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Paris Conference 'Approves' Vietnam Cease-Fire Pact

Repression and Corruption in Bangladesh



Black September Executes Imperialist Envoys to Sudan

Poisoned Atlantic

More than 660,000 square miles of the Atlantic Ocean, running from Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to the Caribbean Sea, are coated with oil slicks, floating tar, and globs of plastic, according to a report issued February 12 by the U. S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The NOAA report stated, "One of the survey ships, Albatross IV, reported that 75 percent of the time its nets were befouled by oil clumps so thick they extruded through the mesh 'like spaghetti.'"

"Contamination covered 50 per cent (80,000 square miles) of the survey area along the East Coast continental shelf; 80 per cent (280,000 square miles) of the survey area in the Caribbean to the Gulf of Mexico; and 90 percent (305,000 square miles) of the survey area north of the Antillean chain."

Dr. James Butler, a professor of chemistry at Harvard, attributes the vast increase in oil pollution to crude petroleum dumped from giant oil tankers off the coast of Africa on their way to the Arabian Gulf.

The origin of the plastic wastes was more difficult to pinpoint. But Kenneth Sherman, an official of the National Marine Fisheries Service, speculated that the plastics were dumped into the ocean in pellet form, the shape in which raw plastics are shipped to manufacturers.

Scientists at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute have found that small fish that eat the indigestible plastics are likely to die from blocked intestines.

The NOAA study reported that "more than half the plankton samples (young fish and their food) collected from surface waters were oil-contaminated." And an editorial in the February 18 *New York Times* warned, "Such edible fish as cod, flounder, and haddock are so contaminated by oil that they may join the swordfish on the forbidden list."

Faced with the threat of poisoned oceans, the Nixon administration has not been inactive. Three U. S. ocean research ships — including one of those involved in the survey — have been ordered out of service as an "economy" measure. □

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Paris Conference 'Approves' Cease-Fire

By David Thorstad

The third conference on Indochina ended in Paris on schedule March 2. What it publicly accomplished fell somewhat short of its original purpose, as stated in the Vietnam cease-fire agreement: "to acknowledge the signed [Vietnam] agreements; to guarantee the ending of the war, the maintenance of peace in Vietnam, the respect of the Vietnamese people's fundamental national rights and the South Vietnamese people's right to self-determination, and to contribute to and guarantee peace in Indochina."

The nine-article "act" agreed to by the twelve foreign ministers at the week-long session states that the signatories "acknowledge, express their approval of and support the Paris agreement" signed in Paris on January 27. It makes no mention of "guaranteeing" anything.

In addition, it provides for no special permanent body to oversee the implementation of the cease-fire, it assigns no special role to the United Nations or its secretary general, makes no reference to multilateral aid in reconstructing Vietnam, and contains what the *New York Times* called a "meager, almost pious" reference to Laos and Cambodia.

The most important articles, 6 and 7, provide for the four parties to the January 27 agreement—the United States, North Vietnam, Saigon, and the Provisional Revolutionary Government—to "inform the other parties of this act" about implementation of the agreement and allow the conference to be reconvened in case of a violation that "threatens the peace, the independence, sovereignty, unity or territorial integrity of Vietnam, or the right of the South Vietnamese people to self-determination." A joint demand by the United States and North Vietnam, or a request by at least six members of the conference (excluding UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim, who was present at the conference but prevented by objections from Hanoi and Peking from enjoying full status as a participant), will

suffice to have the conference reconvened.

The *New York Times* editors expressed a rather pessimistic appraisal of the conference March 4. In their view, it "neither added to nor detracted from the possibility that one day real



KISSINGER and CHOU: An agreement to cooperate in principle?

peace will descend upon Vietnam. Its importance is probably only that it took place, not that it accomplished anything of substance to enhance the settlement terms already accepted by the warring parties."

The editors noted that more than a month after the peace agreement, the fighting is still quite heavy: "Anyone on the ground in Indochina right now may be excused for mocking the Paris conference as a charade. The talk is peace, the reality is war—almost continuous since the cease-fire allegedly came into effect."

One American official said the rather modest purpose of the conference was "to sprinkle holy water on an existing agreement," according to Robert Keat-

ley, writing in the February 26 *Wall Street Journal*.

This description, however, applied only to the public aspect of the conference deliberations, not to whatever went on behind closed doors. Keatley found reason for optimism in the possible results of this latter aspect of the Paris gathering.

The "real business" of the conference, he explained, "will be the behind-the-scenes collaboration among the U.S., China and the Soviet Union about enforcing cease-fire terms throughout Indochina. The results probably won't

be announced officially, but they may be publicized discreetly as warnings to any factions that seek to resume war. Most likely is some understanding among the Big Three about limiting weapons deliveries to Hanoi and Saigon, so neither can launch new offensives."

One "senior American official" told Keatley that in the view of the imperialists "arms shipments are the most interesting subject we can discuss with Moscow and Peking." On this subject the reporter anticipated that "a trade-off might be secretly arranged here [Paris]; Washington might swear to heed the rules against shipments to South Vietnam if Moscow and Peking pledge to restrict the flow of arms to the North."

Keatley also suggested that the imperialists and the Stalinist bureaucrats in Moscow and Peking might seek to solidify a possible agreement to collaborate in another area: "Another Big Three discussion topic, officials here suggest, may be superpower pressure on both Vietnams to demobilize their huge armies. This could get some or all of those 145,000 Northern troops out of South Vietnam while reducing Saigon's military establishment. The payoff for the Communist Vietnamese would be less pressure against their own political activities in the South, where they still hope some day to gain power. Such things were undoubtedly discussed in Peking recently when Nixon emissary Henry Kissinger called on Premier Chou En-lai and Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung; Sino-American cooperation may already have been achieved in principle."

Possible promises of "less pressure" against political activity by the liberation forces may seem a bit far-fetched, however, in view of the fact that at the moment the official representatives of North Vietnam and the Provisional Revolutionary Government to the Joint Military Commission cannot even be sure of their own physical safety. Indeed, this issue was injected into the deliberations of the Paris conference when North Vietnamese Lieutenant Colonel Bui Tin announced from Saigon on February 27, the day after the conference opened, that it was one of the factors prompting Hanoi to hold up the further release of American prisoners of war.

The incident that appears to have triggered the announcement took place February 25 near Dalat when a Communist team appearing for a meeting with other members of the Joint Military Commission was ambushed and four team members were killed and three wounded.

There have been a number of similar attacks since the cease-fire agreement was signed. On February 25, for instance, mobs forced their way into the Commission's compounds in Hue and Danang. In Hue five North Vietnamese officers were injured by flying rocks. A similar incident occurred in Ban Me Thout a few weeks earlier.

General Le Quang Hoa, chief of the North Vietnamese delegation to the Joint Military Commission, charged

that the mobs were "a gang of hooligans hired by the Saigon administration." Such charges of deliberate Saigon provocation are considered by U. S. officials both in Washington and Saigon to be well-founded.

On March 2, some 156 North Vietnamese and PRG members of the Joint Military Commission left their posts in Hue and Danang for lack of security, and returned to Saigon.

The North Vietnamese gave additional reasons for their refusal to release prisoners. Among these were the continued, and even intensified, U. S. bombing in Laos and Cambodia.

Hanoi also charged that the United States was "deliberately delaying" the removal of mines from its waters. American officials privately admit that their mine-sweeping is proceed-

ing at "a very deliberate pace" so as to insure that the bulk of the mines will still be active until all U. S. prisoners have been released, reported *New York Times* correspondent William Beecher in a dispatch from Washington February 28.

A day after announcing the delay in releasing the prisoners, Hanoi reaffirmed its intention to release all prisoners by March 28, the date agreed upon. Its purpose in making the announcement, wrote H. D. S. Greenway in the February 28 *Washington Post* following a conversation with Bui Tin, was to gain "serious consideration" of its complaints and "some show of American effort and concern for solving the problems." Presumably, such "concern" was indicated in the corridors of the Paris conference. □

Just Released From Con Son Island

Viet Prisoners Tell of Treatment

A firsthand account of the treatment meted out to the 200,000 or more political prisoners held by the Saigon regime appeared in a March 2 interview given to *New York Times* correspondent Sylvan Fox by four former inmates who were released from Con Son Island prison February 16. The interview was conducted at a Saigon hospital, where they are patients. All four were crippled after years of beatings and torture at the hands of Thieu's jailers. The former prisoners, fearing reprisals, declined to have their names published. A twenty-three-year-old former Buddhist activist, who had been arrested in December 1967 while a student at the Hung Dao high school in Saigon, acted as the spokesman for the four. He told Fox that he was "beaten and tortured off and on for a whole year" at the national police headquarters in Saigon after his arrest. He described being beaten with a stick "until I vomited blood or until the blood came out of my eyes or ears." Soapy water was forced into his mouth and he was subjected to electric shock. His jailers would manacle prisoners' hands behind their backs, hanging them from the ceilings by the handcuffs until they became unconscious.

A year after his arrest, he was moved to Chi Hoa prison. "There they chained our feet and attached the chains to a pole. There were between 50 and 100 prisoners. We had nothing to lie on, and it was filthy and dirty and cold. Every day they would open the door and send in a bunch of common criminals who would beat us with sticks and kick us."

After his transfer to Con Son Island, the youth was housed in one of the notorious "tiger cages." These were small concrete trenches with bars on top. In these cells, as many as seven prisoners would be squeezed into a space five feet wide, six feet long, and six feet deep.

"During that time not a single day passed that we were not beaten at least once. They would open up the cages and they would use wooden sticks to beat us from above. They would drag us out and beat us until we lost consciousness."

In July 1970, a factfinding team including two members of the U. S. House of Representatives gained access to the prison. Their complaints about the treatment of the inmates sparked a worldwide scandal (see *Intercontinental Press*, July 27, 1970, p. 695). A week later, the prisoners

were transferred from the "tiger cages" to stables that had formerly housed water buffalo.

By 1971, Fox writes, "the old tiger cages had been replaced by new ones built by an American contractor and paid for by the United States."

Since the cages now only housed one prisoner each, the student said, "the jailors would not beat us from above but would open the steel bars, jump in and beat us."

The daily food ration for each inmate in Con Son was "a few spoonfuls of rice and some water." When prisoners protested this starvation diet, they were answered by a brutal attack last January 6, in which guards injured seventy prisoners. Thich Hanh

Tue, a Buddhist monk, was denied medical treatment despite grave injuries he suffered during the guards' attack. He died several days later.

Fox reports, "Other prisoners in the Saigon hospital corroborated the account with only minor personal differences. All told of torture, beatings and malnutrition.

"Each of us went through a similar ordeal," a 38-year-old former prisoner commented."

The ex-prisoners Fox interviewed were not optimistic about their future under Thieu. Fox wrote that "they assumed they had been released because they were disabled and sick; all said they were convinced they would soon be rearrested." □

on. It is also probable that Moscow and Washington have agreed that 1973 must see some resolution to the conflict in the Arab East.

The Arab regimes, especially Jordan but Egypt as well, have more than once indicated that if they can be given any face-saving concessions to pacify the Arab people, they are fully prepared to recognize the Zionist state and to sign a peace treaty with it. This is also the formula desired by the Soviet bureaucracy and by the majority of the U. S. ruling class.

The difficulty is Israel. Any compromise that could be arranged by the "superpowers" would necessarily entail at least a partial Israeli withdrawal from the territories conquered in 1967. And the Israeli government has no intention of withdrawing. The West Bank is now dotted with Jewish settlements; the Arab population is increasingly being integrated into the Israeli economy as a superexploited reserve army of labor. The Arab section of Jerusalem has been annexed outright. Israel shows no sign of willingness to withdraw from the Sinai peninsula.

Thus, the Arab states, Egypt in particular, are in a difficult position. They want to make a deal, but their adversary is not interested. Hence the Egyptian diplomatic activity; Ismail's mission in Washington almost certainly was to convince Nixon of Sadat's pro-West intentions and to urge the United States to pressure its Zionist ally into becoming reasonable. It is even quite likely that the American ruling class would like to do just that. But so far, it has been unsuccessful.

It may appear contradictory that on the one hand the Israeli state is totally dependent on economic and military aid from the United States, and on the other hand that the U. S. government is unable to impose its will on its client. The problem for U. S. imperialism is that any sanctions it could take to whip the Israeli regime into line would be just as threatening to the interests of U. S. imperialism as they would be to the Zionist state.

There is complete agreement within the American ruling class that Israel must remain the dominant military power in the Arab East. There is simply no sufficiently stable Arab

As Diplomatic 'Peace' Wheels Start Turning

Imperialist Envoys Executed in Khartoum

By Jon Rothschild

Nixon, who is noted for his original turn of phrase, told Jordanian King Hussein that February was "Middle East Month" in Washington. Hussein was the first of three Middle East heads of state to visit Washington to talk with Nixon about what seems to have become the next major target of U. S. diplomacy—a deal that will "settle" the Arab-Israeli conflict and dispose of the last "hot spot" threatening to disrupt the U. S.-Soviet détente.

Hussein's visit was followed up by one from Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir. She was making her annual aid-seeking "pilgrimage" to Washington. Her purpose was to nail down Nixon's contribution to Israeli military hegemony during the coming fiscal year (\$515 million was the figure mentioned).

But the real highlight of Middle East Month was the first White House visit by a high-ranking Egyptian official in more than six years. On February 22 Hafez Ismail, Anwar el-Sadat's national security adviser (a post that has earned him the dubious designation "Sadat's Kissinger"), arrived in Washington. The trip was a response to Secretary of State William Rogers's February 15 suggestion that Nixon would welcome meeting a "high-placed Egyptian."

The rapidity with which Cairo responded to Rogers's hint prompted a wave of speculation that a new concerted "peace initiative" was under way.

The Washington parade was not the only indication. Two weeks before he went to Washington, Ismail was in Moscow. On his way to see Nixon, he stopped off to talk to British Prime Minister Edward Heath. After his stay in Washington he left for Bonn, where he was scheduled to hold discussions with West German officials. Concurrently with Ismail's trips, Egyptian Foreign Minister Mohammed el-Zayyat was dispatched to Peking.

Officials of the Nixon regime went out of their way to stress the "cordiality" of the Nixon-Rogers-Ismail chat. The discussions, spokesmen said, produced "a good rapport" between the two countries. "Privately," the February 24 *New York Times* commented, "Administration officials said they were very pleased by what one called 'the positive nature' of today's talks."

No other information about what was discussed or what conclusions were reached was released.

It does seem clear that some sort of new diplomatic offensive is going

government that can take over Tel Aviv's job of preserving capitalist law and order in the area.

Thus, if the United States tries to bludgeon Israel into making concessions to Egyptian diplomatic needs by threatening to withhold military aid, the Israeli regime knows it can ignore the threat. The aid will finally come through, because the U. S. government cannot afford to allow any Arab state to become strong enough to challenge Israeli hegemony.

* * *

The latitude the U. S. ruling class is willing to grant the Israeli state in the latter's pursuance of its policy of domination and aggression was disgustingly demonstrated by the reaction of both Nixon and decisive sections of the capitalist press to the Israeli destruction of the Libyan airliner shot down over the Sinai on February 21.

The U. S. government sent "condolences" to Libya. There was no condemnation of the action; not even a hint of one.

The reaction to Black September's Khartoum operation, during which three Western diplomats were executed, was a little different.

On March 1 at 7:00 p.m., eight Black September members broke into the Saudi Arabian embassy during a farewell party being given for a departing U. S. diplomat. A number of ambassadors escaped. George C. Moore, U. S. chargé d'affaires, who was the guest of honor; his replacement, Ambassador Cleo Noel Jr.; Saudi Ambassador Abdullah el-Malhouk (along with his wife and four children); and Adli el-Nazir, Jordanian chargé d'affaires, were seized as hostages.

The exact demands of the commandos never became clear. At various times it was reported that they were asking for the release of all Arab prisoners held in Israeli jails; Sirhan Sirhan, who killed Robert Kennedy; members of the West German Baader-Meinhof group; a series of Palestinian prisoners held in Jordan; and Abu Daoud, a Fateh member imprisoned in Jordan on charges of having conspired to overthrow King Hussein.

But by the afternoon of March 2, it became clear that the real intent of the commandos was to free Abu

Daoud; the other alleged demands were dropped.

When the Sudanese government refused to bargain with the commandos, the two American hostages were executed. The fedayeen then reduced their demands still further. By March 3 they were trying to negotiate a deal by which they would be granted safety in exchange for the release of the remaining hostages. When that was denied, the fedayeen surrendered on the morning of March 4, some sixty hours after they had taken the embassy.

Nixon released a statement expressing "shock and grief at the senseless and barbarous murder of Ambassador Noel and Mr. Moore." He demanded that "the perpetrators of the crime . . . be brought to justice," and renewed his plea for "all nations to take a firm stand against the menace of international terrorism."

It really is superfluous to comment on the propriety of Richard Nixon complaining about barbarism and terrorism.

Nearly as significant as Nixon's remarks was the editorial stand taken by the *New York Times*. This is because the *Times*, apart from being in general the organ of an important section of the ruling class itself, tends to directly express the viewpoint of U. S. ruling circles on the question of the Middle East. It says openly what the government may consider true but untimely.

