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50c

Deeper into Indochina Mire



The Horror of Lecumberri Prison

Three Killed in Drivers' Strike

Philippine police killed three students and wounded forty-one others February 2. The killings occurred on the second day of protests against increases in petroleum prices.

The students are supporting jeepney [minibus] drivers who are striking to force the government to rescind the increases. (The prices are regulated by the government's Price Control Council.)

At a demonstration February 1 at the University of the Philippines in the Manila suburb of Quezon City, a professor fired at students barring the entrance, wounding one of them. The next day, the February 3 *New York Times* reported, students blocked roads in five different sections of Manila and "fought the police with homemade bombs."

Late that afternoon, police and troops invaded the university campus and arrested several students on charges of throwing gasoline bombs. Most of the casualties occurred at the university.

Demonstrations continued in Manila February 3, although the February 4 *New York Times* reported that "Tension eased after President Ferdinand E. Marcos ordered the troops to pull back outside the campus."

The president of the student council was quoted as saying that students would "fight to the finish" to keep troops out of the university.

The oil industry in the Philippines is a virtual monopoly controlled by five American companies: Standard Oil of New Jersey, Caltex, Getty, Mobil, and Shell. □

Please Note

Our New Address

It's easy to remember: *Intercontinental Press*, P.O. Box 116, Village Post Office Station, New York, N.Y. 10014.

No, we haven't moved out of Manhattan; just to a more convenient location. We don't know why it's called a "village."

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Deeper into the Indochina Mire

By Allen Myers

For nearly a week, the Nixon administration acted as though it believed it possible to invade Laos in secret. As more than 20,000 Saigon troops and 9,000 Americans moved toward the Laotian border, U.S. officials imposed a news "embargo" that prohibited reporters from telling the American public what was going on.

The embargo was officially explained as being necessary for "military security," an excuse that aroused some sarcastic comments from members of the press. Ralph Blumenthal wrote in the February 2 *New York Times*:

"... the enemy does not have to see American news reports to learn about large military operations; enemy commanders cannot fail to be aware if the bombs are falling around them.

"Thus, it sometimes happens that the Moscow radio or the Vietcong's radio may announce allied operations before allied correspondents are permitted to do so."

In the paper's February 5 issue, Blumenthal again pointed out that the "secrecy" of the invasion preparations affected only the American public:

"On Saturday [January 30], with the operation under way in the north since the early hours, the supposedly secret troop movements were being openly discussed in Saigon.

"One American soldier in Saigon for the day remarked that he had heard that the South Vietnamese were planning to invade Laos. 'Where did you hear that?' he was asked.

"The mama-san who cleans my hootch told me,' he said."

In its attempt to keep the operation out of the press, the Nixon administration even embargoed the embargo. Newsmen were forbidden to report that there was a blackout of military news.

Nixon had good reason to wish to keep the operation secret. It represents a major escalation of the Indochina war and clearly contradicted his often-repeated claim that he is ending the U. S. involvement.

The new campaign opened January 30, one day after Secretary of State William Rogers had publicly hinted at an invasion of Laos. [See last week's issue of *Intercontinental Press*, page 99.] Nearly 30,000 U.S. and Saigon troops reoccupied the posts of Khesanh and Langvei—abandoned in 1968—and advanced up to, and perhaps beyond, the Laotian border.

The only disagreement in the press was over whether the Saigon forces had crossed the border *yet*. Everyone agreed that such an invasion would begin shortly if it were not already under way. Alvin Shuster described the plans in the February 6 *New York Times*:

"It appeared that the drive into Laos, the first such assault against the [so-called Ho Chi Minh] trail in the long history of the war, would probably come within a maximum of 10 days."

Shuster also pointed out that Nixon planned to use American planes and helicopters in close combat, just as he had during the battle for Cambodia's Highway 4:

"... *unlimited* American air power would be used to provide support for the South Vietnamese forces, which include marines, rangers, airborne units and infantrymen. American helicopter gunships, B-52's and smaller fighter-bombers would join in the drive to disrupt the enemy supply system." (Emphasis added.)

A number of sources charged that the invasion was already under way. They included the Soviet government, a Japanese news agency, and spokesmen for the Pathet Lao. Soviet Premier Aleksei Kosygin on February 1 and 2 denounced the "outrageous invasion" of the Laotian panhandle, and the government news agency TASS on February 3 spoke of "the armed invasion by United States and Saigon puppet troops."

In Tokyo, the Kyodo news service reported an invasion of the Boloven Plateau by 4,000-5,000 Saigon troops. The agency said the attack

was launched February 1. The plateau is about 150 miles south of the area where the 30,000-man U. S.-Saigon force is operating.

An Associated Press dispatch published in the February 7 *New York Times* said that a Pathet Lao spokesman in Vientiane had confirmed the Kyodo report and also charged that Saigon troops had crossed the border near Khesanh and occupied the town of Tchepone, twenty miles inside Laos.

The Nixon administration stubbornly refused to release any information on the military operation, except to deny that U. S. ground troops would cross the border. On February 2, Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird told reporters: "We are proceeding in accord with restrictions approved by Congress on the use of American troops. We will not open any credibility gap. There will be and there are no American ground combat forces operating in Laos."

Not for the first time, Laird was being considerably less than frank. Even before the current offensive, there were significant numbers of Americans involved in Laos. Carl Strock gave some details in the January 30 issue of the weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review*, published in Hong Kong:

"The United States . . . brought in military attache-advisers, arms and bombers on the sly. More serious, ex-Green Berets, now on the CIA payroll, still accompany tribal mercenaries on combat missions, while other Green Berets regularly cross into Laos from South Vietnam for operations against the Ho Chi Minh trail. And in northern Laos the CIA wages the war through its own Clandestine Army of adolescent conscripts at an estimated annual cost of US\$175 million."

Strock described the base of the Clandestine Army at Long Cheng:

"Over the years eight journalists, including myself, have slipped into Long Cheng and have seen American crews loading T-28 bombers while

armed CIA agents chatted with uniformed Thai soldiers and piles of raw opium stood for sale in the market (a kilo for \$52). It's old hat by now . . ."

Strock reported that U.S. forces have so far suffered at least 1,500 casualties in Laos.

The Laos escalation was accompanied by another Saigon offensive in Cambodia, closely supported by U.S. planes and helicopters. The sweep reportedly involved more than 21,000 troops in the Parrot's Beak and Fishhook regions of Cambodia.

An Associated Press dispatch in the February 4 *New York Times* described the increased use of American air power:

"The United States air role in the sweep was said to include providing helicopter gunships, medical evacuation helicopters and logistical support. The officials said the United States was also sending in B-52's and tactical fighter-bombers to attack targets as required. . . .

"Before the current operation, officials said, the South Vietnamese would request helicopter support and each request would be reviewed on its merits.

"'Now,' one official said, 'when the Vietnamese call for helicopters they don't have to be cleared.'"

It was evident from Nixon's handling of the new escalations that his room for maneuver has been severely limited by the growing public opposition to the war. In the case of "Operation Dewey Canyon II" — the name given the offensive toward Laos — some correspondents believed that Nixon was having second thoughts about the drive. Alvin Shuster wrote in the February 5 *New York Times*: ". . . sources said the decision on a subsequent South Vietnamese attack on the Ho Chi Minh Trail was delayed until later.

"By Monday and Tuesday [February 1-2], these sources began to suspect that President Nixon was beginning to consider whether it was politically wise, even though militarily significant, to proceed.

"'He wants the long-term benefit that would come from it—the destruction of those trail supplies,' a reliable source reported. 'But he delayed out of fear of short-term political furor over a widening of the war even though there was no intention of us-

ing American ground troops.'

"Accordingly, there is some suspicion here [Saigon] that while the news blackout stemmed from military reasons it also served political purposes."

Nixon finally decided that the invasion of Laos could be sold to the public as a part of "Vietnamization," according to Terence Smith, writing in the February 7 *New York Times*:

"The question of public reaction to such a strike reportedly was discussed at length at a series of White House meetings last week. According to one participant, a consensus gradually emerged that the public probably would accept a South Vietnamese expedition into Laos within the context of the 'Vietnamization' program, so long as American troops were not involved on the ground."

Smith went on to warn that Nixon seemed to be misjudging the public temper:

"But even such a limited operation involves considerable political risk for the Administration. If there was any

doubt of this, or that the anti-war movement would come alive again, it was dispelled by the end of the week when several student groups announced plans to assemble in Washington for a protest march later in the month."

Smith was referring, in a misleading way, to a press conference of the National Peace Action Coalition [NPAC] that was held in Washington February 3. NPAC, a broad alliance of antiwar forces, is organizing mass protests in Washington and San Francisco April 24. The demonstrations have already received endorsement of a wide range of student, labor, radical, liberal, and religious organizations.

The continuing escalation of the Indochina war makes it all the more imperative that these protests be a massive demonstration that the majority of the American people want all the troops brought home from Indochina now.

February 7.

Even 'Hawks' Want Out

U.S. Poll Shows Rise in Opposition to War

Nixon's escalation of the Indochina war is having its effect on the American people. Nearly three-fourths of them want the U.S. troops out of Vietnam by the end of the year.

A Gallup poll released January 30 found that 73 percent supported the Hatfield-McGovern amendment. While this amendment actually offers Nixon several loopholes that would permit him to continue the war, it is presented in the daily press as legislating an end to the fighting. It is generally viewed by the public as requiring a complete American withdrawal by the end of 1971, and support for it is therefore a fairly reliable indication of the mood of the country. (The pollsters seldom if ever ask how people feel about *immediate* withdrawal.)

The poll, which was conducted January 9-10, found that support for the amendment had significantly increased since the previous poll in September. At that time, 55 percent of those questioned favored it.

Support for the Hatfield-McGovern

amendment, Gallup also found, was expressed by 60 percent of the persons who approved of the original U.S. involvement in Vietnam. □

U.S. Rules Mexican Market

Mexico had a balance-of-trade deficit of \$800,000,000 in 1970. In the same year, the national debt rose to more than \$3,000,000,000. Interest charges now consume 20 percent of the country's export earnings.

The overwhelming bulk of trade is with the United States. Last year 62 percent of Mexico's exports—chiefly food products and raw materials—went to the U.S., and 66 percent of its imports came from there.

The semicolonial nature of the economy is also indicated by the growth of American investment. In 1956, American capital in the country totaled \$650,000,000. In 1969, the figure was \$1,800,000,000, an increase of almost 200 percent.

Fluctuations in the U.S. business cycle are reflected in the Mexican economy. decline in the growth rate last year generally attributed to the recession in the United States.

Police Assault Chicanos in Los Angeles

Los Angeles police responded to a massive Chicano demonstration January 31 with a brutal assault on the East Los Angeles barrio. One Chicano demonstrator was killed and at least twenty-five wounded.

The demonstration and rally of more than 10,000 persons was organized by the Chicano Moratorium Committee as a protest against the police brutality directed against the barrios.

Last August 29, police attacked a peaceful antiwar demonstration and killed three persons, including the popular Chicano newsman, Ruben Salazar. [See *Intercontinental Press*, September 14, page 739.] Salazar was killed by a tear gas shell fired through an open window. Despite the fact that instructions on the weapon clearly stated that it was for use only against fortified barricades, the district attorney refused to prosecute Salazar's killer, thus implying that the Los Angeles cops could attack the Chicano community with impunity.

In the following months, police repression in the barrio increased noticeably, with the Chicano Moratorium Committee singled out for special harassment.

The massive turnout for the January 31 march demonstrated the determination of the Chicano community not to be intimidated by the police attacks. Participants came not only from the East Los Angeles barrio, but from many surrounding areas as well. The February 1 *Los Angeles Times* described the marches:

"Eight groups had started toward Belvedere Park [the site of the rally] from different directions, beginning as early as Thursday morning [January 28], when a group left the San Fernando Valley. On Friday marchers left Long Beach, San Pedro, Santa Ana, and La Puente.

"On Saturday a group hiked out of Pomona, heading west. On Sunday morning a group left the Old Plaza near downtown Los Angeles' Olvera St., a delegation left from Boyle Heights, just west of the East Los

Angeles sheriff's territory, and a caravan of cars departed from Cal State L.A., heading for a gathering area at Ford Blvd. and Brooklyn Ave., to march in from there."

The ruling class in Los Angeles had gone to some lengths to create an atmosphere favorable to the police attack. Baxter Smith reported from Los Angeles in the February 12 issue of the revolutionary-socialist weekly *The Militant*:

"For over a week prior to the demonstration, Mayor Yorty and L.A. police chief Davis red-baited the Moratorium, speculated about the possibilities of violence at the rally, and ordered police on 12-hour shifts with all leaves canceled for the duration of the weekend."

