

imprecor

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VIETNAM



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ELECTION CAMPAIGN OF THE LCI

The comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal) waged an active revolutionary campaign during the elections to the constituent assembly. For the comrades' evaluation of the political significance of the election results, see the article on page 12 of this issue of INPRECOR.

Throughout the electoral campaign, the LCI was able to distribute its propaganda massively, by utilizing the mass media, by handing out leaflets and brochures, and by selling its weekly, *Luta Proletária*. The LCI was granted six hours of radio time and five television broadcasts of ten minutes each. These five broadcasts were based around the following political axes:

- *Why the LCI did not sign the pact of the MFA; the struggle of the soldiers;
- *The lessons of March 11;
- *Workers self-management;
- *The workers government;
- *The construction and the role of the revolutionary party.

In addition, all the dailies and weeklies of the country devoted many columns to the propaganda of the LCI.

Each week our comrades gave special place to one of these themes in their general propaganda. In addition to an electoral manifesto and an action program, two brochures were published, one on workers struggles in Spain and one on "the socialism that we want."

Many meetings were organized; some of these included the participation of comrades Ernest Mandel (at the beginning of the campaign) and Alain Krivine (at the end of the campaign).

The LCI presented candidates in four districts, winning a total of 10,732 votes (0.19% of the national total): 3,685 in Lisbon (0.30% of the total); 4,568 in Porto (0.57%); 1,125 in Setúbal (0.33%); and 978 in Leiria (0.41%). (The difference between the total and the result obtained by adding up the results of the districts is due to the fact that the district figures are provisional ones given immediately after the vote.)

The other organizations of the workers movement obtained the following results:

SP: 37.87%, total of 2,145,392 votes (running in 22 districts); CP — 12.53%, 709,639 (22 districts); MDP — 4.12%, 233,362 (22 districts); FSP — 1.17%, 66,161 (15 districts); MES — 1.02%, 57,682 (15 districts); UDP — 0.79%, 44,546 (10 districts); FEC-ML (Communist Electoral Front-Marxist-Leninist) — 0.57%, 32,508 (12 districts); PUP — 0.23%, 12,394 (7 districts).

As for the parties of the bourgeoisie, their results were as follows:

PPD (Popular Democratic party) — 26.38%, 1,494,5 (22 districts); CDS (Democratic and Social Center) — 7.65%, 433,153 (21 districts); PPM (Popular Monarchist party) — 0.56%, 31,809 (14 districts).

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VIETNAM



VICTORY!

Saigon-Ho Chi Minh City-liberated!

The liberation of the South Vietnamese capital, barely two weeks after the liberation of Phnom Penh, sounds the death knell of imperialist domination in Indochina and brilliantly highlights the fact that the world socialist revolution is on the march. For that is certainly the essential lesson of this victory, which crowns more than thirty long years of revolutionary struggle.

The victory is total. The Revolutionary Government, abandoning the adjective "Provisional," entered Saigon in triumph. The last minute American maneuvers, supported by French diplomacy, in no way permitted imperialism to avert the most complete debacle.

The spectacle of the disorderly withdrawal of the last American nationals and their most favored lackeys confirmed the ultimate failure of Washington's

policy. Two ambassadors — Dean and Martin — forced to flee in helicopters with their flag under their arms; the last GIs in Saigon dangling from rope ladders; the helicopters of the U.S. Seventh Fleet being thrown into the sea to make room for refugees; the wildcat pillaging of American goods by a population giving vent to its hatred and contempt; the puppets whose relations with the United States were not sufficiently strong being abandoned to their fate despite the prior promises of their protectors; the unconditional surrender of a regime for whose perpetuation imperialism had invested billions of dollars and sacrificed tens of thousands of American soldiers; those are the images that will give governments pause for thought about the value of American commitments and will awaken many peoples to the possibility of victory.