The *Times* ran two editorials on the Khartoum operation. The first one (March 3) began: "The murder of an American ambassador and chargé d'affaires by Palestinian fanatics stirs disgust among civilized people."

The second one (March 4) began: "The brutal, cold-blooded murders in Khartoum constitute an act of barbarism that has appalled the civilized world—and it is only the latest in a string of similar acts of criminal insanity that civilized nations can no longer tolerate."

The Black September commandos were referred to as "this gang of blood-thirsty assassins" and "insane blood-stained fanatics."

By way of contrast, here is the opening sentence of the *New York Times's* lead editorial on March 1: "No useful purpose is served by an acrimonious debate over the assignment of blame for the downing of a Libyan airliner

in the Sinai peninsula last week." (Blame seems so hard to fix that the editorial board cannot even decide who shot the plane down, thus necessitating the use of the passive voice.)

The *Times's* point of view is clear: It has long been established that civilized nations—the United States and Israel being prime examples—murder only on a massive scale. The governments of these nations think big, have no patience for small-scale executions. Only savages who lust after the smell of blood do that sort of thing. Civilized nations never kill less than 100 people at a time and do so only at large distances and with modern weapons.

Moreover, the defenders of civilization can never be sure to what depths the savages may stoop. Passenger planes may be filled with bombs; Asian peasants may be hiding hand grenades in the bellies of pregnant women.

So the embattled nations defending civilization are constrained to shoot first. If need be, the victims can be blamed for creating "tragedies" by having the effrontery to exist. And then the civiliziers' cultural superiority can be demonstrated by offering the savages a solution, a means of preventing further tragedies: a nonemotional, calm negotiation process, conducted in the spirit of charity and reason.

Such is the real attitude of Western imperialism. Given the mass murder that the Zionist state and its U. S. guarantor get away with, it is remarkable that so few of the individual agents who carry out their policies have been violently dealt with by the Palestinian liberation movement. Those who equate the consciously stage-managed mass terror of the imperialist oppressors and their allies with the tactical mistakes made by groups fighting for a people that has suffered continuous exploitation, humiliation, violence, and death at the hands of imperialism are beneath contempt.

But from the viewpoint of the interests of the Arab revolution, the Khartoum operation was a serious mistake. In the narrowest sense, the fedayeen should have realized by now that imperialist governments will allow their kidnapped diplomats to be killed rather than bargain with their captors. Kidnapping diplomats will

simply not succeed in winning the release of political prisoners.

In the broader sense, the Khartoum operation shows that the Palestinian movement has still not drawn the lessons of the defeats it has suffered since the 1970 Jordanian civil war. If having 10,000 men and women under arms could not prevent the Jordanian army from liquidating the fedayeen presence in Jordan, isolated armed operations by small groups will surely not reconstitute the movement on a mass scale.

The Palestinian movement was defeated in Jordan because its leadership failed to recognize the crucial need to link the struggle of the Palestinian masses to that of the Jordanian masses and to do this through developing an action program based

on the socialist transformation of the entire Arab East.

There are signs that the revolutionary movement in the Arab East has begun to emerge from the downturn that followed the Jordanian civil war. The Egyptian student movement, the increasing number of strikes in Egypt, and strikes and student demonstrations in Lebanon are all signs of this.

The future of the Palestinian revolution lies in linking up with these movements, in integrating the struggle against the Zionist state with the fight against the Arab regimes, and in programmatically assessing the inadequacies of the previous Palestinian leadership. It does not lie in executing individual diplomats in Arab capitals. □

South Korean 'Election' Sets Pace for Thieu

Government Party Retains Control

The legislative elections that South Korean dictator Park Chung Hee stage-managed on February 27 offer a model for President Thieu in case he decides to go ahead with "free elections."

Final returns were announced March 1. Park's Democratic Republican party took exactly one-half (73) of the 146 contested seats. The main opposition party, the New Democratic party (NDP), won 52 contests, while the Democratic Unification party (DUP), the product of a recent split in the NDP, seated 2 of its candidates.

However, Park will have no difficulty controlling the National Assembly. "About half the independents are former members of the governing party or known supporters of the President," noted the *New York Times* March 1.

An additional 73 seats in the assembly will be filled by Park's appointees. The legislative body, which is scheduled to meet only 150 days each year, can be dissolved by Park at any time.

Park prepared his "mandate" with four months of stepped-up repression, which began with his declaration of martial law on October 17 (see *Intercontinental Press*, October 30, 1972, p. 1180). A November 30 referendum that took place under tight military surveillance gave rubber-stamp ap-

proval to constitutional amendments aimed at bolstering Park's power. Although martial law was lifted on December 13, political activity was forbidden until a hand-picked National Conference on Reunification dutifully elected Park to a fourth term as president. (Under the old constitutional provisions, the president had been elected by popular vote.)

The legislative campaign then began. However, Park's opponents still faced many obstacles.

The leader of the NDP, Kim Dae Jung, who won 46 percent of the vote in the 1971 presidential race, stayed out of the country to avoid arrest during the martial law period. Kim's house in Seoul was surrounded by security forces to make sure that he did not attempt to register as a candidate. Aides of the regime strongly hinted that Kim would be arrested on a charge of bribery if he dared return to Korea. Accusations of bribery are one of Park's favorite methods of dealing with opponents, allowing him to simultaneously carry out repressions and pose as a reformer.

Norman Thorpe, in an interview with DUP Chairman Yang Il Dong published in the February 12 issue of the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, reported Yang's charge that "five former assemblymen . . . have been ar-

rested expressly to prevent them from joining his party." They are officially charged with receiving bribes. All are Yang's intimates and are among the most outspoken critics of the government. Yang said that, in all, thirteen opposition assemblymen had been subjected to torture during martial law — all members of his faction, or of the NDP.

As the campaign opened, Park warned his critics, "We will not tolerate, from now on, the extreme confrontation between the ruling and opposition parties to the detriment of our national interests." Although press censorship eased slightly after martial law ended, any newspaper sharply criticizing Park's policies faces almost certain suppression.

An additional inconvenience for opposition candidates was a regulation that made it illegal to campaign. The mass media were forbidden to publish political advertising, campaign interviews, or statements made by candidates. Nor was a candidate permitted to carry out house-to-house canvassing of potential voters. Instead, the aptly titled Election Management Committee organized three rallies at which office-seekers could speak to their constituencies for a maximum of thirty minutes.

Each party nominee had to pay a filing fee of \$5,000 [\$7,500 for independent], which was forfeited if the candidate won less than one-third of the vote. Finally, candidates were barred from having pollwatchers at the ballot boxes.

Under these circumstances, Park's vote-counters undoubtedly carried on in their customary manner. According to the January 15 *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "A number of voters in the [November 30] referendum said they went to the polls only to find that their ballots had already been cast." □

Good-bye Lon Nol

A battalion of government troops in Cambodia defected to the Khmer Rouge during February because they had not been paid in four months, according to an Associated Press dispatch from Phnompenh.

The government troops who reported the defection said the battalion had chosen an opportune time to make its move—a few days before its besieged base was attacked by liberation forces. Several hundred men were said to be involved.

Struggle Will Go On After March 11

By Henri Weber

[The following article appeared in the February 24 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

There are two opposing camps in the legislative battle: the conservative camp, which includes the majority [Gaullist] coalition plus the "reformers," and the reformist bloc, composed of the Union of the Left.

The class character of these two blocs is clear. Behind the Gaullist-Center bloc stands the ruling class and its supporters among the middle and petty bourgeoisie. That is, the Centre National du Patronat Français [National Bureau of French Employers], the Association Française des Grandes Entreprises [French Association of Large Concerns], the Confédération Générale des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises [General Confederation of Small and Medium-sized Concerns], and the Confédération Générale des Cadres [General Confederation of Managerial Personnel].

According to the polls conducted by the Institut Français de l'Opinion Publique [French Public Opinion Institute], 94 percent of all shareholders, 88 percent of factory heads, 61 percent of merchants, 73 percent of officers, and the majority of farmers, retirees, and inactive workers will vote for the majority.

Behind the Union of the Left stands the working class and its allies among the petty bourgeoisie, the big trade unions, and the parties that claim as their goal the organization and representation of the workers.

Whatever the outcome of the elections may be, one thing is sure: The clash between these two blocs, despite the reformist leaders, will not be limited to electoral jousts. After March 12, it will move on to the real terrain of the class struggle: the factories and the streets.

The Bourgeoisie Is Ready

Georges Pompidou's statements at his February 8 press conference, elaborated later by Alain Peyrefitte and Pierre Messmer, leave no room for doubt. If the Union of the Left wins, the team in power will not step down. The President of the Republic will not ask the head of the Left Union to form a government. He will try to impose a minority government. (And didn't Mitterrand say that this would be an "unwise" but lawful step?)

If all the stalling maneuvers don't work, he will call for new legislative or presidential elections in a deliberately dramatized atmosphere. The ruling class does not want a Socialist-Communist government applying the common program. It wants to rapidly get on with the work of technocratically modernizing French capitalism, with the aim of approaching in the best possible circumstances the new period of intensified competition caused by the recurrence of the monetary crisis.

Carrying out this rationalization operation through the medium of a Union of the Left government would be very difficult. And for the French big bourgeoisie, the stakes are high.

It is not by chance that the bourgeoisie's professional representatives, in defiance of all decorum and tradition, have personally plunged into the battle. The big bourgeoisie will spare no effort in trying to stop the Union of the Left. It will not hesitate to call new elections, to provoke an economic crisis, or to resort to the protofascist far-right.

If the Left Union Wins

This intention to snatch electoral victory from the workers will give rise to deep indignation among the masses and, at the same time, will contribute to dispelling their legalist illusions. When the bourgeoisie refuses to accept the verdict of the ballot box, the workers will seek to impose their will through direct action.

A more or less spontaneous movement will arise to throw Pompidou out and to install a Union of the Left government through struggle. Urged on by the revolutionary far-left, the workers will struggle to immediately put into effect in their factories some of the demands of the common program, especially the ones about wages, working conditions, and "democracy in the plants."

But, since they will be advanced in struggle and not sought out in hand from an "understanding" government, these demands will express the workers' aspirations and will generally go beyond the restrictive and equivocal formulations of the common program.

The revolutionists especially will replace the timid and ambiguous goal of "democratization" of the factory with the slogan of *workers' control with veto power* over hiring and firing, allocation of assignments, transfers, classification of workers, determination of the work pace and the forms of wages, and the general working conditions.

They will advocate the formation of Popular Committees in the factories and neighborhoods, uniting workers of all tendencies who are determined to defeat the regime's maneuvers, to throw Pompidou out, and to force immediate application of their demands.

Séguy's Counterblackmail

In case of a narrow victory for the conservative bloc, as is probable, Séguy himself says that "the workers, fired up by the left's unity, would want to attain by struggle what they had been unable, undoubtedly just barely, to attain through the ballot box."

And Séguy adds: "So it would be best for everyone for the left to win and then to open up an era of discussion and participation in an economic and social equilibrium."

Certainly there is a bit of counterblackmail in this statement, aimed at counteracting Pompidou's blackmail. The Union of the Left government will cost you dearly, Séguy says in essence. But pay the price. Because if the reactionary government is reconstituted, we can no longer be responsible for anything. Don't be taken in by the relative calm of these past

weeks. For awhile we have been able to channel the workers' militancy in an electoral direction. But if their hopes along this road are disappointed, whatever our efforts, they will not lie back until 1976. And then, god knows how much you will pay.

The SP After Its 'Victory'

What will be the SP's and CP's attitudes after the elections?

If the Union of the Left wins, a revitalization of the SP is not out of the question. The future Socialist parliamentary group will be dominated by the SP right wing. To be convinced of this, one need only look at the SP candidates who have a chance of getting elected.

This right wing has shown for some time now that it could not be more reluctant about the common program. It finally approved it not out of conviction but for tactical reasons: namely, to avoid again getting the miserable vote (5 percent) that Deferre-Mendes got in the June 1969 elections.

Subjected to Pompidou's threats and cajolery, and confronted with a situation of "national crisis," this right wing might very well once more turn back to some kind of "grand center coalition," as has been proposed to it by Giscard d'Estaing, Edgar Faure, Chaban-Delmas, and Jean Lecanuet, one after the other.

If the Communist party leaders spent so much time harping on the "old-time third force," it is because they know that the SP right-wingers will dominate the future parliamentary Socialist group and, through it, the entire Socialist party.

The CP: A Knife Without a Blade

But what would be the CP's reaction? The February 16 *L'Huma* gave Georges Marchais's answer. A reporter asked, "If the President of the Republic does not name a prime minister from among those elected from the left, that is, if he violates the constitution, as you would put it, what reaction can you envisage?"

And he answered, "We would wish that it [the constitution] be respected." And how? "By appealing to democrats to support this position and to force respect for the constitution."

Apparently this answer seemed a bit on the vague side to the reporters present. One of them brought it up

again: "You speak of forcing respect for national sovereignty, for the constitution if it is violated. By what means? By strikes, demonstrations?"

"It's not a matter of interpreting the constitution," Marchais answered. "It says that the French people exercise their sovereignty through their elected representatives. We say that the President of the Republic must respect this. If he does not, he is violating the constitution. In such a case, respecting democracy and legality, we would call upon all workers and democrats to support our position. Do not make us say something we have not said about what the workers can do."

Thus, Georges Marchais refrains from calling for strikes and demonstrations if the President of the Republic decides to bypass the electoral results.

So by what means could he "force respect for the constitution"? By a new election? That's what Marchais suggests. Pompidou must be telling himself that his opponents really aren't too formidable. When he puts the heat on them, Mitterrand declares himself ready to step down and Marchais calls for a new electoral farce!

Marchais does not even dare to form Chilean-style "Popular Unity Committees" organizing the rank-and-file supporters of the common program. The existence of such a mass movement would allow him to force Pompidou to yield and to put pressure on the SP's orientation. *But in the present political conjuncture, the CP leadership is more afraid of the possibility of being outflanked by such a mass movement than it is of Pompidou's maneuvers and the vacillations of its Socialist "allies."*

In the name of respect for bourgeois legality, the CP leaders agree to renounce mass mobilization, even if the bourgeoisie violates its own legality!

But only the mobilization of the masses can block Pompidou's show of force. This show of force is also a calculated risk. Its success depends on the passivity of the workers' movement. From this point of view, Marchais's and Mitterrand's reactions are a powerful encouragement to the President of the Republic!

If the Union of the Left wins, the workers struggling to impose their will on Pompidou and his flunkies will also clash with the reformist leaders of the Union of the Left.

We'll Do Better Next Time!

If the expanded Gaullist-Center coalition wins, the leaders of the Union of the Left will talk something like this: "This time we didn't quite make it. The President of the Republic was able to scare off part of the electorate with his blackmail about chaos. But we'll do better next time. Because in the 1976 presidential elections, no blackmail will be possible. So the relative success of 1973 must be consolidated so as to assure victory in 1976. The workers must prove that they are responsible, in order to definitively win the trust of the other antimonopoly layers."

All this is not to say that the CP and CGT leaders will oppose any upsurge of struggle head on. That kind of opposition would be suicidal, and the reformist bureaucrats have no intention of cutting down on their own longevity. *But they will spare no effort to spread the mobilizations out over time, to fragment them in order to avoid any dynamic toward a test of strength and to channel them toward electoral goals.*

In this case also, the workers wanting to attain by struggle what they could not obtain through the ballot box (to use Séguin's own words) will clash with the policies of the reformist leadership.

Serious Things Start on March 12

Whatever the result of the elections, the upsurge of mass anticapitalist struggles and the victory of socialism require outflanking the Union of the Left.

It is to prepare this outflanking that the Ligue Communiste is running candidates and campaigning. For weeks our members have been explaining that the socialist revolution is the only realistic solution to the system's crisis. They have shown that the Union of the Left is incapable of resolving the crisis and of assuring the transition to socialism.

They have tried to group together all those ready to enter the electoral battle by working to outflank the apparatuses. There are many workers who share our criticisms but who are still planning to vote for the CP on the first round in order to beat the Socialists or because the result in the

district depends on just a few hundred votes.

To these workers we say: On the first round, revolutionists must register their opposition to the regime and their defiance of the Union of the Left. Pompidou, Mitterrand, and Marchais must all be told that no matter what their various schemes may be, there are many workers determined to resolve the question of power through class struggle. The number of votes gotten by the far left will have an effect in determining the political atmosphere in the spring of 1973. The bourgeoisie, the reformist apparatuses, and the workers' vanguard will all have to take it into account.

Fights Denial of Radio Time

Ligue Communiste on the Campaign Trail

All parties presenting at least seventy-five candidates in the French elections are entitled to seven minutes of radio and television time. In February, however, the ORTF (Office de Radiodiffusion et Télévision Française—Office of French Radio and Television) announced that it was denying time to the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International. The reason given was that it had not received in time the official request signed by the Ligue's ninety-two candidates, despite the fact that the request had been mailed well in advance of the deadline.

On February 19, Alain Krivine, member of the Political Bureau of the Ligue Communiste, announced that the Ligue intended to bring a suit charging interference with the mails. "The Ligue Communiste is going to press all the left-wing parties to take a stand on this situation," reported *Le Monde* February 21.