Typically, the government and the cops attempted to place the blame for what happened on the victims. Most accounts in the capitalist press described the police assault as the result of an unscheduled rally outside a police substation near Belvedere Park. Peter G. Ruppap wrote in the February 1 Los Angeles *Herald-Examiner*:

". . . just as listeners were beginning to leave, a man seized the speaker stand and announced plans for what he termed 'a party' at the East Los Angeles Sheriff's substation."

This provocative announcement by an unidentified person, Ruppap said, was followed by an attack on the substation by about 1,000 demonstrators. In a front-page article in the *Los Angeles Times*, Paul Houston and Ted Thackrey Jr. also wrote that "about 1,000" Chicanos "tore down a chain-link fence surrounding the parking lot [of the substation] and threw bricks and stones to smash several car windows."

These accounts were more than a little exaggerated. In a page-three article in the *Los Angeles Times*, apparently written before the police invaded the barrio, Frank Del Olmo and Dial Torgerson described the incident:

"A crowd of 50 young men attacked the East Los Angeles Sheriff's substation Sunday after a peaceful Chicano Moratorium rally, driving officers inside the building with a barrage of missiles." (Emphasis added.)

The incident—which ended with monitors from the Chicano Moratorium Committee putting the chain-link fence back in place—was thus inflated after the fact to provide the pretext for the police attack. That fighting between Chicanos and police actually began later was even confirmed by Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess, who was quoted by Cliff Blackburn and Richard Cox in the *Herald-Examiner*:

"Sheriff Pitchess said that violence in the 54-square block area broke out when two deputies went to investigate a fire at a bank on Whittier Boulevard. They were met 'by a large, hostile crowd and they shot in self-defense,' he said."

One can well believe that Chicanos would feel "hostile" toward the police occupying their communities, particularly when gunfire is regarded by the cops as an antidote for hostility. In the fighting that followed the police invasion, nine buildings were set afire. United Press International reported the next day that ninety persons had been arrested.

Gustav Montag was killed, according to an eyewitness account in the February 1 *Los Angeles Times*, when a group of a dozen police and deputies fired "four or five" shotgun and pistol rounds into a group of forty youths from a distance of about forty feet. United Press International changed this to: "He [Montag] was shot in the chest when a crowd of about 600 advanced on six sheriff's deputies."

The police assault on the East Los Angeles barrio and the crude distortions in the press are only the latest incidents in a long history of attacks on the rising Chicano nationalist struggle. They reveal once again the ruling class's fear of the revolutionary thrust of the fight for self-determination. □

The Horror of Lecumberri Prison

"Far from being a center for rehabilitation, Lecumberri is a den of corruption, extortion, and exploitation encouraged by the prison authorities themselves."

This is the indictment made by Eucario Pérez of the prison where most of Mexico's political prisoners are held.

On the basis of interviews with a large number of prisoners, relatives of inmates, and conscience-stricken prison officials, Pérez offers one of the fullest pictures yet published of life in the Federal District "preventive prison."

Published in the January 22 issue of the Mexico City weekly *Sucesos para Todos*, the article is entitled "The Horror of Lecumberri." The reality it describes is indeed horrible. It is a model of the rapacious capitalist system that dominates all of Mexican society.

"There are, for example," Pérez writes, "a group of operators who work in collusion with the Servicio Secreto [Secret Service] and the state prosecutor's staffs. They complicate the cases of persons accused of crimes in such a way that their relatives cannot help them, and the accused wind up in Lecumberri.

"Getting the accused into the prison is the important thing because it is well known that this experience will terrify both him and his family. Then the machinery starts rolling. The head trustee of the ward where prisoners are held for seventy-two hours before they know whether they will be released offers his services for 30,000; 40,000; 50,000 pesos [12.5 pesos equal US\$1].

"Many people sell their homes to get a relative out, above all when the head trustee . . . not only guarantees the release of the person imprisoned but even the disappearance of the records of his case. And the head trustee always manages to do this without difficulty because the whole thing is set up in advance. At least one such business deal takes place every month. It is obvious that the money goes not into the trustee's pocket alone. It is spread around widely."

Even the right to communicate with friends and relatives is a commodity on the prison market. Permission to make a telephone call costs 500 pesos.

As soon as he is brought into the prison, an inmate enters the housing market. "The head trustee rents the 'de luxe' cells, that is, one- or two-man cells, for 150 pesos a night." Most of the common prisoners cannot afford such rates, but the service is well worth it for those who can because they "escape having to sleep in the common cell where there are not even any beds, only mattresses ridden with bedbugs and cockroaches." For this sum, affluent prisoners can also escape "being raped by their companions in misfortune."

Pérez describes how some of the most advanced features of Mexico's once progressive prison rules have been converted into new fields for private enterprise: "Conjugal visits are also an object of traffic. For from 300 to 400 pesos, unmarried prisoners can get the right to such visits, although payment is strictly forbidden by the law.

"For 1,000 pesos, married or unmarried men can arrange a conjugal visit with one of the prostitutes 'working' with the guards. . . ."

Pérez's references to the threat of homosexual rape in the prison indicate that the reform is not doing what it was intended to—that is, to relieve the sexual deprivation of prisoners. The new system "creates a need" for two saleable services, pimping and offering protection to inmates against the attacks of their sex-starved "companions in misfortune."

Vocational rehabilitation has also been transformed into "an object of traffic." Pérez writes: "All prisoners with a good record have the right to jobs. And it is in their interest to accept positions because they can reduce their sentences this way. But jobs are auctioned off to the highest bidder. The administrative personnel sell them. There are hundreds of cases of prisoners who have been in prison for ten years and have not been able, because of lack of resources, to get

work or a position. On the other hand, some prisoners turn up in choice jobs the day after they arrive."

Some rules of the capitalist economy are less camouflaged in the prison situation than in the outside world. "One of the most expensive jobs to buy is a position in the choir or theater group. As fantastic as it may seem, the cost of choir jobs varies depending on the talent of the aspirant. If he has a bad voice, the job costs 800 pesos; if he has a good one, only 200 pesos."

As in the capitalist economy outside the walls, parasitic enterprise flourishes under the protection of the state. "Every ward has a store run by a prisoner, usually the head trustee, but not always. In some wards, there are even restaurants, like *El Corner* in Ward L. In these establishments the prisoners pay extortionate prices for everything. Credit is offered . . .

"A franchise costs from 5,000 to 7,000 pesos, which is paid to the administration, plus a weekly payment of 300 pesos. But the franchise holders get service in return. The administration strictly forbids all visitors from bringing goods into the prison. This . . . forces the prisoners' families to buy gifts at twice what they would cost on the street."

Despite state ownership of Lecumberri, even food and medical-dental care are distributed according to the free enterprise system. "The food the Federal District Department sends to feed the prisoners is sold. There is a particularly feverish traffic in cooking oil, eggs, and flour, which the Federal District Department provides free."

This system makes the prison "a gold mine" for the officials, Pérez says, but it results in inadequate nutrition for most prisoners. "The inmates do not receive all their food requirements. . . . Only when journalists or functionaries visit are they given their full ration. Even the head trustees complain openly about this situation."

There is no "socialized medicine" in this state institution. "Dentists . . . charge for making extractions. The

usual fee is seven pesos. If they are not paid, they pull the patient's molars without benefit of anesthetic."

Pérez gives this example of the results of business medicine inside Le-cumberri. "According to official data there is not a single case of intestinal parasitosis in the entire prison. But the honest doctors in the prison—and there are a number—say that at least 85 percent of the prison population suffers from the most serious forms of such infection."

Prisoners who have money can avoid most of the discomforts of penitentiary life. "All newly arrived prisoners are sent to the common cell and forced to do a daily detail, that is, to clean the area thoroughly and do all the most humiliating work. But the trustees will release prisoners from this obligation for 200 pesos a week.

"In Ward L, however, the price is higher. The trustees charge 900 pesos for freeing prisoners from the detail."

For those inmates who cannot escape the deprivations and degradation of confinement, the market system offers consolations. "Cocaine is openly sold in the infirmary, at very high prices. . . . You can buy anything in prison. It has reached the point in Ward H where wine prices are openly advertised. Thus . . . a bottle of Presidente costs 200 pesos and a bottle of Castillo rum 175."

Drugs and alcohol have obvious commercial advantages as commodities in a cash-poor market. They offer superior "consumer motivation," as a modern capitalist economist might put it.

But the dividends of this traffic for corrupt guards and officials are not only financial. The desperate scramble for money to support addiction and alcoholism divides the prisoners among themselves and makes it easy for the guards and their cronies to manipulate them. How this system works was described by one of the victims of the January 1, 1970, pogrom against the political prisoners.

"All of the common prisoners were armed with pipes, rods, knives, and machetes. The administration stooges who led them, mostly drug addicts or alcoholics, were completely out of their heads."*

* The Mexican and world press carried reports on how the prison authorities used demoralized common convicts to attack

The drug and alcohol trade may explain the greed of the common convicts, which caused the political prisoners the most suffering. Thievery was the main objective of the common-law prisoners, according to the article cited above: "Once these wards were occupied, the administration opened the gates of the other common prisoners' wards and gave them the go-ahead to loot wards C and M. Both wards were systematically, coolly, and unhurriedly sacked by the common prisoners, who were backed up by the guards. Absolutely all the prisoners' belongings were taken . . ."

The Mexican prison's unique contribution to the field of consumer financing, specifically debt collection, may also help to explain why the common convicts were so ready to rob the political prisoners, who were jailed for fighting the very system that abuses and degrades them.

Pérez writes: "The systems of collecting debts . . . are medieval. Debtors can be taken to the punishment cell, La Pando. It is extremely small, built of metal, and located over the boilers, so that it gets incredibly hot. It is totally dark and all kinds of vermin breed there. It is never clean and there is a layer of packed-down filth covering the floor that is already several centimeters thick. Prisoners under punishment are kept there for days. . . . Spending only a few hours in La Pando, the prisoners say, is the most horrifying experience imaginable. . . ."

"But things don't stop there. Some prisoners put off payment because their relatives didn't bring them the money in time. These men are whipped by the head trustees. As a warning to others, they are forced to kneel down and then the trustees beat them with clubs. If they don't pay after that, the trustees call the guards in. They take the prisoners out to the playing fields and 'practice' the most refined tortures there . . ."

"But it may happen that even then a prisoner won't pay, not because

a relatively small group of political prisoners weakened by a long hunger strike. "General Puentes Vargas [the warden], in person . . . pulled out his revolver and fired several times into the air to urge on the common prisoners who were following him," reported one of the victims; "and he ordered them to attack us. All of the companeros present heard his command." ("We Accuse the Government," *Intercontinental Press*, February 2, 1970.)

he doesn't want to but because he can't. Then the trustees and the guards order one of their cronies or bodyguards to kill him. This is why there are so many murders in the prison. . . ."

"A final form of collecting debts consists of throwing the debtor from the first floor of the ward, about twenty-one feet. Many are killed this way, or left crippled, not out of any merciful inclinations, but as a living example to welschers." □

Ceylon

Austerity for All —Except Capitalists

In his budget speech last November, Ceylon's Finance Minister N.M. Perera announced: "Austerity must be the keynote of our social thinking during the next few years." [See *Intercontinental Press*, November 30, 1970, page 1048.]

Under the administration of Perera, a representative of the reformist Lanka Sama Samaja party in Sirimavo Bandaranaike's bourgeois "United Front" government, the Ceylon economy may be austere for all, but some are required to be more austere than others. "Austerity" for corporations appears to mean freedom from paying taxes.

B. H. S. Jayewardene reported in the January 23 issue of the Hong Kong weekly *Far Eastern Economic Review* that the government has decided to extend a five-year tax holiday to the following categories: industries producing "essential" commodities not previously produced in the country; industries in rural areas; "export-oriented" industries; and industries that are "essentially of a pioneering nature."

In case this brand of "austerity" has not been sufficient to reassure capitalists who might have been fooled by the United Front's "socialist" election propaganda, the government also hastened to give promises of further benefits. Jayewardene wrote:

"At a conference with private industrialists recently the permanent secretary to the ministry of planning and employment, H.A. de S. Gunasekera, said his interpretation of government policy was that both the public and private sectors would be partners in the country's development."

Noticeably absent from "partnership" with the government is the Ceylon working class, which with its votes put the United Front in power. Perera apparently intends to compensate the workers for their exclusion by giving them more than their share of austerity. □

Women constitute 11 percent of the non-agricultural labor force in India.

Solidarity with Angela Davis and Burgos Defendants!



