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Joseph Hansen:

Bejar's Essay on Peruvian Guerrilla Struggle

Report from Mexico:

Jailed Hunger Strikers Beaten; Guards Fire at Wives, Children

No Border Controls

The capacity of air and water pollution to cross national borders, without paying any attention to customs or immigration rules and regulations, is causing rising concern in Europe. An example from Norway was reported in the January 11 *New York Times*.

Dr. Brynjulf Ottar, director of the Norwegian Institute for Air Research, declared that "our fresh-water fish and our forests will be destroyed if these developments continue uncontrolled."

Ottar's worry over what is happening reflects the feelings of the Norwegian people as a whole. They are highly appreciative of fish as a staple in their diet; they consider forests to be both a scenic and economic asset.

The problem in Norway is the rising acidity in rain and snow from industrial wastes originating mainly in England and West Germany. For instance, a year ago, Norway suffered a "black snow," actually a snow gray in color, filled with black spots. The snow was extensive, falling in eastern Norway and western Sweden.

The strange color of the snow was caused by sulphuric acid from air over the Ruhr.

Sulphuric acid has an adverse affect on all forms of life. Even small amounts can upset the ecological balance of plant and animal life, if released continually for some time as in the case of industrial centers like England and the Ruhr. The growth of trees in Norway could be reduced by as much as 5 percent a year because of rising acidity of the soil.

While Norway has local sources of pollution, particularly from cellulose plants, the main problem is contaminants from other countries. Under the capitalist free enterprise system, how can these be checked? Dr. Lars Lund, senior research chemist of the Norwegian institute put it this way:

"The international question is the difficult one because it requires so many separate political decisions, and it takes so long to get around to doing anything.

"If you have a national problem you just pass local laws and clear it up. This is why we must push so hard on the international question now."

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Laos: '20,000 Bombing Sorties a Month'

Nixon's secret escalation of American aggression in Laos in recent months has reached the point where it may rapidly expand into a Vietnam-sized conflict. That is the conclusion shared by Arnold Abrams and T.D. Allman in two articles from Vientiane in the January 1 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review* published in Hongkong.

"Despite blithe denials and bland interpretations by Vientiane officials," Abrams writes, "the war in Laos may be entering a decisive phase. US embassy officials insist — in private — that the decade-long struggle here still is an American 'holding operation', a low-key effort with limited objectives. But intensified fighting in the last six months may have triggered an escalatory cycle leading to another face-off between Washington and Hanoi."

An escalation of American bombing of the so-called Ho Chi Minh trail produced a counterthrust from the insurgent Pathet Lao and the North Vietnamese in June. The rebels took the government outpost of Muong Soui on the western edge of the Plaine des Jarres in northern Laos.

"Moreover," Abrams said, "the North Vietnamese didn't stop at Muong Soui. They pushed south and west, severing road links to the royal capital and probing at Long Cheng, northern nerve centre of the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) and operations base for General Vang Pao's so-called secret army.

"The enemy's steamrolling drive shattered the morale of government forces and brought US and Laotian officials to the verge of despair. In late summer the shaken officials decided to hit back hard."

The CIA-directed government forces "retaliated" with the much heralded assault on the Plaine des Jarres, in an operation "marked by fierce American aerial pounding and increased American logistical support."

In addition there was a massive escalation of U.S. bombing of the civilian population in the 50 percent

of the country under the effective control of the Pathet Lao. "Under the euphemism of 'armed reconnaissance flights,'" Abrams reports, "Thailand-based American jets and bombers have mounted aerial bombardments equal to the pounding taken by North Vietnam prior to the bombing halt in 1968." (Emphasis added.)

Nixon has kept this aggression hidden from the public at home. "Ironically," Abrams said, "those most in the dark about Laos are the American people. More than simply being unaware of the scope of US operations here, they have yet to be told by their government that their nation is militarily involved in violations of the 1962 Geneva Accord, which bars all forms of foreign military intervention in Laos. . . .

"Consequently, everyone in Vientiane, from the Russian ambassador to the *mamasan* of the legendary White Rose, knows what the Americans are doing here. But the American public remains ignorant of the fact that their government is arming, training, supplying, transporting and directing approximately 70,000 Laotian troops in a war which threatens to get out of hand."

The CIA operatives who direct the U.S. intervention encourage their Laotian protégé General Vang Pao to deny that he receives American support. At a recent meeting with foreign journalists, Vang Pao declared that his Meo troops fight with "antiquated weapons, inadequate communications and inconsequential American support."

As General Vang Pao was speaking, Abrams said, "American F-4 Phantom jets roared overhead, several American observation planes were parked nearby and three cargo-laden American transport planes landed in quick succession at his official Sam Thong base. After denying he even received indirect US military support, Vang Pao calmly climbed into an unmarked American helicopter,

guarded by Laotians carrying American-made M-16 automatic rifles, and was flown back to his secret Long Cheng headquarters by a three-man American crew."

Abrams gave some details on the U.S. operation in Laos:

"In addition to 75 military advisers listed as embassy 'attaches', about 300 men are employed in a variety of clandestine military activities supervised by the CIA. Although technically civilians, many CIA agents in Laos are former Special Forces soldiers recruited because of military expertise and Vietnam experience.

"These ex-Green Berets train government troops, assist wide-ranging reconnaissance teams and plan guerilla and psychological warfare operations. They wear combat fatigues and work out of three main camps, where they administer rigorous training in jungle warfare, guerilla tactics, communications handling and weaponry.

"The CIA also maintains and largely controls Vang Pao's army of approximately 15,000 full-time troops. Official instructions to the contrary, CIA personnel occasionally accompany these forces on combat forays. More than 20 agents have been killed in Laos." Total American combat deaths, including pilots shot down during bombing missions, are said to number some 200.

Even the financing for the dirty war in Laos is hidden by Washington through various subterfuges.

"Money for many US operations in Laos is cloaked in the budget of the mammoth Agency for International Development, or channelled through other unobtrusive conduits. The scope of American financial support of the neutralist Royal Lao government testifies to the effectiveness of such cover. Total American assistance here is reliably estimated at between US\$250 million and \$300 million per year. Of that, only the technical aid budget — about \$60 million — is made public. The rest, undisclosed, goes al-

most entirely for military purposes." The *Far Eastern Economic Review* correspondent does not indicate whether this figure includes the cost of the U. S. bombing raids, but presumably it does not.

T. D. Allman, writing in the same issue of the Hongkong weekly, said the U. S. "now flies as many as 20,000 bombing sorties a month in Laos—and they are increasingly directed not just against the Ho Chi Minh trail but against communist settlements and supply routes which previously were spared."

According to Allman, the government "victory" last summer in the Plaine des Jarres did little to offset a general collapse of Prince Souvanna Phouma's administration in wide areas of the country.

"The Plain of Jars . . . is still relatively quiet with CIA-organised Clandestine Army units still holding positions that for five years had been a Pathet Lao heartland. But elsewhere in the country communist terrorists and battalion-sized units have sliced deep into government-held territory, disrupting traffic on the country's main highways and threatening several important towns in central Laos."

The Pathet Lao has for a long time controlled the eastern half of the country all the way from the China border in the north to the Cambodian border in the south. In September, however, U. S.-backed troops attacked the Pathet Lao-held town of Muong in the central province of Savannakhet.

"In reprisal," Allman writes, "North Vietnamese and Pathet Lao forces have driven west: forcing government units from dozens of small outposts, attacking the two important towns of Muong Phalane and Keng Kok, and even shelling the military centre of Seno, only 35 kilometres from the Mekong."

"In less than two months, the government lost most of a province where before it loosely dominated considerably more than half the territory and more than three-quarters of the population." Savannakhet is one of the most populous regions of Laos.

Large areas of the country have newly fallen to the Pathet Lao, all the way to the Mekong River, the western border.

"Thus," Allman writes, "from Sitha-

done province on the Thai-Cambodian border, where communist troops for the first time now have an invulnerable base area, all along the nominally-government-held banks of the Mekong up to the Burmese border, the Royal Lao government finds itself with its overland communications cut, its main towns isolated, and small parties of communist troops able virtually at will to attack a wide variety of targets."

It is to stave off the threatened collapse of its "client" government that Washington has initiated the genocidal bombing of civilians in the Pathet Lao areas. But bombing alone may not save the discredited regime in Vientiane. Both Abrams and Allman suggest that Nixon will find it difficult to keep his puppet in power without committing massive numbers of American combat troops.

"The Americans began the bombing with some hope of keeping the war

from spreading deep into the territory of an increasingly dependent Vientiane government," Allman writes. "But jet bombers cannot stop ambushes; they are of relatively little use even in medium-sized engagements. As a result, American bombs have been able to drive the communists off the Plain of Jars and have constantly harassed traffic along the Ho Chi Minh trail. But nothing the Americans can do, short of moving their own ground troops into Laos, can prevent the communists from disrupting normal commerce and government in the Mekong valley."

There is now "absolute unanimity among all observers, of all persuasions," Allman concludes, "that an end to the Laos war is impossible until after the end of the Vietnam war, whenever that may come, and that the prognosis for Laos in 1970, and indeed for a long time after that, is for more—perhaps much more—of the same."

Lukacs Scores Practices of Stalinism

Georg Lukacs, the celebrated Hungarian philosopher, made a broad attack on Stalinist conservatism in an interview given to *Borba*, the organ of the Yugoslav Communists.

Lukacs called for a "renewal of the bases of Marxist theory," which he said were still suffering from Stalinist distortions.

Lukacs called for applying Marxist principles to international relations. The specific principle he had in mind was "A people which oppresses another cannot be free."

Unless they democratize their societies, Lukacs said, the workers states will be unable to solve their economic problems. He specified that in his own country also, economic reforms cannot succeed "unless they proceed to a renewal of socialist democracy."

One of the main accusations Lukacs made against Stalinism was that it "turned Marxism upside down," transforming tactical considerations into so-called revolutionary strategy. This led to "grotesque" results and a contempt for reality that has still not been overcome.

Lukacs credited Yugoslavia, which is much admired in East Europe, for

standing up to the Kremlin, with paving the way for the establishment of democratic socialism through self-management by the workers in the plants. He praised Tito for being "the first to criticize the Stalinist methods in a practical way."

Despite the importance of Tito's defiance of the Kremlin in 1948, and the role played by the Yugoslavs in beginning the breakup of monolithic Stalinism, Lukacs chose an unfortunate time for lauding Belgrade for "socialist democracy."

In a recent plenum of the Serbian philosophical society, a speaker had this to say about the progress of democratization in Yugoslavia: "The party's words about freedom of self-management are only a façade . . . At bottom, this situation is like that in the Soviet Union between 1935 and 1937, when men were led like lambs to the slaughter."

These remarks referred to the purges of dissident intellectuals that have been in progress in Yugoslavia for some months, resulting in the silencing of a number of relatively independent publications and in jail terms for outspoken journalists.

Nixon's Chemical Warfare in Vietnam

By Gerry Foley

Nixon's announcement November 25, 1969, shortly after the revelations about the Songmy massacre, that the United States would never use bacteriological weapons nor initiate the use of toxic gases does not seem to have won Washington a new humanitarian image.

In fact, this concession may only have succeeded in drawing more attention to the Pentagon's use of "tear gas" and defoliants in Vietnam, which the White House specifically excluded from the ban.

The council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science voted December 30 to condemn the use in Vietnam of two types of defoliants designated by the names 2,4,5-T; and 2,4-D. The resolution cited evidence that the chemicals involved cause deformations of the human embryo.

Concern over the long-range effects of the chemicals being used by the U.S. on a massive scale in Vietnam has been mounting among medical and environmental specialists for some time. Considerable obstacles have been encountered, however, in establishing the facts.

In an article in the January 2 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde*, Jacques Decornoy reviewed the evidence on the consequences of the defoliation.

Laboratory rats and mice, given type 2,4,5-T defoliant in their food, give birth to young with deformed palates and defective livers and kidneys.

The Saigon paper *Tin-Sang* was suspended, Decornoy wrote, for merely raising the question of the long-range effects of the defoliants on vegetation, animal, and human life. A Saigon journalist, quoted in the November 1 issue of the *New Haven Register*, accused the Thieu government of trying to conceal an increasing rate of abnormal births resulting from U.S. chemical warfare.

Representative Richard McCarthy of New York appealed to Nixon in November to stop using potentially dangerous defoliants in Vietnam. At the

same time, McCarthy raised some interesting questions. He asked why the Defense Department had decided to continue to use a chemical in Vietnam that Nixon's scientific adviser Dr. DUBRIDGE had banned from use in the United States. He asked why Washington had done nothing to check out the questions raised by the suppressed journal *Tin-Sang*.