The next day, *Le Monde* noted that the February 21 issue of *L'Humanité*, the Communist party newspaper, supported the Ligue's right to radio and TV time. Hedging somewhat, the newspaper stated: "The French Communist party considers this decision to be a violation of the rules set down by the government itself and feels that the Ligue Communiste ought to receive time to express its position on

While on the second round it is necessary to vote for the Union of the Left in order to defeat the conservative bloc, on the first round it is essential to vote for revolutionary candidates—for the candidates of the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière wherever they are running, and for the other far-left candidates (PSU, OCI, Maoists) everywhere else.

Fight the UDR and kick out Pompidou! But no confidence in the Union of the Left as the way to achieve socialism.

For a workers' government!
Support revolutionary candidates!
And on March 4,
Vote Ligue Communiste!
Vote Lutte Ouvrière!

the ORTF in proportion to its real influence."

In addition, a protest petition was signed by representatives of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the National Education Federation (FEN), the United Socialist party (PSU), the Socialist party, and the League for the Rights of Man.

On February 23, the Ligue was offered three minutes time by the head of the ORTF. It rejected the offer and is insisting that it be granted the full time to which it is entitled.

In another protest against harassment of the far left, on February 16, some fifty members of the Ligue Communiste and Lutte Ouvrière occupied the offices of the president of the Paris city council, Madame de Hauteclouque. They were protesting the denial of a meeting hall for Lutte Ouvrière.

"We are all candidates of Lutte Ouvrière and the Ligue Communiste in the legislative elections in Paris and in the Paris region," they stated, "and we are demanding that Mme. de Hauteclouque tell us why the Paris office refused to give Lutte Ouvrière authorization to hold a meeting in the Sports Palace next February 26. The Prefect of Paris was asked to provide a hall of equivalent size and we were met with another denial."

Police forcibly broke up the dem-



onstration, arresting the occupiers. All were released within a few hours.

A taste of the Ligue's election campaign approach can be gotten from a report in the February 24 issue of the Ligue's weekly, *Rouge*, on its activities in Nanterre and Suresnes, just northwest of Paris. On Sunday, February 18, a "red caravan" of cars covered with flags and posters made its way through the streets and high-rise apartment complexes of Nanterre, a Communist-party-controlled municipality. "Henri Weber, the candidate [of the Ligue] in Nanterre, speaks to the workers through a loudspeaker. His remarks are broken up periodically by revolutionary songs.

"On Wednesday, February 21, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., the caravan is back. Around it, newspaper hawkers and people distributing literature accompany a street-theater group. Three times, at the railroad station and in front of Monoprix [a department store chain], this group explains, in colorful fashion, our concept of the electoral battle. Interested, a local troupe proposes working with us. Skits dealing with the army and immigrant workers are in the works."

The Communist Youth in Nanterre threatened to systematically cover over any posters put up by the Ligue. And so, the Ligue "organized paste-ups at 11:00 a.m. or 5:00 p.m., in broad daylight. A half hour later, when we return to the places we have hit, we find the CP covering them over, so we engage in discussions with them while the people from the area listen."

In addition to these activities, during the same week the Ligue organized meetings and intervened in one for the local Stalinist member of the Chamber of Deputies. It also held literature distributions and sales at factories and shops, cinemas, a Georges Brassens gala, and a meeting on sexual liberation. □

Brazilian Peasant Leader's Life in Danger

The life of the Brazilian peasant leader Manuel da Conceição Santos is in danger, the Comité de Solidaridad en Defesa de Manuel da Conceição (Committee of Solidarity in Defense of Manuel da Conceição) reported in a February brochure. He was arrested on February 23, 1972, and has now been transferred to a prison for common criminals where, it is feared, the dictatorship will try to do what it has so far failed to do—murder him.

Manuel da Conceição, the committee reports, was a participant in the "peasant leagues" in Brazil's northeast prior to 1964. "Following the military coup, he struggled tenaciously against the yellow unions that the government imposed on the working masses." In spite of electoral corruption and the influence of the local landholders, in 1967 he was elected president of the Union of Rural Workers in the Pindaré-Mirin Valley in Maranhão Province.

Under his leadership, the union continued to organize large numbers of peasants despite an intensification of repression in the valley, the committee explained.

In 1968, the landowners decided to require an increased payment of rent from the peasants. In the face of peasant resistance, the landowners began to pillage and fence off the lands of the poor peasants.

"The union opposed this, and the peasants stepped up their struggle and refused to pay the increased rent. The union called on them to cut the wires of the fences that the peasants found oppressive and to get rid of the livestock that the landowners were using to invade their land."

In the ensuing repression, many peasants were arrested and their houses set on fire. The union headquarters was invaded by police, and Manuel da Conceição was seriously wounded in his foot. For lack of medical attention during his captivity, gangrene set in and the leg had to be amputated. He now has an artificial leg.

Upon his release, the committee stated, thousands of peasants from

the Pindaré-Mirin Valley gathered to greet him. He immediately went back to working in the peasant movement.

Following his arrest in February last year, Manuel da Conceição was removed from the area in which he was politically active and transferred to the province of Guanabara. "International solidarity and pressures prevented the dictatorship from actually murdering him," the committee explained. "Thousands upon thousands of protest letters were sent to Brazilian embassies throughout the entire world. The government was forced to put off its effort to kill him, and to publish reports showing that Manuel da Conceição was alive and that he had not been tortured. At the same time, it accused groups like 'Amnesty International' of serving as a tool of terrorists."

Now Manuel da Conceição has been transferred again, to a prison for common criminals. In this new location, he has been subjected to sadistic physical tortures, as he relates in a letter that the committee has obtained. The letter, dated November 1972, reads as follows:

"They threatened to kill me if I denounced the crime they have committed against me.

"For four months I was severely tortured by the army in Rio de Janeiro and then in the Navy Information Center (CENIMAR). For the sixth time, I was taken, practically lifeless, to the hospital. So harsh was the beating that my body became one huge hematoma. The blood coagulated on my skin and all the hair on my body fell off.

"They tore out all my fingernails. They stuck a needle all the way through my sexual organs, took me to the balcony, and lowered me by a rope tied around my testicles. Immediately, they lifted me up by my feet.

"They then hung me from a bar with my wrists handcuffed together, tore off my artificial leg, and tied my penis so I could not urinate. They left me standing for three days on my one leg with no food or drink and gave me so many drugs that I

have lost my hearing and I am impotent. They nailed my penis to a table top for twenty-four hours. They dragged me to a tub, tied up like a pig, and I nearly drowned.

"They put me in a cell that was in complete darkness. For thirty days I was kept in this cell, urinating and defecating in the same place where I slept. All they gave me was bread soaked in water. They put me in a rubber box and turned on a horn, and for three days I did not eat or sleep; I almost went crazy.

"They injected a 'truth serum' into my blood. I was in an insane state and completely unaware of the situation I was in when they interrogated me. They laid me down on the floor and threatened to get confessions out of me by putting a three-pointed iron tool, with three rows of teeth like those of a wood saw, into my anus.

"There were dozens of other things too. But this is enough for now. Following all this, they took advantage of false papers [used in underground activity in order to avoid detection by the repressive forces]; they denied that I was Manuel da Conceição since I had no documentary proof of my identity. On this basis, after twelve months of prison and after the people had forgotten me, the government would then order that I be thrown into the ocean from a helicopter. This is what they constantly said they would do. The main question for them was to isolate me from the people.

"Once again my life is in the hands of the Brazilian people. Only they have a right to pass judgment on my actions."

The Committee of Solidarity is calling for protest letters to be sent to the Brazilian authorities on Conceição's behalf. It also requests that the protests include appeals on behalf of another political prisoner—Sérgio Landolfo Furtado, a twenty-one-year-old student leader active in the province of Bahia since 1968. He was arrested on July 11, 1972, but the police deny this in order to facilitate their efforts to torture and ultimately murder him. □

Makavejev Expelled

Dusan Makavejev, producer of the film *WR—Mysteries of the Organism*, has been expelled from the League of Communists of Yugoslavia because of the "extremely reactionary" nature of his film and for an interview he gave to a West German film magazine. □

How the Awami League Rules Bangladesh

By Jon Rothschild

On March 7, about one year and three months after the defeat of the Pakistani army of occupation, Bangladesh will hold its first national elections. Prime Minister Mujibur Rahman's Awami League is a shoo-in. In fact, it is not impossible that the Awami League will sweep nearly every seat in the National Assembly.

Leaders of the League have claimed that their impending victory is a result of the charismatic presence of the prime minister and the fact that the opposition has been unable to arouse the interest, let alone the support, of the people. Mujib's personal popularity is no doubt a real factor. But given the abysmal condition of the country and the virtually complete failure of the Awami League even to begin to deal with the post-independence problems of reconstruction and development, the real explanation for the Awami League's hegemony must be sought in the tactics it has used to maintain its grip.

Chief among these are fraud, graft, black-marketeering, and careerism. Alone these are insufficient. When challenged, the Awami League resorts to gangsterism and terror. In fact, it just may be that the Rahman regime, if it accomplishes nothing else, will provide the world with a model of a new form of government—armed dictatorship resting not on professional military officers, but on the fascist-like mobilization of masses of lumpenized elements against the independent organizations of the workers and peasants.

This is a technique that has been used by Indira Gandhi, especially in the state of West Bengal. But it may yet develop that Rahman, a great admirer of Gandhi, will wind up outstripping his own teacher.

When Awami League Took Over

When the Pakistani army surrendered in December 1971, the prime task facing the new Bangladesh regime was economic reconstruction. Yahya Khan's army had killed at

least a million Bengalis during the nine-month war of independence. The rice crop had been destroyed, and hardly a bridge in the entire country remained standing. The major ports were immobilized by the large number of ships that had been sunk or disabled during the war.

In one sense, the economic devastation was even more dangerous for Bangladesh than similar destruction would have been for other countries in the colonial world. The country is basically a vast delta of constantly shifting rivers and streams. With about 75 million people in an area of just more than 55,000 square miles, Bangladesh is one of the most heavily populated countries in the world. At the same time, its largest city, Dacca, has only slightly more than 500,000 people. Chittagong, the second largest city, has about 350,000.

The huge rural population is concentrated in innumerable small and medium-sized villages, separated only by short distances, but cut off by the rivers and therefore isolated from one another to a greater extent than the distances would imply.

The combination of the destruction of crops and the lack of water-transportation links connecting the villages with each other and the cities with the countryside therefore threatened a severe famine.

On the other hand, the very backwardness of the country could have provided a revolutionary regime with certain advantages in beginning to deal with agrarian and administrative problems. The soil is extremely fertile, and the Bengali peasantry has always displayed great resourcefulness in overcoming natural obstacles. Agriculture is far more resilient than industry in recovering from physical destruction.

Furthermore, the Bengali peasantry had just gone through one of the most intense political struggles of the colonial world. It was armed, organized, mobilized, and—most important—prepared to extend the revolutionary

mobilization against foreign occupation to a revolutionary struggle to transform the social relations that have imprisoned Bengal in its backwardness.

There was one further advantage. Pakistani domination had blocked the development of an East Bengali bourgeoisie. The bulk of what industry existed was foreign-owned. So the prospects for extending the revolution, for erecting the dictatorship of the proletariat (supported by the huge militant peasantry) on the ruins of the old state apparatus, smashed completely during the war of independence, seemed open-ended.

What was lacking was a revolutionary leadership. During the war, the Mukti Bahini (Liberation Forces) had been led mostly by former officers in the Bengali divisions of the Pakistani army. Political control rested in the hands of the Awami League, which under Pakistani rule had been a petty-bourgeois opposition party. When the middle-class politicians of the Awami League found themselves at the head of the new government, they acted in accordance with the character, morals, and aspirations of their class. And as was pointed out long ago, there is nothing more repulsive than a petty bourgeois engaged in primitive accumulation.

Thievery in the Countryside

One of the Awami League government's first moves was to enact an "agrarian reform." It was aimed at stabilizing social relations in the countryside and at demoralizing the peasantry. It has been the government's greatest success.

In an article marking the first anniversary of the end of the war of independence of Bangladesh, published in the December issue of the French monthly *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Nayan Chanda described the "pessimism in the countryside":

"The only measures taken up to now in this area have been to abolish land taxes on holdings less than 25 bighas [about 3.2 hectares, or just under 8 acres] and to limit individual family holdings to 100 bighas [about 32 acres]. Neither of these measures seems to have transformed the country's agrarian system, still marked by absentee landlordism and exten-

sive métayage [a system whereby the peasant pays rent in kind]."

Chanda quoted one peasant in the Mymensingh district (north of Dacca):

"What's it to us that the maximum holdings are 100 bighas? We still have to work just like before in the burning sun, in the mud, and under the monsoon rains to fill the storehouses of our landlords. We still have to pay 100 percent interest on the loans we're forced to draw from the mahajan [usurer]."

Questioned about the apparent contradiction between the peasants' situation and the economic plans of a government that claims to be socialist, an Awami League official told Chanda that the regime had not yet had time to "study the problem."

But there must have been some study. The government has produced a plan for rural development during 1972-73. It deals exclusively with technical matters, insecticides, distribution of aid, and so forth. It does not mention the problem of the debts the peasants owe the usurers.

One reason for this may be that the usurer is now likely to be a member of the Awami League. Another may be the fact that distribution of technical aid to the countryside is an important source of raw materials for the flourishing black market, which in turn is controlled by enterprising Awami League accumulators.

"Take for example the case of fertilizer," Chanda wrote. "The government has already doubled the price to 20 takas for a 20 kilo sack. The stuff is distributed by local committees composed of regional leaders and members of the constituent assembly [all of whom are Awami Leaguers]. Instead of being given to the peasants, the sacks of fertilizer usually end up being sold on the black market. In Jamalpur (Mymensingh district), for example, one sack goes for 50 takas."

This is what might be called "normal" or even humane thievery. Chanda cites a more macabre case, one that seems to be fairly common:

"Ashvajama Chakma's family, in the Chittagong Hills area, had had nothing to eat for several days. When he heard that food was being distributed to the most needy, Ashvajama laboriously dragged himself to the Tanchhi marketplace, the region's commercial center, where in fact some

money had been distributed to the hungry. But what he was able to get was taken from him by Subal Mahajan, a moneylender who is also the head of the local Awami League. He explained that Ashvajama owed him that sum. Too weak to protest, Ashvajama returned home empty-handed. When he got there he found that his seven-year-old daughter had died of starvation. This story was told at a public meeting at which an Awami League leader had asserted that press reports that people had died of starvation were pure and simple lies."

Ten Will Get You Five Will Get You Fifteen

The famine in the countryside, it should be noted, is entirely man-made. Phani Bhusan Majumdar, the minister of food, had estimated that Bangladesh's grain needs for 1972 would total about 11.5 million tons. National production was reported as 10.2 million tons. Even allowing for inflated figures, the deficit is not unbearable, and was theoretically made up by aid from India and the United States.

The real explanation for the famine, Chanda noted, is not even so much the domestic black market, although that certainly does not help, but smuggling. This goes on, on a massive scale, in the provinces near the Indian border. It is an intriguing process, reminiscent of the operations of Milo Minderbinder in the American novel *Catch 22*. The smugglers, it seems, make money by selling contraband at a price lower than what they paid for it.

Here is how it works:

Officially, the Bangladesh monetary unit, the taka, is equal in value to the Indian rupee. But in fact, the taka exchanges for about 60 percent of its official value in rupees. This opens good prospects for the entrepreneur. One journalist described the egg traffic, for example. Two dozen eggs are bought in Bangladesh for 25 takas.

Then they are smuggled over the Indian border, where they are sold for 20 rupees, a 5 rupee (or taka) loss. The 20 Indian rupees are then conveyed back to Bangladesh where they are exchanged for 33 takas, an 8 taka profit.

Some smugglers eliminate the last

step. They simply exchange their takas into rupees and deposit them in banks in Calcutta or Delhi. For those who do exchange back into takas, the profit can on occasion be as high as 200 percent.

According to Chanda, the major part of this trade is carried out by members of the constituent assembly—or at least with their knowledge. (They are compensated for not noticing.) This has now reached the point where even the pro-Moscow Communist party, which has supported the Rahman regime, says that the population regards membership in the constituent assembly and personal corruption as synonymous.

The Commercial Ripoff

Corruption and scandal are not restricted to the countryside. In March 1972 the government passed a series of measures nationalizing some enterprises (excluding foreign companies and tea estates). Foreign trade was placed under government control, specifically under the control of an outfit called the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh (TCB). The TCB vies with the constituent assembly in the corruption derby.

The TCB serves as a major means of accumulation for aspiring government personnel. Its operations in the textile industry are a case in point. During the war of independence, East Bengal's textile mills were shut down. No cotton was imported from Pakistan, the usual source. This created an acute clothing shortage. It got so bad that many people had nothing at all to wear. The dead were buried wrapped in leaves from banana trees so that the living could use their clothes.

Last August, a TCB delegation was sent to India. It was provided with 50 million takas with which it was supposed to buy clothes that would be sent back to Bangladesh and sold at specially reduced prices in government-controlled stores.