ANGELA DAVIS

[The following declaration by a number of Mexico's political prisoners was published in the December 31, 1970, issue of the Mexico City journal *Solidaridad*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

We political prisoners in Lecumberri

jail in the Federal District express our complete solidarity with the victims of the Francoist dictatorship being tried before the Burgos military court. We salute the revolutionary attitude these compañeros have taken in confronting the fascist tribunal.

We support and call on all others to support the campaign for the release of the Burgos defendants and all

political prisoners in Spain. This fight is part and parcel of the struggle of the Spanish people and workers in Spain and throughout the world to overthrow the Franco dictatorship, the ally of Yankee imperialism and world capitalism.

We also express our solidarity with compañera Angela Davis, now imprisoned in the United States for her activity in the Black movement and threatened with extradition to California where she faces a possible death penalty. We demand the release of Angela Davis and all revolutionary activists imprisoned in the jails of American imperialism.

We call on the workers movement, the student movement, the unions and workers organizations, the student comités de lucha [struggle committees], and all the workers, anti-imperialist, and people's parties and organizations to take a stand in defense of the Burgos defendants and Angela Davis. We call on these organizations to express their support in the form of resolutions, mass protest meetings and assemblies, and to make every possible demonstration of solidarity with these political prisoners and condemnation of the Francoist dictatorship and Yankee imperialism.

Lecumberri Jail, December 10, 1970.

Signed: Francisco Colmenares, Gerardo Peláez, Víctor Rico Galán, Adolfo Gilly, Mario Rechy, Manuel Marcué Pardiñas, Oscar Fernández Bruno, Luis E. del Toro y N., Miguel Cruz, Roberto Iriarte, Gilberto Balam, Francisco Luna, Rolf Meiners, Antonio Gershenson, César Catalán, Agustín Montiel, Gumersindo Gómez Cuevas, Pedro Castillo Salgado, Adán Nieto Castillo, César Nicolás Molina, Salvador Zarco, Fausto Trejo Fuentes, Raúl Contreras, Rolando Segura, Carlos Martín del Campo, Pablo Alvarado Barrera, Antulio Fernández, Juan Robles Armenta, Pedro Estrada, Raúl Álvarez, Jesús González Guardado, Eduardo Valle, Florencio López Osuna, Fidel Valdovinos, Rafael Jacobo García, Luis González Sánchez, Ernesto Olvera, Luis González de Al-

ba, Gerardo Unzueta, Ramón Danzós Palomino, Salvador Martínez della Roca, Germán A. Díaz, Rafael Servín, Antonio Morales, Fernando Granados

Cortés, Américo Saldivar, Joel Arriago, Eduardo de la Vega de Avila, Gilberto Rincón Gallardo, Arturo Martínez Nateras, Eduardo Montes, José

Oviedo, Rubén Valdespino, Prisciliano Torres Prieto, Rodolfo Echeverría, Zeferino Chávez, Prisciliano Pérez Anaguiano, Servando Dávila Jiménez.

Now Let's Get Them All Freed!

17 Mexican Political Prisoners Win Release

Making its first significant concession to protests against the political repression, the new Mexican government of President Luis Echeverría released seventeen critics of the regime on bail January 26. These persons had been imprisoned since the student and popular movement of 1968 was met with massacres and sweeping arrests.

The group released included the leading scholar and educator Eli de Gortari, Professor César Nicolás Molina Flores, Romeo González, Félix Lucio Hernández, Antonio Pérez Sánchez, Pedro Castillo Salgado, and Roberto Avendaño. All of them had been held in Lecumberri prison, except the one woman of the group who had been confined in the Cárcel de Mujeres (Women's Jail).

The release of the seventeen was abrupt and obviously political in character. Late in the evening of January 26, the warden of Lecumberri told the prisoners, without any advance indication, that they were free. He ordered them to leave the prison forthwith. Bail of 500 pesos each had been provided by some unknown benefactor.

Because of the lateness of the hour, most of the prisoners were unable to arrange for friends or relatives to pick them up. Those who had no money were obliged to find their way home on foot.

The government was as contemptuous of legal norms in freeing the prisoners as it had been in jailing them in the first place, *Intercontinental Press's* Mexico City correspondent reports. The seventeen were ordered released by Federal District Court judges on a motion by the prosecution, that is, the state repressive apparatus. However, by that time their case had gone to a higher court, the Tribunal Unitario, which alone had the legal authority to release them.

It was clear that the government's action represented a grudging concession to the broad campaign for immediate release of the political prisoners. The academician Eli de Gortari, for example, was apparently jailed only because of a sweeping witch-hunt against all well-known leftist and progressive intellectuals.

After more than two years, this sort of obscurantist hysteria could be expected to wane, making such imprisonment of "ideological corrupters" increasingly embarrassing to the government and a source of division within ruling-class circles themselves.

For several months the Mexican regime has shown signs of discomfort under the heat of public condemnation of its repressive policies. But it has also been apparent that the government was reluctant to relax its suppression of political opponents.

During the presidential campaign in late 1970, Echeverría cultivated the impression that he would call a halt to the political victimizations and release the prisoners. He was careful, however, to make no commitments.

On December 17, less than three weeks after Echeverría's inauguration, the Mexican one-party press tried to create the illusion that a large group of political prisoners had been set free. In fact, all that was involved was a change in the formal status of fifty-six persons charged with offenses related to the 1968 movement. They were already at liberty.

The government's latest move, a partial but real concession, indicates that the pressure on the regime has continued to build up. The release of the seventeen came in the midst of new disclosures embarrassing to the regime.

In its January 22 issue, the popular Mexico City magazine *Sucesos para Todos* published an article giving a

detailed picture of the all-pervasive brutality and corruption in Lecumberri.

In the last week of January, Amnesty International, an eminently respectable civil-liberties organization, which even the Mexican witch-hunters could not accuse of having leftist sympathies, announced the results of its investigation into the 1968 jailings of student and intellectual leaders.

Despite the Mexican government's claims that the persons arrested were common criminals, Amnesty International found that "the prisoners are being held not because they can be proved guilty of criminal offenses but because of their membership or support for left-wing organizations that have opposed the policies of the regime."

Also at the end of January, a prominent French lawyer, Mrs. Nicole Dreyfus, accused the Mexican government of torturing political prisoners and intimidating their families. Mrs. Dreyfus had conducted an on-the-spot investigation for the International Association of Democratic Lawyers and the International Association of Catholic Lawyers.

The Mexican government's belated and partial concession should encourage every defender of civil liberties to increase the pressure for releasing all the political prisoners. By this move and the way it was carried out, the regime further exposed the political nature of its persecution of supporters and sympathizers of the 1968 movement. The manner in which the seventeen political prisoners were released did not leave a shadow of doubt about the servile role of the Mexican judiciary.

Demands for the release of all the political prisoners can be sent to President Luis Echeverría, Palacio Nacional, Mexico 1, D. F., Mexico. □

To Jack Borut—In Appreciation

By Joseph Hansen

James J. Borut, who was known to his comrades in the Socialist Workers party under the pen name of Ed Wilde, died January 10 of complications following an operation for cancer of the lung.

Most of the new generation of revolutionists will hardly have heard of him. Still, he was one of the old-timers of the Trotskyist movement to whom they owe a considerable debt.

Let me begin by mentioning that he was the translator into English of A. Leon's study, *The Jewish Question—A Marxist Interpretation*.

He was the translator, too, of many Marxist theoretical and political articles that appeared over the years, particularly in the *International Socialist Review*, its predecessor *Fourth International*, and more recently *World Outlook* (now *Intercontinental Press*).

Jack was born in New York City on May 9, 1905. His parents, immigrants from Poland, found life in the Lower East Side not as promising as they may have been led to anticipate, but they sought to make it possible for their children to become rooted in the new homeland.

After Stuyvesant High School, Jack went to Cornell University. Architecture or medicine were his first choices, but he turned from them to a field he found more congenial, French literature, graduating in 1926 with honors.

As a Phi Beta Kappa, an academic career seemed assured to him. Members of the French faculty at Cornell suggested that he attend the Sorbonne. They even sought to help him in this financially.

The independent turn of mind that was so characteristic of Jack led him to reject the offer. Nevertheless, he decided to go to Paris.

He lived there for about a year on his own, making a meager living translating English subtitles on the Hollywood silent movies of the time into French.



JACK BORUT

One of the prominent figures among the American exiles in the art and literary circles of Paris in those days was Alexander King, already a celebrity as an illustrator. King became interested in Black culture, took a trip to Africa, and on his return gave a talk in Paris on the subject.

Jack attended out of curiosity. The outcome was an enduring friendship and introduction into the literary and artistic circle in New York of which King was a central figure.

Among those in this group whom Jack met upon returning to the United States was Usick Vanzler (John G. Wright), who was later to become an outstanding theoretician of the American Trotskyist movement and one of Leon Trotsky's close collaborators.

The Great Depression radicalized this circle, as it did many other intellectuals, bringing them to the central

question of our time—the necessity for a socialist revolution. They found themselves confronted with the complex programmatic problems relating to organizing such a revolution.

Alexander King founded and edited a monthly magazine of "satire and humor" called *Americana*, the first issue being dated February 1932. This was one of the many "little magazines," corresponding in the thirties to the "underground press" of today.

Within a few issues, James J. Borut was listed as "president" of "Americana Group, Inc.," publishers of this colorful monthly. Among the contributors were Peggy Bacon, Miguel Covarrubias, E.E. Cummings, George Grosz, Irving Kolodin, José Clemente Orozco, S.J. Perelman, Gilbert Seldes, John Sloan, William Steig, James Thurber, and Art Young.

Like most of the "little magazines," *Americana* represented a transitional phase for some of America's intellectuals as they probed deeper into the economic and social contradictions underlying the Great Depression.

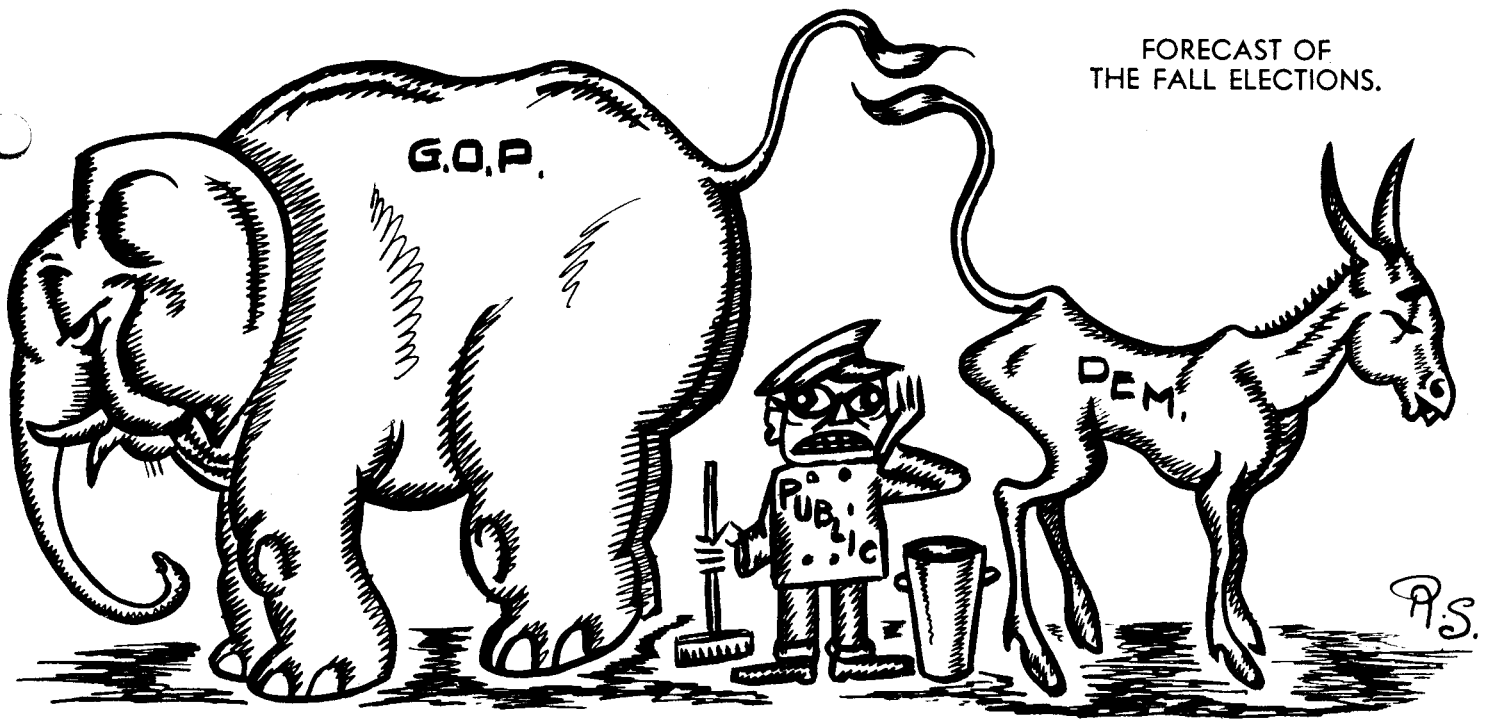
Jack Borut was one of those who moved in the direction of Trotskyism, the decisive influence in his case—turning him away from any experimentation with Stalinism—being André Malraux's revolutionary novel *Man's Fate*.

