hard fighting before a settlement is reached," Johnson predicted, "but I can assure you it'll yield no victory to the Communist cause."

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