These stores were mobbed by needy people. But inside they found saris of miserable quality on sale for fourteen takas, an exorbitant price. This gave rise to widespread discontent, and an anti-India campaign developed under the reasonable assumption that the Indians had cheated the people.

The Indians then got themselves off the hook by publishing a statement according to which "the Bangladesh delegation wanted to buy only the poorest-quality cloth." The statement also revealed the prices paid. The saris that were selling for 14 takas in Bangladesh had been bought in India for 6.12 takas each. Some of the press in Bangladesh (the scandal was so great that even the progovernment papers had to admit that something was wrong) charged that the TCB delegation, besides arranging the profiteering, spent only 30 million of the 50 million takas that had been allocated. The rest, which was presumably pocketed, was accounted for by lying about the prices paid in India.

Light industry has also seen its share of graft and corruption. Most of the plants nationalized in 1972 by the Rahman government were formerly owned by Pakistani capitalists. They were placed under the control of government officials, members of the Awami League who used that control to enrich themselves.

The Bangladesh Small Industries Corporation, for example, was supposed to distribute cotton thread to weavers. Instead, the thread was sold to profiteers, who sold it to other profiteers. When it finally got to the weavers, its price had been inflated several-fold.

Similar trading goes on with import-export licences. The Awami League has sold these to speculators who in turn sell them to others. In some cases the licences are sold over and over again but are never actually used to import the commodities they were supposedly issued for.

This sort of trafficking results in shortages that should be avoidable. Medicine, for example. In his article Chanda reported that a "completely reliable source" had told him that 60 percent of the licences granted for drugs had never been used—this despite continual press reports that people were dying from lack of medicine. A tour of Dacca's pharmacies, Chanda wrote, revealed mostly empty shelves.

Those who have imported medicine have taken advantage of the shortage to make a little extra profit in other ways. One Bengali magazine reported an example: "An ill person had purchased two bottles of Terramycin cap-



MUJIBUR RAHMAN

sules, but his health showed no improvement. The doctor became suspicious and had the capsules examined. They were found to contain nothing but ground corn."

Even rice distributed by the government is about 25 percent garbage. The most common additive is ground stone.

Goon Squads for the Cities

When it is remembered how the state of Bangladesh came into existence—through a massive war during which as many as 100,000 Bengalis were armed and organized into the Mukti Bahini—it becomes immediately obvious that the Awami League regime could not survive solely through the force of Mujib's personality.

The first task taken up by the Rahman administration at the beginning of 1972 was disarming the masses. The second was creating a progovernment armed force. A related necessity was bringing the small but militant trade-union movement under state control. The regime has been notably more successful in these latter two tasks than it has been in the area of economic reconstruction. In the first one, success has been more spotty. But in the course of demoralizing the peasantry and isolating the left wing of the liberation struggle, the government has transformed those who refused to turn in their arms into street bandits.

When Rahman nationalized Bangladesh industry, he also abolished collective bargaining. Councils were set up to administer the confiscated enterprises. The workers have 40 percent representation on them. An official government declaration on the nationalizations stated in part that "the government believes that, just as it is necessary to achieve a growing participation by the workers in the management of nationalized industries, differences that arise must be resolved by consultations conducted in the management bureaus. Under these circumstances, collective bargaining will not be necessary for workers employed in industries nationalized or controlled by the government."

Most of the unions in Bangladesh denounced this move. (The pro-Moscow Bangladesh Trade Union Centre said the administration's policy on this question was "confused.") But the Jatiya Sramik League, the Awami League-dominated "union," supported it.

Since then, the government has followed a policy of bolstering the JSL at the expense of other unions. The JSL has been provided with a well-armed goon squad (called, of all things, the Lal Bahini, or Red Guards) that has used violence to eliminate its political opposition.

The mainstay of the Awami League's military forces is the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini (National Defense Forces). Armed with Indian rifles and trained by Indian officers, the JRB is supposedly a law-and-order outfit. In reality, it serves as an omnipresent paramilitary squad that takes over where the Lal Bahini leave off.

Violent attacks on antigovernment activists are a daily occurrence. Chanda quotes an example taken from a small article on the corner of page 4 of an issue of the *Bangladesh Observer*: "As the demonstration of members of the Chhatra League [an anti-government student organization] was passing through Rajgani [in the Comilla district], a passing jeep opened up with machine-gun fire. Ten demonstrators were seriously wounded."

The February 11 issue of *Holiday*, an English-language weekly published in Dacca, described an incident that occurred on February 4 at the R. R. Jute Mills in Barabkunda, near Chittagong.

"According to reports received here," a staff correspondent wrote, "... armed thugs surrounded the whole area [of the mills], posted guards at the exits and then launched their attack on the labour colonies. They set the kutchra [makeshift] structure of the workers on fire, and then, using their automatic weapons, started firing at the innocent workers. When the labourers, for safety but also out of fear, tried to flee from the mill area, the armed hirelings of the progovernment Jatiya Sramik League swooped on them."

Holiday reported that 200 workers were killed; 300 are missing.

And Now for an Election

The Awami League's gangster tactics have been applied to opposition candidates in the elections. The two largest anti-Awami League organizations are the National Awami party (B), the formerly pro-Peking group headed by Maulana Bhashani, and the Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (National Socialist party).

The latter group originated in a split from the Chhandra League, which at one time was the pro-Awami League student organization. A. S. M. Abdur Rab and Shahjehan Siraj formed a left-wing faction in the Chhandra League. It was opposed by a "Mujibist" faction.

In July 1972 the two factions held rival conferences; both invited Rahman, who, naturally, went to the Mujibist conference. Soon after, the Rab-Siraj group united with Major Ahmed Jalil, one of the best-known Mukti Bahini commanders during the independence war; they formed the JSD.

The JSD appears now to be the most significant opposition group. It has grown rapidly among student leftists who are hostile to Maoism. When the March 7 election campaign began, the JSD announced that it would field 300 candidates. The NAP(B) said it would run 220 candidates.

But the Awami League has used a variety of gangster methods to discourage oppositionists from running.

On February 11, the JSD held a national day of protest against the government's repressive policies. A large rally was held in Dacca. "Speaking at the rally," the February 21 *Holiday* reported, "Rab alleged that the ruling party had resorted to gangster

tactics everywhere to get through the elections and to scare the antiestablishment forces. He said that the election-eve happenings, including kidnapping of opposition nominees and obtaining of signatures on withdrawal papers from some of those who filed their nomination papers at a number of places, showed what the government had up its sleeve. He forecast that as the elections came closer, things would be worse."

It is hard to see how much worse things could get. *Holiday* has reported a number of incidents in which opposition candidates were kidnapped before they could present their nomination papers. Some have been attacked while on their way to file. Opposition workers have been arrested on various flimsy charges. And finally, the media, controlled almost exclusively by the Awami League, have given coverage only to the progovernment candidates.

The Awami League-inspired violent atmosphere has reached the point that even the offices of the National Awami party (Muzzafar), a pro-Moscow organization that has generally supported the government's policies, have been attacked and set on fire by mobs mobilized by Awami League goons.

The February 26 issue of the West German weekly *Der Spiegel* reported one particularly grisly instance of Awami League election tactics. M. Islam tried to tear a poster of Rahman down from a wall in Dacca. Mujib supporters attacked him and cut off one of his ears.

In the absence of any well-organized revolutionary opposition, the population's response to Rahman's terror and to the dashing of their hopes for social change has tended to express itself in randomly directed violence.

Young people who fought in the Mukti Bahini during the independence war have found no jobs and have been cast onto the scrap heap by the economic policies of the regime. Surrounded by corruption and violence, and deprived of any means of livelihood, they have themselves turned to violence and robbery. *Der Spiegel* has reported that the streets of Dacca are virtually empty at night. People who visit friends and are unable to leave for home before dark stay overnight. Dacca is more violent today than it was during most of the war.

This state of affairs, created by the

Awami League itself, serves the regime as an excuse for bolstering the Jatiya Rakkhi Bahini, allegedly in the interests of preserving law and order. And it also provides the base for what may become a special form of Mujibist fascism.

The regime utilizes the masses of declassed lumpen elements to form the base of a repressive movement used to destroy all independent forms of popular organization, and specifically to smash the independent trade unions and the radical student movement. It is all done in the name of nationalism, socialism, secularism, and democracy, the four main watchwords of the Rahman regime. Having itself created disorder and lawlessness, the government is now using that situation to tighten its grip by mass-based repression.

The people have on many occasions responded to the Awami League regime with some violence of their own. Lewis Simon reported in the December 18, 1972, *Washington Post* that 550 Awami League officials had been killed by outraged peasants "in the last few months."

It is probable that many of these cases involved people like Ashvajama Chakma, whose child died of starvation because the Awami League stole his food. But the Awami League regime will not be overthrown by unorganized violent outbursts, as justifiable as they may be. At this point there is little evidence that any of the opposition groups have been able to develop a comprehensive program that can mobilize and arm the people against the government.

The Awami League will therefore win its election. And most probably, Rahman will take advantage of that to announce that the people have spoken, and that the opposition is antinational. An intensification of repression may then be expected.

But the future of Bangladesh is far from decided. No matter how severe the Awami League's repression may become, the revolutionary will of the people who fought one of the most heroic mass armed struggles of colonial history will not be easily broken. And their problems will not be solved by Rahman. The question is, Will a leadership emerge to organize and mobilize that revolutionary will before the country is brought to a state of permanent, hopeless degradation by Awami League thieves? □

Interview With PST Candidate in Argentina

[The following is an interview with Jorge Mera, a former leader of the bank workers' union who is the candidate of the Argentine Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores (PST—Socialist Workers party) and the Frente Obrero (Workers Front) for governor of Buenos Aires Province in the March 11 elections. The interview is translated by *Intercontinental Press* from the February 14 issue of the PST's weekly, *Avanzada Socialista*.]

* * *

Question. You have been stating [during a tour of the Buenos Aires area] that our party has already won the elections, no matter what vote we receive.

Answer. That's right. I am referring to the fact that committees of support to the Workers Front have sprung up all over the place—Tucumán, Misiones, Córdoba, Santa Fe, Buenos Aires, in neighborhoods and in factories; that many workers are making their homes available so that committees can function; that in conjunction with this, our party has opened up a massive dialogue with the workers and we are being attentively listened to; and, finally, that we are present in the front lines of all the struggles that break out.

Just think of it: It was our front that spread the spark of the struggle against the trade-union deduction, one of the antibureaucratic battles of the moment; that had a decisive influence on the events at SOMISA [a major steel factory]; that is encouraging the heroic struggle at Panam [a plastics factory in Tucumán].

All this shows that we are a national force that is emerging from the heat of the struggle and that is beginning to be recognized by broad layers of the working class. This is the reason that we are taking part in the elections. Considering the fact that this has occurred within the space of only a few months, we can say that we have already won.

Q. To what do you attribute this success?

A. A few days ago, two of our compañeros met with a top Peronist union leader in order to ask him for official information regarding a particular struggle. They suggested that his union call a meeting of political parties in order to urge them to reach concrete agreements on wages. With surprising candor, the union leader said No, because today Peronism is for taking control of the government and does not want to enter into agreements of any kind, since the country is in ruins. If Perón succeeds in obtaining important credits in Europe, then they will see what kind of wage policy they will pursue.

Q. In other words, this leader was admitting, in fact, that Peronism is going to continue exploiting the workers more or less the way the other governments of the bosses and the military have done.

A. Exactly. This is why the Peronist leaders do not want the people to mobilize around wage demands. Rucci went so far as to say that there should not be any struggle now for higher wages.

Q. Just the opposite of what we are doing and saying.

A. That's right. We are calling for struggling right now and for getting organized in the Front's support committees. It is true that the country is in ruins, but for this very reason we must confront the causes of this ruin—the bosses and imperialism, as well as the leaders who have betrayed us. We must do this by attempting to establish a workers' and people's government.

Q. Do you think the working class agrees with our approach?

A. What is sure is that in spite of what the Peronist bureaucrats and Perón himself are saying, the working class is struggling. Thus you have

the impressive wave of struggles that is going on—and I might add that in every one of these struggles, we are being listened to and our ideas are being picked up.

Q. Could you give any examples?

A. All kinds. There are many cases in which workers who do not know us, and with whom we are not in direct contact, are taking up and using our positions, or including our slogans in their demands.

But let me give you an example from last week. The steelworkers in the Workers Front were out leafleting SIAM, which is a very Peronist factory, in opposition to the union deduction. The first day, the workers didn't say a word. But the next day our compañeros came back again and this time the workers lined up to get leaflets and to talk.

Q. How then do you explain the fact that the polls of the bosses and the government give us somewhere around 140,000 votes?

A. Leaving aside the fact that you can't have much faith in these polls since they are carried out for political purposes, there is nevertheless a certain logic in this figure. The Front and our party have provided a nucleus for the best of the workers' and popular vanguard and have headed up the recent struggles. As a result the working class pays attention to us and takes a friendly attitude toward us.

But this is not enough to guarantee us an avalanche of votes. There are two extremely powerful factors that prevent this from happening. One is the massive propaganda facilities of the regime that are put at the disposal of all the bourgeois parties—from the Nueva Fuerza [New Force] to Alende, with the FREJULI [Frente Justicialista de Liberación—Justicialist Liberation Front] and the Radicals in between—but that are denied us. The other is that the majority of the working class still has faith in Perón. That is, Peronism on all levels under Perón is already corroded, but most workers still believe that he personally will be able to make things come out all right. If the Peronist movement comes to power and does what the union leader I spoke about



PST slogan on wall in city of Rosario calls for a 50 percent wage increase for all workers and a minimum wage of \$120 per month.

earlier says, then the experience of the working class with Perón will come to an end.

Q. Thus this figure of 140,000 votes that we are supposed to receive seems reasonable to you?

A. If 140,000 working compañeros—many of them union or neighborhood leaders—vote for a workers' and socialist program, for a plan of

struggle, and for an organization that exists throughout the entire country, it will be an indication of the enormous strength and power of this new organization of the workers' and people's vanguard. But I call for us to go beyond this limit set by the official statistics. Let's continue to move forward with the Workers Front. Let's continue to form new committees. Let us continue to press on with our struggles and call for a vote for the workers' and socialist candidates. □

'Nothing Will Ever Be the Same'

After the Belgian High-School Actions

[During January, Belgian high-school students conducted their largest demonstrations in years. They were part of a campaign against two repressive plans that have been put forward by the Belgian government. The following interview, a brief account of this campaign, appeared in the February 17 issue of *Rouge*, weekly newspaper of the Ligue Communiste, French section of the Fourth International.

[Gilles Augier is a member of the Central Committee of the Ligue Révolutionnaire des Travailleurs (LRT—

Revolutionary Workers League), Belgian section of the Fourth International. He has been active in the high-school movement.

[The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

* * *

Rouge. Could you tell us briefly what the two plans are about?

Augier. The VDB plan, named after Van Den Boeynants, the minister of national defense, has two main points.

First, under direct pressure from NATO, it aims at bolstering the organizational capacity of the Belgian army by increasing the number of combat units stationed east of the Rhine and by raising the rate of assignments to combat units.

Second, on the internal level, it provides for strengthening "defense of the national territory" by creating an integrated command structure that in times of crisis could bring the country under military administration and rule.

Finally, and this is the thing that precipitated the huge mobilizations that have taken place, it provides for abolishing draft deferments, as well as increasing police forces that are supposed to cooperate with the army in "defending our territory."

The Vranckx project (Vranckx is the minister of the interior) is directly complementary. It would ban "private militias" or "any group whose aim is to resort to force or whose actions tend to disturb order or public security."

The various clauses of this plan show that it is aimed implicitly at the revolutionary organizations. It specifically excludes "certain groups charged with surveillance or protection of persons and property, whose activity is sometimes necessary" (that is, employers' militias). And also, strike picket lines are exempted, provided they are under the control of the trade-union organizations.

In both cases, it's a real civil-war plan that the bourgeoisie is trying to set up and in this sense it clearly recalls the efforts of the French bourgeoisie to consolidate its strong state.

Rouge. How do you explain such plans in a country that is still marked by relative "social peace"?

Augier. That's just an illusion that Belgian capital wants to put over. This famous "social peace" has been pretty badly shaken up during these past years. There was the big miners' strike in 1960-61, the student unrest of 1965-68, the Limbourg strike in January 1970.

In the course of these struggles, the bourgeoisie saw that the revolutionary organizations, composed mostly of students, would be able to link up with the workers. Since then, it has come to the understanding that simultaneously it had to threaten the revo-

lutionary organizations (the Vranckx plan) and also to strengthen its base, especially by intensifying its militarization of youth (the abolition of deferments).

Rouge. What was the reaction to these plans?

Augier. We can say that the movement developed in three phases that were related to the level of its radicalization. In the first period (beginning in December 1972) the high-school revolt was *solely* around the question of the draft deferments. The movement spread very rapidly, like an oil stain, and affected wide layers, including the Catholic schools. Many high schools went on strike.

January 17 was the turning point. The movement then extended into the main cities; up until then, Liège, and especially Antwerp and Ghent had not mobilized. But on that day, there was a demonstration of 4,000 in Brussels. That was when the movement began denouncing the *whole* VDB plan, including the strengthening of the repressive forces (the police), and when it demanded the complete annulment of the plan; it also demanded democratic rights within the army, and the right to refuse army service.