Usick Vanzler, his companion Edith Konikow, and Edith's mother, Antoinette Konikow, one of the pioneers of the women's liberation struggle in the United States, completed the essential process in winning Jack to Trotskyism.

This was in the days of the Communist League of America, a predecessor organization in the early thirties of the Socialist Workers party.

Jack Borut's companion, Genya, who survives him, came to Trotskyism through a different series of accidents. Trying to locate her union contingent in the May Day parade of 1934 (the New York labor move-

FORECAST OF
THE FALL ELECTIONS.



Cartoon from Vol. 1, No. 1 (February 1932) issue of *Americana* indicates the magazine's attitude toward the elections of that year. In their historic confrontation, the Republican and Democratic candidates, Herbert Hoover and Franklin Roosevelt, did about as expected by *Americana*.

The parallel with today's elections hardly requires comment. Nevertheless, one change should be noted.

The "white wing" in the center, a universal symbol of the chore of keeping the streets free from pollution, is no longer part of the American scene. He has been replaced by the mechanical street sweeper.

It is open to question whether this modern gadget marks an advance, in view of the explosion of garbage that has accompanied the "second industrial revolution."

ment used to hold giant marches in observance of this annual labor holiday), she was attracted by the militant banners and slogans of a rather small group and joined them.

As she marched with these spirited youths, she discovered that they were "Trotskyists."

After meeting Jack in February 1935, Genya remembers most vividly, so far as politics goes, the factional struggle inside the Socialist party that led to the formation of the Socialist Workers party.

A new generation of radical youth, repelled by Stalinism, had formed a left wing in the Socialist party and were recruiting rather rapidly. Many of them were sympathetic to the Trotskyists but thought that they, too, ought to join the Socialist party under the general invitation issued by the centrist Norman Thomas leadership to build an "all-inclusive" party.

The Trotskyists responded to this invitation, bringing fresh vigor to the Socialist party left wing.

The hardened right-wing Social

Democrats, fearing loss of their domination of the party, soon opened a factional struggle against the Trotskyists.

The battle was conducted on a national scale but was particularly virulent in New York. Jack and Genya, of course, were in the thick of it. The outcome was a split, a large section of the left wing of the Socialist party joining with the Trotskyists to launch the Socialist Workers party in January, 1938.

During the worst depression years, Jack belonged to the great army of the unemployed. The battles put up by these millions won concessions from the Roosevelt administration, including jobs on "make work projects." Getting in on this, Jack brought home \$23.86 a week until he was fired.

Not a few senior citizens will recall what a disaster that could signify in the thirties. Fortunately, one of Jack's friends tipped him off about an opening as a radio technician in a local broadcasting station. In theory Jack

was perfectly acquainted with the difference between a soldering iron and a pair of wire cutters, but not in practice. He took the job, nonetheless.

With the help of technical books available in the public library and trial-and-error methods on the job, he became a highly skilled radio technician.

He kept up with developments in the field, to the profit of some of his friends who were attracted to the "hi-fi" movement when it first began as a "do it yourself" project. In his quiet way, it amused Jack to prove to the "golden ear" addicts what can be done with an inconspicuous six-inch speaker in a New York apartment, provided you have an amplifier constructed with proper circuits. But then Jack was a "golden ear" man himself, a lover of classical music, possessing an unusually large collection of recordings.

As political activists, Jack and Genya belonged to the Queens branch of the Socialist Workers party, which was

established in a period of expansion during the war.

Had this expansion continued, Jack would undoubtedly have been brought at one point or another into full-time activity on the *International Socialist Review*. The rise of McCarthyism precluded that.

Instead of continued expansion, the generation of Trotskyists to which Jack belonged had to learn the meaning of *retrenchment*, a lesson the older generation passed on with some agony.

The combination of McCarthyite witch-hunting and economic prosperity induced relative quiescence in the class struggle. Worst of all, this lasted for an unprecedented number of years. Nothing like it had ever been seen before in the American labor movement.

The years of witch-hunting and political ebb in the labor movement eroded the entire radical movement in the United States. That the Trotskyist movement, without a periphery of financial sympathizers, was able to survive at all was a near miracle.

The near miracle is to be credited to the Jack Boruts, who understood the situation and who knew that the outcome depended in part on their doggedness and what they were able to contribute, however small it might be under the difficult circumstances the movement faced.

Jack put a regular financial contribution as his No. 1 obligation. In relation to his wages it was substantial — and never failing.

In addition, within the limitations

of maintaining his job under the witch-hunt and assuring fulfillment of family obligations that came his way, he took certain assignments. He did not rate these according to "recognition," "importance," or "glamor." His view was that he was expending human labor power, and so long as it contributed to the overall political defense or advancement of the movement, it was equal to anyone else's expenditure of labor power for the same general purpose.

As a translator he was excellent, not only in doing justice to the original but in conscientiousness in assuring objective accuracy. He spent innumerable hours in the library checking sources, having learned through hard experience that the most articulate theoreticians and writers can be spectacularly sloppy in copying down statistics, quotations, citing page numbers, dates, names, and even titles.

The same concern for accuracy was evident in his work as an indexer, a task that fell his way year after year. If a job needed to be done, it had to be done right.

Although for many years Jack could not engage in the intense political activity he would have preferred, he followed developments in the world Trotskyist movement with close attention. He was interested in everything affecting its fortunes, including the internal differences that developed from time to time.

He was not what could be called a "factionalist." His primary concern was the underlying issues that sometimes become manifest in unexpected forms. He could be counted on to make up

his mind independently, paying little attention to who might be in the majority or minority at a given moment.

Sharply intelligent, cool and urbane classical in taste, easily led to laughter at the ironies of our times, a determined opponent of fakery and pretentiousness of any kind, Jack was a friend to treasure. Politics to him was but part of the general culture every educated person should have. But politics, in his view, had priority. The only road along which humanity can hope to solve the problems of poverty, war, prejudice, and degradation of civilization, everything that goes against the scientific outlook, is political struggle. This made him a revolutionary socialist.

Jack's last days were days of torture, a consequence, he thought, of his long years as an inveterate cigarette smoker. He asked Genya to use her influence to get anyone she knew to stop the habit.

Yet, a realist to the end, considering that his chances for survival were very slim, he still wanted to know the latest news on the political front. His last message to his friends and comrades was to give them "all his love"; to which he added his pleasure over the news that the long battle to win Hugo Blanco's freedom had been won.

Jack believed that in the life process, death should be considered to be the counterpart of birth, and ought not to be dreaded, even if it is only natural to try to hold it off as long as possible. For himself, he was against any funeral services, preferring simple cremation, leaving out the flowers. This was done, as he wished it. □

Czechoslovak Witch-hunt

Trial Imminent for Youths Accused of 'Trotskyism'

According to reports reaching the West, twenty-five young persons, held for more than a year in Czechoslovak prisons on charges of belonging to a "Trotskyite" organization, were scheduled to go on trial in Prague February 8.

An Agence France-Presse dispatch from Prague in the January 30 Paris daily *Le Monde* credited "a generally well informed source" with the news

that the student case would finally be brought to court. The prisoners were arrested in December, 1969. Agence France-Presse gave this background to the case:

"In January 1970, the Czech press reported discovery of a 'Trotskyist' organization hostile to the state, whose aim was to disrupt the process of consolidation and to create a political crisis. According to [the Prague daily]

Rude Pravo, the goal of this organization, known as the 'Revolutionary Socialist party of Czechoslovakia' and 'arising from the so-called Revolutionary Youth Movement,' was to 'overthrow the socialist regime not only in Czechoslovakia but also in other socialist countries, including the Soviet Union.' The newspaper also specified that this movement was mainly composed of students and young workers,

and that it was active primarily among the steel workers, the printers, and among students."

The Husak regime has long pledged that there would be no show trials of political dissidents such as there were in the Stalinist purges of the Novotny era. The present government's words have been belied by its actions, however, and since 1969 a growing number of fighters for socialist democracy have been jailed. A broad spectrum of political figures have fallen victim to the witch-hunt. These range from members of the ruling bureaucracy itself who merely wanted to institute a few reforms, to genuine revolutionists who called for a return to the program of Lenin in face of the August 1968 Soviet invasion.

The biggest wave of arrests, including the youths about to go on trial, occurred in December 1969 when 1,700 persons were "investigated" by the police. No figures were ever released on the number of arrests [see "Czechoslovakia Today—An Interview in Prague," on page 140 of this issue of *Intercontinental Press*].

The specific accusations against the twenty-five "Trotskyites," outlined in a communiqué issued January 12, 1970 [see *Intercontinental Press*, January 26, 1970, page 64] by the Czech Ministry of the Interior, were entirely limited to the dissemination of political ideas. The students were charged with such "crimes" as having "distributed various publications," having maintained political contacts abroad, and having received "Trotskyist literature" from outside Czechoslovakia.

For the Stalinist bureaucrats in Prague and Moscow, "Trotskyite" is used primarily as an epithet, synonymous with "heretic" for the Inquisition of the Middle Ages. It may refer to anyone in opposition to the totalitarian-minded party chiefs.

It is significant that the Husak regime has waited so long to bring its youthful captives before a court. It seems clear that the trial of the "Trotskyites" is to be a test case for the bureaucrats. If it can be brought off without arousing too much internal and international protest, more show trials can be expected to follow. Many of the writers and unionists who played important roles in the "Prague Spring" of 1968 are now under indictment. They will have their turn in the

dock if Husak succeeds in railroading the student activists to prison.

Solidarity has already been expressed for the twenty-five youths in an open letter to the Czechoslovak government drafted December 14 by a number of well-known European intellectuals and left-wing figures, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Ernest Bloch, François Maspéro, and Ernest Mandel.

The open letter, which is still being circulated for additional signatures, demands the immediate release of the prisoners accused of belonging to the "Revolutionary Socialist party," and appeals for "a public political discussion . . . on their activities and views." [See *Intercontinental Press*, January 11, 1971, page 24, for the full text.]

Claim Polish Police Used Dum-Dum Bullets

Gdansk Doctor Tells How Hundreds Died

The Polish police who attacked demonstrating workers in December may have used dum-dum bullets, according to an "eyewitness report" published in the January 25 issue of the West German weekly *Der Spiegel*.

The magazine printed the account of a doctor in Gdansk, who spent "four days and nights without interruption" caring for the wounded. The doctor said:

"The wounds were almost always very severe. With many of the fatally wounded, the first glance revealed no serious injury: the bullet holes, usually in the belly or the lower part of the body, were small and could not be a cause of death. We secretly dissected the corpses and found the intestines torn to shreds, which leads to the conclusion that these victims were shot down with special ammunition."

The doctor also noticed that many of the police were in a peculiar condition:

"It was medically determined that some of the wounded policemen who were brought to the hospital were in a state of intoxication that was not caused by alcohol: their pupils were enlarged and there was foam on their lips. . . . It was clear that these persons had been prepared for the attack

The signers of the appeal declare that it was "slanderous to accuse these young comrades of counterrevolutionary activity. Even though we do not fully agree with their views, we believe that these views must be open to public discussion in a socialist country. . . ."

"These young comrades, some of whom have spent their twentieth birthday in prison, are paying the price for the Czechoslovak leadership's inability to decide whether or not it should stage political trials."

"Furthermore," the appeal warns, "some signs indicate that new and still more absurd accusations are to be fabricated at the hearings in order to justify the long pretrial detention of the prisoners." □

with tranquilizers or stimulants."

The police brutality against the demonstrators was not limited to gunfire, the doctor said. He treated one boy who suffered a fractured skull and other broken bones from police clubs. Others had similar experiences:

"A relative of mine, a boy who is a student in a technical high school, did not take part in the demonstrations, but was arrested by the police and taken to the precinct, where they held him for twenty-four hours and then released him.