Two American zoologists — G. H. Orians of the University of Washington and E. W. Pfeiffer of the University of Montana — were able to conduct a limited study of some defoliated areas in Vietnam during a two-week period in 1969. They were excluded from the forest and mountain regions but managed to visit some sites north of Saigon and in the Mekong Delta.

Orians and Pfeiffer reported that the localities they observed, which had been defoliated several years previously, were still totally denuded. In areas normally covered with lush mangroves, only the birds who feed on fish seemed to have survived.

Scientists have so far been unable to study the effect of the defoliants on fish, but the appearance of certain symptoms, such as skin blotches, have aroused alarm. Fish is an essential staple in the Vietnamese diet.

Writing in the June 9 and 23 issues of *Scientific Research* Orians and Pfeiffer outlined the use of defoliants. About 50 percent of the defoliants dropped from the air consists of the so-called orange mixture, which is composed of types 2,4-D and 2,4,5-T.

The "white" mixture, which destroys forests, makes up about 35 percent of the defoliants delivered from the air.

According to Decornoy, the effects of the defoliants on Vietnamese soils cannot be studied because these chemicals are used primarily in zones controlled by the National Liberation Front.

A formidable obstacle to researching the impact of chemical warfare in the NLF-held areas is that they are subjected to continual and massive bombardment. The B-52 bombers, which

are mainly used for this, carry out their raids from such a high level that they cannot be seen or heard from the ground. Thus, their high explosives hit without warning.

The bombing has been so intense, Decornoy writes, that "It may now be asked what consequences the air raids carried out mainly by B-52's will have on the agricultural economy. The bombs dropped by these planes blasted out nearly 2,600,000 craters in 1968 alone and they were not the only planes used. Certain districts are so devastated that they can hardly be cultivated any more. Transformed into stagnant pools, these craters teem with mosquitos, increasing the risk of epidemics."

In order to achieve the politically desirable objective of reducing U.S. casualties in Vietnam, Nixon need not de-escalate his use of chemicals and bombs. Unlike foot soldiers, high-flying bombers are relatively invulnerable to small-arms fire and totally beyond the reach of such devices as sharpened stakes coated with water-buffalo dung.

Thus, "Vietnamization," Washington's code word for getting American troops out of the line of fire, may not require any great increase in the effectiveness of the Saigon army. The Pentagon may hope that it can liquidate the Vietnamese revolution by turning a substantial part of the country into an irreclaimable desert and a decisive section of the people into a mass of despondent and dependent refugees.

The U.S. military machine seems specially adapted for just that kind of job — impersonal, mechanical destruction by remote control.

As the Pentagon's perennial cheerleader, columnist Stewart Alsop, wrote in the December 29 issue of *Newsweek*, "American ingenuity has produced all sorts of useful tricks and techniques — Rome plows to make infiltration barriers, miracle rice, the terrifying B-52 strikes, airborne sensors, river patrols, simplified road-building techniques, and so on. This is the sort of thing we Americans are good at."

Support Palestinian Resistance Movement

By Javad Sadeeg

Arab intellectuals in the U. S. voiced support to the Palestine revolution at the annual convention of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates in Detroit December 5-7.

The convention theme was "The Palestine Revolution: Its International, Social and Technical Dimensions."

More than twenty papers were presented for the consideration of the some 200 participants. The papers ranged from "The International Dimensions of the Palestine Revolution," by Professor Hisham Sharabi, to "The Palestine Liberation Movement in the Arts," by the young Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata, and "Law and the Palestine Revolution," by Abdeen Jabara, editor of *Free Palestine*.

Non-Arab speakers also took the floor. Among them, Ania Francos, author of *Les Palestiniens*, and the Pakistani author Ahmad Eqbal received standing ovations.

Tariq Ali, the Trotskyist revolutionist, who was invited to deliver the keynote speech to the convention, was prevented from doing so by the U.S. authorities. In a last minute move, they denied him a visa.

This arrogant racist action of the Nixon administration was condemned by the participants at the convention. They reflected the feelings of the vanguard throughout the Arab world.

Fateh, which is published by the Palestine National Liberation Movement, featured a front-page account of the Tariq Ali case in its December 5 issue:

"Ali's speech was to be on 'The Palestine Revolution and Wars of National Liberation.'

Press Institute Denounces Agnew

U.S. Vice-president Spiro Agnew was cited as "the most serious threat to freedom of information in the free world" in the annual report made to the International Press Institute in Zurich by its chairman, Ernest Meyer. Meyer said that Agnew, in his attacks on the press and his ominous references to the government's power to withdraw broadcasting licenses, was "clearly encouraged by the White House."

"A lawyer for the association said the State Department's action was part of the U.S. administration's efforts to suppress points of view at variance with its policies.

"U.S. officials claimed they were denying the visa to Ali for his prominent participation in an antiwar demonstration Nov. 23 outside the U.S. embassy in London."

However, these and other imperial-

Bolivia

Debray Interviewed on French TV

The first television interview with Régis Debray since his imprisonment in Bolivia in 1967 was broadcast in France December 30. The young French intellectual is serving a thirty-year sentence for allegedly taking part in the guerrilla struggle led by Che Guevara. The January 3 issue of the Paris daily *Le Monde* carried a report of the interview, which had been granted to Bernard Volker and Adolphe Drey in Debray's cell in Camiri on Christmas day.

"I am in a cell from morning to night and from night to morning," Debray said, "and that is all. This is a very small prison, a sort of cave, a bears' den surrounded by barbed wire and guard towers." He told the newsmen that the conditions of his imprisonment had improved somewhat in the preceding two months.

On his hopes for freedom, Debray declared:

"I won't be able to leave as long as this country continues its relations with American imperialism, relations that are very deep. The most reactionary sector of the army, which is holding me, knows perfectly well the meaning of keeping me in prison, inasmuch as in the next coup d'etat they will surely have the opportunity to settle the thing in a more definitive

ist and Zionist acts of intimidation—and they have been many—did not deter the Arab intellectuals in this country from defending the Palestine revolution and, further, taking a principled position in relation to the "third world" revolution.

This was exemplified by Professor Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, president of the association, who declared in his opening speech:

"We stand united with our Black Brothers in the United States, in South Africa, Rhodesia and in Mozambique and Angola; we stand united with the gallant fighters of Vietnam and with all other groups valiantly struggling against all manifestations of human oppression."

way, so that I face all kinds of uncertainties."

Debray commented on General Ovando's recent hints that his case might be reopened. Ovando, he said, "stands between the right and left wings of the apparatus. As long as this contradiction is not resolved, I won't get out."

Debray told Volker and Drey that he did not believe further efforts on his behalf would succeed.

"I am very grateful to the French government for everything it has done," he said, "but it is evident that for many reasons it can do no more. As to my French friends, I also believe that they have done everything they can. I think they have already done a lot, almost too much, and I am not inclined to ask them to do more. I believe that I must return to anonymity, which I should never have left. I do not merit all this commotion, this whole campaign."

Debray called attention to the condition of other political prisoners in Latin America.

"We must concern ourselves with the prisoners in Brazil," he said. "There has been a very remarkable movement of solidarity on my behalf, but I believe that we must think instead of the comrades tortured in Brazil."

Young Guard Socialists Hold Congress

[The following article has been translated from the December 27 issue of the Belgian revolutionary-socialist weekly *La Gauche*.]

* * *

More than a hundred activists participated in the national congress of the JGS [Jeune Garde Socialiste—Socialist Young Guard] which was held in Ghent this weekend [December 20-21]. The majority were university and high-school students but there were also workers from private industry and the public services, as well as young teachers.

There was no more-or-less self-congratulatory juggling of successes against failures. The traditional formulas stressing "the positive" were out. But one elementary necessity was affirmed—the need to achieve the theoretical and organizational means for action. These were some of the aspects of a congress which marked the point of takeoff, a qualitative leap for the JGS.

Two reports were discussed at this meeting—a political report and an organizational report. The latter proposed a new constitution for the movement. The primary objective of both reports was to offer a unified answer to the problems facing activists in the regions where they are established and in the JGS's areas of work—the university, worker, high-school, and anti-imperialist arenas.

The political report sought to show that the different aspects of the same general capitalist reality that we face are tied together by essential common elements. It sought to bring out these elements by analyzing the international context in which Belgian capitalism operates. The report sought to explain what overall goals the bourgeoisie is pursuing even through the many different spheres and manifold aspects of its activity.

At the same time, the political report posed the necessity for revolutionists to respond on the same overall level through varied tactics adjusted to fit specific audiences and re-

gions. It set forth the necessity of revolutionists mounting a general counterattack, a counterattack requiring a unified strategy by the vanguard organization to which all tactics and partial struggles must be subordinated.

Partial struggles acquire meaning and value only as the specific expressions of such a general strategy. Thus, the vanguard refuses to combat any single aspect or component of capitalism in separation from the struggle against capitalism per se.

The JGS rejected once and for all the narrow-minded "realism" that consists of treating every problem separately as it arises, in sovereign disregard for the broad economic, social, and political reality that shapes and determines it. Such "realism" results in an attitude of abdication, of "acting" while "waiting for the revolution."

This abdication may take either a reformist aspect (parliamentary "action" and discreet invocations of our socialist future in Labor Days speeches) or an ultraleft, Mao-spontanéist aspect (repetitious "actions" "in the service of the people" lacking any strategic tie-up, awaiting the Great Day that will inevitably come when the interminable revolutions of the activist prayer wheel reach the celestial number).

The function of the political report was to analyze the present capitalist reality, and propose a strategy and tactics based on it. The report on the new constitution had the aim of providing the organization with a structure enabling it to carry out this policy.

This meant unifying the work of the JGS in different areas into a coherent whole. It meant unifying and centralizing the organization, which will plan this work as well as execute it. Above all, it meant selecting a political and organizational leadership.

The questions of strategy, organization, and leadership obviously could not be solved with the wave of a magic wand. In adopting a political re-

port, in laying out a line of action, in adopting democratic socialist organizational forms, in establishing membership standards, and in electing a political leadership which will guide the overall work of the JGS in all its aspects, the activists present in Ghent realized that they had not solved everything.

The December 1969 congress opened a period of discussion on the central political document which will last a full year. Discussion and political education work will go hand in hand, since many theoretical problems must be dealt with and thoroughly understood by the JGS members before they can fully assume the main obligations of this document.

In February a national conference will discuss tasks and tactics in the movement's arenas of work.

As of now, however, our activity will be based on clear political guidelines. As a result, this activity will serve to test our orientation and to increase understanding of it and the theoretical considerations on which it is based.

Beginning now, confronted by a series of concrete tasks, the leadership team elected by the congress will be obliged to transform itself into a responsible political leadership. The organizational and political framework that the congress established for its functioning will force this.

In the immediate period ahead, the centralization of our work within the context of a political line already assimilated by the JGS activists will give them a new broader understanding and increase their effectiveness, even if we still far from exhaust the potentialities such centralization offers.

The JGS has irrevocably begun the process of building a vanguard youth organization, taking the first step on the road toward building a revolutionary party. The activists who voted almost unanimously for the reports, after discussing them and amending them with a seriousness and self-discipline quite new in the movement, clearly realized this. And because they

lized it, they also voted for the part of the report that defined the JGS as having a Trotskyist line and as a sympathizing organization of the Fourth International.

The revolutionary party must be an international party confronting world capitalism. Setting out on the path to

building such a party brings you toward those who have not merely piously desired an international party but who have concretely tried to construct one.

Drawing the practical conclusions from what was called for in theory, the JGS showed that it had passed

a landmark. Its last links with Social Democracy and centrism have been cut. It has a year to show that it was right in moving forward against the tide of skepticism, dilettantism, and immobilism. As far as we are concerned, we have no doubt that our choice will bring good results.

Soviet Union

'Clinic' to Probe Natalia Gorbanevskaya's Politics

Natalia Gorbanevskaya, who was arrested in Moscow December 24, will reportedly be sent to a psychiatric clinic this month for pretrial examination. The thirty-three-year-old poetess is threatened with confinement in a mental institution, an increasingly common device for disposing of political dissidents without the embarrassment of a public trial.

Mrs. Gorbanevskaya, the mother of two boys, was one of a group who demonstrated in Red Square on August 25, 1968, protesting the invasion of Czechoslovakia. She was one of the thirty-nine signers of an open letter circulated on the eve of Stalin's ninetieth birthday anniversary December 21, 1969, protesting the ouster of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn from the writers' union.

The June 30, 1969, issue of the Underground Soviet periodical *Chronicle of Current Events* carried a description of the treatment of persons declared mentally ill because of their political beliefs. Its account was summarized by Neal Ascherson in the London *Observer* and in the *Washington Post* of January 5.

The *Chronicle* said that a panel of psychiatric experts, called the "Special Diagnosis" department, exists at the Serbsky Institute in Moscow which handles such cases. The panel is headed by Professor D. R. Lunts, chief of the "Political Department" of the Serbsky Institute in the 1950s.