The third phase began on January 24. On that day, mounted police attacked a demonstration of 4,000 high-school students. Many were hurt and there was even a rumor that someone had been killed. At that point, the revolutionary organizations, especially the LRT, tried to combine the struggle against the Van Den Boeynants plan with a mobilization against the Vranckx project. The movement, which through repression had just seen how complementary the two plans were, understood this perfectly.

The high point of the mobilization was the national mobilization in Brussels on January 31. People from all the cities converged on Brussels by car, and to our great surprise (not as great as the bourgeoisie's, though), 15,000 high-school students marched through the city! And the lesson of January 24 had been learned; a well-organized defense guard was set up — with all due respect to Mr. Vranckx.

In all (and this is according to Van Den Boeynants, not us), 176,000 high-school students demonstrated in Belgium during the month of January.

Rouge. How was the movement structured?

Augier. At first, it had a city-by-city structure, in the form of mobilization committees. But the need for national centralization was felt very quickly, especially since the movement was developing very unevenly, high school by high school and city by city (a little like what happened in France with the mobilization around the Guichard memorandum).

On January 29 the Front National Lycéen [FNL—National High-School Students' Front] was formed at the initiative of the committees in Ghent, Antwerp, Brussels, and Liège. This was intended to be a means of centralizing the movement, and at the same time to be the *sole authorized representative of the high-schoolers*. (In the meantime the bourgeoisie had started to talk about "consultations" and "negotiations"—but without the main people concerned, the high-school students.)

The FNL held its first conference on February 3, but nothing was able to come out of it, mostly because of the ultrasectarian attitude of the Flemish Mao-Stalinists. On the other hand, another conference was held on February 10 with 400 attending, both Flemish and French-speaking. A resolution was adopted and a regional and national structure was agreed to.

Rouge. Apparently this movement didn't go beyond the high schools. . .

Augier. That's right. For a very simple reason. It was the high-school students who felt directly affected. University students remained relatively indifferent. But there were important demonstrations of solidarity, especially after the violent repression on January 24.

For example, we got motions of support passed in certain union locals. And what's more, for the January 31 demonstration striking oil workers gave us the gasoline to get to Brussels. So the movement stayed basically among the high-schoolers. But it had an exemplary value, showing all layers of the population the militarist and repressive character of the bourgeoisie's plans.

Rouge. This movement took place

during a big governmental crisis. Did it have any effects on the crisis?

Augier. Frankly, no. This government crisis began in November and was an internal bourgeois crisis having to do with a new sharing-out of economic and political power. [A new cabinet was created—*IP*.] But during this period, the bourgeoisie kept up a solid front against the high-school movement. To the point where, symbolically, they kept Van Den Boeynants on as minister of national defense, even though he had been the target of the whole movement.

Rouge. What's next?

Augier. It's hard to make an exact prediction of what will happen. In my opinion, it is impossible for the bourgeoisie to preserve its projects completely. It will undoubtedly have to backtrack a little and "chop them up" so as to make their import less obvious; probably, the deferments will wind up being maintained.

The bourgeoisie will also try to bring these things about slowly, under cover of "nonpartisan cooperation." The FNL has decided to wage a big, fifteen-day-long educational campaign to explain the meaning of the high-school movement and to warn against "the government's manipulative maneuvers over the so-called proposals for nonpartisan cooperation."

For the time being, we are not calling any national actions or new tests of strength—this would be repetitive and would hurt the good response we have gotten. But if the bourgeoisie presses its projects or pushes things too far, there will be new actions—and still stronger than January's. For Belgian youth, nothing will ever be the same. □

Stalin the Wise and Likable?

On the eve of the twentieth anniversary of the death of Stalin on March 3, 1953, Aleksandr Chakovsky, editor of the Soviet Writers Union weekly, *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, published a novel entitled *Blockade*. The book deals with the siege of Leningrad and portrays Stalin as a wise and likable leader. Blame for the bloody purges goes to the head of the secret police, Lavrenti Beria. "Yes, mistakes were made," Stalin says in the book. "Mistakes were allowed. But before the people can know this, the enemy must be defeated." □

Swedish Trotskyists Hold Third Convention

[The Swedish Trotskyist organization, Revolutionära Marxisters Förbund (RMF—League of Revolutionary Marxists), held its third convention January 26-28. According to the convention statistics reported in the February issue of the RMF's monthly, *Mullvaden*, 37 percent of the delegates were workers, 50 percent students, and the remainder unemployed, soldiers, etc. Seventy-five percent were male.

[The overwhelming majority were very young—fifteen to thirty years old. No less than 63 percent had been recruited from the ranks of other left-wing organizations. For the remainder, the RMF is their first political organization. An indication of the expansion that the RMF is undergoing is the fact that 66 percent of the delegates were attending their first convention.

[The following report on the convention is from the February issue of *Mullvaden*. The translation is by *Intercontinental Press*.]

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The significance of the RMF's third convention cannot be understood by comparing it to the to-do that accompanies a nonevent like a Social Democratic convention, for example. No excited journalists came to our convention. No television crews loaded down with cameras and grease paint were there. Only a shivering secret policeman kept an eye on the convention from the subway adjacent to the convention hall. Red-nosed and all dressed up, he hung around there for three days and tried to look as if he were reading *Aftonbladet*. All he got out of his special assignment was a good case of inflammation of the bladder!

No, the significance of this convention can only be understood by assessing the class struggle and the strength of the revolutionary movement within it today. What possibilities did the convention give us to increase our political and organizational preparation to meet the tasks posed by the class struggle? Such an

appraisal must also be made with regard to our previous activity. What have conditions been for building a revolutionary communist party in Sweden? And how have we taken advantage of these conditions?

The Youth Radicalization

Building a revolutionary Marxist organization in Sweden has been a painful process. There has never been a genuinely Trotskyist tradition here. Only isolated individuals have used Marxism as a *method* for carrying out independent work. But the Communist party of Sweden [SKP—Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti] has never done this. The SKP has only slavishly followed the Moscow bureaucracy's every whim. Like all its sister parties, the SKP remained a faded and phlegmatic institution supported through parliamentary and trade-union advance posts together with liberal bribes from Moscow.

The youth radicalization that began in the 1960s in Sweden, as in most parts of the world, occurred *outside* of the SKP/VPK [Vänsterpartiet Kommunisterna—Left party of Communists].¹ The party's sluggish apparatus not only did not prevent radical youth from engaging in independent activity, but it also found itself in *opposition* to the militant forms of struggle that began to come into use.

Therefore, the youth radicalization involved a break on the part of layers of student youth not only with the Social Democracy, but also with Stalinism. But the break was not a particularly conscious one; it took place in practice, but not on a theoretical basis. The result of this was that the greater part of those who were radicalized were not able to further develop this split, but slipped back into the traditions of the SKP.

'Old Fossil Swimming Against Current'

What, then, were the conditions in

1. The SKP changed its name to VPK in 1967. — *IP*

Sweden that gave rise for the first time to organized Trotskyist activity? In our view, they were unfavorable. It was the Chinese Communist party that stood out as the only political alternative for the activists who broke with the VPK. The Fourth International could not offer that alternative. Because of the international relationship of forces, the International was completely unfamiliar to most activists.

Thus the radicalization that took place around the issue of the Indochina war gave stability to an organization like KFML [Kommunistiska Förbundet Marxist-Leninsterna—The Communist League of Marxist-Leninists]² without it facing any competition whatever from a revolutionary Marxist organization. It acquired a stability and weight that were used to instill a vulgar anti-Trotskyism in most of those who became involved in antiimperialist activities. The first, small Trotskyist group, Revolutionära Marxister [RM—Revolutionary Marxists], was treated as an "old fossil swimming against the current."

This first, modest trend toward Trotskyism was brought about by the coming together of two processes. The first was a historic settling of accounts with Stalinism. The second was the experience of May 1968: Trotskyism was no longer to be found simply in history books but out fighting in the front lines on the barricades in Paris! During the fall of 1970 and the spring of 1971, RM was able to unite with Bolsjevikgruppen [BG—the Bolshevik Group]. This was a splitoff from KFML/Clarté in Lund that had behind it a thorough settling of accounts with the brand of Marxism that KFML stood for.

Childhood Diseases

Cooperation between RM and BG was painful. The Trotskyist movement found itself confronted with two conflicting needs: on the one hand, a more solid basis for unification (through comprehensive analyses of Swedish society, more knowledge about the Fourth International, etc.),

2. At its convention at the beginning of January 1973, the KFML changed its name, adopting the name Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti (SKP), the old name of the present VPK. — *IP*

and on the other hand, a centralization of political activity so as to be in a position to maintain and extend the influence of RM and BG among the new youth vanguard.

Added to this contradiction was organizational amateurism. The cooperation between RM and BG and the formation of the Revolutionära Marxisterna Förbundet simultaneously brought about a split in the Trotskyist movement. An opposition tendency arose in both RM and BG that placed top priority on the first need. It split away and formed the Kommunistiska Arbetsgrupper [KAG—Communist Work Groups]. It completely failed to put together an alternative organization. The project soon collapsed; some of its members became demoralized, and a large number rallied to the majority's viewpoints and went back to the RMF.

Toward a New Course

To a certain extent, the period between the RMF's first and third conventions consisted in repairing the damage done by the split. At the same time, we acquired the initial material basis for carrying out effective propaganda work—bookstores, headquarters, typewriters, mimeograph machines, a typesetting machine, etc. This was an arduous and costly task. Unlike other left-wing organizations, we built up an organizational apparatus from scratch. We were not able to take with us any material supplies from any VPK district organization. We didn't get even one post office box.

The absence of a Trotskyist tradition in Sweden meant that we were forced to introduce clarity where the worst Stalinist garbage prevailed. We were forced to refute KFML's stupidities. We answered their increasingly escalated agitation against us—symbolized first by a foolish newspaper article entitled "The Truth About Trotskyism," then by a pamphlet entitled "The Trotskyists, Fronts, and the Vietnam Movement," and finally by the book "Marxism or Trotskyism?"—and we even launched an offensive against Stalinism.

But this work of clarification, together with our organizational lag, meant that we were also held up in developing an analysis of the economic and political conditions of the pres-

ent period whose general tactical and strategic outlines could be worked out in harmony with a conscious plan for building the organization. It was only in the summer of 1972 that this work could be begun.

The New Course

The point of departure for the "new course" was a report to the convention on the economic and political situation today. The thesis presented in this report was that we are facing a period of economic and social struggles. Naturally, this period will not be a smooth one. On the contrary, here and there it will be broken up by smaller booms and powerful crises. Out of the contradiction between what the working masses demand and what cannot be granted by this society, the stability of the Social Democracy will find itself challenged.

The communist movement has an opportunity to break the reformist hold on the working class. But in order to accomplish this, an understanding is necessary of what the Social Democracy is, what the role of the trade unions is, etc. We must first be able to equip ourselves with tactics and a strategy that make it possible for us to meet head on the Social Democracy's offensive against any independent activity on the part of the working class.

Here too we see that the strongest organizations to grow out of the radicalization of the sixties—KFML and KFML (R)—did not resolve this problem. KFML succumbed to one side of the Social Democracy's offensive—the attempt at integration. This can be seen most clearly in the work in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution, which KFML/DFFG [De Förenade FNL-Grupperna—The United NLF Groups] in no time turned over to the government.

The KFML's policy does not make it possible to develop a *consciousness* of the fact that we are living in an imperialist country with an imperialist government. Instead, it involves a capitulation to that very government.

KFML (R), on the other hand, succumbed to the other side of the Social Democracy's offensive—repression. We saw this best during the Arenal strike, when KFML (R) was skillfully outmaneuvered and isolated from the mass of the workers.

Develop Consciousness

The starting point for taking on the attempt by the Social Democracy to curb all independent activity—whether it be the trade-union struggle, the women's struggle, the environmental struggle, or whatever—must be a revolutionary strategy. Thus the "new course" grew out of reports and contributions to the convention that involve an initial reacquisition of the strategical concepts that were used in, for instance, the first four congresses of the Third International or that are part of the "Transitional Program" of the Fourth International.

What is a revolutionary situation like and how can we prepare now to meet the needs of the advanced workers in that situation? How can we begin today to develop *consciousness* among groups of advanced workers so that they will be able to come up with a correct policy and correct forms of struggle during a revolutionary situation? And how can we promote the development of the struggle toward a situation in which, in the words of Lenin, "the oppressed no longer want to, and the rulers no longer can, live as they used to"?

On the basis of the economic and political report, together with the reports on revolutionary strategy and the struggle for workers' control, the conditions for mass struggle in the present epoch, the nature of the party, the upsurge in the Swedish workers' struggle, and revolutionary strategy and the union movement, the convention also passed a resolution developing a policy toward the workplace. It is a document that lays down our main tasks in the workers' struggle today.

Top Priorities

This resolution does not present any ready-made strategy. But it is a contribution to the process of working out a communist program, that is, a single program that takes up various phases of political and organizational activity and their forms, as well as possible demands and slogans that can be actively raised by the masses in their independent organs of dual power and that, during the revolutionary situation, can be transformed into the expropriation of the bourgeoisie by the working class!

The convention put forward two top priorities for our work: first, to work to establish a political presence among the radicalized and politicized proletarian layers, and second, to carry out activity in solidarity with the Indochinese revolution. But in addition, "work on questions relating to women's oppression" will receive special attention.

Finally, the convention dealt with the task of transforming the RMF into a communist propaganda organization. This too is a priority! This takes in questions such as working out a pedagogical form for our propagan-

da, producing a regular-functioning operation and an organizational machinery that can penetrate every pore of capitalist society with communist propaganda!

With regard to the needs of the class struggle, the revolutionary movement is behind time. Thanks to incorrect policies, from, among others, VPK, KFML, and KFML(R), the Social Democracy has a big head start. RMF's third convention closed the gap a bit by reaching an initial theoretical understanding of what is needed. Now the most important thing remains—*to turn it into action!* □

141 Writers Demand its Retraction

Swedish Parliament Votes 'Terrorist Law'

The "terrorist law" proposed by the Swedish government passed parliament February 20 without much debate and without any important alterations in the original proposal.

The law, which was first proposed last December, states that any foreigner can be expelled from or denied entry into Sweden "if there is good reason to assume that he belongs to or works for a political organization or group that, it is feared here in the kingdom, uses force, threats, or coercion in its political activity." (See *Intercontinental Press*, February 26, 1973, p. 209.) Persons who, according to the Swedish secret police or Interpol, fall into this category are to be considered "presumed terrorists."

The law, which has aroused a great deal of opposition in Sweden, will go into effect on April 15. It is to remain in effect for one year, with the understanding that an extension is possible by vote of the Riksdag (parliament).

Opposition to the law has taken various forms, including demonstrations and protest statements. In the latter category was a statement by 141 Swedish writers demanding that the law be withdrawn.

On February 17, some 400 persons marched through Uppsala to protest the law. They adopted a resolution, which was presented to Minister of the Interior Eric Holmqvist, who was in town for a conference on immigration. The resolution, published in the

February 18 issue of the Stockholm daily *Dagens Nyheter*, stated in part:

"The Swedish government condemns the Vietnam war, but does not grant asylum to those who refuse to take part in the American war machine. Sweden gives material support to the the PAIGC [Partido Africano da Independência da Guiné-Bissau e Cabo Verde—African party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands], but Portuguese soldiers and officers who refuse to take part in the genocide of the fascist Portuguese regime in Africa do not get political asylum in Sweden. A number of Portuguese who sympathize with the PAIGC have already been expelled from the country via France to sure death in Portugal. Therefore, we demand political asylum for political refugees."

Soh Sung's Sentence Reduced to Life

Soh Sung, a 27-year-old former leader of South Korea's student movement who was sentenced to death in late 1971 on frame-up charges of spying for North Korea, had his sentence reduced to life imprisonment by a Seoul appeals court on December 7, 1972.

At the appeal hearing, Soh, who has severe burns over his whole body, explained, "It is the result of my trying to commit suicide. I could not endure the mental and physical pain during the interrogation."

As the day for Riksdag consideration of the proposed law drew closer, government spokesmen took pains to clean up the dirty image their law will help create for Sweden. Despite the fact that the wording of the law is so vague as to threaten the civil liberties of large numbers of colonial freedom fighters seeking asylum in Sweden, as well as their supporters in Sweden, the government sought to persuade the public that the law would only affect a small handful of obvious evildoers.

"The people who will be affected by this law can be counted on the fingers of one hand," said Holmqvist.

Cabinet member Carl Lidbom, who is the official who proposed the law, claimed that Swedish revolutionary groups and colonial liberation movements were not the target of the law. In Riksdag debate, he mentioned only two organizations by name that would allegedly be affected by it—the right-wing Yugoslav Ustasha, and Black September, reported *Dagens Nyheter* February 21.

The government claims that persons who have received political asylum in Sweden will not necessarily be expelled if they belong to a "terrorist organization." "Instead," said *Dagens Nyheter*, "the person in question will be placed under special control measures, including orders to place restrictions on his ability to choose a job and a place of residence. There is a possibility that he will be subject to physical searches, raids on his home, and censorship of his mail and monitoring of his telephone.