"In the courtyard of the precinct stood a line of uniformed police. The boy had to run the gauntlet while they beat him with truncheons. All the teeth in his upper jaw were knocked out. Others who were arrested with him went through the same experience. Some of them suffered broken bones."

The doctor reported a death toll of 300 in the nearby city of Gdingen. In Gdansk, ". . . refrigerated trucks normally used for transporting meat, fish, or fruit drove through the streets" to gather the corpses. The authorities insisted on burial at once and permitted only two members of the immediate family to be present. □

Spain After the Burgos Trial

[We have translated the following editorial from the first issue in 1971, No. 47, of *Quatrième Internationale*.]

* * *

Since the big strike wave of 1962, the most important Spain has experienced since the end of the civil war, the Francoist regime has undergone a long period of chronic crisis. Although marked from time to time by abrupt explosions, this crisis has, in general, been contained within an evolutionary, nonrevolutionary framework. Francoist bonapartism maintained itself owing to an equilibrium of forces. The traditional conservative elements were too weak to halt this evolutionary process but still too strong to fall prey to inner decay or to passively abdicate. The mass movement was too strong to be suppressed, but too weak to overthrow the dictatorship spontaneously, without effective revolutionary organization.

Behind this equilibrium of political forces loomed the historic crisis of social classes. The bourgeoisie is too weak to permit a new legal expansion of the workers movement in a framework even of decadent bourgeois democracy—to say nothing of classical bourgeois democracy. The new generations of workers, no longer weighed down by the defeat of 1937-39 and the long period of fascist terror during and after it, are not yet battle-hardened enough and experienced enough, and, above all, do not have an effective enough leadership to spike a well-oiled repressive apparatus—no matter how backward this apparatus may seem in comparison with the ones in France, the United States, or other advanced imperialist countries. Franco's "genius," "mastery of the art of governing," and "good luck," which inspire the admiration of so many superficial commentators, are merely manifestations of this equilibrium.

The equilibrium is unstable, undermined by the evolutionary development itself, which is constantly and

consistently changing the relationship of forces in one direction only—toward structurally weakening the traditional reactionary forces, whose strength made it possible to unleash the military-fascist coup d'etat of July 1936; structurally reinforcing the working class, the sole consistent and effective foe of the Francoist dictatorship.

The evolutionary development of recent years has undoubtedly delayed the revolution. Economic growth has created a margin, however narrow, for improving the standard of living. But, above all, this development has fostered illusions about a more or less irreversible "liberalization" of the regime, illusions which only experience, that is, time, could wipe out. But this same evolutionary development has also prepared the ground for a revolution that will be more deepgoing and thorough. The revolution will cut the more deeply insofar as this evolutionary process is gradually clearing away all intermediary "solutions," more and more directly counterposing the two great antagonistic social forces emerging from the transformation of old Spain—the big bourgeoisie on one side and the proletariat on the other.

The year 1970 has been a turning point in this process in more than one respect. For the first time since 1936 a wave of mass political strikes has swept over the peninsula. For the first time since 1936, if not 1931, the urban petty bourgeoisie has lined up en masse on the side of the proletariat. For the first time since 1936, the shift in the relationship of class forces has shaken the stability of the political forces on which the dictatorship rests, producing an internal crisis of the regime.

It is too early to predict the outcome of this latest intensification of the crisis, although the commutation of the sentences of the six Burgos defendants is an indication. However, it seems no matter how the regime evolves, whether in the direction of "stiffening" the repression, increased

"liberalization," or a combination of the two—or dancing back and forth between the two poles of the Francoist policy—that such development now works to promote an increasing politicalization of the masses, that is, in favor of the revolutionary overthrow of the dictatorship. In this sense, we can correctly speak of the twilight of Francoism, Francoism with or without Franco.

|

The chronic crisis the Francoist regime has experienced since the welling up of the strike wave in 1962 reflects the underlying contradictions of Spanish capitalism, magnified by the specific features of a slowly decaying military-bonapartist dictatorship.

The economic expansion, which has been and remains real, is clearly marginal with respect to the industrialized imperialist countries, that is, it is the product of an *imported* "prosperity." It tends to reproduce in an exaggerated way all the cyclical movements, however minor, of the international imperialist economy and especially the European imperialist economy.

Opening up the Spanish market to commodities from the rest of the capitalist countries is the precondition for "modernizing" Spanish capitalism and integrating it increasingly into the economy of capitalist Europe. But as a result, the native capitalists are continually confronted with competitors who produce better quality goods at lower prices.

Spain's balance of trade is therefore chronically in the red. This deficit feeds inflation, as it is fed by it. From the structural standpoint, the deficit is covered by income from tourists and the repatriation of the wages of Spanish emigrant workers, as well as by American financial aid (in exchange for military bases) and importing foreign capital.

The growth of the Spanish capitalist economy has therefore been given a peculiar spasmodic form. Every

phase of expansionist fever in the domestic economy (generally no more than a year in duration) produces inflation and an increased deficit in the balance of trade. Every cyclical downturn of the international imperialist economy immediately reduces the external resources needed to restore the equilibrium. Secondly, every worsening of the balance-of-payments situation, which results from the interaction of these two fundamental forces obliges the Francoist regime to tighten the screws and choke off the expansion by a deflationist policy. But since such a policy cannot help but aggravate social tensions, expansion is "resumed" as soon as there is the slightest reduction in the balance-of-payments deficit, thereby opening a new cycle of spasmodic development.

The reasons for this spasmodic development are not conjunctural but structural: the persistent weakness of Spanish capitalist industry relative to its foreign competitors, and the intensity of domestic social tensions. The first factor rules out long-term expansion without aggravating the balance-of-trade situation; the second rules out long-term deflation without risking an explosion in the country.

It is significant that in its desperate search for markets that the more developed capitalist powers will not try to take away, Spanish capitalism—which came to the phase of technological revolution too late—must turn toward the Arab countries, the West African countries, and . . . Poland (thus Franco and Gomulka exchanged favors all through 1969 and 1970, with the Polish bureaucracy not hesitating to break the Asturian miners' strike by delivering coal to Spain). That is, the perspectives opening up for Spanish capitalism on the big world markets are less than uninspiring. In 1969 the Common Market countries imported \$300,000,000 worth of food products and only \$260,000,000 worth of manufactured products from Spain! To Spain, these countries exported \$1,175,000,000 worth of manufactured goods and \$55,000,000 worth of food products.

There is an obvious interlocking between this fundamental economic contradiction of Spanish capitalism and its acute social contradictions. That is, the economy has been too backward and too unstable to create suf-

ficient margins of maneuver for reforms of the neocapitalist type.

Of course, with the undeniable economic growth of the decade just ended, the standard of living of the Spanish workers and toiling masses has risen somewhat. But it has not risen sufficiently to reduce two fundamental disparities—the gap between the real incomes of the different parts of Spain, and between Spanish real wages and real wages in the rest of capitalist Europe.

In 1969 the Banco Español de Crédito published an annual report on the Spanish market which contained numerous invaluable indications of the extremely uneven development among the different provinces and regions of Spain. The difference in the level of development between the richest regions (the Balearic Islands, Catalonia, and the Basque country) and the poorest regions (Ronda in Andalusia, Badajoz, and Jaen) is estimated at 1,000 percent. The scale of "coefficients of active wealth" goes from 16,600 for Madrid to 28 for Ayamonte (in the province of Huelva)! Per capita buying power in the poorest provinces barely equals 15 percent of that in the richest ones.

Massive emigration has partially concealed the extreme underemployment and poverty underlying these figures. But every deflationist thrust, every slowdown in expansion, every reflux of emigrants resulting from a recession or rise in unemployment abroad immediately makes this underemployment explosive.

On the other hand, to realize the enormous disparity that persists between Spanish wages and those in the rest of Europe, we need only note that the Spanish council of ministers has set the new minimum wage at 120 pesetas a day [69.8 pesetas equal US\$1], or 3,000 pesetas a month, and that this [monthly] sum is equivalent to 230 French francs, or US\$42. As early as 1962, the revolutionists demanded a minimum wage of 250 pesetas a day; today they are demanding a minimum daily wage of 200 pesetas.

This disparity between the Spanish and European wage rates is the expression at once of underemployment (of the industrial reserve army) and the dictatorship (the absence of real mass trade unions capable of forc-

ing the sale of labor-power at its value).

In exporting its unemployed, transforming them into a subproletariat and manual-labor force in other European capitalist economies, Spanish capitalism has created a temporary cushion. But as the emigrants return home, bringing with them needs and tastes acquired abroad, as they strive to get these incorporated into the minimum living standard, that is, into the value of labor-power in Spain, this cushion will no longer operate. The emigration of workers will be transformed into a source of conflagration.

The interlocking of the economic and social contradictions of Spanish capitalism has been the basis of the long life of the Francoist dictatorship. This pattern has ruled out any chance of the dictatorship actually transforming itself even into a "strong state" of the Gaullist type, to say nothing of a bourgeois "democracy."

The revival of mass militancy has made possible an incessant struggle for immediate demands. The essential function of the dictatorship has been to prevent any linkup or spread of these struggles, which would be fatal for this weak capitalist system. In the last analysis, so long as the combativity of the masses continues to mount, the Spanish bourgeoisie has no realistic prospects for survival except in the context of a dictatorship.

Bourgeois "liberals," Social Democrats, and reformists of every stripe—with the Spanish CP heading the pack—are of course trying to convince the ruling class that the contrary is true. But time and time again the bourgeoisie shows that it understands its own interests better than do its friendly advisers. The events since 1969, that is, since the declaration of the state of emergency, have been a very clear demonstration of this.

II

In recent years Francoist policy has generally been represented as wavering between two wings—Falangism of either the old (Solis) or new style (Fraga); and the Opus Dei technocratic, neocapitalist, "liberalizing" and "European" wing personified by the present planning minister Lopez Rodo

and the minister of foreign affairs Lopez Bravo.

The September 1969 cabinet shake-up, the designation of Prince Juan Carlos as Franco's successor, and the commutation of the death sentences of the six Burgos defendants have been depicted as a victory of the "liberal" wing over the Falangists. The declaration of the state of siege in 1969 and the street demonstrations in support of Franco after the sentencing in the Burgos trial have been represented as the revenge of the latter. The arbitrator's role that Franco has played, balancing off these two tendencies against each other for more than ten years, is supposed to have been taken over by the army. After the transformation of the fascist dictatorship into a bonapartist one, we were supposed to see it becoming a military dictatorship pure and simple (with or without a new coup d'etat).

This analysis obviously rests on real facts. The Falangist bureaucracy has seen its power decline constantly ever since the country emerged from its isolation; since the state industrial sector—which could flourish only under conditions of autarky and extreme protectionism—has been put on short rations; since foreign capital has pervaded the peninsula and Spain has been ruled in fact by a coalition of the big Spanish financial interests increasingly associated with the big international capitalist monopolies. That this coalition of interests finds itself more at home with the embezzling technocrats of Opus Dei than with the demagogic intriguers or brainless fascists of the Falange is obvious.

But this is only one aspect of the complex reality of capitalist Spain today. From another standpoint, the chiefs of Opus Dei and the financial groups are no less anxious than the heads of the army, the police, and the Falange to see order maintained at any price. After all, they have a lot more to lose in the event of a triumph of "subversion." They possess infinitely greater wealth and have proven themselves in a totally different class as specialists in graft and influence-peddling (e.g., the Matesa affair!) than the petty chiselers of the fascist hierarchy. *Thus, over and above the real differences separating the two wings of Francoism, they have*

a common interest—to prevent a social revolution and contain a mass movement threatening to become explosive.

In a period of calm, divergent points of view can appear between the two wings on the most suitable tactic to use to gain this end. The one wing advocates material concessions, semi-legalization of real unions, meeting material demands that tend to co-opt the workers into the system so as better to suppress political demands and the politicalization process. The other wing does not oppose such concessions; sometimes it even calls for more than the other side. But it objects to anything permitting independent activity by the masses, even on the trade-union reformist level.

But as soon as the activity of the masses steps up, the "struggle against subversion" logically shifts the center of gravity in the government toward the repressive wing. This was the case at the time of the first state of emergency proclamation in 1969. The same was true at the beginning of the agitation against the Burgos trial. What in certain aspects of the Spanish political situation seems to be two factions in the government also represents two combined forms used by the big monopolies in exercising power, alternating according to the trend in the relationship of forces.

In this sense, an open military dictatorship, a military coup d'etat (a "new 1936"), would not constitute an immediate solution for the contradictions besetting the Spanish bourgeoisie. In 1936 the problem was to use terror to smash a mass revolutionary movement which could strike for power. Even at that time, the undertaking was risky; it almost precipitated what it was designed to avoid. This attempt succeeded in fact only because of the bankruptcy and betrayal of the traditional working-class organizations. Today the problem is how to assure accelerated industrialization and at the same time prevent the proletariat, constantly more numerous, younger, and more combative, from fighting for wages and rights that Spanish capitalism is incapable of granting.