"Experience makes it clear," the *Chronicle* said, "that each decision is taken at the KGB [secret police] level, and Prof. Lunts has only to wrap it up in the form of a medical conclusion."

Recent "patients" include former Ma-

yor General Pyotr G. Grigorenko, former Latvian collective farm chairman Ivan Yakhimovitch, and Ilya Rips, the student who set himself on fire in Riga to protest the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.

The other patients in these special hospitals, according to the *Chronicle*, are those who have "committed serious crimes (brutal murder, rape, thuggery), and are not answerable for their actions as being in a mentally disturbed state, and are therefore exempt from trial."

Political "patients" are kept in the same cells as regular patients. Ascherson quotes from the *Chronicle* on their treatment: the politicals are "subjected

to injections of large doses of aminazin and sulfazin which cause depressive shock reaction and serious physical disorders . . . sometimes sodium aninate, a strong narcotic, is administered by injection to weaken the patient, and after the injection he is interrogated."

According to the *Chronicle*, the hospital staff consists in part of security police with white overalls over their uniforms. Persons who are released from these hospitals are given a special identity card. "Those who persist in refusing to admit they are ill have," it says, "on the whole, hardly any hope of getting out to freedom."

Italian Anarchists Charge Frame-up

At a press conference in Paris January 2, French and Italian anarchist leaders denounced police attempts to pin the blame for the December 12 bombings in Rome and Milan on their cothinkers. They called it a "new Sacco and Vanzetti case."

The conference was organized by the Fédération Anarchiste [Anarchist Federation] and *le Monde Libertaire*, the organization's monthly organ. The speakers were Hemel, the general secretary of the Fédération Anarchiste; Roland Bosdeveix, the organization's secretary of external affairs; Maurice Joyeux, the editor of *le Monde Libertaire*; and Marco Airoidi, a representative of the Libertarian Youth of Milan.

Hemel explained that while anarchists are not opposed to terrorism, it must have a political aim. The Italian bombings made no political sense

from their point of view. "The authors of anarchist attacks, have always openly proclaimed their responsibility for them," Hemel said. "Ravachol mounted the steps of the scaffold singing. An act of terrorism has no meaning unless someone takes credit for it. That is why it is absurd to attribute the anonymous explosions in Rome and Milan, the acts of irresponsible malefactors, to anarchists.

The speakers stressed the lack of solid evidence against Pietro Valpreda and the five Roman anarchists arrested in connection with the bombings. They denounced as arbitrary the arrest of Giuseppe Pinelli, an anarchist activist, who died in a mysterious fall from the fourth floor of police headquarters. "They committed Pinelli's suicide for him," one of the speakers said.

Praise for the Gravedigger of Revolutions

Nhan Dan, the official North Vietnamese government newspaper, carried a front-page editorial December 22 commemorating the ninetieth anniversary of the birth of Stalin. According to a report in the December 23 *Washington Post*, the Vietnamese described the late dictator as "an eminent Marxist-Leninist theoretician, great leader of the Soviet Union and the world Communist movement."

The *Nhan Dan* editorial reportedly said that Stalin was Lenin's "disciple, comrade-in-arms and successor," and that he "waged an unremitting struggle to preserve the purity of Marxism-Leninism and develop its creative power" while opposing "opportunism under all forms."

Nhan Dan urged the "entire Vietnamese party, army and people" to learn from Stalin's "revolutionary spirit."

Even *Pravda*, in its December 21 editorial on Stalin's birth, included criticism of his "unjustified repression" of the Soviet people, although the Soviet CP paper painted a more favorable picture of Stalin than at any time since the Khrushchev revelations in 1956.

It can hardly be supposed that the North Vietnamese leaders are unaware of the truth about Stalin. Lenin, rather than regarding him as his "disciple, comrade-in-arms, and successor," demanded that the party remove Stalin as general secretary. After Lenin's death, Stalin became the spokesman for the privileged bureaucratic caste that suppressed every expression of proletarian democracy in the Soviet Union and murdered virtually all of Lenin's closest collaborators.

Instead of opposing "opportunism under all forms," it was Stalin who made "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism a central tenet of the Communist International in place of Lenin's policy of advancing revolutionary struggles.

The Vietnamese people have had bitter experiences with Stalinism. After World War II, when the French sought to reoccupy Indochina and crush the new Viet Minh regime, the

French Communist party—then, as now, one of the most servilely pro-Moscow CPs in the world—supported the de Gaulle regime against the Vietnamese.

The French CP was, in fact, in the government, and in March 1947 all the Communist cabinet members voted to support the military expedition. Maurice Thorez, then head of the Communist party and a vice-premier, personally signed the military orders. *L'Humanité*, the French CP newspaper, although it formally called for negotiations with Ho Chi Minh's government, declared in the July 24, 1946 issue, that it did not wish to see France reduced to "its own small metropolitan territory . . ."

"Are we," *l'Humanité* added, "after having lost Syria and Lebanon yesterday, to lose Indochina tomorrow, north Africa the day after?"

In 1954, after the French had been decisively defeated at Dienbienphu, Stalin's immediate successors and their Chinese counterparts insisted that the victorious Viet Minh accept the extremely disadvantageous terms proposed by the French and their American allies: that the Viet Minh withdraw north of the seventeenth parallel and turn the south over to the French puppet emperor Bao Dai, thus setting the stage for the present American intervention in support of an "independent" South Vietnamese regime.

Tillman Durdin, writing from Geneva in the July 24, 1954, *New York Times*, said: "Evidence has accumulated here that Viet Minh leaders are not entirely happy about the peace settlement for Vietnam. A number of members of the Vietnam delegation have declared openly that pressure from Chinese Communist Premier Chou En Lai and Soviet Minister Vyacheslav M. Molotov [to this day a die-hard defender of Stalin's record] forced their regime to accept less than it rightfully should have obtained here."

It must be recognized, of course, that the Vietnamese leaders are under heavy pressure from both Moscow and Peking, which control the major sources of arms for the free-

dom fighters in South Vietnam. Neither of the bureaucratic giants would hesitate a moment to cut off even the small flow of aid they have granted the Vietnamese if political concessions were not forthcoming.

The fact that the Hanoi leaders feel it necessary to pay such blackmail (or to hail Stalin for reasons of their own) does not lessen the duty of revolutionists throughout the world to actively demonstrate their solidarity with the Vietnamese revolution and to do everything within their power to force the United States to withdraw all its troops at once from Vietnam.

At the same time, it must be stated that putting Stalin in a place of honor injures the Vietnamese revolution. Stalinism has accurately been described as the syphilis of the labor movement. Millions of people who are opposed to what U.S. imperialism is doing in Vietnam can become uncertain and even more accessible to imperialist propaganda if Hanoi fails to recognize where Stalin stands in informed public opinion internationally today.

Turkish Students Take Over Buses

In a protest action against cancellation of reduced-fare permits, students at Ankara University on January 5 took over more than thirty buses run by the city, according to Associated Press.

The students stopped the buses in various areas and ordered the passengers to get out. Then they took the buses to the university campus and other locations.

For four hours, traffic was paralyzed. The students finally released the buses after a battle with the police in which seven cops were injured. Thirty-four students were arrested.

Passes had previously been issued by the student government. They entitled students to ride at half price and to enter movie theaters at reduced prices.

Ankara municipal authorities claimed that the system had been abused and that persons not enrolled at the university had been getting the passes.

Correction

In the article in our last issue "YSA Convention Registers New Gains," George Fyson was listed (page 5) as being from the Socialist Action League of Australia. That should have been New Zealand.

Peking Agrees to Resume Talks with Washington

By Les Evans

On January 8, Peking agreed to resume the procedure, broken off during the "cultural revolution," of having a Chinese ambassador meet regularly in Warsaw with an American ambassador for talks on subjects of mutual concern to the two governments.

In the United States the press that represents the sector of the capitalist class that has long advocated modifying the State Department policy of not recognizing China is hailing this as an encouraging step. In their opinion it is fresh proof of what they have long contended—Peking will respond if the U. S. drops its long-standing bellicose attitude and seeks normal relations with a government that after all represents one-fourth of the human race.

The talks were broken off by the Chinese on January 8, 1968, as the "cultural revolution" reached a climax and the Maoist faction recalled virtually all its representatives abroad, from workers states as well as from the capitalist countries.

In recent months Peking has begun to reassign ambassadors to embassies in various countries. In Poland, in fact, there is still no Chinese ambassador, and so, instead of an ambassador, Lei Yang, a chargé d'affaires, will hold the first official meeting with U. S. Ambassador Walter J. Stoessel Jr. on January 20.

The reopening of talks could be taken as merely a restoration of the 1968 procedure. But the break was so demonstrative and has lasted so long that new factors, it may well be concluded, are now involved, particularly the tension in Sino-Soviet relations which reached the point of armed conflict before the present Moscow-Peking talks opened.

Washington obviously desires to turn the tension between the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China to account.

Even the preliminaries to the agreement to resume diplomatic contact in Warsaw were drawn out and carefully stage-managed by both sides. The first meeting between Stoessel and Lei

Yang took place December 3 at, of all places, a fashion show at the Yugoslav embassy in Warsaw. This was followed by a meeting at the Chinese embassy December 11 that lasted more than an hour. The agreement was sealed when Lei Yang returned the call on January 8, the second anniversary of the last formal meeting.

Nixon began bidding for the renewal of contacts as long ago as July, when he ordered a relaxation of the total trade embargo Washington has enforced against China since 1950. Businesses were still to be prohibited from importing Chinese goods, but tourists would now be allowed to bring back \$100 worth of goods made in China.

In December the ceiling on tourist purchases was lifted entirely and, more important, foreign subsidiaries of U. S. companies are now permitted to do business with the Chinese. Other gestures included allowing the ban on travel to China to fall into disuse, although the Chinese have permitted few Americans to enter the country. Secretary of State Rogers even hinted at a December 23 news conference that Washington's virulent campaign to keep the People's Republic of China out of the United Nations might be scrapped—some time in the future.

Tad Szulc, writing from Washington in the December 28 *New York Times*, suggested there had been reciprocity from Peking at an early stage of these developments:

"Knowledgeable officials here make clear that the Nixon Administration would not have voluntarily come forth with public concessions to Communist China if it had not received, through diplomatic channels, solid indications of interest, if not actual encouragement, from Peking. Pakistan has helped with these quiet indirect contacts."

Although few American newspapers said so, Nixon's trade "concessions" proved to be advantageous to U. S. businesses abroad. The concessions also helped to remove a major point

of friction between Washington and governments, particularly Ottawa, that maintain trade relations with China. The *Toronto Globe and Mail* discussed these questions in its December 24 issue:

"The ban on trading with China," wrote the paper's Washington correspondent Terrance Wills, "placed by Washington on subsidiaries abroad of U. S. companies, has been a political sore spot and hot potato in Canada for years. . . . The easing of the U. S. restrictions is especially significant for Canada for two reasons: the large percentage of Canadian industry controlled by U. S. companies and citizens, and the current talks between Ottawa and Peking to establish mutual recognition. . . . The Canadian Government has maintained that U. S.-controlled firms on Canadian soil are obliged to follow Canadian laws. The [U. S.] Associated Press took it for granted that these firms followed the U. S. restrictions."

If Nixon's "concessions" to China have been more apparent than real up to now, he made a more tangible gift to Chiang Kai-shek to soothe the generalissimo, who has strong partisans in the U. S. On November 20 Representative Robert L. F. Sikes introduced a bill in Congress to appropriate \$54.5 million in order to present Chiang with a squadron of supermodern Phantom jet fighter-bombers. Fearing the request would be turned down, the administration had eighteen of the slightly less sophisticated F-104 Starfighter jets declared "excess," and will turn them over to the Taiwan dictator. The decision was made public January 9, one day after the announcement that the Warsaw contacts would be resumed.

Nixon has thus expended considerable effort to reopen a direct pipeline to the regime in Peking. What does American imperialism hope to get out of it? For the most part the press has talked about "normalization"

of relations, a lowering of world tensions, the virtues of civilized discussion, etc. A more candid hope was expressed editorially by the *New York Times* December 16, when it appeared that the resumption of talks might still be a distant objective.

"The Nixon Administration," the *Times* said, "can calculate that an easing of tensions with Mao Tse-tung's regime could have positive resonance in Hanoi that might help break the impasse in Paris."

Nixon was vice-president under Eisenhower when the Geneva Agreements were concluded in 1954. At that time the Maoists joined with the Soviet government in pressuring the Vietnamese to accept the settlement cooked up by the Americans and the French that led to the division of Vietnam. Nixon may calculate that the deterioration of Chinese-Soviet relations makes it easier to persuade the Peking government to play a similar role today.