"Following notification from the government, the national police board will draw up a list of the foreigners affected by the law. The list will remain secret." □

Canadian Indians Challenge Trudeau

[The following article first appeared in *Labor Challenge*, a revolutionary-socialist biweekly published in Toronto, Canada.]

* * *

The question of aboriginal rights remains a burning issue following the rejection by the Supreme Court of Canada January 31 of land claims by British Columbia's Nishga Indians.

The Nishga tribe is claiming title to 4,800 square miles of land in northern British Columbia, which the provincial government—the target of their legal suit—conceded they had occupied "since time immemorial." The case was regarded as a landmark test of native peoples' claims across Canada to compensation for lands stolen from them by the white man as he colonized the continent. The Nishgas have never signed a treaty with the whites.

Of the seven judges who heard the case in Ottawa, three upheld the Nishga claim, arguing in part that the Indians' longtime occupation of the Nass Valley was a proof of ownership, and that Indian title was recognized in George III's Royal Proclamation of 1763, which forbade private persons to buy Indian lands.

Three judges turned down the Nishga appeal, saying that they were not covered by the Royal Proclamation since the lands in question had come under British control only in 1846 with the signing by Britain and the United States of the Treaty of Oregon, which did not mention Indian rights. The seventh judge's deciding vote against the native claim was based on a "technical detail" that the British Columbia attorney general had not authorized the case to come before the Supreme Court.

While the Nishga spokesmen said they would take the case to the World Court in The Hague, George Manuel, president of the National Indian Brotherhood, said it was now up to the federal government to make the final decision. Native Member of Parliament Wally Firth (NDP [New Democratic party]—Northwest Terri-

tories) challenged the government to adopt as its own his motion to form a commons committee that would investigate the whole question of Indian land claims. (As a private member's bill, his motion is unlikely to be debated during this session.) Frank Howard (NDP—Skeena) moved unsuccessfully for a special debate on the court's decision.

Asked the government position, Prime Minister Trudeau referred to the 1969 White Paper, which dismissed aboriginal claims.

Yet the question of aboriginal and treaty rights is a vital one for Canada's native peoples—a cornerstone of their attempts to fight off new encroachment on their lands threatened by energy resource developments like the Québec government's James Bay hydroelectric development, or the Projected Mackenzie Valley highway and pipeline in the Northwest Territories. Not only are many of the 250,000 reserve Indians pressing for renegotiation of their treaties, with their minimal [protective] provisions imposed on their ancestors by colonial agents and the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police]. But there are 115,000 Indians, as well as the Inuit (Eskimos), and mixed-blood Metis, who lack even the rudimentary protection of treaties.

Their land claims were bolstered by federal officials at recent court hearings in Montréal on a bid by the James Bay Indians and Inuit for an injunction to halt the \$6 billion [billion] hydro project. The director of the policy division of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development testified that no land cession treaty has ever been signed between the District of Ungava's 6,000 Cree Indians and Inuit and any government, with one exception, and therefore they have a firm legal right to more than half the province.

In the Northwest Territories, native people—a majority of the population—are mobilizing around demands that the government freeze all development north of the 60th parallel (the boundary with the southern provinces) until their land claims are settled.

The Territories' 7,000 Indians are covered by two treaties. One of these, Number 11, covers the entire Mackenzie Valley region. This land, now worth billions of dollars, cost Ottawa only \$23,000 when it induced the Indians to sign over their rights in 1921.

The Indians argue that the federal government made these treaties in recognition of their underlying aboriginal rights. They are now invoking these rights to claim mineral rights, and want the matter settled prior to any major resource development. Ottawa claims that if the Indians possessed aboriginal rights, they lost them when they signed the treaties, surrendering "forever" all rights, titles, and privileges to their lands.

The Yukon and Territories' 13,000 Inuit and 5,000 Metis have no treaties. They joined with the Indians last September to form a new federation of Northern Natives to fight for land claims in the North. The federation has since been joined by the powerful Alaska Federation of Natives, which received \$1 billion and 40 million acres from the U.S. government in 1971 in recognition of their aboriginal rights.

The struggle for recognition of their aboriginal rights is uniting all of Canada's native peoples, treaty and nontreaty alike. For if aboriginal rights are denied, then what is the status of the treaties which were based on the concept that the Indians had rights as original inhabitants? Trudeau himself demonstrated this logic when he told a Liberal party dinner in Vancouver in 1969 that "we won't recognize aboriginal rights . . . and this will mean that perhaps the treaties shouldn't go on forever."

In practice, of course, the existing treaties have been continually broken or not fulfilled by white capitalist society. The most authoritative study of the question, *Native Rights in Canada* (published by the Indian-Eskimo Association of Canada), lists seven major heads under which the treaties have been violated, beginning with the violation of natives' hunting and fishing rights by white men's laws.

Many unsettled native claims date back even to the last century. The native peoples make settlement of these claims a prior condition to discussing amendments to the federal Indian Act or other government measures.

Failure to recognize aboriginal rights was a major factor in their near-unanimous rejection of the Trudeau government's White Paper on native policy.

Following the Supreme Court's rejection of the Nishga appeal, Trudeau is reported to have told Nishga chief Frank Calder that he now thought the Indians have more legal rights to their land than he at first believed, but he told the House February 8 that he still considers aboriginal rights to be "a very vague concept." Indian Affairs Minister Jean Chrétien, in a recent interview with *Toronto Star* columnist Peter Desbarats, termed native claims to aboriginal rights "legal and semantic disputes," stating, "I prefer to look at the question in terms of some sort of social compensation, not related to any rights but to the social disturbance that we are creating for the native peoples."

Why are Canada's rulers so reluctant to acknowledge the just claims of the native peoples, the most oppressed of this society? Trudeau expressed their cynical reasoning very succinctly in his Vancouver speech: "It's inconceivable, I think, that in a given society, one section of the society have a treaty with the other section of the society. We must be all equal under the laws . . . I don't think that we should encourage the Indians to feel that their treaties should last forever within Canada so that they be able to receive their twine or their gun powder. They should become Canadians as all other Canadians.

"If we think of restoring aboriginal rights to the Indians, well, what about the French who were defeated at the Plains of Abraham, shouldn't we restore rights to them? And what about the Acadians who were deported—shouldn't we compensate for this?"

Or as the prime minister stated elsewhere last year: ". . . If we were to try in any government, try to undo the errors of our past and buy back the past, we wouldn't have a nation, we wouldn't have a country."

Straight from the horse's mouth, as it were—the leading spokesman of the Canadian capitalist class acknowledges that the state is founded on violence and injustice!

It is precisely this control by the Canadian state over their lives and livelihoods that growing numbers of native people are challenging. Asserting their nationality as sovereign

peoples in their own right, based on their territorial claims, they are rejecting the laws and prerogatives of the profit-oriented white society as we know it.

"The Nishga tribal claims, far from being resolved by the Supreme Court ruling, have helped bring to a head the underlying issues posed by Canada's native struggle for self-determination. The Nishga case arose because the previous Social Credit provincial government denied the Indian's right to their land. What will be the response of the new NDP government in British Columbia? The NDP is pledged by convention decision to

respect natives' aboriginal rights. Nishga chief Frank Calder, instrumental in taking their claims to the courts, is a minister in the British Columbia cabinet.

Indian affairs are by law a federal responsibility. But the British Columbia NDP government has now been handed a magnificent opportunity to take the lead on this question, to respond by putting its weight unconditionally behind the Indians' demands, putting at their disposal all the resources of the provincial government so that they can win a victory for all native people in this country. □

Tactics for New Zealand Protests Debated

Opposition to South African Tour Grows

A scheduled "goodwill" tour of New Zealand by South Africa's all-white Springbok rugby team has become a major political issue facing the newly elected Labor government.

Opposition to the projected tour has grown steadily since the team was invited by the New Zealand Rugby Union in 1971. Despite criticism from its Wellington chapter, the Rugby Union has refused to withdraw the offer.

According to New Zealand's minister of sport, Joseph Walding, the government of Fiji is also considering withdrawing from the 1974 games.

Opposition to the Springbok tour has also been voiced in the cabinet. According to the February 17 *Auckland Star*, Minister of Maori Affairs Rata expressed fear that the tour would cause a "racial split" in New Zealand. He asked for a postponement "til everyone had the right to compete in spite of ethnic differences."

Prime Minister Norman Kirk, basing himself on police estimates, has predicted that 10,000 will participate in antitour protests in New Zealand's major cities.

A dispute has erupted among New Zealand's antiapartheid groups over how to organize opposition to the tour. The Citizens' Association for Racial Equality (CARE) is planning a peaceful occupation of the playing

fields during the games that it calls "Passive but Resolute Invasion of Springbok Matches (PRISM)." HART, a student-based organization, favors a campaign of "nonviolent disruption." Both CARE and HART have opposed the perspective of building mass protests favored by the New Zealand Young Socialists.

Peter Wilson, a leader of HART in Wellington, stated, "Strong feelings exist about this tour, and there is always the danger of extremists becoming violent. People will get hurt, even killed, and this serious factor must be recognized and seriously considered by the volunteer protestors."

The Young Socialists have pointed out that such bombast could have the effect of discouraging many opponents of apartheid from protesting the tour. Russell Johnson, national coordinator of the Young Socialists, said on February 16 that protestors "won't be brought out by the disruptors. They will only be brought out through the methods of the antiwar movement—massive, peaceful protest.

"Sporting contacts with South Africa will only cease through explaining the issues involved and bringing thousands into the streets in peaceful demonstrations, not by the threats of HART. The Young Socialists will be working with other student groups, church groups, political organizations, and trade unions to this end." □

The 'Second Serfdom' in Central and Eastern Europe

By George Novack

The transition from one social formation to the next brings forth a variety of anomalous phenomena in which features belonging to an earlier, more primitive stage of development are fused with those representative of the new order in the making. These extremely contradictory forms grow out of the operation of the law of uneven and combined development.

Such hybrid forms necessarily appear because the superior economy remains attached to the inferior conditions of labor until it acquires strength enough to stand firmly upon its own productive foundations and let loose its full energy. Before it becomes autonomous, the new stage of economic organization grows at the expense of its predecessors but in reliance upon them.

This law of the historical process asserted itself with great vigor during the rise of capitalism from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. The commingling of capitalist relations with precapitalist forms characterizes this epoch on a world scale. The expansion of capitalism not only displaced, disintegrated, and destroyed precapitalist arrangements, but penetrated, annexed, impregnated, and merged with them, creating a wealth of paradoxical economic, social, and political institutions that had a combined character.¹

In the Americas, the Western Europeans from the Spanish to the English implanted and fostered chattel slavery, which had been unknown until the time of Columbus. This type of labor exploitation, installed to grow such staple crops as sugar and tobacco for the widening world market, amalgamated the most rudimentary mode of class production with the most advanced commercial relations of that era.

The nature of slavery itself was transformed. In its archaic patriarchal form, slavery was the pedestal of a self-contained natural economy producing use values for the master's family estate. In the New World, from the start it was a subordinate branch of the developing capitalist system, producing commodities for its commerce.

Marx explained the effects of such combinations of the new and the old upon the direct producers in *Capital* when he discussed "the greed for surplus labor" among the owners of the means of production. "As soon as people whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labor, corvée labor, etc., are drawn into the whirlpool of an international market dominated by the capitalistic mode of production, the sale of their products for export becoming their principal interest, the civilized horrors of overwork are grafted on the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom, etc."²

1. See *Understanding History—Marxist Essays* by George Novack, pp. 82-159, for a more extensive theoretical exposition of this process.

2. *Capital*, Vol. 1, International Publishers, New York, 1967, p. 236.

At the same time that this "werewolf's hunger for surplus labor" was taking hold in the Americas, a parallel phenomenon emerged in Central and Eastern Europe. Under the pressure of West European commerce, the agrarian relations in that backward area of the continent were transformed. But the result of the infiltration of trading relations with the West into the old order and their melding with a lower form of labor was very different in content and consequences from that across the ocean.

Whereas previously nonexistent modes of exploitation, notably chattel-slave and feudal relations, were introduced and imposed by the European conquerors and settlers in North and South America, the indigenous rulers and large property owners of Central and Eastern Europe, avid for monetary gain, extended and intensified serfdom in the most brutal and thoroughgoing fashion. This product of uneven and combined development was analyzed in various connections by Marx and Engels, who designated it as "the second edition of serfdom."

A collection of articles dealing with this historical phenomenon entitled "Le Deuxième Servage en Europe Centrale et Orientale" was issued by *Recherches Internationales à la Lumière du Marxisme*, Numbers 63-64, 1970, with a foreword by the French Communist historians Antoine Casanova and Charles Parain. It can be obtained through *Les Editions de la Nouvelle Critique*, 29, rue du 4-Septembre, Paris 2. Many of my references to this topic, which has been debated by scholars for the past hundred years, are taken from the studies by Soviet and East European authorities translated for this symposium.

From the fifteenth to the twentieth centuries, Western Europe was the birthplace and remained the center of world capitalism. The preconditions for its origination there, rather than elsewhere, were rooted in the exceptionally high degree of development of the potentialities of feudal society and culture. The artisans and merchants of the medieval towns and cities, especially those carrying on extensive trade, developed the productive forces that provided the starting points and set free the elements for promoting the manufactures, overseas commerce, home market, and collateral economic processes that enriched the bourgeoisie and undermined the feudal regime.

England presented the perfected model of the primordial transition from feudal to capitalist conditions. As early as the last part of the fourteenth century, serfs had been converted into independent yeomen and landless cottagers on that island. Later the demands of the bourgeoisie for wool for the manufacture of fabrics led to driving the peasants from the land, which was taken over for sheep-raising. The dispossession of the rural cultivators benefited all sections of the ruling classes, who were aided by a powerful and centralized monarchical state. The evictions gave the landed proprietors the necessary supply of agricultural laborers for capitalist farming on a large scale, in which the city bourgeoisie also invested

its accumulated wealth. They placed levies of wage workers at the disposal of the capitalist manufacturers in the cities and countryside and provided sailors and soldiers for navigation and the armed forces of the kingdom.

A bourgeoisified aristocracy, the "gentry," replaced the old aristocracy which had been exterminated in the War of the Roses. This new nobility came to live, not upon feudal tribute, but upon capitalist money rent derived from its agricultural enterprises. Thanks to their common economic interests, they coexisted politically in close alliance with the rising bourgeois forces. This reconstruction of its economy enabled England to build its colonial empire and achieve domination of the world market, first in trade, afterwards in industry.

During this same period the regions of Central and Eastern Europe, including Germany, especially east of the Elbe, experienced another path of development, which gave birth to very different economic, social, and political forms. Social relations in general, and feudalism in particular, which lasted with modifications throughout Europe until the end of the eighteenth century, were far less developed in that part of the continent than in the West. The state power, though autocratic, was relatively weak in relation to the nobility. Until the sixteenth century the peasants had managed to retain or regain communal rights to the land in the villages (the mir and the mark) and kept family possession of their allotments. They owed tolerable obligations as tenants of the landed proprietors, and enjoyed considerable acquired personal rights. The lords of the manor did not feel an overwhelming urge to turn from brigandage, compete with the patrician bourgeoisie, and amass monetary wealth by selling sizable amounts of surplus produce from their domains.

The feudal mode of production pivots around the payment of tribute in diverse forms to the liege-lord by the direct producers (serfs or peasants). The first edition of feudalism, like patriarchal slavery, was based upon the supremacy of a natural economy in which the feudal domain was a self-sufficient whole. Most of the agricultural output was consumed by the people living on the estate and only a small surplus was exchanged or sold on the nearby market.

While the cultivators were attached to the land, this tied them with that indispensable means of production. They owed fealty to their lord and paid their dues to him in kind or in labor. The serf or peasant worked the soil on an extremely low level of traditional technique, using the crudest implements. However ample the lord's holdings, they were cultivated by a multiplicity of small farming units. Under these conditions the amount of surplus labor extracted from the free peasants or bondsmen was circumscribed. The weakening of the feudal dependence of the peasantry in many places during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries further eased their situation.

The entry of capitalist influences from the end of the fifteenth century on changed this situation from top to bottom. The increased demand for agricultural products by Holland, England, Scandinavia, and other countries, coinciding with a revolutionary rise in prices that doubled and tripled the price of commodities in the sixteenth century, impelled the nobles in Central and Eastern Europe to embark on a new course. They strove to enlarge their

domains, deprive the peasants of their family and communal lands and rights, and intensify serf corvée labor in order to export large quantities of grain and other agricultural products abroad, maintain their extravagant courtly style of living, and buy new articles of consumption to vie with the wealthy merchants.

The lords of the land became transformed from feudal barons into entrepreneurs engaging in large-scale undertakings of the commercial type. For this kind of exploitation they required greater territory and more forced labor. So they proceeded to acquire both of these necessary means of production at the peasants' expense.

In various ways and by devious means free peasants were ousted from their allotments of land, which were amalgamated with the lords' domains. The cultivators were converted from tenants, owing payment in kind or money to the seigneur, into full-fledged serfs. Their corvée labor became the basis of this second edition of serfdom. This type of tribute that had formerly been minor became major.