In this context, dismantling the dictatorship, that is, giving the workers more freedom to struggle, is no more

effective than tightening up the repression. Clandestine struggle is scarcely easier to canalize and contain than legal or semilegal struggle—the events of the last two years testify to this!—and repression in itself is incapable of preventing such combat. Open military dictatorship, even combined with demagogic social measures, offers no way out of the impasse. Any comparison with the Greece of the colonels is out of place. First of all, the weight of the working class is infinitely greater in Spanish society than in the Greek. Secondly, the dictatorship was installed in Greece after a period of increasing demobilization and demoralization of the masses. But in Spain the mass movement is expanding vigorously.

An additional factor supports the conclusion that the internal crisis of the dictatorship in recent weeks represents an extremely grave threat to the survival of Francoism. It is the fact that while the army attempted to play a different game than the government—for the first time since the establishment of the dictatorship—the game was by no means all of one piece. In fact, many signs indicate that the army high command was less disturbed by the worker and student street demonstrations than by the impact of the Burgos trials on the military itself. The camarilla of superior officers split between supporters of strong measures, supporters of clemency, and cliques irritated at the idea that the army had been made into a scapegoat by the Opus Dei ministers for the difficulties of the dictatorship.

Information coming out of Spain on reform and oppositionist movements in the ranks—including in the Burgos garrison itself—indicates that the movement of challenge is growing among the soldiers as well, bringing them into conflict with their officers.

Of course, it is at times when this challenging penetrates into the army that the most reactionary and stubborn officers always lose their heads and are most tempted to strike. But where can they strike and at whom? In view of the growing politicalization of the mass movement, which astounds the clandestine reformist leadership as much as the foreign

journalists, and considering the going over en masse of the middle classes (e.g., the merchants in Barcelona, Bilbao, and other places) to the side of the "challengers," it is probable that any stroke of force would increase the fissuring of the army rather than stop it.

The Spanish vanguard has been barely touched by the virus of constitutionalist and electoralist illusions which paralyzed the Brazilian masses in 1964 and the Greek masses in 1967. There is little risk that an escalation of repression will catch them unprepared. In fact, hasn't such a step-up already been tried with the declaration of the state of emergency in early 1969? Any hopeful super-Francos must be thinking that this did nothing to alter the immediate dilemma that Spanish capitalism must face. And if they are not, events can be counted on to bring this fact to their attention still more forcefully!

III

The crucial fact of 1970 in the history of the Francoist dictatorship is, in truth, the failure of the stepped-up repression inaugurated by the state of emergency proclamation. Less than two years after this declaration, in the second half of 1970, Francoist Spain had the largest number of strikers in its entire history. And since the preparations began for the Burgos trials, these strikes have more and more clearly taken a political turn.

It would obviously be a grave underestimation of the weaknesses of the Spanish workers movement to claim that the state of emergency had no effect. It enabled the dictatorship to strike hard blows against the worker and student organizations, which felt them all the more because these formations were semilegal (the national network of workers' commissions animated by the CP comes to mind first) or too weak organizationally (here one thinks of a whole series of young far-left groups composed primarily of students). The workers and revolutionary movement paid dearly in 1969 for the reformist and "liberalizing" illusions of the former and lack of seriousness of the latter with

respect to organization and the rules of clandestine work.

The dismantling of the workers' commissions, the arrests of many activists, and the disintegration of some "leftist" groups undoubtedly blocked the expansion of the mass movement in 1969. As a result, it became a banner year for Spanish capitalism in both the economic and social spheres. But the 1969 boom itself promoted a revival of workers struggles. Fundamentally, the working class was neither defeated nor demoralized by the state of emergency. A phase of regroupment had barely ended when new strikes erupted, sometimes better organized than before, and which did not fall into the snare of semilegality within the state unions.

Moreover, while the severe repression in 1969 momentarily increased the weight of the CP—the strongest and best diversified of the far-left groups and therefore the best able to withstand selective repression—it also speeded up the formation of a more battle-tested revolutionary vanguard which took the rules of clandestine work seriously and strove to build organizations better protected against the successive waves of arrests.

In this sense we are justified in speaking of the failure of the repressive policy applied from the beginning of 1969 to September of that year. *The historic result of this attempt has been the rise of increasingly political struggles that has marked the second half of 1970.* In the course of this upsurge, for the first time, the struggle against the repression, for the release of the political prisoners, and against the parody of justice in Burgos has moved ahead even of the struggle for better pay which is so necessary and so acute because of the living conditions of the Spanish proletariat. And this has occurred at a time when the economy has again been moving toward a recession.

Events then have taken care of deflating the reformist and "liberalizing" balloons better than the propaganda of the revolutionists could. Every attempt to divert the workers struggle toward purely trade-unionist forms of action and organization, in expectation that changes at the top of the

dictatorship would lead to its dismantling, has proved to be a criminal and suicidal policy. Life has taught the Spanish workers to link economic demands closely together with political and democratic ones, and to develop clandestine organizations for this purpose.

The Francoist dictatorship cannot be transformed into bourgeois democracy through "mass pressure." It must be overthrown by the direct revolutionary action of the masses. And while this revolutionary assault on the state may very well begin with a struggle for the most elementary democratic and economic demands, *it will inevitably be transformed into a process of permanent revolution which will put on the agenda not consolidating some constitutional monarchy or liberal republic, but creating a socialist democracy of workers councils, of soviets.* The big difference from 1931-36 is that the relationship of social forces in Spain and Europe is infinitely more favorable to the victory of such a proletarian socialist revolution today than it was thirty-five years ago.

But despite a less favorable relationship of forces, the victory of this revolution was perfectly possible in 1936, if a revolutionary leadership had consolidated itself and been recognized by the Spanish proletariat. And, while the more favorable relationship of forces today will no doubt assure a more prolonged period of hard-fought struggles, it will not by itself guarantee a revolutionary victory. As before, the factor of leadership, of a revolutionary party, remains absolutely decisive. This is what must be understood by the young revolutionists emerging from a tumultuous weeding-out process over the decade just concluded. They must devote all their efforts to surmounting this obstacle.

Building the revolutionary party in Spain today means concretely, on the *programmatic* level, waging an extremely rigorous struggle against all the Menshevik, neo-Menshevik, Khrushchevite, and not a few Maoist and left Social Democrat deformations concerning the nature of the Spanish revolution that is in preparation. It means tirelessly educating the workers vanguard to prepare for the

self-organization of the masses in committees and councils, first as organs of dual power and then as organs of struggle for workers power.

On the *strategic* level, building the revolutionary party means giving the organizational question the key importance it deserves today. It means tirelessly building a disciplined organization of the Leninist type, capable of withstanding the blows of repression, of centralizing the experiences of struggles at the national level, and gradually of centralizing the struggles themselves. It means building a party capable of distilling from these experiences and from a scientific analysis of Spanish capitalism a program of transitional demands capable of mobilizing the masses for the overthrow of the dictatorship and capitalism.

On the level of *general orientation*, building the revolutionary party requires advocating forms of struggles that foil all reformist maneuvers and enable a broadening vanguard to learn the practical lessons of revolutionary combat.

On the *tactical* level, carrying out this task means concretely gaining experience in using the best-formulated slogans, slogans that draw the maximum number of workers and students into independent class struggle. It means gaining practice in applying the united-front tactic, which makes it possible to unite all the workers in struggle without the revolutionists striking their colors, hiding their goals, or camouflaging their program. It also means understanding the prop-

er place in these tactics of mass struggle that must be accorded to democratic and national demands, as the events of November-December 1970 confirm. At the same time, building the revolutionary party requires understanding the proper place that the development of forms and techniques of mass self-defense occupies in mobilizing against a cruel and implacable dictatorship.

This task is possible only on the basis of the accumulated theoretical and practical capital of the revolutionary workers movement in Spain and worldwide. The revolutionary party that will be built will be the Spanish section of the Fourth International.

December 31, 1970.

Indira Gandhi's Police Scour Rural Areas

Clubs Instead of Jobs for West Bengal Peasants

By Chitta Mitra

Kalna, West Bengal
Unable to fulfill its pledge—made when President's Rule was imposed on West Bengal last March—to eradicate chaos, misrule, and anarchy by introducing a peaceful atmosphere into the state, Indira Gandhi's government has instead conducted a terror campaign against militant workers and peasants.

Public expectations, which ran high at the beginning of President's Rule, have been disappointed. The havoc in the economy that existed under the "United Front" [UF] government has continued and even grown worse.

The people of West Bengal suffered greatly during the United Front regime. The opportunist left parties in the UF, especially the CPI(M) [Communist party of India (Marxist)], preferred interparty clashes to class struggle and thus created panic and disorder in the state.

The CPI(M), which held the most important portfolios in the UF ministry—deputy chief minister, home (police), land and land revenue, education, industry, relief and rehabilitation—tried to strengthen itself in a short time by recruiting cadres from

all sections of the population, including hooligans and lumpen youth. To the distress of honest party members, these new cadres were permitted even to murder members and supporters of opponent parties. The latter retaliated in kind.

At the same time, the CPI(M) leaders posed as the only militant Marxist revolutionaries in the country. This disturbed the other reformist parties in the UF government. The pro-Moscow Communist party [CPI], the Bangla Congress (which represents the interests of the *jotedars* [capitalist peasants]), and other opportunist groups deserted the UF government in order to bring about its fall.

Among the people, expectations had been shattered by the CPI(M) leaders' deals with the big monopolists, their treacherous onslaughts against the Naxalbari peasant movement and militant workers in several mills and industries, and the plundering of poor peasants' lands in the rural areas.

All these factors helped bring an end to UF rule. The Bangla Congress, CPI, and other parties called for President's Rule. Thus a once-popular regime received a severe setback only

a few months after its election. It is very doubtful that it will recover in the next election.

The Gandhi government promised that under President's Rule it would give jobs to the unemployed, reopen closed mills and factories, initiate new enterprises, and carry out welfare projects. More than nine months have passed, but the promises remain unfulfilled.

The number of unemployed has increased more than under the UF regime. The number of jobless is officially given by the Employment Exchange offices as 600,000, of whom 80 percent are educated. According to experts, the real figure is much higher.

No new employment measures have been adopted. Since President's Rule was imposed, some 125 mills and factories have been closed, throwing more than 20,000 persons out of work. Of the 274 factories closed during UF rule, 164 remain shut.

Prices are soaring for all commodities, including essentials like food and clothes. Anarchy and insecurity rule everyday life: hooliganism, theft, da-

coities [violent robberies by gangs], and murder.

The ruling class blames the (Maoist) Naxalite cadres and supporters of the CPI(M) for this violence. With the implementation of the Prevention of Violent Activities Act, any suspect can be arrested without warrant or shot dead by the police. The CRP (Central Reserve Police), under the direction of the Indira Gandhi government, have killed hundreds of young workers, peasants, and city dwellers.

The precedent for this situation was set by the CPI(M) during the rule of the United Front. Deputy Chief Minister Jyoti Bose used armed police to suppress Maoist guerrilla activities and militant trade-union movements in some industries.

Now the CRP are attacking not only the Naxalites and the unfortunate young people suspected of being Naxalite supporters, but also many honest rank-and-file members of the CPI(M). Even college teachers have not been spared. For example, Professor Kalyan Bhattacharya, a progressive young lecturer at Kalna College, was recently arrested by the CRP. He is accused of committing murder at a time when he was really teaching in the college.

Gandhi's police are now scouring the rural areas, brutally suppressing any disturbance among the workers and poor peasants. During the UF ministry, the West Bengal branch of the Socialist Workers party [SWP—Indian section of the Fourth International] warned that the opportunist policies of the Stalinists were preparing the way for the present reaction.

At that time, SWP members were heckled, and even physically assaulted by CPI(M) recruits. In Bankura, where the SWP had launched a militant peasant movement, Jyoti Bose's police did everything they could in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent the movement from spreading.

Organized in the PSKS [Palli Shramik Krishak Sangh—Village Workers and Peasants Union], the movement seizes lands illegally held by the *jotedars*, and harvests and reaps collectively. The product is equally distributed among the peasants.

Under President's Rule, the persecution of the workers and peasants initiated by the UF has increased. Since mid-November, Gandhi's police have raided the homes of peasants, ransacked their households, and on six

occasions destroyed the office files in the PSKS headquarters. In several places they have used gunfire to terrorize the peasants.