The Kremlin bureaucrats have virtually accused Peking of preparing a military alliance with Washington against Moscow. The January 9 issue of *Izvestia* ran the report of the U. S.-China agreement side-by-side with an attack on the "anti-Soviet slander" of the Maoists. Readers were clearly supposed to conclude that the Maoists were friendlier toward American imperialism than toward the Soviet workers state.

This is virtually pure and unadulterated cynicism. One of the main charges leveled at Moscow by Peking in the Sino-Soviet dispute is that Khrushchev, Brezhnev, and Kosygin have sought to make a deal with U. S. imperialism at the expense of China. Among the proofs were such items as Moscow's agreement to join Washington in attempting to block other countries from developing nuclear weapons, an agreement aimed at China in particular. Now Brezhnev and Kosygin are attempting a "tit for tat" response by clamoring about Mao's agreement to resume talks with Washington at the ambassadorial level. If conducting diplomatic talks with imperialist governments constituted sufficient proof of capitulation to the foe, what would Moscow's record and current practice in this field show?

Moscow's attempt to make propaganda out of Peking's diplomatic shift is all the more ridiculous in face of

the evident irritation in the Kremlin over Nixon's efforts to play both sides of the street.

Harrison Salisbury writing in the January 11 *New York Times* quoted an unnamed Soviet diplomat who asked: "At the very moment when the Americans are trying to work out some agreement with us on SALT [the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks] and at the very time when Washington knows how difficult our relations are with China the State Department has deliberately started talks with Peking—now is this a friendly act?"

The Kremlin bureaucrats, of course, are hardly in a position to criticize the Chinese for collaborating with imperialism. It was Stalin who instituted the policy of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism, of which the SALT talks are only the latest expression.

But the Maoists also, despite their revolutionary rhetoric, profess adherence to the principles of "peaceful co-

existence" with imperialism. There is nothing wrong with a workers state maintaining diplomatic or trade relations with a capitalist country. But in Stalinist practice "peaceful coexistence" has meant making political concessions to imperialism at the expense of the class struggle.

As long as the Moscow-Peking talks remain shrouded in secrecy, it will be difficult to clearly estimate the issues in dispute or the irreconcilability of the two positions. But both sides have in the past put their own factional interests ahead of solidarity with revolutionary movements around the world—particularly the Vietnamese revolution, which has received meager aid in comparison to the imperialist commitment in the south.

Moscow has long sought to use its ties to American imperialism to further isolate Peking. It would be no less reprehensible if Peking should decide to play the same game.

New Vietnam Atrocities

Korean Mercenaries Murder Hundreds

Terry Rambo, the former head of a team doing research for the Defense Department in Vietnam, told the press in Washington January 9 that his group had uncovered evidence in 1966 that Korean troops were systematically massacring Vietnamese villagers.

"Our interviewers started to turn up what I can only call atrocities by Korean soldiers," Rambo said. "The principal kind of thing was when Korean troops passed a village and received sniper fire. They would stop and pull out people at random and shoot them in retaliation."

"For the Koreans," Rambo said, "this was a deliberate, systematic policy." Rambo claimed that the U. S. military authorities had quashed the reports of Korean atrocities.

Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird responded to Rambo's disclosures by claiming that the 50,000 Korean troops in Vietnam are not under American command. The United States government, however, foots the

entire bill for the Korean operations, including paying the troops wages thirty-eight times what they would receive at home.

The new atrocity scandals caught the Saigon regime out on a limb again. After the Thieu government gave up its original claim that the reports of the Songmy massacre were "totally false," the buck was passed to the Saigon senate. It was hoped, presumably, that some show of "democratic debate" on the atrocities would help overcome the effect of the denial of the Songmy massacre, which made the regime look like an overeager stooge of the American military.

The senate adopted a resolution January 5, admitting the massacre without calling it that. But the resolution described it as "an isolated act by an American unit and not the policy of the United States armed forces."

Only a few days afterward, Rambo disclosed that mass executions of "hundreds" of Vietnamese villagers was a "deliberate, systematic policy" of the U. S.-paid Korean mercenaries.

Nine Months of the Caldera Regime

By Luis David

Caracas

The last days of 1969 offer a convenient opportunity to review the general situation in Venezuela after nine months of the Christian Democratic regime headed by Dr. Rafael Caldera.

Coming to power on the basis of about a third of the vote in the December 1968 elections, COPEI [Comité Organizado por Elecciones Independientes — Committee for Independent Political Action, the Christian Democratic party] sowed many illusions among the people because of its slogan—"change."

Indeed, when the new government was installed last March, even many who did not vote for the Christian Democrats hoped that the movement would entail a small revolution, inasmuch as Caldera and his people had promised sweeping changes in the economic, political, and social life of the country.

Since no one has seen any changes anywhere (and nine months is long enough for them to appear), one wonders why not even the tiniest part of a program as detailed and, in some respects, radical, as that offered by the Christian Democrats has been realized.

For if there has been any change, it has been of a negative sort, that is, from bad to worse. Prices have gone up, especially for consumer goods. The value of the bolivar has declined with the upsurge of a new inflationary process, which the spokesmen of the bourgeoisie are afraid to call by its right name.

Unemployment is growing by leaps and bounds, without any restraint. No governmental action on behalf of the dispossessed classes has been perceptible, although there has been no lack of appeals. And, finally, the country has undergone a wave of strikes and agitation the like of which has not been seen in Venezuela for many years.

In the ten years it exercised power, AD [AD—Acción Democrática—Democratic Action, an old anti-imperialist party turned reactionary] was, to be



CALDERA: Has done little in office to gain popularity beyond playing a cool, sound game of dominoes.

sure, more fortunate than COPEI has been. It was only at the end of the Betancourt-Leoni period that Acción Democrática found itself in a minority in parliament. But that has been the rule for the Copeyanos.

Up until the dissension in its ranks, which developed at the end of 1967, and the resulting formation of the new party called the MEP [Movimiento Electoral del Pueblo—People's Electoral Action Movement, led by Luis Beltrán Prieto and Jesús Paz Galarra-ga], AD had bureaucratically controlled the majority of the Venezuelan trade unions. COPEI has always been a minority force in the union movement.

From the beginning, the new regime could have made some demagogic gestures that would have fitted in well with the style of its election campaign,

like cutting the prices of staples and taking some measures to alleviate the housing shortage. (As far as its gestures go, the new government confined itself to changing the name of the political police and flooding the papers, radio, and television with official propaganda.)

Why did the government not take even these timid measures? Because its commitments to the wealthy classes prevented it. Up to now, Caldera's achievements in the areas of agrarian reform, low-income housing, and defending the consumer have been inferior to Leoni's, for example. The fact is that the origins of these two parties cannot be forgotten.

Acción Democrática emerged in 1941 as a populist party, stealing all the Communist party's thunder, since the CP had dedicated itself to defending the Western democracies against Nazism and that alone. In fact, the ex-Communist leader Pedro Duno, who was expelled from the party, harshly criticized this attitude of the CP in his recent book. He repeated what Fidel Castro had said before—the PCV [Partido Comunista Venezolano—Venezuelan Communist party] betrayed the revolution.

On the other hand, COPEI was formed in 1946 primarily to oppose the popular measures taken by Acción Democrática when it came to power for the first time thanks to a military coup d'etat. When it took over, AD lowered rents and the cost of electricity and food, as well as doubling the salaries of teachers and forcing the oil companies to disgorge half their profits.

COPEI was the political formula that national and international reaction found to pit against the popular upheaval that impelled AD in its first assault on power, which the conservatives considered a revolution. It was not for nothing that the main base of mass support that COPEI had was among the illiterate peasants of the three Andean states who were blinded by means of religious fanaticism.

Today the Catholic church itself has renounced some of the obscurantism that it practiced thirty years ago. Youth, inspired by Social Christian ideas, have been welcomed into the ranks of COPEI. While these ideas are reactionary in the last analysis, they are not the same ultramontane notions that gave birth to this party.

In contrast, Acción Democrática has lost the majority of its youth, first with the exodus of those who formed the MIR early in the 1960s and later of those who constituted the MEP.

But both Acción Democrática and COPEI, after governing jointly under the Betancourt administration, ended up in the same place. Today they are the two bulwarks of imperialism in Venezuela, the twin defenders of national high finance.

The only difference is that Acción Democrática defends these interests through its own people, perhaps in order not to lose its ascendancy over its membership, which is still numerous throughout the country.

COPEI has been franker, on the other hand, and included well-known representatives of the two influential financial groups in its slates of candidates. Thus, such personalities have received nearly a quarter of the seats won under COPEI's banner. To cite only one case, the secretary of the treasury in the present government is



LEONI: During his years as president was much appreciated in Wall Street circles for his skillful handling of problems connected with Venezuela's natural resources, particularly oil.

a banker who in all justice would not be out of place in Nixon's cabinet.

Due to its precarious position in parliament, the Social Christian government has found itself obliged to enter into pacts with the smaller organizations in the opposition, pacts that have faded away with the passing of the momentary crises.

But the force of circumstances has operated as many foresaw. The parties with the greatest interest in preserving the status quo are Acción Democrática and COPEI, each hoping to elect Caldera's successor. Recently, events have occurred that suggest the existence of a general understanding between these two parties on "saving democracy"—democracy being rather tarnished in the eyes of the masses.

Not long ago, Dr. Juan Pablo Pérez Alfonzo, the architect of Acción Democrática's oil policy, made public his warnings against increasing oil production. In his judgment, this could cause a drop in petroleum prices, rapid exhaustion of the reserves, and greater dependence of the country and its development on a single product whose supply naturally is not unlimited. He noted, however, that his position was not that of his party.

Pérez Alfonzo knew that on this question, too, which is fundamental for the Venezuelan economy, there are many points of convergence between the AD and COPEI leaderships in their compliant attitudes toward American imperialism.

Likewise in the field of labor there is a common interest between the two parties in halting the advancing strike wave. First there was the general strike of the teachers, who were demanding salary increases. The government had to meet a good part of these demands.

Up until just yesterday there was no sign of a solution in the already prolonged and violent "wildcat" strike of the workers in the state steel company in Venezuelan Guyana. The strikers' demands were directed against the high cost of living in the region in which they work and their abysmal living conditions. It can be said that in this strike the workers were defeated by management and the government.

Although the oil workers enjoy advantages denied to the other workers in the country, they did not want to approve their new contract unless it contained clauses guaranteeing job security. At the last national convention

of the oil workers union, the MEP leaders ousted the Acción Democrática officials from leading positions—which they have held for decades.

In view of the rising cost of living and the fact that the struggle among the parties for control of the unions



GUSTAVO MACHADO MORALES: One of the fabulous brothers from a wealthy but proud family who founded the Venezuelan Communist party. Seized in a nationwide witch-hunt, he was held in prison from 1963 to 1968. Upon release, he still favored wheeling and dealing with capitalist parties in the electoral game. Likes his glasses gold-rimmed and his brandy neat.

is making it difficult to suppress the aspirations of the workers, the bourgeoisie fears that its "labor peace" is threatened.

In practice, wages have been frozen for several years. And some industries, like the textile industry which employs mainly women, as well as banking and commercial establishments, pay only starvation wages.

Such an outstanding representative of the financial oligarchy as the present minister of the treasury has warned against wage rises out of fear of inflation, which has already begun. He warned also against any increase in the cost of the government bureaucracy.

But the government has not paid any attention to the latter warning because there are innumerable COPEI activists seeking official posts. And

with the recent approval of the budget for 1970 (more than \$2,000,000,000), everything indicates that the political patronage system established by AD in its final year in office is going to be maintained for the remaining four years of Dr. Caldera's government.

In fact, the Social Christians have justified the inaction of their regime in its first nine months with the claim that AD left nothing in the treasury but debts. Nevertheless, in approving the 1970 budget, both parties assumed joint responsibility for continuing to increase the country's domestic and foreign debt. The amount of money paid out in interest could easily finance the construction and consolidation of basic industries to develop the country.

In view of the ever more urgent material difficulties facing the Venezuelan people, it does not require any great perceptivity to say that strikes are going to increase in number and importance. Nor does it require any special vision to see that general discontent is brewing among the uncounted multitudes of the unemployed and among the marginal populations of the shantytowns surrounding the country's big cities. This will inevitably boil over.

When this happens, it will be the end of the hypocritical policy of "pacification" which the eulogists of the regime are trumpeting from every microphone in the nation.

The "pacification," which has consisted of releasing many of those imprisoned by Acción Democrática, plus others imprisoned by COPEI on an equally broad scale, has coincided with fierce repression directed first against the striking teachers, then against the university students, and later against the steelworkers in Orinoco. At the same time there has been no letup in the repression against those accused of complicity with the guerrillas.