The imperialist defeat in Indochina, which is the

work of a national liberation struggle, is also the result of a social revolution. It was the agrarian reform that enabled peasants to remain on their land despite the bombing and terror and thus to provide food for the front. It was the Vietnamese bourgeoisie, after its Cambodian counterpart, that found itself brutally uprooted by the collapse of the puppet military and administrative apparatus on which it had depended. By the concurrent loss of the landed property and imperialist domination indispensable for its survival, by the bursting forth of urban popular mobilizations into the arena of the Indochinese revolution. The current impact of the revolution is illustrated by the first measures taken by the PRG in Saigon, similar to those taken previously in Da Nang, Hue, and Quang Tri:

- *Dismantling of the apparatus of the neocolonial state;
- *Dissolution of the reactionary parties and closure of the imperialist pleasure houses;
- *Placing of public services and means of production under the control of the revolutionary government or of the workers;
- *Administration of the urban centers by military revolutionary committees.

Above all, the reunification of South Vietnam with the workers state of the North is now in process, implicit in every day's events, even if it will still take some time to complete the process. The DRV dong is becoming the "strong currency" of South Vietnam in place of the many times devalued Saigonese piaster. Cadres, often people of South Vietnamese origin who went north in 1954, are returning by the thousands to central and southern Vietnam. Machinery, textbooks, and theater groups are following weapons in the flow of aid to the South. The unity of Vietnam is being asserted, again in victory

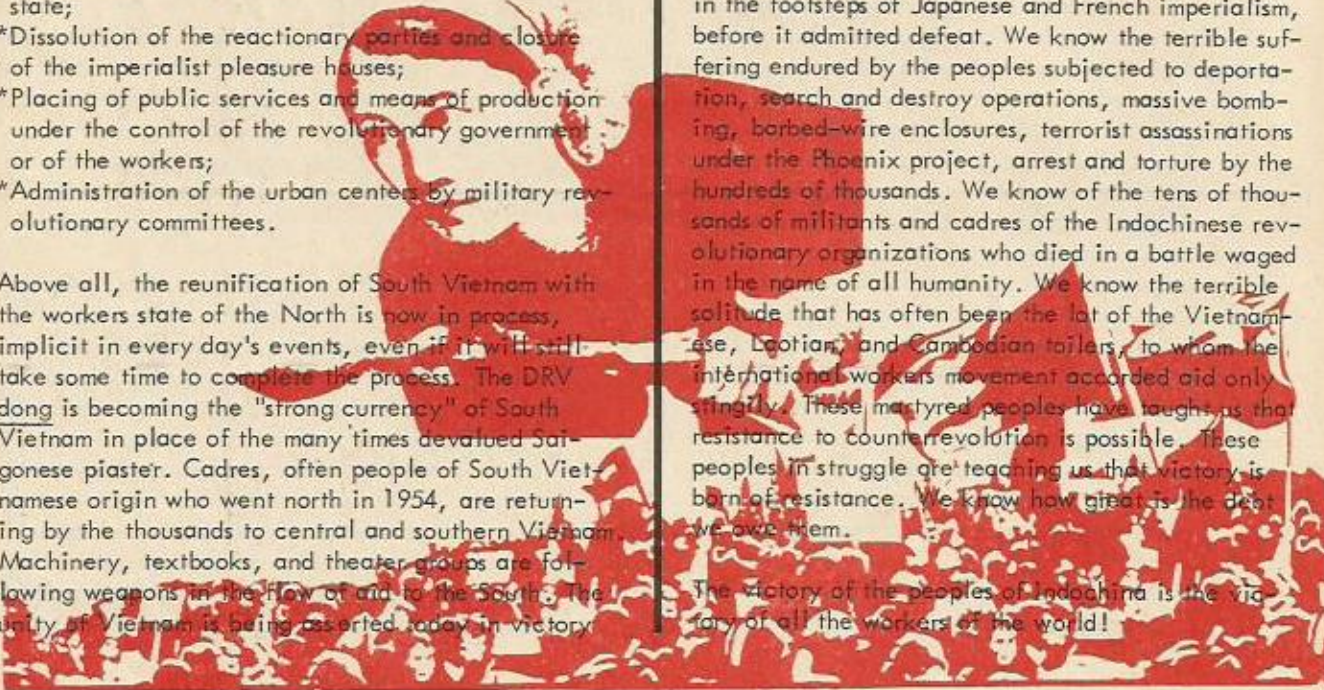
as it was yesterday in combat, along with the unity of the three peoples of Indochina.