During harvesting at Fulmati on November 24, police and *jotedars* fired two rounds and arrested eleven workers, including the PSKS volunteer captain, Banku. In Mukundapur on November 26 and December 19, 21, and 27, armed police invaded different villages, and attacked the peasants with clubs. They arrested many workers, including Anil Roy, the secretary of the local SWP unit; Gangadhar Roy, an old peasant of seventy years; Daran, Sambhu, Daktar Murmu, etc., all members of the PSKS.

Gandhi's police have been carrying out an intensive search for the Trotskyist peasant leader Jagdish Jha, one of the main organizers of the Bankura peasant movement. It is reported that district police officials and landlords have offered a reward of rupees 10,000 [rupees 7.5 equal US\$1] for his dead body. Seventeen frame-up charges, including murder, have been filed against Jha by the *jotedars* and police.

At dawn on December 14, fifty armed police raided the village of

Krisnapore, where the PSKS headquarters and Jha's house are located. Not finding Jha at home, the police destroyed his house, beat his children, and even brutally molested his ninety-seven-year-old mother. They also attacked old men and young women in the neighborhood.

When young peasants came to the defense of the victims, the police fired upon them without warning. Nagen Roy, the secretary of the Bankura district PSKS, was wounded in the chest, and Dukhit Roy, a landless worker, was shot in the leg.

Similar raids took place on December 18 and 27. Nagen Roy has been arrested and is now facing trial.

Some 200 militant peasant workers have been charged in twenty-five cases initiated under Gandhi's "progressive" regime, but the PSKS has not been intimidated. It is determined to cover the whole district with agitation for collective farming, for harvesting, reaping, and distributing the crops.

The local papers are careful to suppress any news about this movement. The SWP is virtually the only group working to bring it to the public attention.

January 15, 1971.

'Hooliganism' Reported in Albania

The Albanian government, chief European practitioner of Mao Tsetung Thought, appears to be experiencing its own cultural revolution—one somewhat different in form from the Chinese variety.

A Reuters dispatch printed in the January 17 *Los Angeles Times* reported that the Communist party newspaper *Zeri I Popullit* had commented "with surprising frankness" on a certain decline of law and order among the country's youth. *Zeri I Popullit* cited the example of young people who had forced a passenger train to make repeated unscheduled stops so that they could pilfer fruit from orchards along the route.

"While denying that Albania had a crime problem," Reuters said, "the newspaper castigated the fruit-pilfering as hooliganism and went on to condemn public indifference to the offense. It expressed concern over members of the public who, instead of attacking

hooliganism, objected to police action against the young offenders."

We are surprised that *Zeri I Popullit* was unable to put the finger on those responsible for the shocking decline in public morality. It is no wonder that youths are corrupted when capitalist-roaders, economists, and hidden traitors deliberately subject them to harmful influences like those described by Reuters:

". . . many of Albania's earlier austerity measures and prejudices—including a ban on miniskirts and hippie-length hair—have been modified or dropped to encourage the tourist trade and hard currency earnings."

Miniskirts! Long hair! Surely the Albanian workers and poor and middle peasants will rise up and, continuing the revolution under the great red banner of Maoism, overthrow such offenses against socialist morality. □

Czechoslovakia Today — An Interview in Prague

[Netherlands television reporter Dick Verkijk succeeded in filming an interview with four prominent anti-Stalinist personalities in Czechoslovakia August 9-13, 1970. One of the participants, Jiri Hochman, was facing trial at the time. Another, Vladimír Skutina, had been jailed on political charges but was free on medical grounds. Giving an interview to a representative of a Western television station constituted a daring political act for these Czechoslovak figures. It was also one of the few chances representatives of the anti-Stalinist opposition have had to present their views since the "normalization."

[In the period since the interview, Skutina has been returned to prison on the pretext that treatment is now available there for the thyroid condition from which he suffers. Hochman was to be tried October 15, three days after the interview was broadcast. But at the last minute his trial was indefinitely postponed.

[In view of the importance of this interview, the Amsterdam weekly *Vrij Nederland* published the full text in its January 16 issue, from which we have translated it.

[The views expressed in the interview are primarily those of the reformist current in Czechoslovakia. But the participants declared their solidarity with young activists accused of membership in the Revolutionary Socialist party, which represents the revolutionary Marxist opposition to the Stalinist dictatorship.]

* * *

[The participants introduce themselves.]

KS. Karl Sling, son of Ota Sling, student at the Prague Economics Institute, twenty years old.

JS. I am Jan Sling, the son of Ota Sling, twenty-seven years old, and a law student at Charles University in Prague.

JH. My name is Jiri Hochman, one of the former editors of the [banned] weekly *Reportér*.

VS. I am the former television journalist and editor *Vladimír Skutina*.

* * *

VS. I am ill and waiting at home for my trial on the charge of undermining the republic.

Verkijk. This is not your first time in prison, is it?

VS. No, it is the second time. I was arrested first under Antonin Novotny for so-called slander of the state. This time it is for a similar offense, only not for slandering the state but for slandering a friendly power.

Verkijk. What are you doing now *Mijnheer Hochman*? You are no longer a journalist; they forced you out. You had to stop publishing the "Reportér." What are you doing now?

JH. Well, since April or May 1969 when my publication was banned I have been living in my weekend cottage in North Bohemia. Since September 1969 I have been employed as a metalworker in a little shop in a town near my home. I have been on the sick list since January [1970] because I came down with tuberculosis. I am now waiting for my trial. It will come very soon, this September.

Verkijk. Do you know the charge yet?

JH. Yes, of course. I do not know the official text of the indictment, but judging from the question, I am accused of preparing . . .

Verkijk. An uprising?

JH. No . . . the term used is peculiar, quite peculiar, a technical term that is not known in the West.

Verkijk. Undermining?

JH. . . . Undermining . . . The official text says that I prepared to undermine the republic, among other

things, because I signed a petition that we sent last year to the state bodies in Czechoslovakia and the parliament.

We are now on a list of accused. Three persons on this list have been in prison since last August and September. Five of us were questioned but not jailed, so far.

Verkijk. Who are the three persons jailed? *Pachman* is one, isn't he?

JH. The chess champion Ludek Pachman; the prominent historian Dr. Tesár; former member of parliament Dr. Batek. The five not yet jailed are Dr. Vladimír Nepras, a former editor of *Reportér*; the writer Ludvík Vaculík . . .

Verkijk. Of "Literarny Listy"?

JH. . . . Yes. And the prominent Czech sociologist Professor Kohout—who must not be confused with the writer Pavel Kohout—and Karl Kincl, a former Prague television commentator. Kincl is out of it because after months of investigation they found out that he was in Italy at the time [during the August 1968 events].

Verkijk. Yes, that is how I remember it; that is right.

JH. And the playwright Vaclav Havel and myself.

Verkijk. And you, *Mijnheer Skutina*, are not in this group; your case is different. Why were you jailed?

VS. I have not yet been able to find out why I was arrested. It could have been in connection with the August 1968 broadcasts.¹ But anyway they have to find a scapegoat. For a year, however, the investigation has been in fact discontinued. And so far nothing they have accused us of could

1. Specifically a documentary on the invasion, broadcast by the Czechoslovak underground television network during the events. — IP

be shown—in legal terms—to be a criminal offense.

Verkijk. You are out now only on a furlough, because you are sick. Otherwise you would still be in jail.

VS. No doubt about it.

Verkijk. Jan Sling, you have been through a lot. You were nine years old when your father was executed.² That must have been a terrible shock. What happened to you after that?

JS. After my father was arrested, we—my mother was also arrested—were sent for twenty-eight months to a children's home, which was really more of a children's prison for youngsters whose parents had been arrested. After that we were exiled to an area in Northeast Bohemia near the Polish border.

After 1956 we lived in Prague. My first job was as a building worker. I was banned from attending a technical high school, and after my military service I worked as a laborer. Later I became a librarian and worked for my high-school diploma in night school. After the start of 1968 I was given permission to finish my high-school education.

Verkijk. So there were changes for the better finally in 1968 in the Dubcek period.

JS. A slight improvement occurred in 1963 after the first so-called rehabilitations. But there was a complete change in 1968. After the invasion, I studied a year in the LSE in London.

Verkijk. What is the LSE?

JS. The London School of Economics. And since then I have been studying in the law faculty in Prague since October 1969.

Verkijk. So you came back to Prague in 1969.

JS. Yes, I came back to Prague.

². Ota Sling was a codefendant in the Slansky trials, accused of being a Zionist agent. For a period, his sons were even forbidden to use their family name; the name "Sling" was to be eradicated.
—IP

Verkijk. That was a very brave thing to do.

JS. Do you know why I came back? When a country is in difficulty not everybody can leave and go abroad to wait for better times.

Verkijk. But I assumed that you yourself were in difficulty again. Haven't things taken a turn for the worse since 1969, that is, for you?

JS. I am used to keeping an eye out to see if the authorities are getting ready to do anything to me. There are some signs that they are. I have already had some run-ins at the university.

Verkijk. Karl Sling, what difficulties have you had?

KS. As my brother just said, we lived in a children's home. First I went through elementary school and then I had the choice of being a construction worker, farmer, or miner.

I chose the mines because I could make the most money there. After three years I became a skilled miner. After that I went to the miners' vocational high school. After passing my final examination, I went to the economic institute. I had practically no difficulties in registering for the institute.

The biggest problem I had was always with my personal history form, over how to describe my father.

My brother had a harder time. He went through more than I. I always stayed in the background and tried not to cause too many problems.

Verkijk. How do you think the majority of the Czech people feel now, Mijnheer Hochman? It is very difficult to judge. Do you have any idea?

JH. You know I am more in touch now with the man on the street than when I was a journalist. That sounds strange, but it is so.

I think that at least 95 percent of the people have not changed their opinion in the slightest. The regime's propaganda and methods are so primitive and so far out of touch with reality that they can develop no normal human contact with their constituency. I cannot venture a guess as to why this is so. I do not know whether Russian pressure prevents the

local officeholders from acting more independently to establish a policy more suited to national reality, or whether they simply do not know how to do their jobs.

The regime is proud of having eliminated every possible means of expressing different opinions. They have even expelled at least 50 percent of the members of the Communist party. They have forced all the legally elected workers councils in the factories and offices to resign. They have their creatures everywhere now, men of less than average ability, men who in many cases have a very shady past, even during the Nazi occupation.

An insurmountable barrier separates the people from their rulers. You could say that the overwhelming majority of the population simply ignores the regime. Both the government and the people lead their own distinct lives. On one side you have the ruling caste, propped up by the 100,000 Russian soldiers on our territory and thousands of secret police, other security forces, some members of the state bureaucracy, and the officer corps of the army.

You know, we have made jokes about a struggle going on over all jobs paying more than 4,000 korunas [7.14 korunas equal US\$1]. All these jobs have been redistributed. All those who weren't satisfied with what they had before have ousted all the people who used to occupy these positions. The result has been simply that the incompetent have shoved out the competent officials in grand style. For the most part, this process has now been completed. From time to time we will see a clash over this or that post, and the Russians will decide who is to hold the most important positions.

Verkijk. So, it's worse now than it was in the last years of Novotny?

JH. Right, of course it is much worse.

VS. I would not be so quick to generalize and thus make the same mistake as our official propaganda when it claims that an "overwhelming majority" supports the present leadership. I could not say how many citizens support the present leadership. I think it would be a good thing if elections were held and people could determine who does and does not support the leadership. We don't even need more than one party on the bal-

lot. It would be all right, for example, if the elections took place under the eye of the "friendly army" as long as people could indicate by means of the ballot whether they were for or against the regime. Only then could I say whom the "overwhelming majority" supports.

But all the people I have met—perhaps that is a subjective feeling, but people make certain associations when they see my face—have never shown hostility toward me, just the opposite. They have always shown sympathy. But that may be because people here have a certain humanitarian tradition—you are supposed to visit the sick and treat them kindly; or perhaps this is one reason.

KS. As a student of economics—as my studies show and as our economy shows—every competent economist has to be against the regime. We can only improve our economy, which has been in crisis for twenty years, by improving the political situation. That is what Ota Sik was striving for—decentralized leadership, which is impossible in the present situation. We are continually losing ground, which will have tragic consequences for our economy.

VS. Along with Hochman, Vaculik, the playwright Havel, and others, we have been accused of criminal acts and we shall answer these accusations. I should not like to think, like some, that everything has been staged in advance. Not long ago we had an experience. In January 1969, after the tragic incident with Jan Palach, Member of Parliament Novy accused us, that is, Pavel Kohout, the student Holecek, Pachman, Emil Zatopek, and me, of setting fire to Jan Palach. He claimed that we had conspired with an engineer who had invented a kind of cold fire and that we made use of his discovery but that something had gone wrong.