Unlike his predecessors in the post, the present minister of defense is a little loose-tongued. On two successive occasions, he has thrown a scare into the political parties by statements assigning the army an excessive independence from the civil government.

For ten years it has been well known that some army officers lean toward AD and that others favor COPEI. Those who showed sympathies for the left parties (and who became known during the Carúpano and Puerto Ca-

bello uprisings) were weeded out of the army under the Betancourt government. Of course, the majority of the officers do not commit themselves politically.

But it is unrealistic to harbor illusions about a supposed "Nasserite" mentality on the part of the Venezuelan officers. They enjoy many privileges, their training is too Prussian, and they are kept under too strict surveillance by both the Venezuelan and American intelligence services.

The ranks of the army are another matter. Their discipline goes no deeper than the formal veneer any soldier acquires. But it is well known that the ranks become politically conscious only at times of great revolutionary upheavals which are powerful enough to be heard through the barracks walls.

The problem that can be anticipated in the approaching struggles is the same as that holding for Latin America as a whole since imperialism made its presence felt in these countries—the absence of revolutionary organizations and leaderships.

If it is true that all of the parties are suffering from tremendous internal crises (crises exist in AD and in the MEP, and COPEI's assemblies have been the scene of real battles), it is no less true that the prestige of all political organizations in Venezuela is literally at rock bottom.

The people have been lied to so much from both the left and the right, that their faith in the politicians, parliament, the government, and the courts is no more than these corrupt institutions and groups deserve.

Didn't ex-dictator Pérez Jiménez's movement surprise every one a year ago by receiving 400,000 votes precisely because it presented itself as the enemy of the parties? But Pérez Jiménez is undergoing the same loss of prestige as the other political leaders. Perhaps the most positive development in 1969 was the rejection by the masses of all the familiar leaders.

On the left, it is enough to say that PRIN [Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista—Revolutionary party of the Nationalist Left] has disappeared from the scene and that the MIR [Movimiento de la Izquierda Revolucionaria—Movement of the Revolutionary Left] is going through such a devastating process of internal questioning that no leader has been spared

from accusations of treachery and incompetence.

In reality, the MIR has been reduced to its hard core, and what was supposed to be self-criticism has turned into self-destruction.

The Communist party likewise has found itself unable to mobilize its energies for anything except internal wrangling. A young Communist leader, Teodoro Petkoff, published a book quite recently opposing his party's official approval of the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. His stand has been answered (if they haven't expelled him yet, it must be because they want to cut down his influence over the CP membership first) by the luminaries who determine the destinies of the PCV.

These leading lights include the Machado brothers, who really belong to the world of fiction; the scholastics Pompeyo Márquez and García Ponce; the lawyer Pedro Ortega Díaz, who, as the PCV's educational director, maintained that the party's struggle should be directed against American imperialism and some Venezuelan groups in its service and not against capitalism in general or European imperialism; and the veteran trade unionist, Jesús Faria, who responded to an article by Domingo Alberto Rangel recognizing the advances of Trotskyism in the world with the assertion that Trotsky was an agent of imperialism and with other fabrications cooked up by Stalin which not even the worst Stalinists dare repeat today anywhere else in the world.

If a capable revolutionary vanguard is not soon organized, the approaching social upheavals will be dissipated, owing to lack of leadership, and these thrusts will be supplanted by a counterthrust of government repression.

There is no organization today that can take the lead on a mass scale. The guerrillas are weaker today than before and all their activity has been concentrated in a few ambushes. Their essential weakness is that they are far from the cities, where the contradictions are seething.

December 26, 1969.

Prisoners Murdered in South Africa

Mary Benson, an exiled South African journalist, told a working group of the United Nations Human Rights Commission January 8 that the Vorster regime recently murdered eleven African prisoners and has given "cruel and horrible" treatment to twenty-two persons arrested in May and June 1969.

Bombings Fail to Stem Labor Upsurge

[A bomb was set off in the lobby of the Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura in Milan December 12, killing fourteen persons and wounding a hundred. In Rome, on the same day, a powerful bomb exploded in the Banca Nazionale del Lavoro on the busy Via Veneto, but without causing any deaths. Two other bombs likewise were set off the same day at the monument to the unknown soldier.

[The perpetrators of the bombings were obviously highly skilled; and their intent was just as obviously to kill as many people as possible.

[Immediately following the explosions, well-organized groups of fascists circulated through downtown Rome, distributing leaflets calling on the armed forces to "restore order" and shouting slogans against the "reds" and "terrorism." The leaflets announced a mass meeting to be addressed by Giorgio Almirante, the leader of the main fascist organization, the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano—Italian Social Movement). The meeting was attended by fascists from all over the country and was played up as a sort of "march on Rome."

[The police, however, attributed the bombings to the revolutionary left. The publisher Feltrinelli was threatened with indictment for publishing "anarchist" writings. Five members of the March 22 Movement were arrested and charged with the bombings. One of the five—Giuseppe Pinelli—was reported by the police to have "committed suicide" by jumping out of a window on the fourth floor of police headquarters three days after being arrested. The police version of the "suicide" was met with considerable reserve in the press.

[The Paris daily *Le Monde* wrote December 14: "It is hard to see, after all, how and why the little extremist groups of 'leftists' could carry out such attacks. To be sure, they continually preach the most extreme violence in their journals. But is their organization highly enough developed to plan events like those in Milan? It is dubious."

[The bombings came in a climate

of mounting political tension. Shortly before this, Greek exiles made some documents public, which, if genuine, would prove that the Athens regime was helping reactionary army and governmental circles in Italy to prepare a coup d'etat. In Milan, November 21, fascists turned the funeral of the policeman Annarumma, who was killed in a clash with demonstrators, into an anti-Communist pogrom.

[On December 1, Francesco Tolin, the editor of the left-wing journal *Potere Operaio* (Workers Power), was sentenced to a year and a half in prison for "advocating revolution."

[The following article commenting on the Rome and Milan bombings is scheduled for publication in *Bandiera Rossa*, the organ of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (Revolutionary Communist Groups), the Italian section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

The dramatic events in Milan and the outcome of the main workers' struggles during the fall raise a question that must be answered now. Is the Italian situation shifting in trend, and if so, in what direction? What are the current tasks of the workers movement and in particular of its revolutionary-left vanguard?

We have given a detailed analysis elsewhere of the contracts won by the metalworkers. Here we will note only that this vast and impetuous struggle revealed the enormous fighting capacity of the masses and an unprecedented anticapitalist and antibureaucratic dynamic.

In the course of the struggle, the relationship of forces shifted clearly in favor of the working class. This was expressed concretely, above all, in a very different atmosphere in the plants.

The results of the contract negotiations were in various respects below the expectations of the workers, particularly those in the most advanced sectors. Nonetheless, the concessions the bosses were forced to make were unquestionably major ones.

And more importantly, the working class came out of the battle not only with a heightened consciousness of its own strength but also with a clearer understanding of the profitability of adopting more advanced objectives and more resolute methods of struggle.

All this indicates that the preconditions exist for new upsurges, even in the relatively near future in the event of struggles for equal wage increases for all, or for more general objectives such as battles against rent gouging and higher prices.

The bourgeoisie as a whole is perfectly aware of this trend in the relationship of forces, which is accentuated by the crisis of political leadership (the impossibility of reconstituting the four-party coalition* or of launching another well-balanced formula after the Socialist party split, the breakup of the rightist faction, and the further attrition of the Christian Democrat leading group).

Therefore, the bourgeoisie's main centers of decision-making have acted with notable caution, giving ground when they had to (this was admitted, for example, in Costa's letter to Rumor) and rejecting adventurist proposals for a reactionary coup d'etat.

But for the same reason the bourgeoisie has attempted obstinately, and without any great fastidiousness, to exploit tragic incidents like the death of the policeman Annarumma, and still more, the slaughter in Milan. As of this writing, we lack the information to come to any definite conclusions about this second episode. The least that can be said is that the many obscure aspects justify the deepest suspicion.

But the way the bourgeoisie have been attempting to use this incident is absolutely clear. They have very

* The original center-left government included the Christian Democrats, Socialists, Democratic Socialists, and Republicans in a coalition. The two Socialist groups later merged, but split again after the united party suffered a disastrous defeat in the most recent legislative elections.

definite aims, which, moreover, have been explicitly stated. Essentially, they have tried to take advantage of the horror aroused by the massacre to reverse the leftward trend, to halt and drive back the rising mass movement, to stir up a witch-hunt against the vanguard and set in motion a reactionary backlash in the most timid and wavering petty-bourgeois sectors.

Now, a couple of weeks after the explosion in the Banca Nazionale dell'Agricoltura, it can be said that the most ambitious objectives of this political operation have not been realized. It is significant first of all that big new strikes took place in the week immediately following the bombing without the slightest letup. And the metalworkers' campaign itself was carried through to the achievement of objectives similar to those won in the public sector (furthermore, other struggles like that of the trolley car workers are continuing unhesitatingly so far).

Secondly, the attempt to put the blame for the Milan and Rome events on the left has not succeeded. Very few by now have the nerve to defend such a supposition. Most prefer to fall back on a more general proposition that the tragic event of December 12 was objectively the consequence of the climate of tension reigning in the country and that the left, and the revolutionary left, in particular, was responsible for this.

Thirdly, the fervent appeal for unity, in the face of a threat to the country, fell flat and dissension on the bourgeois front was neither overcome nor reduced.

Finally, despite the climate of the first few days—the propaganda build-up for certain repressive actions, and the exhortations from on high—the revolutionary left did not become the object of public execration. Rather the left enjoyed quite extensive solidarity. (It was symptomatic that the Communist party did not imitate the reactionary attitude adopted by its French counterpart in June 1968 at the time the Trotskyist, Maoist, and anarchist organizations were outlawed.)

All this, in the last analysis, confirms the fact that the 1968 and 1969 developments have profoundly shaken all of Italian society, considerably changed the relationship of forces, and created a truly new situation. Infamous machinations and scaremonger-

ing are not enough to reverse the trend.

It would, however, be dangerous to fall into the error of underestimating what has happened and the consequences that can flow from it in the more or less near future. The tendencies toward a military coup d'etat, or something like it, did not make much headway and it is improbable that things will change in the coming months.

But this does not rule out a more subtle maneuver to bring about a less tumultuous but no less substantial shift to the right in order to counterbalance the previous tilt in the opposite direction, taking advantage in particular of the reactions in some petty-bourgeois sectors.

Despite the persistent difficulties, the bourgeoisie's primary objective is a center-left government—in one or another variant—which would have a less precarious appearance than the present one-party cabinet. Such a government would reestablish a certain "normality," maneuver to head off new waves of struggles, and carry out a few reforms mainly for window dressing.

Its objective would be to win credibility and establish the kind of relationship with the unions that would permit the union leaders, with the greater strength they have drawn from the new contracts and the adoption of the new labor law, to fulfill their bureaucratic role without having to ride the tiger as they did in the "hot fall."

In other words, the new government would endeavor to return, insofar as possible, to the situation existing at the end of 1967, before the big upsurge of the student movement ushered in the new phase of political struggle in Italy.

One of the prerequisites for this operation would naturally be repression directed selectively against the extreme left, which has already been hit. In the aftermath of the Milan bombing, almost all sectors of the extreme left suffered blows, although of varying severity.

A magistrate has declared that no new laws are necessary for a repressive move of this kind. We concur totally, because the laws in force are still fundamentally the ones the fascists put on the books; they can be used against anyone with extreme facility (in accordance with many articles of the fascist legal code, complaints could

be sworn out every day even against the moderate *Unità* [the Communist party organ]). That this danger is by no means imaginary is shown by the scandalous sentences handed down just recently against Tolin, Dinucci, and Maffi.

It is on the basis of this analysis of the situation and the tendencies within it that we must define our perspectives and our line of action. Our primary, fundamental objective must be to prevent the development of stagnation; or, worse, an ebb in the mass movement. It is clear to all that if that happened, the situation would become truly dangerous and that what has been impossible for the ruling class up to now would then become possible.

Concretely, this means that we must begin as of now to create the preconditions for a rapid resurgence of the workers struggles. This is not an unrealistic objective, since, as we have said, the masses came out of the struggles just concluded, by no means demoralized, and urgent problems are still on the agenda both at the sectoral and national levels.

Revolutionists must begin preparing immediately for the struggle for equal raises for all, singling out objectives more suited to the aspirations of the workers, and filling the voids that exist in the national contract negotiations.

Revolutionists must at the same time be able to put forward clear and consistent positions on problems like housing and prices, which the unions' attention will center on in the coming months. No one can doubt the timeliness of these issues (for our part, we have already made an effort to develop a program on these questions in various caucuses, and we will try to clarify our positions in the next few weeks).