What we are now seeing is the socialist transformation of the Indochinese revolution!

The first national liberation struggle to have defeated the "policeman of the capitalist world," even though this policeman had committed all his forces to the counterrevolutionary escalation, the first victorious "permanent revolution" since the victory of the Cuban revolution. Therein lies the importance of the struggle of the Indochinese peoples for all those struggling for socialism throughout the world.

We know the tribute the peoples of Indochina have willingly paid for this. We know the price in blood that was demanded by U.S. imperialism, following in the footsteps of Japanese and French imperialism, before it admitted defeat. We know the terrible suffering endured by the peoples subjected to deportation, search and destroy operations, massive bombing, barbed-wire enclosures, terrorist assassinations under the Phoenix project, arrest and torture by the hundreds of thousands. We know of the tens of thousands of militants and cadres of the Indochinese revolutionary organizations who died in a battle waged in the name of all humanity. We know the terrible solitude that has often been the lot of the Vietnamese, Laotian, and Cambodian tailors, to whom the international workers movement accorded aid only sparingly. These martyred peoples have taught us that resistance to counterrevolution is possible. These peoples in struggle are teaching us that victory is born of resistance. We know how great is the debt we owe them.

The victory of the peoples of Indochina is the victory of all the workers of the world!



TO THE WORLD SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!



world capitalist leadership in disarray

by PIERRE FRANK

Huế, Da Nang, Phnom Penh, and now, Saigon. The scenes of immense defeats not only for the puppets, the Thieus and the Lon Nols, but also for the master, American imperialism, which brought the puppets to power, trained their regimes and their armies, and supported them with all available means. Dien Bien Phu, which marked the defeat of French imperialism in Southeast Asia some twenty years ago, pales before the present debacle of Yankee imperialism. One of the strongest bourgeois armies of Southeast Asia, commanding the fourth-largest air force in the world, has collapsed before an army one-fourth or one-fifth its size, an army that did not even have an air force.

This rout is not the result of the military victory at Ban Me Thuot or of Thieu's allegedly ill-executed order to retreat. It can be explained only by the totally mercenary character of this "free world" army, which collapsed, throwing down its arms or dissolving into bands of robbers and highwaymen, in face of the resolute determination of the Vietnamese people and the other peoples of Indochina, who have decisively rejected colonialism and its neocolonial surrogates. The "Paris accords" could only have been and still can only be an intermediary stage on the road to the total national and social liberation of the Indochinese peninsula, to an expansion of the workers states.

After thirty years of nearly uninterrupted combat, initially against the French and Japanese imperialists, these peoples, small in number, have inflicted a colossal defeat on the greatest capitalist power. The myth of the invincibility of the American giant has been destroyed. That is the unforgettable example that many other peoples aspiring to socialism will emulate.

A succession of imperialist reverses and defeats

The rout on the Indochinese peninsula is not an isolated blow received by American imperialism during the most recent period. U.S. imperialism might have thought that the heavy defeat it inflicted on the Chilean people in September 1973 had turned back the march of history and inaugurated a prolonged period of success at the expense of mass revolutionary struggles. Of course, the Chilean defeat has had grave consequences, but in spite of everything, these consequences have been essentially limited to Latin America.

In less than a year the United States, and more generally capitalism itself, has suffered serious reverses in the rest of the world. Some of these have resulted from the decomposition of archaic or worm-eaten regimes, as in Ethiopia, or from errors committed by the State Department. For example, in extending support to the operation the Greek colonels conducted in Cyprus with the aim of eliminating Makarios, who was considered too neutralist, Washington had not counted on the Turkish intervention, the success of which provoked the fall of the Greek military dictatorship itself. Consequently, both Turkey and Greece, although divided on the question of Cyprus, have now taken some distance from the Atlantic alliance, thus weakening it.