The member of parliament accused us of this incredible act at a public meeting in Ceska Lipa. We lodged a complaint against him on the basis of the libel law and demanded an apology. The case came to court a year and a half later. It was claimed that the member of parliament had acted in a time when a healthy core of the party was being sought, and that we were really guilty of killing Jan Palach.

As for the libel law, it was claimed

that it did not apply to antisocialist forces and right opportunists. We respected the verdict. One of us, the former Olympic hero Emil Zatopek, even went to offer his apology to Member of Parliament Novy because he had realized that Novy was in the right and had changed his opinion.

I think that Zatopek's opinions were crystallizing. At the time he was an enthusiastic supporter of the regime. In 1968 he had been one of the leading advocates of what was termed "socialism with a human face."

After the August 1968 events, Zatopek even took an active part in the protest actions. If he now realizes that he lost his head, if he has changed his mind—asked forgiveness and found his way back to the path of what is called "international duty"—then I think he has a right to his opinion. I do not think he should be condemned. In fact, the regime should learn from his example how to treat others.

If those who now support the political leadership of Dr. Husak should later become disillusioned, they would also have the right to say: "We have lost faith." Thus, this "overwhelming majority," as official propaganda calls it, must, like Emil Zatopek, be given the right to change their faith. I think that it would be a good thing if the law were equally respected on both sides, that is, not only used against us but also against those who have done injustice to us.

Verkijk. Do you have any idea how many arrests have occurred?

JH. We have only a very vague idea. You know that the regime does not give much publicity to these cases. It is very careful about reporting them. And I myself do not think that they will go as far as anything that would resemble the mass arrests of the fifties.

Verkijk. Why not?

JH. In the first place the Russians are much more sensitive to foreign public opinion.

Verkijk. Do you really think so?

JH. I am sure of it. They are under constant fire from the international left, and even from the Communist parties in the West. And they cannot ignore the positions of such impor-

tant and influential sections of the left as the Japanese and Italian Communist parties, or even the French and British Communist parties. We could see ourselves that the Greek national hero Manolis Glezos, even though he is in a Greek fascist prison, defended the cause of Czechoslovakia, of Czechoslovakia's right to national independence. The cause of national freedom is indivisible.

Verkijk. So, as you see it, the more publicity that is given to the Czech situation the better it will be for Czechoslovakia?

JH. We hope with all our hearts that the world will not forget the Czechoslovak cause.

JS. I would like to call your attention to the case of a large group of students who have been under arrest now for several months and are in a very difficult position. It is possible that their trials will be held first and that they will get harsh sentences. About twenty students are involved, primarily from the Charles University School of Philosophy and the Czech Technical Institute in Prague. They have been accused of antistate activity and attempting to found a new political party, as well as Trotskyist activities and so forth.

Verkijk. Who are they? Do you have their names?

JS. I know some of their names, such as Jan Frolik; Jaroslav Basta; Egon Cerny; Jaroslava Strbova; Jaroslav Sulek, the son of the former director of the Czech press service, who was on rather good terms with the Russians at the time of the invasion.

Verkijk. Ceteka? [CTK, the official news service.]

JS. Yes, that is one of the paradoxes of the situation. It is a paradoxical situation in our country that the children of leaders of the oppressing forces strongly oppose their parents. These students need support in my opinion because they are very young, very inexperienced, and are in rather great danger since they are not very well known. No one knows their names, as they know Pachman's name and the names of the others.

I think the greatest danger is that they will begin a show trial against

these students on the charge that they formed an antistate center. The authorities may even throw spy charges in while they're at it, but that is not certain. This could be an indication of what the regime wants to try in the future. I would guess that the regime is not in a position to start up any show trials, or large-scale trials. But it might try. This regime is totally isolated from the nation. It is based on nothing but coercion and force. It is incapable of foreseeing the consequences of its actions.

Verkijk. What do you expect for the future of Czechoslovakia in general?

JS. I am very optimistic about the future.

Verkijk. On what basis?

JS. On the basis of the progress in East Europe, especially in the Soviet Union, and on the progress in the international political sphere. It may be that the Russians' attempt to reach an understanding with America will bring peace in Europe. I

would say that the progress in Russia indicates that there are opposition movements there. The Soviet Union is undergoing a great crisis which is producing an opposition movement, primarily among the technical intelligentsia but not only among them. And that, I would say, is the hope for the future. For regimes of this type cannot survive forever. And if after 1948 it took our country twenty years to reach 1968, I would guess that the present setup will not last any twenty years. I think it will have a much shorter life.

Verkijk. Is that also your opinion, Mijnheer Hochman?

JH. I share it completely. I am also an optimist. I also expect that the face of Eastern Europe will be altered primarily by the internal development in Russia. You know, we could not do again what we did before. Perhaps there will be a new development in Poland the next time. But it is Russia itself that must do something. It is Russia that must again take up the banner of individual human liberties, which the bureaucracy has

thrown out the window. The regimes in most East European countries have nothing more in common with socialism or with revolution. It is therefore in the interest of the great masses of the peoples in East Europe to do something to rehabilitate the fundamental human rights of the peoples. Unless this is done, not one social or economic problem will be solved in the future. On the basis of these assumptions, I am extraordinarily optimistic about future development.

KS. I am also optimistic.

VS. Naturally we must remain optimistic. Otherwise we could not retain our humanity. Hope is what distinguishes men from other creatures. I would say that that has even been scientifically proven. I have a motto: "Freedom, toleration, humor."

We have already shown many times that we have kept our sense of humor, and that perhaps is what most worries some dogmatists. On the one hand, they do not understand it; on the other, they don't know what to do about it. So we have the second and the third points of my motto. It is only the first that we lack — freedom. □

REVIEWS

A Look at Permanent Revolution in Pakistan

Pakistan—Military Rule or People's Power, by Tariq Ali. William Morrow and Company, New York, N. Y. 270 pp. \$7.95. 1970.

This history of the overthrow of Ayub Khan has created a bit of a controversy within Pakistan, despite the fact that the book is banned there. The debate, necessarily, has been conducted by Pakistanis (Ali himself among them) currently living abroad. It has reached inside Pakistan through the pages of *Forum*, a weekly journal published in Dacca.

The fact that an unavailable book can thus find its way into the intellectual life of a country should cause no surprise. It has been observed often enough before that ideas have a way of ignoring police barriers. In this particular case, the ideas have a relevance that must make efforts at

suppression all the more futile.

What Ali has done is to illustrate the theory of permanent revolution in the concrete context of the November 1968-March 1969 mass uprising that overthrew General Ayub Khan. In the first part of the book, which presents a brief history of Pakistan as a background to the rebellion, the incapacity of the bourgeoisie to solve any of the country's problems is clearly demonstrated.

The inability of the traditional left parties — whether Social Democrats or Stalinists of either the pro-Moscow or pro-Peking variety — to recognize and act on this fact was the chief reason for the failure of the 1968-69 uprising to overthrow the capitalist state.

Pakistani Maoists, it should be noted, were particularly handicapped by the Chinese government's open support for Ayub. For example, two days af-

ter the rebellion had broken out and students had been shot down in the streets of Rawalpindi, the chief of the General Staff of the People's Liberation Army declared at a banquet in Peking:

"Friendship and co-operation between our two countries have been growing constantly over the last few years and there has been increasing friendly contacts between the armed forces of our two countries . . . in recent years, the Pakistani people under the leadership of President Ayub Khan, have fought unremittingly to safeguard national independence."

(A few years earlier, Ayub the guardian of "national independence" had told his cabinet: "There is only one embassy as far as I am concerned and that is the American Embassy.")

And in late January 1969, Ayub's foreign minister could attempt to ap-

pease the leftist opposition by announcing that Chou En-lai had accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan.

If there is one conclusion that emerges more clearly than others from Ali's book, it is that there is a desperate need for a revolutionary party on the Leninist model in Pakistan. In his final chapter, Ali indicates in outline how such a party might function today and gives examples of transitional demands it would advance to lead the Pakistani masses toward the seizure of power.

It is this application of Marxist theory to the concrete situation that aroused the wrath of Iqbal Khan, a former editor of *Pakistan Left Review* (a London magazine no longer being published). In the October 10 issue of *Forum*, Iqbal Khan reviewed Ali's book under the title "How the Fourth International sees us."

His substantive criticisms — which were all but buried in trivial sniping at Ali's "rapid commentary" or his effrontery in offering "advice"—concerned two related points. Iqbal Khan began by attempting to draw an artificial distinction between internationalism and the task of carrying out a revolution within national boundaries:

"From the very beginning, I believe, he [Ali] considered himself to be an 'internationalist' rather than a 'Pakistani' (in the narrow sense of the word); not surprising, therefore, that he was drawn towards the Trotskyite faction of the Socialist movement . . . Recently, however, Tariq Ali has been trying to re-establish contact with Pakistan . . ."

According to Iqbal Khan, internationalists do not eat, sleep, work, agitate, and make revolutions within the boundaries of any particular state. Rather they exist in a sort of limbo, isolated from the concrete conditions in any specific country. The purpose of this unreal distinction, it turned out, was to permit Iqbal Khan to dismiss (without attempting to refute them) the lessons learned by the revolutionary movement through a century of experience:

"The problem of making a socialist revolution in Pakistan is *fundamentally* different from making a similar revolution elsewhere. To say this is *not* to deny the validity of ideas like 'international communism' or

'permanent revolution,' but it is to question their relevance to the particular historical circumstances that exist in Pakistan today." (Emphasis in original.)

We need not get involved in a discussion of Iqbal Khan's suggestion that revolutionary theory can be simultaneously valid and irrelevant as a guide to action. In fact, Ali's book proves that Marxist theory — interna-

tionalist theory — is not only relevant, but indispensable.

Hopefully, the continuing debate in *Forum* (Ali's answer to Iqbal Khan in the October 31 issue, the latter's reply in the January 16 issue) will help make this clear for Pakistanis denied the opportunity to read the book itself. Those who do have the opportunity should take advantage of it.

— David Burton

Iranian Revolutionists Defy Court

Shah Condemns Pak-Nejad to Life Term

"Pak-Nejad has been condemned to life imprisonment and consequently could be tortured for the rest of his days," the shah of Iran declared in late January. "Why then should he have been tortured before his trial? . . . These accusations are without foundation and do not deserve the least attention."

Shah Reza Pahlevi's brutal outburst was directed at reports in the foreign press of torture inflicted on a group of eighteen young Iranian sympathizers of the Palestinian revolution given harsh sentences December 31 by a Teheran military tribunal.

The shah's remarks seemed to have been as much provoked, however, by the courage of the young revolutionists in their appeal trial January 16-19. Despite the fact that the government was calling on the appellate judge to stiffen the already harsh penalties handed down by the original court, many of the prisoners continued their denunciations of the frame-up and tortures to which they had been subjected.

The most outspoken were the three who had been given life terms — Shokrollah Pak-Nejad, Naser Kakhsaz, and Massoud Bathaii. Their sentences were upheld. One of their codefendants, Mohamad Rez Shal-Guni, had his sentence increased from five to ten years at hard labor after he had denounced the government's political persecution.

On the other hand, seven of the defendants expressed opposition to "Marxist-Leninist subversion" and avowed support of the government. Their sentences were reduced. From three to fifteen years, they were given

terms running from one to four years.

The shah's peculiar hangman's logic in denying the charges of torture also contained a threat—it was a reminder that reprisals could be taken against the young anti-imperialist fighters at will, now that they are "convicted criminals."

Despite this intimidation, Pak-Nejad accused the regime of torturing him for ten days after his arrest. He gave the names of two political prisoners who died under torture, including the religious leader Aytollah Saedi.

"Our only crime," Pak-Nejad said, was that we wanted to fight Zionism. . . . We are being sentenced for this in Iran despite the government's pro-Arab statements. In reality this government is bound hand and foot to imperialism."

Faced with the failure of the police to break the morale of the principal defendants and with widening protests against his victimization of anti-imperialist militants, the shah introduced a sweeping new repressive measure.

On January 18 the Teheran daily *Keyhan* reported that the military prosecutor had invoked the 1931 anti-Communist decree to outlaw the Confederation of Iranian Students, which led protests on behalf of the prisoners.

According to this ruling, membership in the confederation is now punishable by prison terms ranging from three to ten years. "Sympathizers" can be jailed for three years.

The prosecutor gave members of the student organization until the first day of the Iranian new year, the date of the vernal equinox, March 21, to turn themselves in. □