Thirdly, revolutionists must work to keep the newly created relationship of forces from proving short-lived, to develop its potential concretely, and to consolidate it. Our fundamental concern in this area must be to utilize to the utmost forms of workers democracy and workers control which, although embryonic, have emerged in recent months, especially in some big plants (shop delegates, councils of delegates, and so on).

It is precisely here that it will be possible at the same time to advance transitional demands capable of mo-

bilizing the masses in struggles with an anticapitalist dynamic and prevent the great energies released in recent years from being bottled up in the bureaucratized trade-union structures.

Facing repression, the revolutionary left must understand thoroughly that it needs to put all sectarianism aside and present a united front against the insidious and bullying tactics of the class enemy. And it is not only among all the extreme left movements—spontanéists, Maoists, Trotskyists, etc.—

that a united front must be established. The unions and the traditional workers parties must be made to face up to their responsibility.

All these groups, moreover, have a common interest in united-front action. In this delicate phase of its growth, the extreme left cannot ignore the importance of avoiding confronting the developing offensive single-handedly. For their part, the traditional parties, and first of all the Communist party, cannot overlook the fact that if the

repression against the extreme left succeeds, their turn will come very quickly (and then they would have to defend themselves in much more difficult conditions than at present).

What the revolutionary left requires is a clear understanding of the necessity for a more comprehensive and energetic policy. The day of confrontation, of more or less spontaneous rebellion, of detonators is over. Our responsibilities are infinitely graver. The coming period will be a severe test for all.

Shoot at Prisoners' Wives, Children

Knives, Sticks Used on Lecumberri Hunger Strikers

Mexico City

The high morale of the political prisoners on hunger strike since December 10 (!) and the many signs of support they have received make the Mexican authorities visibly nervous and eager to find a desperate solution to evade the responsibility for unconstitutionally holding without trial the students, teachers and workers allegedly responsible for the student movement of 1968 that culminated with the famous Tlatelolco Massacre of October 2, 1968.

Apparently, one solution was to finish off as many of these bothersome individuals as possible at the hands of common criminals and then to construe it as a lamentable jail riot and internal fight among inmates. And who was chosen to touch off the incident: no less than the children and wives of the political prisoners themselves!

They were leaving the cells of their husbands between 6:30 p.m. and 6:45 on New Year's Day. Officially the visit ended at 6:00 p.m., but it has become the custom to leave somewhat later to avoid the sometimes hour-long wait in line to file painfully and slowly out of the prison with children whining, and nervous tension mounting.

Up to now there had never been any pressure by the supervising personnel to impose an exact time for leaving. However, yesterday, all those leaving late, mostly wives and children of the

political prisoners, found themselves before closed doors.

They demanded to be let out, but only encountered cynical answers, and discovered after an hour and a quarter's wait, that the door behind them was also locked, so that they stood in a walled-in hallway, about ten meters wide, no roof, while in front and in back were locked iron gates, about fifty meters apart.

Their children became frantic; they had not eaten for eight or ten hours, because since the hunger strike started, no food is taken into the galleries [wards] any more by anyone.

The women shouted and rattled at the iron gates, and this noise penetrated into the nearby galleries where soon the prisoners knew that their relatives were still being held. By now it was ten minutes to nine, and of course, completely dark except for the prison lights. These permitted some women to see the following:

Around a hallway that connects all galleries some inmates of the political gallery "M" were approaching to see what was going on with their families, for many surprises, although of less dimensions, have occurred before. They had managed to open their gallery gate.

At that very moment, the women saw how the subdirector of the Lecumberri jail, Major Bernardo Palacios, personally opened the gate of Gallery "F" where common prisoners, mostly drug addicts, are held. And

the surprising detail: These common prisoners were already armed with sticks, pipes, and knives, and ran like wild beasts toward the political prisoners.

These tried to calm them, telling them that they should not pay attention to the jail authorities, that were inciting them at this moment to fight; that the political prisoners had nothing against them; and that the inmates of "F" had nothing to do with what was going on.

However, all was in vain. The more or less 250 common prisoners attacked mercilessly the weakened (by the hunger strike) and unarmed political prisoners, who were aided soon by the inmates of the two other political prisoners' galleries, who altogether, however, did not even equal in number half the common prisoners.

The political prisoners tried to flee into the nearest gallery, which was the "N" of the political prisoners, which was then used as a welcome opportunity by the common prisoners, apparently also now joined by inmates of other galleries, to raid the almost abandoned "M" gallery and take absolutely everything they found there.

That, of course, was not seen by the women, because they were by that time flat on the ground, protecting with their bodies their children, for a general shooting from the roofs and walls had started—against the women

and children, not the prisoners.

Bullets criss-crossed the narrow hallway, almost hitting them, but so far there is no report of wounded women or children. Perhaps that can be attributed to the fact that police guards were among them, and if they had shot directly to kill, the policemen would have perished, too.

After having been under fire for about ten minutes, they were rushed out of jail. Meanwhile, inside, the ferocious fight continued, and a general looting with the connivance of the jail authorities took place.

Even cots were carried out of the cells! Nothing, but nothing is left, according to the wife of the writer José Revueltas, who was let in "by mistake" early the following day. Her husband (fifty-six years old and diabetic, he also participates in the hunger strike, never once having lost his sense of humor) even had to watch as they walked out with his desk, books, manuscripts and blankets, all the things that mean so much in a place like that, and that cost inconceivable effort to bring in because even to receive permission to introduce something as simple and necessary as a cot, countless trips have to be made in order to persuade the authorities to let it in.

So last night, the cold Mexican high-altitude night saw around 100 political prisoners with their bones sticking out already, sleeping, huddled together probably, on the cold cement floor without anything to cover them, except maybe, some newspapers the raiders may have disdained.

The sad part is, that in the same fashion many Mexicans sleep daily, and it may have reminded the political prisoners how necessary their fight and that of all the Mexican people is.

This morning, January 2, about 100 wives, mothers or sisters congregated in front of Lecumberri jail in order to enter and see how their prisoners were. Most of them have so-called defendant's certificates, given to family members of the defendants by their lawyers. These permit them to see the accused two hours in the morning.

But this day, no one was let in, except, as already mentioned, the wife of the writer José Revueltas, who had

come very early before the order not to let in anyone had gone into effect.

Immediately, the different lawyers were called. They were also denied entrance. About four hours later, they and some journalists and some women were granted an interview with the director of the jail, General Andrés Puentes Vargas. He gave them an official statement which blamed it all on the recalcitrant visitors, and gave a list of fifteen political prisoners that are under treatment in the hospital of the jail together with six common prisoners. He admitted that there were many others with contusions and possible fractures, but that they were in their gallery.

Jestingly he admitted that the gate of the "F" gallery had been opened, adding that everyone should feel very happy that he ordered that, because

Mexico

Why They Called a Hunger Strike

According to an account carried by the Paris daily *Le Monde*, the attack on the political prisoners in Lecumberri prison during the night of January 1 was led by General Andrés Puentes Vargas, the director of this notorious Mexico City prison.

Le Monde said that at least ten political prisoners were wounded and that four were in critical condition. Moreover, the attackers were still wandering through the prison the next day, carrying knives and steel bars.

At the time of the attack, eighty-seven prisoners, the overwhelming majority of the political detainees, had been on a hunger strike for twenty-four days. They were protesting over being held longer than the constitutional limit without a trial and over the fact that the courts failed to observe the minimum norms in hearing evidence in their cases.

Previous to the January 1 attack, the prisoners had been subjected to a variety of threats in an attempt to force them to abandon their protest, including the use of riot policemen against them.

Following this pogrom, the prison administration sent out a press release blaming the political prisoners for the violence.

if he had let loose the guards, the results would have been much worse.

Evaluating all the evidence, one must come to the following conclusion:

The entire incident had been staged as a coarse provocation to make the political prisoners fight, with possible physical elimination of some, in order to break the strength of those participating in the hunger strike.

As a side product it could be "proven" that the political prisoners are really hoodlums attacking peaceful common prisoners, and that therefore holding them and using repressive measures against them are fully justified. Moreover, society has to be protected from these dangerous elements and it would be gross irresponsibility to give them the freedom they hope to attain through their hunger strike.

January 2, 1970.

Prior to the attack, the prisoners had called for worldwide protests in solidarity with them on January 10 to mark the completion of one month of the hunger strike. It is not yet known whether the terrorism of the prison administration has forced the protesters to abandon their strike or to change their tactics.

It is evident, however, that an immediate outpouring of international protest is needed to protect the lives of the political prisoners against the murderous Mexican regime which shot down hundreds of peaceful student demonstrators on October 2, 1968, in the Plaza de las Tres Culturas.

The Lecumberri strike had been winning increasing public support. That may be why the government has tried to suppress it with terror and intimidation.

On December 12, Sergio Mendez Arceo, the Bishop of Cuernavaca, issued a pastoral letter supporting the prisoners. The bishop called on the people to "express our solidarity . . . as Christians with the suffering and affliction of our brothers—the prisoners themselves, their relatives, their friends, and their compañeros."

"We are aware," the bishop wrote, "of our common responsibility for ad-

vancing or detracting from the common good. We are all responsible, in fact, and we cannot remain indifferent or make excuses in the face of the multitude of abuses in the administration of justice, abuses which are still more infamous when their victims are the weak, the economic, social, or political outsiders."

On December 20, a group of more than a hundred Mexican intellectuals, students, priests, and artists published a half-page advertisement in the Mexico City paper *El Día* supporting the hunger strikers' demands. The text said, in part, "Your cause is the cause of all, your struggle is for the democratic freedoms that concern us all. You are showing, by heroically starving yourself, the danger that threatens our basic rights."

The signers included the writer Carlos Prieto A.; the painter Alfaro Siqueiros; the sculptor Federico Canessi; the poet Leopoldo Ayala; the painter Mario Orozco Rivera; and many others.

Protests on behalf of the political prisoners can be sent to Lic. Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, Presidente de México, Palacio Nacional, México 1, D. F.; or Lic. Luis Echeverría, Secretario de Gobernación, Av. Bucareli y Calle General Prim, México 1, D. F.

Messages expressing solidarity with the prisoners will reach them if sent by registered mail. The address is Bernard Philip Ames, Administracion de Correos #9, Letra "M", México 9, D. F.

The following is the complete list of prisoners taking part in the hunger strike. The imprisoned scholar Eli de Gortari began the strike with the others, but was forced to abandon it because of his age and ill health.

1. Pablo Alvarado Barrera
2. Germán Alvarez D. de León
3. Raúl Alvarez Garín
4. Daniel Alvarez Lorenzo
5. Saúl Alvarez Mosqueda
6. Carlos Andrade Ruiz
7. Joel Arriaga Navarro
8. Fidel Baldovinos Vázquez
9. Alfonso Barrios Román
10. José Luis Becerra Guerrero
11. Miguel Vejarano Garcés
12. Carlos Cavagne Mendoza
13. Adrián Campos Díaz
14. Pedro Castillo Salgado
15. Zeferino Chávez Alarcón
16. Ramón Danzós Palomino
17. Eduardo de la Vega de Avila

18. J. Servando Dávila Jiménez
19. Rodolfo Echeverría Martínez
20. Federico Emery Ulloa
21. Pedro Estrada Vega
22. Antulio Fernández Maldonado
23. Carlos García Gutierrez
24. Félix Goded Andreu
25. Pablo Gómez Alvarez
26. Luis O. González de Alba
27. Luis González Sánchez
28. Jesús González Guardado
29. Fernando Granados Cortés
30. Carlos Rolando Segura Medina
31. Gilberto R. Gallardo Meltis
32. Angel Juan Heredia Espinoza
33. Félix Lucio Hernández Gamundi
34. Mario Hernández Hernández
35. José Manuel Irán Tellez
36. Rafael Jacobo García
37. Nicolás López Martínez
38. Florencio López Osuna
39. Manuel Marcué Pardiñas
40. Carlos Martín del Campo
41. Salvador Martínez de la Roca
42. Arturo Martínez Nateras
43. Carlos Medina Sevilla
44. Germán Molina Monroy
45. Eduardo Montes Manzano
46. Agustín Montiel Montiel
47. J. Refugio Mora Foll
48. Adán Nieto Castillo
49. Ernesto Olvera Sotres
50. Jorge Ortega Rodríguez
51. Arturo Ortiz Marbán
52. José Oviedo Garza
53. Raymundo Padilla Salazar

54. José L. Pámanes González
55. Luis Jorge Peña Martínez
56. Prisciliano Pérez Anguiano
57. Antonio Pérez Sánchez
58. Bernard Philip Ames
59. José Piñeiro Guzmán
60. Ignacio Alfonso Plata D.
61. Javier Ramos Rodríguez
62. José Revueltas Sánchez
63. Gilberto R. Gallardo Meltis
64. Juan Robles Armenta
65. Manuel Rodríguez Navarro
66. Mauro Rodríguez Sierra
67. Issais Rojas Delgado
68. Antonio Morales Romero
69. William Rosado Dapote
70. Federico Guadalupe Rosas Barrera
71. Américo Saldivar Valdéz
72. Juan Sánchez Chávez
73. Félix Sánchez Hernández
74. Rafael Servín Aspuru
75. Carlos Sevilla González
76. Mario René Solórzano Aldana
77. Fausto Trejo Fuentes
78. Prisciliano Torres Prieto
79. Gerardo Unzueta Lorenzana
80. Rubén Valdespino García
81. Rigoberto Valenzuela Yepiz
82. Eduardo Valle Espinoza
83. José L. Vázquez Bustamante
84. Roberto Vázquez Camarena
85. Amada Velasco Torres (Cárcel de Mujeres [Women's Jail])
86. Arturo Zama
87. Salvador Zarco Flores

New Trujillo for Santo Domingo?