The inability to find a solution to the Palestinian question that would satisfy both Israel and the Arab regimes (which is what Washington needs in this part of the world, so decisive for its oil riches and its strategic position) has deflated Kissinger, this "Metternich" of the twentieth century, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize! In combination, the Pales-

BOURGEOIS LEADERSHIP CRISIS

tinian and Cypriot affairs are considerably weakening NATO's power in the eastern Mediterranean.

But the sharpest blows have been dealt to capitalism by the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, in Portugal in the first place. What began a year ago as a military coup aimed at putting an end to hopeless colonial wars has opened the way for a formidable eruption of the masses onto the political scene. Within just a few months the fall of a dictatorship that had lasted nearly half a century has generated a powerful revolutionary upsurge of the masses, who are tending to escape the control of the traditional workers parties and to make serious inroads into capitalist property.

The upsurge of the Portuguese working masses is accelerating that of the Spanish masses, who are becoming increasingly audacious in their struggle against the Francoist dictatorship in its death agony. Portugal and Spain are near France and Italy, two countries that since May 1968 have been experiencing nearly uninterrupted movements in which all categories of the toiling population, most especially the youth, have been involved.

Crisis, disarray of the leadership of the capitalist world

The defeats of imperialism are occurring in a capitalist world profoundly affected by recession, the first recession since the end of the second world war to develop simultaneously in the major capitalist countries. As is known, this economic crisis is combining inflation and unemployment. The rise of prices has recently slowed somewhat, but it has not stopped. Unemployment, on the other hand, is only growing. Just at the moment when it is being hit most strongly from the outside, American capitalism is exhibiting the greatest indecision in the realm of economic orientation. At the most, it plans on slowing down the spread of unemployment by increasing the budget deficit, which in 1975 could hit \$60,000 million, \$80,000 million, or even more. This would again stimulate inflation and threaten to make it difficult to control.

But the most important and essential phenomenon in the present situation is the crisis of leadership of American imperialism, the disarray with which it is now afflicted, which inevitably must have international consequences. The rout in Indochina did not create this crisis and disarray, but it has brought them to light with exceptional and aggravated sharpness.

In spite of its riches and still gigantic resources, Washington presents a picture rarely seen in history.

Nearly fifteen years ago the defeat at the Bay of Pigs in Cuba began to tarnish the American presidency, held at the time by Kennedy, the first to commit the American army to Vietnam. Kennedy was succeeded by Johnson, who in 1965 under the lying pretext that there had been a North Vietnamese attack on American ships in the Gulf of Tonkin, began to extend U.S. military operations and was finally forced by the daily rising condemnation of the war in Vietnam to renounce seeking a second term. After that, Nixon, who had tried to impose his own "peace" on Vietnam by the merciless bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong, went under amid the most sordid scandals.

This whole heritage of crimes, worthy of the pen of a Shakespeare, was passed on to a Gerald Ford, who was brought to power in spite of his notorious intellectual incapacity, essentially because he was an "honest" man. But since he acceded to power only a few months ago, the list of crimes and scandals has only lengthened. And finally, there is the debacle in Indochina, which has offered the world the at once repugnant and grotesque televised spectacle of the power of the United States, of Ford's idiot laugh in response to a reporter's question about Vietnam, and of this monstrous assertion by a White House spokesman: "Vietnam is not our war." As if the United States had not sent half a million soldiers there; as if the \$5,000 million worth of military equipment captured by the PRG did not bear the trademark, "made in USA"!

No resolute initiatives to attempt to overcome the economic crisis or to work out an alternative policy after so many reverses on the international field! That is the result of the decay of American hegemony, a decay that the regime in the United States had in no way anticipated.

All the other bourgeois governments, including those that had a certain understanding of this retreat by the United States, are dismayed and uneasy about the disarray now being manifested in Washington. There are two reasons for this: First, in spite of its deterioration, U.S. hegemony remains very great in most areas; second, no alternative political leadership exists anywhere in the world.