Corvée in general comprised obligatory services of an economic, social, or military kind rendered to a lord or a king. More precisely, it was the labor performed by the vassals, not for themselves on their own land, but for the lord on his portion of the manorial demesne. The peasant had to divide his working week between labor on his own fields and labor on the lord's land.

Labor rent (corvée), rent in kind (in agricultural or artisan products), and money rent were the three successive forms of feudal rent. As the peasants lost their rights and autonomy and fell under the unrestrained sway of the lord, the more developed forms of supplementary imposed labor, realized in kind or in money, were replaced by the most elementary form. In reverting to personal servitude the serf became subjected to the most brutal exploitation under the corvée. Work for the lord rather than for his own account took up a larger and larger part of the year. It rose from two to three to four days a week until the grasping lord claimed there was no limit to the obligations he could exact from his tenants.

As the corvée gained control over social production, the whole existence of the cultivators changed for the worse. At its extreme the serf was no better than a slave. He could be bought and sold like a chattel with or without the land, which was not customary in earlier centuries. Although corvée labor had existed from the beginning of feudalism (serfdom in fact sprang out of the corvée), it was not so harsh and omnivorous until the landed proprietors, their lust for gain incited by the prospects of export trade, "grafted the horrors of civilized overwork" upon this type of labor. Overwork took the form of more days of labor for the lord.

The Belgian historian Pirenne thus describes the result of these arbitrary measures: "The descendants of the free colonists of the thirteenth century were systematically deprived of their land and reduced to the position of personal serfs (Leibeigene). The wholesale exploitation of estates absorbed their holdings and reduced them to a servile condition which so closely approximated to that of slavery that it was permissible to sell the person of the serf independently of the soil. From the middle of the sixteenth century the whole of the region to the east of the Elbe and the Sudeten mountains became covered with

Rittergüter exploited by Junkers, who may be compared, as regards the degree of humanity displayed in their treatment of their white slaves, with the planters of the West Indies."³

These developments greatly augmented the wealth and power of the landed nobility, which concentrated economic, juridical, and clerical functions in their hands, giving them virtually total command over the lives and minds of their bondsmen.

This intensified oppression and robbery by the landlords was fiercely resented and contested by the peasants, who rose time and again in insurrection. Their resistance, which was spread out for more than a century from the Peasants War in Germany of the early sixteenth century to the Thirty Years War, was pitilessly crushed. The defeat of the peasant insurgency sealed the fate of the rural toilers, leaving them in a state of helpless servitude. Except for some "free" villages surviving in protected pockets here and there, the subjugated village communities disintegrated and disappeared. Thus the second edition of serfdom was consolidated on the expropriation and coercion of the peasantry, just as serfdom was instituted in Latin America on the forced labor of the aboriginal population, and slavery on the importation and bondage of the African peoples.

The second serfdom, oriented to the production of commodities for the international market, was not a mere replica of the first, which was based on the growing and making of products for local consumption. It was a reversion in form but not of substance. Whereas the serfs originally created use values according to custom, the overworked bondsmen of the new dispensation had to produce more and more exchange values. Far from reproducing the pristine state of affairs, the second serfdom was a novel combination with dual characteristics, imposed by the higher laws of social development that forcibly merged an old mode of production with a new form of exchange.

The second serfdom, whereby the surplus agricultural product entered the European market, was a product of the uneven development of capitalism in its rise and feudalism in its decline. It was a specific phenomenon that could take root and flourish only in essentially backward agrarian countries with an underdeveloped social division of labor and a dispersed rural population, lacking a strong central authority or thriving commercial centers to which the peasants and serfs could flee and be absorbed. Such a feudalized society in Eastern Europe was suitable for economic annexation by the more advanced countries of Western Europe with a high degree of commodity production, exchange, and monetary relations.

Capitalism preserves and uses for its own purposes all forms of labor, provided they remain subordinate to its mastery. The combination of capitalist relations with precapitalist methods of production that took place on all continents during the transition from feudalism to capitalism presupposed the coexistence of social formations on disparate levels of historical development. This was

3. *A History of Europe from the Invasions to the XVI Century*, New York, 1939, p. 534. (Quoted from *The Transition From Feudalism to Capitalism*, a symposium, by Paul Sweezy, Maurice Dobb, H. K. Takahashi, Rodney Hilton, Christopher Hill. Science & Society, New York, 1967.)

not an unprecedented phenomenon. After all, feudalism itself had originated as a composite of the decayed remains of Roman civilization and Germanic barbarism integrated with the technological innovations, particularly in agriculture, of the early Middle Age.

So the North American Indian trappers living in collective tribal conditions hunted and exchanged their skins and furs for goods, firearms, whiskey, and money offered by the great trading companies or their factors. In Latin America the colonial powers and landed aristocrats subjugated native peoples and reduced them to serfdom, instituting feudal relations of production and forms of ownership in the service of mercantile and money-lending capital. Such hybrids are inevitable when backward societies come under the sway of higher ones, wherever, that is, disproportionate historical and social development is present and active.

Similar crossbreeds arose in industry as well as agriculture. Whereas manufacture, the primary stage of capitalist industry, was carried on in Western Europe in cottage industry or by wage labor, in the Russia of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries many manufacturing enterprises employed serf labor. Indeed, as Trotsky pointed out, "The landlords who owned factories were the first among their caste to favor replacing serfdom by wage-labor."⁴

History exhibits manifold variations even within a single mode of production. There were not only two editions of feudalism east of the Elbe but, as we have indicated, pronounced contrasts between the feudal societies of Western and Eastern Europe. The rich and diversified urban activities of the former gave it a progressive character that led on to the independent evolution of capitalism. The retarded urban and industrial development, the stunted growth of the bourgeoisie, the lack of differentiation among the peasantry, and the generally adverse political and cultural conditions gave a sluggish and reactionary stamp to Eastern Europe that facilitated the imposition of the second serfdom upon it.

In the Western Hemisphere the vigor of bourgeois relations in the British colonies of the North American seacoast gave an impetus to their advancement along capitalist lines that eventuated in revolutionary consequences. On the other hand, the weakness of bourgeois forces coupled with the strength of feudal and semifeudal institutions under the Spanish and Portuguese conquerors stunted the development of capitalist relations in Latin America and perpetuated its backwardness.

As A. Casanova and C. Parain note in their introduction, the second edition of serfdom itself passed through very uneven phases of development from place to place and from one century to another. This phenomenon, they write, involved "a lengthy process, extending from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, unrolling at paces and in forms and stages that differ for Germany (where the essential stages are the Peasants War and the Thirty Years War), Poland, Russia, Hungary or still more Rumania (where the expansion of the system is complicated and relatively late)." As Rumania demonstrated, even parts of the same nation were unequally developed.

After the breakup of primitive collectivism it is rare to

4. *History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 8.

find a "pure and simple" social formation without weighty carry-overs from earlier forms of life and labor. The distinguished French medievalist Marc Bloch observed: ". . . Feudal Europe was not all feudalized in the same degree or according to the same rhythm and, above all . . . it was nowhere feudalized completely . . . No doubt it is the fate of every system of human institutions never to be more than imperfectly realized."⁵

Every concrete, actually existing, civilized society incorporates more archaic institutions, customs, and ideas into its own dominant economy and culture. The blending of past conditions of social production with the new functions of capital was especially evident throughout the rise of capitalism.

Moreover, no method of production evolves in a harmonious, symmetrical, all-sided manner. It is constrained by inherited and environing conditions to follow a more or less erratic and lopsided course. This inescapable irregularity of development forbids any rigidly schematic interpretation of the historical process. The analyst has to take into account the deviations from the norm produced by uneven and combined development. The passage from one stage to another moves not along a straight line but a complicated curve.

As capitalism expanded, the laws of the market pervaded all countries regardless of their degree of development and no matter what the distances between them. However, the consequences of these laws differed considerably, depending upon the given historical conditions.

The heterogeneity in the socioeconomic development of Central and Eastern Europe and Western Europe in the infancy of the capitalist system left its imprint upon the entire subsequent course of European and world history and had fateful consequences for its peoples. Indeed, the key to the evolution of Eastern Europe and Russia from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries is to be found in the role played by the second serfdom.

It saddled an onerous backwardness upon these nations from which they have still not fully recovered. The *corvée* remained intact in Russia until the Reform of 1861, and even then this moribund system of economy hung on. In his first major work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, Lenin devoted a chapter to "The Landowners' Transition from *Corvée* to Capitalist Economy," which contained the following pertinent paragraph.

"Thus capitalist economy could not emerge at once, and *corvée* economy could not disappear at once. The only possible system of economy was, accordingly, a transitional one, a system combining the features of both the *corvée* and the capitalist systems. And indeed, the post-Reform system of farming practised by the landlords bears precisely these features. With all the endless variety of forms characteristic of a transitional epoch, the economic organisation of contemporary landlord farming amounts to two main systems, in the most varied combinations—the labour-service [in a footnote Lenin explains that this is another term for "*corvée*."—G. N.] system and the capitalist system. . . . The systems mentioned are actually interwoven in the most varied and fantastic fashion: on a mass of landlord estates there is a combination of the two systems, which are applied to different farming operations. It is quite natural that the combination of

such dissimilar and even opposite systems of economy leads in practice to a whole number of most profound and complicated conflicts and contradictions, and that the pressure of these contradictions results in a number of farmers going bankrupt, etc. All these are phenomena characteristic of every transitional period."⁶

The backward condition of Europe east of the Elbe in turn determined its mode of transition from feudalism to capitalism. In Western Europe and the United States this changeover took place in a thoroughgoing way by virtue of the successful bourgeois democratic revolutions. Central and Eastern Europe on the other hand experienced no such bourgeois-democratic reconstruction and had to crawl toward capitalism by way of a compromise between the feudal and bourgeois forces.

Lenin pointed out that agriculture could develop along two very different lines in the transition from feudalism to capitalism. It could either continue to rely on servile labor or go over to small freehold farm production. He wrote: "Either the old landlord economy, bound as it is by thousands of threads to serfdom, is retained and turns slowly into purely capitalist, 'Junker' economy. The basis of the final transition from labour-service to capitalism is the internal metamorphosis of feudalist landlord economy. The entire agrarian system of the state becomes capitalist and for a long time retains feudalist features. Or the old landlord economy is broken up by revolution, which destroys all the relics of serfdom, and large landownership in the first place."⁷

Lenin designated the first possibility of development as "the Prussian way" and the second as "the American way" in accord with the patterns set in these two countries. The former, based on an impoverished and oppressed class of dependent laborers, was highly conservative; while the latter, based on the emancipation of the peasants as independent proprietors and producers, was the most progressive within the framework of bourgeois relations.

The reactionary combination of semifeudal with capitalist relations that prevailed from eastern Germany to Czarist Russia up to the twentieth century shaped the peculiar path of development there. History sooner or later demands payment on its unfulfilled obligations, and however circuitous the route it takes from one turning point to the next, it cannot be cheated in the end.

The failure of these countries to achieve the objectives of a democratic revolution in the preceding centuries paved the way for the occurrence of a novel type of revolution in the twentieth century. This joined a peasant uprising, characteristic of the beginning of bourgeois development, with the conquest of power by the proletariat, which sought to realize both the democratic tasks of the former and the socialist measures of the latter, a combination that marked the process of permanent revolution.

Thus in historical perspective, the second serfdom in its death agony was a component of the combined character of the Russian Revolution of 1917, just as the commercialized slavery in the cotton kingdom led to the Civil War that consummated the democratic revolution in the United States. It might be further noted that the survivals of four centuries of Black bondage, combined with the con-

6. *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1960, pp. 194-95.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

5. *Feudal Society*, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p. 445.

temporary miseries of proletarian existence as an oppressed nationality under monopoly capitalism, is bound to be one of the most explosive factors in the coming American revolution.

The dialectics of the historical process, expressed in its contradictory phases, movements, and manifestations, is no invention of the imagination or a Hegelian sophistication foisted upon scientific socialism. It exists in social reality and can be verified in concrete cases. The second edition of serfdom, initiated at the end of the sixteenth century, was preceded by an emancipation of the serfs under medieval conditions in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. And it was followed in the post-Reform period of Czarist Russia by a transitional form in which *corvée* labor was intermingled with hands hired by the year, season, or day.

Contrary to the mechanical thinkers, a given cause can have very different effects, depending on the context. The radiation of forces that led to the formation of slave and feudal tributaries of commercial capitalism in the Americas simultaneously produced capitalist farming in England and intensified serfdom east of the Elbe. A spectrum of three complementary variations! The spread of capitalism that suppressed feudalism in Western Europe re-created and reinforced it in Eastern Europe.

The specific course, consequences, and outcome of new economic relations depend upon the given historical context and circumstances in which these forces must operate. There was, for example, a general tendency of increased economic energy by the nobility throughout Europe during this epoch. Yet their activities acquired dissimilar forms in the East and the West. The landlords in England transformed themselves into a bourgeoisified gentry profiting from capitalist agricultural enterprise; whereas the landed proprietors in the East became beneficiaries of the unlimited *corvée*, ruling their agricultural districts like absolute monarchs.

The gentry-entrepreneurs constituted a more progressive type of landed proprietors than the nobility of East Prussia, Poland, and Russia, who clung to the way of life proper to feudal barons and resisted the subversive introduction of bourgeois culture. To be sure, at a later stage the Junkers themselves more and more approximated the category of landlord-entrepreneurs, as did the cotton planters of the Southern slave states.

The ruling classes of both parts of Europe expropriated their peasantry—but with very different results. In the one case, the dispossessed peasants were degraded into serfs; in England they became landless and propertyless proletarians, raw material for capitalist exploitation as wage workers in agriculture or manufacture.

The efficient cause for the strengthening of serfdom as the fundamental form of labor organization in Central and Eastern Europe came from the influences exerted by foreign commercial capital. But this economic driving force had to find the existing social structure susceptible to its penetration. While natural, geographical, technological, and other factors played a role in the process, its outcome was determined by the alignment of the class forces engaged in struggle.

The correlation between the noble landlords and the agrarian population was most decisive. But their respective strengths were conditioned by the presence or absence—and the active intervention—of other social forces on the

arena. Here the peasants were immensely disadvantaged. The state backed up the nobility. There was no strong and oppositional urban bourgeoisie or aggressive petty bourgeoisie to give aid and leadership to the rural rebels, as in the West. The rich merchants allied themselves by and large with the feudal reaction. The isolated and scattered peasants could not prevent the lords from suppressing their defensive efforts and reducing them to abject servitude.

At all stages of its development, capitalism has produced inequalities between the imperial powers and the less developed peoples they directly or indirectly subjected. Outside Europe these were incorporated into their colonial systems. Within Europe the backward peoples of the East on a lower economic level labored for the benefit of the West. Just as contemporary imperialism blocks and holds back the economic and cultural progress of the colonial world, so Dutch, English, and West European capital took the feudalists into tow, upheld their power, and deformed and checked the development of their countries along capitalist lines. Not the city and its culture but the village and the manor acquired supremacy, consolidated themselves, and dictated the further mode of development. There was a comparable contrast between the slaveholding South and the free North in the United States.

* * *

The phenomenon of the second serfdom in Europe casts light upon the issues involved in the contemporary debate over the relations between capitalism and feudalism in Latin America from the sixteenth to the twentieth centuries. Two positions have been defended in this discussion. One is the liberal, proimperialist view, shared by the reformists and Stalinists, of a purely feudal past that has to be overcome by a bourgeois-democratic renovation. The opposite conception, held by scholars on the left like Andre Gunder Frank, is that capitalism fully characterized Latin American society as early as the sixteenth century. Both are one-sided and incorrect. (The two tendencies draw corresponding sets of political conclusions for the current situation from their premises. The liberals stand for reforms to be undertaken by the capitalist regimes, a position grading into the Stalinist revival of the Menshevik theory of a two-stage revolution—first a democratic revolution in which the national bourgeoisie are assigned a progressive role, then in the distant future a socialist revolution. Those who agree with Andre Gunder Frank exclude any transitional phases in the development of the socialist revolution. Both schools, of course, deny the validity of Trotsky's theory of permanent revolution.)

Just as economic pressures from Western Europe produced the second serfdom in the East, so similar pressures created a first edition of serfdom in Latin America. Both of these formations had a combined character resulting from the adaptation of a primitive culture to the more advanced one. They amalgamated a precapitalist mode of production based on the forced surplus labor of serfs (or slaves) for the landlords and planters with the exploitative relations of merchant capital to which they were economically subordinated.⁸

8. See my article "Hybrid Formations and the Permanent Revolution in Latin America" in *Understanding History*, pp. 147-

The further development of a hybrid formation proceeds in a dialectical manner. Just as the master and the slave are bound together, so the superior system needs the lower to exploit, while the inferior one becomes even more dependent upon the more advanced economy for survival and prosperity—until changing conditions bring them to a parting of the ways.

Merged within the combined form, the two opposing trends progress at varying rates and extents, depending upon the totality of circumstances. For an entire period, the reinstated lower economic formation may be reinforced, retarding the overall development of the society, while the more advanced productive forces, assimilated in a debased and disfigured form, maybe relatively subordinated.