General Wessin y Wessin, who bombed the working-class districts of Santo Domingo as he sought to put down the 1965 uprising, has announced his candidacy for president of the Dominican Republic in the coming June elections.

The hated general's bid for office comes as no surprise. Wessin y Wessin was saved from the revolutionary wrath of the Dominican people by President Johnson, who sent in 23,000 U. S. troops to prevent the people from ousting dictator Trujillo's heirs.

Perhaps the revolution could still have succeeded in 1965 were it not for the course followed by the new figures who skyrocketed into prominence on the left as the revolutionary upsurge gained momentum. They were persuaded by representatives of the State Department to accept a "deal."

Wessin y Wessin, the most notorious figure of the right, agreed to go into exile in Florida, while Colonel Francisco Caamaño Deño, whose popularity was immense as a member of the military establishment who had broken with Wessin y Wessin and joined the uprising, took a diplomatic post in London.

Later a rigged election was staged to make Joaquín Balaguer president.

On November 28, 1967, it was reported that Caamaño had disappeared from his post. He was last seen in The Hague on October 24. The papers said "foul play" was suspected; and that was that.

Wessin y Wessin returned from his Florida "exile" January 10, 1969. There have been repeated rumors that he has a coup in mind. Perhaps the coup will be given a legal cover by counting him into office at the ballot box.

Bejar's Essay on the Peruvian Guerrilla Struggle

By Joseph Hansen

Perú 1965: Apuntes Sobre una Experiencia Guerrillera, por Héctor Béjar Rivera. Casa de las Américas, 3ra y G, Vedado, La Habana, Cuba. 182 pp. 1969. Maps, tables, bibliography, no index.

Les guérillas péruviennes de 1965, par Hector Bejar. François Maspero, 1 place Paul-Painlevé, 5e, Paris. 110 pp. 1969. Map, no tables, no bibliography, no index.*

This essay was awarded the Casa de las Américas prize for 1969. In consequence, the book received considerable publicity throughout Latin America. By now it is familiar to the entire Spanish-speaking vanguard. A French translation was published in Paris by Maspero simultaneously with the Havana edition so that Béjar's study became accessible to the vanguard in Europe perhaps even earlier than it did to some sectors in Latin America. As yet no English translation has appeared.

The awarding of the prize did not imply official approval of the book by the Cuban government. The panel that judged the entries included only one Cuban, Oscar Pino Santos. The other members were Rubén Bareiro (Paraguay), Sergio Benvenuto (Uruguay), Hans Magnus Enzensberger (Germany), and Carlos María Gutiérrez (Uruguay). It is important to note this in view of Béjar's criticisms of international Stalinism and the importance he ascribes to the role of the Trotskyist leader Hugo Blanco in the revival of the revolutionary movement in Peru. That top figures in the Cuban government might disagree with Béjar on various important points underlines their integrity in seeing to it that the book was published and distributed in accordance with the decision of the panel of judges.

Héctor Béjar himself broke from the Communist party of Peru and moved to the left under the influence of the Cuban revolution.

The jacket of the Spanish edition carries the following biographical note:

"Héctor Béjar Rivera was born in Chosica, Peru, on December 2, 1935. Studied law and literature at the University of San Marcos and was a student at the School of Liberal Arts. Took up writing poems and essays. While still in his adolescence, became a member of the Communist party and rose to membership in the Central Committee. Founded and edited the party's official journal. Expelled from the CP in 1958 because of differences over the electoral road and the party's policy of compromising with the country's oligarchical regimes. In 1962, together with

other *compañeros*, he organized the *Ejército Nacional de Liberación* [Army of National Liberation], in order to establish a guerrilla front. Participated in various armed actions. Gravely ill, he was arrested in Lima in 1966, and since then has been held in San Quintín prison awaiting trial.*

Writing in a prison cell under harsh conditions and without adequate research materials, Béjar made no attempt to draw up a definitive balance sheet. *Peru 1965: Notes on a Guerrilla Experience* is intended, he says, merely to "open a discussion." As a contribution to that discussion, it will be "corrected and completed in the future."

Besides opening a discussion on the vital question of armed struggle in Latin America, the book breaks fresh ground in other respects. As a firsthand account from one of the few survivors of the 1965 guerrilla experience, it offers unusually important factual material. Of greatest significance, perhaps, is the *critical* estimate it offers of that experience.

"The reader will find few eulogies to the guerrillas," says Béjar in his foreword. "It is always easy, especially for those who did not participate in the combat, to heap up adjectives. Nevertheless, the author feels that it is preferable, if one really wishes to continue a task, to explain why the first attempts failed. Total adherence to a cause does not exclude, but imposes, the obligation to discuss in what way it can be better served."

Béjar seeks to show why armed struggle is inevitable in Peru—there is no other way to overcome capitalism and open up the road to socialism. To prove his point, he proceeds in accordance with the Marxist method, sketching the class struggle in Peru as shaped by the geography and history of the country and as finally influenced by the penetration of U. S. imperialism. Béjar's analysis is brief but incisive.

In considering the upsurge of the peasantry in recent years, Béjar pays tribute to the work of Hugo Blanco.

"In 1961 and 1962," he writes, "the Lima newspapers began to talk about Hugo Blanco, demanding the repression of the unions in La Convención and Lares.

"The recovery of the land, dubbed by the rightist oligarchy as an 'invasion,' proceeded peacefully in these valleys through the mobilization of large numbers of peasants whom economic developments and migration had divided up into a complex social structure. . . .

"Through the Cuzco lawyers, the peasants joined the *Federación de Trabajadores del Cuzco*, led almost exclusively by the Communist party. The first strike occurred during the months of June and July 1960, before Hugo Blanco had yet reached the valley.

"Hugo Blanco's participation in the organizational ac-

* To obtain a copy of the Spanish edition, send \$1.25 to Vanguard Bookstore, 824 Yonge St., Toronto 5, Ont., Canada. For the French, send 75 Belgian francs [about \$1.50] to Emile var Ceulen, 111 Avenue Seghers, Brussels 8, Belgium. (These prices include \$.25 to cover handling and postage by ordinary mail.)

* As with other quotations in this review, the translation is my own. J. H.

tivities of the unions led to a rise in the level of struggle. 1961 and 1962 can be considered as the high points of the union wave.

"But Blanco's revolutionary ideology aroused the jealousy of the former heads of the *Federacion Provincial* and his Trotskyism aroused the distrust of the Communist leaders of the *Federacion de Trabajadores del Cuzco*. When he was named general secretary of the latter in 1962, the election was contested by some members. Meanwhile the Lima government ordered his arrest.

"Then came the violent period of persecution that culminated in his being taken prisoner in May 1963. The government had freed itself of Blanco but it had not been able to avoid thousands of peasants freeing themselves, the power of the *hacendados* being broken, and the pre-existing social structure altered. It was the first defeat of such proportions to be suffered by the *latifundio*—a de facto agrarian reform had been realized."

In a few pages on the development of the "new left" in Peru, we are given indications of the repercussions of Khrushchev's admissions at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and of the victory of the Cuban revolution:

"The impact caused by the Cuban Revolution was very great and was not long in becoming reflected in the political organizations. In the APRA [*Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana*] a group of youth responded by forming first the *Comité de Defensa de los Principios Apristas y de la Democracia Interna* [Committee in Defense of Aprista Principles and Internal Democracy], then the *APRA Rebelde* [Rebel APRA], and later the MIR [*Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria*—Movement of the Revolutionary Left]. They were headed by Luis de la Puente Uceda.

"The effect in the Communist party was even greater, linking up with the repercussions of the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU and the polemic with the PCCH [Chinese Communist party].

"In short, an entire ideological, theoretical, and practical scaffolding was automatically placed under discussion. The Stalin cult had been shaken to its foundations and along with it the infallibility of the Party of the Soviet Union. Subjects such as the validity of the positions of the CPSU; when to expect the Revolution—in the immediate or distant future—and the role of the social classes in it; the stages of the revolution and the role of the party, began to be debated.

"In general, Cuban socialism put the problems of the revolution on the agenda for today and not for a more or less distant tomorrow, gave all the revolutionists of Latin America a precise objective, and offered a certain support for the sprouting 'heresies.' Without stating it, all of us understood at the time that a new revolutionary stage had opened and that the revolution, in being carried out, would not necessarily develop in accordance with the patterns we had previously had in mind."

Besides these influences, the upsurge of the peasantry and the role played by Hugo Blanco had to be added:

"We have already seen how, under the influence of the left in some instances and spontaneously in others, the unionization of the peasantry broadened from 1956 up to 1962. The highest point of this great wave, because of

the political quality of its leaders, was in the valleys of La Convención and Lares and the most outstanding figure was Hugo Blanco.

"But Hugo Blanco was a disciplined Trotskyist militant. This fact presented a serious problem for the left. Hadn't it been said for many years that the Trotskyists were agents of imperialism? Hadn't it been repeatedly claimed that Trotskyism was a counterrevolutionary current? The years of Stalinism were not in the distant past, and in any case, even with the idol of Stalin fallen, the supreme anathema against Trotskyism had not been withdrawn by anyone; it remained in full force.

"This, on the one hand. On the other, the left as a whole did not become fully incorporated into the peasant struggle. It directed the organizations 'from above,' advised the unions, sent organizers temporarily into the field, but it did not lead 'from within' the way Blanco did.

"On the one hand, its still existing political prejudices prevented it from giving Blanco the collaboration he merited. On the other hand, its inertia kept it locked within the old urban molds."

An attempt was made to set up a united front to help Hugo Blanco. A number of currents responded. But the "great majority of the left ignored the appeal and support for Blanco remained in the majority of cases purely verbal. However, what Blanco needed was not declarations, but money, men, arms . . ."

In Béjar's opinion, a great opportunity was lost. The counterrevolution took full advantage of the defeat, and the left is paying to this day for its failure to back Hugo Blanco during the ascendancy of the movement he led.

It should be noted that Héctor Béjar, despite his effort at complete objectivity in estimating Hugo Blanco's role, makes several assertions that are dubious, particularly since he does not attempt to substantiate them. For instance, he holds Blanco partly responsible for the defeat because "Blanco himself was not prepared to meet these difficult moments inasmuch as he remained subject to a dogmatic leadership, little aware of the national reality and ignorant of practical work, a leadership that was unable to devise a consistent and logical way out for the movement that had been initiated."

Hugo Blanco himself, however, has explained that the gravest weakness confronting the movement was *the absence of a mass revolutionary-socialist party*.

Béjar also disagrees with Blanco's policy of seeking to bring the peasants into the revolutionary struggle as a mass force through extension of their unions and organization of militias in defensive battles that might open the perspective of establishing dual power. Béjar appears not to have grasped the import of this policy, its relation to the construction of a combat party, and its derivation in the final analysis from the experience of the Russian revolution. He counterposes the tactic of guerrilla struggle, evidently based on the Cuban model.

It should likewise be noted that while Béjar came to understand, through the activities of Hugo Blanco, that Trotskyism does not at all correspond with the slanders that were so long the stock-in-trade of the Stalinists, he has yet to make an intensive study of its origins, development, and current positions. And this despite his understanding that the outlook of the Communist party of Peru

cannot be properly understood without going into its history and its relations with the Communist International. Thus he writes:

"Only by exhaustively analyzing the history of the party and relating it to the history of the international Communist movement, can the roots be uncovered of the errors that were committed, because the national policy of the party always reflected the line of the international Communist movement. Standing solely on a vague, overall rejection of its opportunism, the dissidents of the Communist party and those who repeated their arguments, refused to deepen their analysis.

"The same can be said with respect to the Trotskyists. It is true that Stalinism is the source of the deformations of the Communist movement, of its errors and setbacks. But is that enough to explain everything? Is it not also necessary to seek the roots of Stalinism, the explanation of why it could rise and triumph in the struggle for leadership of Bolshevism? Why direct the criticism solely at Stalinism and not likewise at Trotskyism, whose claims are not new in our country? In reality, the Trotskyist leaderships shared to a considerable degree in the conceptions and methods designated as 'traditional.'"