West Europe could perhaps have been able to play such a role had it been united. But it has only painfully managed to hold itself together economically; not a single step toward political unity has been taken. The fear the European and Japanese bourgeoisies are expressing about a possible return to isolationism by the United States is indicative of the inability of these bourgeoisies to replace American leadership today. So long as the "independent nuclear striking force" remains only a vague

project for the future in West Europe, not to mention Japan, there is no salvation for Washington's competitors outside the American nuclear umbrella. Moreover, Washington is using the specter of isolationism solely for purposes of blackmail, for the loss of West Europe or Japan would decisively modify the worldwide relationship of forces to the detriment of U.S. imperialism, an eventuality just as little acceptable to U.S. imperialism as nuclear exposure in face of the USSR is to the European imperialisms.

The decline of American hegemony does not mean the disappearance of that hegemony, and Washington's present disarray does not at all mean that American imperialism can no longer be noxious and cruel or that it can only retreat from now on. Its resources are still enormous, and it is well known that a ferocious beast is especially dangerous when it is wounded and feels cornered. U.S. imperialism is temporarily paralyzed, but after some time it may once again throw its real forces into the balance. Even in Southeast Asia it can still commit new crimes, as is proven by its furnishing of "asphyxiation" bombs to the Saigon puppets, who made use of these weapons. (See *Le Monde*, April 24, 1975.) In addition, it still commands allied armies (in Brazil, Iran, etc.) that are prepared to crush revolutionary movements. Throughout the world there are powder kegs where armed conflicts can break out; this is particularly the case in the Arab East, where the decisive interests of American imperialism could commit it to actions whose repercussions could run out of control.

Fundamental cause of the crisis of imperialist leadership

Nevertheless, the fundamental cause of the paralysis with which the leadership of the capitalist world is now afflicted lies neither in the depth of the economic crisis, nor in any supposed loss of military superiority (which is far from proven), nor in the intellectual poverty of the leading personnel, nor, especially, in the alleged diplomatic successes of Moscow or Peking. Rather, it lies in the shift in the worldwide relationship of forces between the classes, especially in the major imperialist countries themselves. For the moment, this makes it politically and socially impossible for imperialism to take the initiative again.

The cases of Cambodia, South Vietnam, and Thailand are most significant in this regard. Technically and militarily, Washington is no less ready to intensify its military intervention in this region than it was in 1961 or 1965. In fact, it is even more ready to do so. But what has changed in the meantime is that formidable opposition to any new massive military adventure abroad has arisen among the Ameri-

can masses. So long as the bourgeoisie is unable to alter this situation in the United States, the price it would have to pay for such an operation would be a political and social crisis of catastrophic proportions in its own country.

The same is true of the sociopolitical situation in West Europe. Of course, the imperialist bourgeoisie could seek to take advantage of the economic crisis to try to break the organized strength and combativity of the workers by stabilizing massive unemployment for years and by systematically dismantling democratic and trade-union rights, above all the right to strike. But given the current relationship of forces, such initiatives would strongly risk provoking responses from the workers that would threaten the very survival of the capitalist system.

At bottom, then, the paralysis of imperialist leadership is an expression not of the absence of bourgeois "solutions," but rather of the impossibility of applying these solutions under the existing relationship of forces. The bourgeoisie has to try to alter this relationship of forces, to change the political atmosphere in the United States, and to inflict a serious defeat on the European and Japanese working class before it can try to take the initiative again.

Silence of the Soviet and Chinese leaderships

It is not possible to appease or disarm American imperialism by refusing to exploit the defeats it has suffered or even by exhibiting fear in face of those defeats, which is what the Soviet and Chinese leaders are presently doing. They are exercising rare discretion in regard to the American debacle in Vietnam; when they do open their mouths, it is only to speak of the defeat of the Thieu and Lon Nols and not that of American imperialism.