But that is not the end of the road. Where a more progressive system is active at home and abroad in the next phase, the higher forces, however sublimated at first, feeding on a more advanced technique and culture, grow stronger and will break through more extensively, corroding the hybrid formation to the detriment of the old conditions.

This fate befell the second serfdom. It established itself not in the ascending epoch of feudalism in Europe but in its descending phase. Like slavery in the New World, it was a historical anomaly that was essentially opposed to the major forces shaping the bourgeois world. As a mixed offspring of capitalism in its rise to world supremacy, corvée labor burned brightly before it suffered extinction. Born in Russia at the end of the sixteenth century, it flourished for the next two centuries until it was illegalized by Alexander II's reform in 1861. Austria abolished the last corvée in that part of Europe in 1848. This feudal relic therefore had a run of about three and a half centuries, about the same as commercialized slavery.

59, in which the implications of this fact are considered, including the differing political positions of the Andre Gunder Frank school of thought and the adherents of Stalinism. (The article is also available in *Intercontinental Press*, November 16, 1970, pp. 978-83.)

This differential growth of the old forms and the new in backward countries where precapitalist systems of economy are first implanted and invigorated, and thereafter devitalized and eliminated, exemplifies the contradictory pattern of historical progress, the essence of its dialectic. The antagonistic coexistence of the two systems could be resolved in the long run only by the triumph of the more efficient one. What was done in the West by the bourgeois-democratic revolutions had to be carried through in the East by dual popular revolutions in which the socialist proletariat led the insurgent peasantry demanding possession of the land.

* * *

It is significant that none of the articles in the *Recherches Internationales* collection mentions the law of uneven and combined development. Since all the writers live in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union, they may never have heard of it. They recognize and describe manifestations of uneven development, a phenomenon that is not only visible on the surface of events but has been certified by such authorities as Marx, Engels, and Lenin. (Stalin, too, approved it.)

However, the authors do not go beyond this point of empirical observation to a profounder theoretical insight into the main features of the transition from feudalism to capitalism that have a combined character. In this respect the scholars of the Soviet bloc are no better equipped than their counterparts in the bourgeois universities, who are likewise ignorant of this valuable tool of analysis generalized and named by Trotsky in the 1930s.

This deficiency demonstrates the degree to which able minds educated under the restrictions of Stalinism suffer from lack of knowledge of the contributions of Trotskyism to Marxist theory, not only in contemporary politics, but in the explanation of social processes and the understanding of historical problems. Knowledge of the law of uneven and combined development is just as essential in the study of comparative history today as is knowledge of the periodic law of the elements in chemical research.

February 6, 1973

Wave of Land Occupations Sweeps Colombia

A wave of land occupations by peasants is going on in the northern part of Colombia, according to a United Press International dispatch from Bogotá published in the February 27 issue of the New York Spanish-language daily *El Diario-La Prensa*. According to official reports, five invasions of rural estates took place in the week prior to the dispatch in the department of Sucre near the Atlantic coast.

"In every case, the police intervened. In some cases, dialogue with the peasants was enough to persuade them

to leave the estates," UPI reported, "while in others they tried to resist, but without any serious confrontation resulting, the police said."

The governor of Sucre, Isaias Carrizo Ealo, instructed civilian and police authorities to "proceed with tact but very energetically."

Associated Press reported in the February 28 issue of *El Diario* that a fleet of helicopters "purchased from the United States government and consisting of part of the team of helicopters used in the Vietnam war" has been sent into the Colombian country-

side to deal with "guerrillas and rural criminals." According to AP, there have been three assaults on police in the rural areas during the past two months in which twelve policemen have died.

In the past year, some one hundred invasions of rural estates have occurred throughout Colombia, according to UPI. Approximately 100 peasants taking part in the latest wave are said to have been arrested. They are being held under surveillance in a bullring in the provincial capital of Sincelejo. □

Irish Trotskyists' Election Policy

[The following articles are taken from a special issue of the Irish Trotskyist paper, *The Plough*, printed for the February 28 legislative elections in the formally independent part of the country. In the last parliamentary elections in June 1969, the lineup was as follows: Fianna Fáil, the ruling and historically more anti-imperialist bourgeois party, 75 seats; Fine Gael, the bourgeois party traditionally more conciliatory toward imperialism, 50; Labour, 18. Since the last election a new party has been formed from a split from Fianna Fáil, Aontacht Eireann (Irish Unity), which takes a more militant-sounding line toward imperialism than its parent party. Official Sinn Féin, the political wing of the Official republican movement, contested the elections for the first time as a nonabstentionist party. Provisional Sinn Féin called for a boycott.]

* * *

Officials' Strategy

The Officials must be complimented for their efforts to offer the only determined resistance to the established parties. At a time when Labour is once more selling out on the national question by joining up with Fine Gael, and when Fine Gael itself is carrying out a bipartisan policy with Fianna Fáil on such issues as the North, repression, etc., it is absolutely necessary that the public be given some kind of real alternative. Without the Officials this would in reality be a one party election.

Key Issues

In this one party nature of the election resides the chief advantage of the Officials. They have a chance to show that the nation is not united around the policy of helping the Tories and Unionists defeat the Catholic minority in the North. With only Aontacht Eireann in competition they have a clear field to explain to the people

what the real questions about the future are: what British imperialism is up to, etc.; what must be done in order to unite Ireland and give the people the better and happier life they look for.

While the Officials' attempt to do this has been much better than the Provos, it must be said that they have not availed fully of all the opportunities in their favour. This is visible in their election strategy which is summed up in the slogan 'People before Profit'.

Admittedly social and economic issues are very relevant to this election campaign. Housing has never been so bad, inflation never so rampant, unemployment rarely so high. On all these matters, especially inflation, which takes in low wages and high prices, there is seething discontent that needs to be given open expression by socialists. And the Officials more than anybody else have been trying to do this. They are certainly justified therefore in capitalising on these ills and in benefiting from the efforts they have made in combatting them.

Economics Before Politics?

But the question remains: are these the key issues? On the answer to this depends the correctness of the Officials' strategy. In our view the answer to this is *no*. It is wrong to think that because day to day issues are uppermost in peoples' minds that they must be made the key issues in the elections. The fact of the matter is that these day to day issues can only be solved by radical political change—by the transfer of state power from one class to another. This means that general political questions must be the focus of socialists' attentions—especially in an election campaign.

In what way do political questions differ from social and economic ones? Lenin summed [up] the difference when he wrote that '*Politics is concentrated economics*'. In other words it is the attempt to interpret the causes of economic problems and offer solutions on this basis. So it is not sufficient

to merely talk about social and economic ills. It is also necessary to explain their causes and pose a framework within which they can be solved. Once you begin to do that you are out of the sphere of the day to day struggle and into the sphere of general issues. For instance, how do you explain a structural 5% to 7% unemployment rate, emigration, low wages, etc. There is no other way than by pointing the finger at British imperialism and its native clients. It is the machinations of British imperialism that has caused these problems. So in order to have a real framework for raising consciousness on day to day issues it is necessary to go beyond them and deal with capitalism and imperialism in general. Only this approach shows us the true relationship between the economic struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle, which has escaped the Officials.

Officials' Chance

To make the slogan 'People before Profit' the central slogan in this campaign is therefore one-sided. Firstly it disarms the Officials even in dealing with the day to day issues because within the limited framework of this slogan they cannot point to the origins or solution to these issues. Secondly, it prevents the Officials from drawing in the anti-imperialist struggle except as a side issue. This is fatal. While they have much to their credit on economic issues it is on the anti-imperialist struggle that their standing is highest. It is on this question more than any other that they could draw support.

* * *

Provos Make a Mistake

The central task of the major pro-British parties in the coming election is to inflict an ignominious defeat on the Republicans. In a certain sense this puts the small Republican parties (Officials and Provos) in a good position. At least it puts them in the limelight and they won't have to waste time drawing attention to themselves. However, to be in the limelight is not enough. What counts with the public is the performance given.

Provos Abstain

Unfortunately we must say that the political shortsightedness of the Provos (which even they themselves are acutely aware of) has played a very bad role on this occasion. The failure of the Provos to throw their weight into this election is an unnecessary retreat which can only lead to demoralisation among the anti-imperialist forces. Obviously the Provos realise that the government is trying to draw them into battle before they are fully prepared. On these grounds they have refused to take the bait. So far the reasoning sounds faultless. But does it solve the fundamental problems?

Firstly, the very fact that the Provos abstained from the elections is an immediate point in favour of the major parties. In itself it reveals to the public the weakness of the Provos.

Secondly, there may not be a second chance. A victory for Fianna Fail now would not just put them back where they were; it would change drastically the balance of forces.

People would feel in view of Fianna Fail's past (almost uninterrupted) forty years in government that there was no hope of change. They would feel frustrated and become increasingly cynical. In other words the ground would not be as firm as before for the Provos to go on building up their support.

Relationship of Forces

Now, it is true that at this stage the Provos have little chance of making a big impact on the electorate. But to think that this means inevitable defeat is to look at elections too formalistically. It is to imagine that elections are a mirror image of how people feel. But this is not the case. Anybody who witnessed the fifty-thousand-strong trade union demonstration burning down the British embassy, or the crowds which protested the imprisonment of Sean Stiofain, or the massive resistance to the anti-IRA bill must surely admit that the ordinary people do not really support the people they elected to power — despite all outward appearances.

The fact that the relationship of forces in the Dail, the number of seats held by each party, etc., does not necessarily or accurately reflect their standing with the people is a very important fact. It may mean that one

party's 5 to 10% of votes can make as big an impression as another party's 30 to 40%. The elections of a half dozen Republican candidates, or a poll of say 10% in this election would in fact be a victory for the Provos and a defeat of the major parties. It would be a clear demonstration that the people were not in favour of crushing Republicans.

Vote Republican!

That is why we call on people to get out and vote for their Republican (or Republican-Labour, i.e., Thornley, etc.) candidate. It is not so much

that we agree with their programme but the fact that it can change the balance of forces in a revolutionary direction. So don't let the fact that only a handful of Republican candidates are going forward influence your vote if you sympathise with the anti-imperialist struggle and reject the government's collaboration. Your vote even if it doesn't elect a Republican can help.

The other side to this policy is to abstain where there is no Republican candidate. To give a vote to Fine Gael, who supported the Anti-IRA bill, or Conor Cruise O'Brien, who supported the Prisons Act, is the same as voting for Fianna Fail. □

Czech Student Leader Speaks Out at Trial

Last July 19 Jiri Muller, a twenty-nine-year-old activist in Czechoslovakia's student movement, was sentenced to five years in jail on charges of having violated Article 98 of the criminal code. The specific violation was "sabotage of the elections by distributing and producing tracts hostile to the state."

Transcripts of statements Muller made during his trial and subsequent appeal hearing have now been published in the January issue of *Pravda Vitezi*, the bulletin of the London-based Committee to Defend Czechoslovak Socialists.

The "tract hostile to the state" referred to in the indictment was a leaflet informing citizens of their constitutional right to abstain from voting or to strike out the names of official candidates running in the electoral farce. Muller was one of forty persons arrested in connection with the leaflet. But his activity against the "normalization" process was not the first in which Muller had clashed with the ruling bureaucracy.

He had been an active opponent of the bureaucratic regime since 1964, when he led an attempt to reform the *Ceskoslovensky Svaz Mladeze* (Union of Czechoslovak Youth). His dissenting views led to his expulsion from Charles University and his conscription into the army. The "Muller case" became a focal point for the growing ranks of oppositionists.

After the Kremlin invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968, Muller was instru-

mental in setting up contacts between the *Svaz Vysokskolskeno Studentstva* (SVS — University Students Union), of which he was a leading member, and the Metalworkers Trade Union, whose 900,000 members represented one quarter of the Czechoslovak work force. These contacts resulted in an SVS-Metalworkers agreement signed during the December 1968 Trade Union Congress that expressed student-worker support for the reforms of the Prague Spring period. Within two months, similar agreements were reached with every trade union in Moravia and Bohemia.

The SVS was banned in June 1969. Muller was again expelled from Charles University in the spring of 1970, despite protests by his fellow students.

* * *

After being found guilty in his brief frame-up trial for election sabotage, Muller told the court:

The indictment under which I am charged describes and evaluates my past political activities, which were directed against certain of the policies of the group at present in power. These activities are also described as posing a threat to society, and therefore as constituting a criminal offense.

The prosecution, on the basis of this indictment, has assumed that there is a wide-ranging identity of interest

between society at large and the group in power. I am charged with offenses which fall under Article 98 of the penal code. This article is concerned with offenses against the state and against society which have been motivated by a hostility towards socialism itself. I can only conclude then that, in the CSSR [Czechoslovak Soviet Socialist Republic], loyalty to the state and to society is the same as loyalty to those in power. Further, a demonstration of this loyalty is an obligation imposed on every citizen, and is to be expressed in his every belief and action. If this is so, then any disloyalty towards those in power would be interpreted as an expression of hostility towards the social system.

I submit that such attitudes have nothing whatever to do with the actual situation; neither are they a correct interpretation of the law. Instead, what they do show is the sort of pressure that the group in power has exercised on the prosecution in this trial.

Contrary to what has been said, my activities have been neither antisocialist nor antisocial. They were based on socialism, but they were opposed to a regime created as the result of the invasion of Czechoslovakia by foreign armies. They were opposed to a regime with an internal policy that is not based on general consent, but rather on the coercion of the loyalties of those to whom it was applied. They were opposed to coercion effected primarily by making prospects of employment totally dependent on political attitudes. It is for these reasons that I utterly reject the charges made against me.

I believe that a fundamental difference exists between political activity directed against the policies pursued by those at present in power and activity which is fundamentally antisocialist and antisocial in nature. I am convinced that the real concern of this court should be the attitude adopted by the prosecution—yet it is apparently just this attitude that holds the sympathy of the court.

The right of a defendant to answer all charges brought against him is a basic principle of judicial procedure, and in this trial the charges involve the question of the motivation for my activities, because motivation is the essential factor that decides whether the offenses with which I am charged

have been committed. In view of the way in which this trial has been conducted, there is no need to add anything to what I have already said. On the whole, there is convincing evidence that the question of motivation, although of crucial importance, had been decided on by the court in advance of the actual trial. The views of the defendants were of no interest. My conviction and guilt were a foregone conclusion.

Such a conclusion is inevitable under a regime which feels it must suppress any open expression of disagreement with its policies. This trial was not concerned with questions of guilt or innocence. Its real concern was to provide support to a policy which could be generally described as "keep quiet and don't step out of line."

I am convinced that this policy will ultimately be destroyed. When it is, the verdicts of this particular political trial, and of the others that will follow it in a few weeks time, will be reversed. My future standpoint is, I am certain, obvious to everyone.

* * *

Muller's appeal to the Supreme Court was heard and rejected on September 13. In his statement at the hearing on his appeal, Muller described the violence and threats of torture that were used in the unsuccessful effort to get him to confess:

I would like to inform the court of the methods used to make me talk during my interrogation in Brno-Bohunice prison. As an example, I shall describe my experiences during an interrogation that took place on the night of November 27-28, 1971. The preliminary phase of the interrogation was apparently intended to generate a suitable atmosphere. Typical comments made by the interrogators were statements such as "You're in our hands now," "Everybody is just out to save their skins in here," and "You wait till we put you into the same cell as a murderer, then you'll start talking!"

After this, they began to test my reactions. Crumpled-up balls of paper were suddenly thrown at me, and feigned punches were made at my face. As soon as I began to react to their satisfaction, they resumed their previous verbal psychology with further

comments, such as, "Would you like to find out if what they say about you is true or not?" "You have got just enough time to smoke a cigarette, and then we're going to start on you," and "We'll put the radio full on and explain to you what it's all about in our own way." There were shouts of "You rogue" and "swine" while these comments were being made. At the same time, shirt sleeves were being rolled up as conspicuously as possible.

When I stated that I would say nothing unless a lawyer were present, Lieutenant Kucera shouted, "You've only got one right, and that's to tell us what we want, as quickly as you can." My interrogators then told me to stand in the corner of the room, where they screamed threats at me and menaced me with their fists. As I still refused to give them the information they wanted, they began to slap my face, tug my beard, and bang my head against the wall. After this, the interrogation ended.

I also wish to make brief mention of the authoritarian system of remand. This encourages the use of psychological pressure against prisoners on remand and does not provide even the minimal requirements for keeping them in good health. Perhaps it is designed to ruin one's health.

Everything that I have described is of course trivial compared with what we know happened in the past, but it does enable me to ask the following question: "What value can be put on the recent assurances made by the general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist party that 'the law will be strictly observed'?"

* * *

After the dismissal of his appeal, Muller was transferred from Ruzyně Prison in Prague to the Bory Prison Camp near Plzen. According to reports received from Czechoslovakia by *Pravda Vitezi*, Muller's health is deteriorating. He has suffered in the past from gall bladder disorders, gall stones, and skin disorders. These were thought to have been the results of the severe psychological pressures imposed by the life of a political dissident in Czechoslovakia. Jiri Muller is now in the hospital ward of the prison camp and is believed to be seriously ill. □