Despite the favorable impression created by Béjar's insistence on "exhaustively analyzing" the history of the Peruvian Communist party and its relationship to the history of the Communist International, we are struck by the nature of his criticism of Trotskyism. It is "also" necessary to seek "the roots" of Stalinism, to work out a Marxist explanation of why Stalinism succeeded in smashing the Bolshevik party built by Lenin! But the probing of these "roots" and the working out of a Marxist explanation of the rise of Stalinism were precisely among the main contributions made by Trotsky. That Béjar is obviously unaware of this tells us much about the theoretical level of the Peruvian guerrilla fighters in 1965. It is clear that they went into action without first having genuinely settled accounts with Stalinism.

Mere rejection of Stalinism is not enough. If the disasters to which Stalinism has repeatedly led are to be forestalled, the nature of Stalinism must be understood to the bottom. That means, to begin with, knowing the origin of the revolutionary resistance to it, beginning with the bloc formed by Lenin and Trotsky against Stalin in 1923. It means thoroughly grasping Trotsky's explanation of Stalinism as the expression of the privileged social layer that arose in the Soviet Union owing to the low economic and cultural level of Russia, the decimation of the revolutionary vanguard in the civil war, the imperialist encirclement of the first workers state, its inability to raise the productive level at a sufficiently swift rate in face of the blockade, and the temporary inability to extend the revolution on an international scale—all this, coupled with the rise of a petty-bourgeois reaction based on the peasantry as the proletarian vanguard sank back exhausted.

Once Trotsky's contributions in this area are really understood, the true role of the Stalinized Communist International as a border guard for the usurping bureaucratic caste becomes clear. Along with this, much else also becomes clear—such as the tenacity of the caste, its capacity to veer and maneuver, even to clean up its image and grant some reforms as under Khrushchev. Most important

of all, perhaps, is the understanding that what is wrong with Stalinism is not that it represents "traditional" concepts and methods, i.e., a Leninism outmoded by events, but that it represents the direct antithesis of Leninism, which is the theory and practice of building a combat party to provide leadership for the masses when they actually begin moving as a whole toward a revolutionary solution to their economic and social problems.

The guerrillas of 1965, by going into action without having settled accounts in a fundamental way with Stalinism, left open two grave political breaches: (1) The possibility of Stalinism (whether in a Khrushchevist, Maoist, or "neo-Stalinist" form) exercising an influence, even if indirect, in their own ranks. (2) The certainty—by equating Stalinism with Leninism or with political parties in general—that they could not bring to bear in their situation the revolutionary methods conceived by Lenin and tested out under his and Trotsky's joint leadership in the Russian revolution, which still remains the example *par excellence* of an assured way of winning a revolutionary struggle.

The most valuable sections of Béjar's study are those dealing with the specific guerrilla fronts and the errors that finally led to disaster. Béjar remains a firm believer in guerrilla warfare as the royal road to victory and he considers the errors that proved fatal to the campaign to have been tactical in nature.

The guerrillas held, for instance, that by starting various fronts simultaneously this would compel the regime to disperse its armed forces, making it easier to confront them with guerrilla war. It turned out, however, that the regime, which enjoyed the full support of U.S. imperialism, had such overwhelming military forces at its disposal that it was the guerrillas who suffered the consequences of dispersal in face of a highly coordinated foe trained in counter-guerrilla war. The initiation of various fronts in remote areas is thus rated by Béjar as a tactical mistake.

The ELN and the MIR had contradictory estimates of the Peruvian economic and social reality so that they did not follow the same political guidelines. Left out of account was the conservatizing effect on the peasants of the repression that followed the victories won under Hugo Blanco. The relative roles of the countryside and the city were miscalculated, the importance of the cities being underestimated. Publicity was poorly handled, the program of the movement remained unclear to the public.*

* The program, in any case, was limited to five demands: "(1) People's Government. (2) Expulsion of all the foreign monopolies. (3) Agrarian Revolution. (4) Friendship with all the peoples of the world. (5) National Sovereignty."

National sovereignty and an agrarian revolution belong historically to the democratic demands of the bourgeois revolution. It is noteworthy that the program did not call for *expropriation* of foreign capitalist interests. What a "people's government" might mean is hard to visualize. Equally vague is the foreign policy labeled "friendship with all the peoples of the world."

In short, the Peruvian guerrillas did not start from what was shown by the Cuban revolution; i.e., how a revolution for democratic demands in the world of today tends to become converted into a revolution for socialism. Their program amounted to an attempt to begin where the Cubans started, without taking into account the *advance* represented by the *victory* of the Cuban revolution—the new stage opened up in the revolutionary strug-

The fronts were easily infiltrated by the enemy, with devastating consequences. When the army entered a zone in which the guerrillas had been operating, uncertain elements among the local population rapidly went over to the other side, shifting the apparent relationship of forces to the great disadvantage of the guerrillas.

The guerrillas could not reach agreement on a unified military command. They proved incapable of coordinating their actions or even making military intelligence available to each other in a timely way.

Despite determination to follow the Cuban model rigorously, innovations were tried that proved to be self-defeating. One of the worst mistakes was the attempt to set up "security zones." For example, the belief that the Mesa Pelada was safe turned out to be an illusion. It was encircled by the foe and became a death trap for the main leader Luis de la Puente.

Béjar goes into all this in some detail. As to the ultimate reasons for the errors, he ascribes these to the origin of the guerrillas. The key cadres of the ELN came from various dissident groups, but principally from the left wing of the Communist party. They left that organization under the influence of the Cuban revolution. Under the same influence, the key cadres of the MIR came from the left wing of the APRA. Each of these currents, although they had overcome much that was bad in their background, retained features of their formation that interfered with proper coordination of their struggle and a proper estimate of the political scene in which they operated.

A question arises which one hopes Béjar will return to as he deepens his study of what happened in 1965. To what degree were the errors not just "tactical" errors but *political* errors? The question is of considerable importance in drawing up a balance sheet.

Note some of the things that emerge from Béjar's account of what the guerrillas ran into "tactically":

Armed action was begun in the field without construction of a *general staff* to guide the participants in their common struggle.

Armed action was begun without a common political estimate of the reality, and, in the absence of a general staff, no means to keep that political estimate up to date and to test it in ways entailing the lowest overhead cost to the movement.

With neither a general staff nor a common political estimate, it is a wonder that the guerrillas were able to achieve such coordination as they did. But, as Béjar stresses, it was woefully inadequate.

Further political consequences followed. The guerrillas lacked means of connecting up with and mobilizing the masses if they failed to be directly and immediately "inspired" by the armed action into mobilizing themselves. Not only were the means lacking, the guerrillas did not even take into consideration the possibility that the masses

might not be prepared to move at the signal given by the action of small bands of armed men lacking roots in the masses. The masses might require more time to gain their own political experience in their own way—time to test the claims of leaders, to check out methods, to build up self-confidence, to get a feel of the strength of their numbers. The guerrillas did not visualize the possibility of the masses themselves making a contribution, perhaps in unexpected ways.

In talking about the absence of a "general staff" and of a "common political estimate of the reality," what are we really saying? *That the guerrillas lacked a political party built on the Leninist model.*

One might assume that this would logically be one of the main criticisms reached by Héctor Béjar. His opinion, however, is just the contrary.

The truth is that throughout his study he views armed struggle—guerrilla warfare—as having such intrinsic virtues and powers, even when initiated by a tiny handful, as to open up completely new perspectives, particularly with regard to bypassing the task of building a revolutionary-socialist party.

In a chapter "The ELN," under the subheading "Revolution and Party," Béjar indicates his views on this. He takes us to the heart of the concepts that guided the Peruvian guerrillas of 1965:

"The Socialist Revolution is the first change that requires the active participation of the people as a whole. Without this participation it is illusory to count on a revolutionary triumph.

"While being an indispensable requisite for victory, the people at the same time constitute the best safeguard against any deformation of the Revolution. The peasant and proletarian masses, without whose collaboration no revolutionary war is possible in Peru, must raise up their own leaders and engage in reaching their own decisions.

"In bringing this process to a successful conclusion, the premature creation of a political party is a serious obstacle.

"If the party is created *before* [emphasis in original] the guerrilla war is initiated, it is rapidly converted into an organization with its own group interests and gives rise to a leadership that likewise has its own interests. The overall interests of the organization, or the particular ones of its leadership, often come into contradiction with the needs of the Revolution in countries like ours, where parties arise, not from the exploited majority, but from privileged layers, bourgeois or petty-bourgeois, separated from the exploited masses as a whole.

"The contradictions are not long in becoming expressed in repeated postponements of the revolutionary time schedule, delaying of tasks, egoism of the organization, sectarianism, and an incendiary verbalism that does not correspond to actual conduct.

"Often the party must use an 'insurrectional' language to satisfy the ranks and attract new adherents. In reality it develops an activity aimed exclusively at controlling the organizations of the students and workers from above.

"Isn't this, in reality, the traditional politics refurbished with a 'new' language?"

"When the pressure of the members requires turning to real revolutionary tasks, an ideological and political fight is not long in appearing. Then the revolutionary perspec-

gle in Latin America, which requires a new, more advanced, set of demands. Despite their intentions, the Peruvian guerrillas locked themselves into a "traditionalist" schema.

Béjar is critical of the programmatic inadequacies of the 1965 guerrilla struggle in Peru but does not go into the problem in depth.

tive is lost in a tangle of internal struggles. And the revolutionary tasks are again postponed in the name of a struggle against opportunism."

The author then deals with problems that presumably arise when a prematurely formed party attempts to engage in guerrilla struggles, outlining the position of the ELN on this question. He repeats his main conclusion:

"A prematurely formed party is always an obstacle, a fence put up between the masses and the revolution. What is required is not to call on the masses to follow a party but to construct a party among the masses themselves.

"If a party is born from the peasantry and the proletariat, after a long process of struggle in which the revolutionists and the exploited have united into a single phalanx, the exploited will themselves have succeeded in forming a genuine vanguard."

Béjar's theory that a party formed at any time except in the hour of armed struggle is almost certainly doomed to degenerate because it has its own group interests and gives rise to a leadership with its own particular interests, both of them in contradiction to the revolutionary interests of the exploited layers of the population, is hardly something new. As a matter of fact, it is the theme developed in great detail by Robert Michels in *Political Parties*, which was published in . . . 1911. Michels drew his conclusions principally from his observations of the Social Democracy in its period of degeneration.

Béjar's conclusion that the degeneration of the party can be avoided by the expedient of not organizing it prior to the stage of armed struggle is not very consistent. The anarchists are more logical in arguing that the best safeguard is not to organize a party at all, but to rely exclusively on the "deed" or on armed struggle. The anarchist record, particularly in Spain, shows of course how much worth can be placed in the logic of the anarchists when it comes to practice.

But let us come to the key question. If Béjar is correct, what happens to Lenin's contribution with regard to the

role of a combat party in bringing a revolutionary struggle to a successful conclusion? Let us recall the not unimportant item that Lenin *in practice* refuted both Michels and the anarchists.

The failure of Béjar to consider Lenin's contribution in this field is perhaps the most glaring omission in his entire study of the 1965 guerrilla experience in Peru. Does Béjar consider Lenin to have been proved wrong? If so, why not say it? And try to explain why, in the world of today, Lenin should be disregarded as . . . "traditionalist."

Perhaps Béjar has not made up his mind on this point. On the other hand, nowhere in Béjar's study is to be found anything approaching Lenin's concept of the party as the general staff of the revolution.

Although he does not state it, one wonders if he equates Stalinism and Leninism. Or equates both Stalinism and Leninism with political parties in general. Perhaps what he is really doing is generalizing from his own unhappy experience with the Stalinized Communist party in Peru, to which he counterposes his hope that guerrilla struggle per se is so efficacious that if carried out correctly on the tactical level, the building of a revolutionary-socialist party can be relegated to a level of fifth-rate importance.

To consider a Stalinist-type party as a fence separating the masses from the revolution is accurate, if inadequate. But it is not correct to conclude from this that the same holds true for a Leninist-type party. Such a party functions as a political general staff for the masses in their struggle. It is precisely the absence of such a political general staff that has made victory exceedingly difficult in Peru.

Hugo Blanco saw this very clearly during the 1961-62 upsurge. It is to be hoped that the survivors of the 1965 guerrilla defeat will reach a similar conclusion as they deepen their critical appraisal of their own effort. This could prove to be decisive in the next great upsurge, which may come sooner than the political representatives of the oligarchy and imperialism fear or the revolutionary leaders now in prison dare hope.

Hector Bejar in English

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