The Brezhnevs and Maos, separately and each in their own ways, are acting so as to allow the American imperialists to save face and, worse yet, to recover from the blows they have received and to strengthen themselves for the future. The aid of the Soviet and Chinese leaderships to the peoples of Indochina has been extremely limited in comparison with the human and material expenses of the United States in this same region of the world.

On the other hand, the Soviet and Chinese leaders are expending enormous resources waging a frantic competition among themselves in several other areas of the world, particularly Africa and the Middle East. Moscow, which sent more arms to Egypt and Syria than to Vietnam, maintained Lon Nol's embassy in Moscow until the eve of his departure from



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of the paralysis...*



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classes*



Phnom Penh. During this same period, Peking made overtures to politicians as reactionary as Franz Josef Strauss and extended no aid to the victims of Pinochet's repression. Although the interests of the socialist revolution, and consequently those of the workers states, require that considerable support be given to all revolutionary struggles, especially when they are targets of imperialist military aggression, the similar policies of Moscow and Peking are dictated by the interests of these bureaucracies, each of which defends its own "socialism in one country." For them, the defeats of American imperialism do not constitute victories, for they know that the victories of the Vietnamese and Indochinese revolutions, far from strengthening their domination of the masses in China and the Soviet Union, can on the contrary give these masses greater confidence for freeing themselves from the bureaucratic regime to which they are subject and for establishing socialist democracy in their countries.

Exploit the defeat and disarray of imperialism

During the great French revolution, the bourgeoisie of France considered the royal budget deficit as the "treasury of the nation." It is in this spirit that the situation created by the defeat of imperialism in Vietnam and the resulting disarray in Washington must be approached. Any span of time that is not utilized now by the masses to wage intensified offensives against capitalism will instead be used by the imperialists to catch their breath and work out alternative policies against the masses.

It is in the first place in Southeast Asia that the imperialist rout will be exploited: in Thailand, where eighteen months ago the masses overthrew a regime of terror and where guerrillas are struggling in the northern part of the country; in Burma and in the Philippines, where struggles will certainly experience a new expansion.

In the Middle East, although the Kurds and the Palestinians have suffered serious defeats, a reawakening has recently occurred among the most proletarian, most concentrated, and numerically largest working class in the region: the Egyptian working class. This can give an impulse to the class struggle throughout the Arab world.

In Africa, the disappearance of Portuguese colonialism has transformed the situation south of the Zambezi River. The overthrow of white domination is now on the agenda. It will be stopped neither by the maneuvers of the Vorster government, which is seeking to preserve this domination in South Africa by casting off Namibia and even Rhodesia, nor by

certain African leaders inclined to make an arrangement with Vorster.

Even in Latin America, scene of the defeat of the Chilean revolution and the savage repression of the vanguard and the workers in Argentina, where the situation is characterized with only a few exceptions by a retreat of the masses, the rout of imperialism in Southeast Asia will inevitably have favorable consequences. Nowhere has capitalism been able to establish stability of any durability. In Brazil, the military dictatorship is beginning to show some weaknesses, even though it has benefited from exceptionally favorable economic conditions.

In the United States itself, the rout in Southeast Asia cannot but have at least indirect repercussions on the development of the class struggle. It is difficult to conceive of a repetition of the phenomena of the 1960s: the eruption of various movements (the antiwar movement, the Black movement, the women's movement) which did not deeply penetrate the working class and eventually declined, the country falling back into political apathy. Inflation, which has significantly reduced living standards, has not generated big reactions from the working class. It is only rather recently, in face of a recession that has provoked the greatest unemployment since the end of the war, that the toiling masses have begun once again to demonstrate, especially against unemployment itself.

But West Europe will also certainly be affected by the rout of the bourgeoisie in Indochina. It was the defense of Vietnam, along with the fight of Che, that contributed most to mobilizing a vanguard in West Europe prior to May 1968 and during the mobilizations that followed. It is in Europe that the struggles of the workers are continuing to pose the question of power. Since the drafting of the document on "the building of revolutionary parties in capitalist Europe," which was approved by the Tenth World Congress of the Fourth International, the dictatorial regimes that still existed at the time have disappeared, with the exception of the Francoist regime in Spain; and it can be affirmed without fear of error that the days of that dictatorship are numbered.

The only important country in Europe where the workers upsurge has not found significant expression is West Germany, where the experiences of coalition government between the Social Democracy and the liberal bourgeois party threaten to lead the Christian Democracy to power (because of the very impotence of these coalition governments). But such a possibility could in turn contribute to radicalizing the working masses.

It is not necessary to spend a lot of time here describing the policy of the traditional reformist leaderships, Social Democratic or Stalinist. The "social contract" in Great Britain, the "historic compromise" in Italy, and "advanced democracy" in France all have the avowed aim of reforming the capitalist system. The example of Portugal, where the crisis of the system is most advanced right now, is significant: The Socialist party, led by Mario Soares, openly appears as a more determined defender of the Atlantic alliance than do the officers of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). The Portuguese CP gives the appearance of wanting to go beyond "bourgeois democracy"; but that is not really the policy being consciously followed by the Cunhal leadership. This leadership is making timely use of leftist phrases in order to gain control of the masses, who are not yet lined up and are listening with sympathy to the revolutionary organizations. At the same time, the CP is seeking to limit the struggles and is unconditionally serving the MFA, within which the same officers who today pronounce themselves for "socialism" threaten to turn to a "regime of order" tomorrow.

The crisis of bourgeois leadership is being prolonged by the loss of authority of these old leaderships of the workers movement, especially in the eyes of the new generations, who more and more are not satisfied with simple economic demands and traditional forms of struggle. Forms of workers control, of bodies of self-organization of the masses, are beginning to emerge. The rout that imperialism has just suffered in Indochina will act as an enormous stimulus during the period of the great struggles that are now taking shape in Europe and can in their turn lead to great victories for the workers.

April 30, 1975

EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN ASIA

by G. VERGEAT

1 The defeat of American imperialism in Indochina is provoking inevitable reactions among the ruling classes of the states of the Far East and Southeast Asia, especially those that are tied to U.S. imperialism.

All the various reactions have one feature in common: the belief that a period is coming to an end and that it is consequently appropriate to consider the new political and economic features of the period now opening. Not all the ruling classes of the region are drawing the same conclusions about how to maintain their privileged status. The problem that is common to them all is that they must create as quickly as possible the conditions necessary for their security in the wake of what they correctly consider to be the abandonment of the Cambodian and South Vietnamese ruling classes by U.S. imperialism.

Some regimes, such as the dictatorships of South Korea, Indonesia, and the Philippines, see their immediate future in continuing to strengthen their economic, political, and military alliance with U.S. imperialism. They are thus eliminating their own margin for maneuver, however narrow it may be.

Other regimes — in Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia — are drawing different, quite opposite conclusions. All agree that the failure of the Nixon doctrine marks the end of a period and that American imperialism no longer represents a guarantee of power and security, but instead an obstacle to the political and economic changes that have now become necessary. They consider it appropriate to acknowledge that the leaders of the People's Republic of China are partners worthy of genuine trust who must be dealt with at all levels.

The Malayan leaders have demonstrated their confidence in their immediate future. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has stated: "I do not believe

in the domino theory," adding, "The fate of the states of Southeast Asia is to be held in the vise of competition between the People's Republic of China and the Soviet Union, China having the advantage of historic ties with the region." As for the Thai foreign minister, in response to questions asked by the American magazine *Newsweek*, he stated: "Our foreign policy on this subject (the U.S. troops and bases in Thailand) is very clear. The American troops and their logistical support will leave Thailand within twelve months. We are now negotiating the organization of the withdrawal, which must take the situation in the region into consideration. As soon as peace is established in the region — in other words, a cease-fire in Cambodia — the troops will depart." To a question about relations with Hanoi, this gentleman, Chatichai Choonhavan, replied, "It is difficult to guess the intentions of a country that possesses half the armed forces in the Indochina area. As a neighboring country of Indochina and Thailand, North Vietnam has for years infiltrated agents into Thailand, engaging in constant efforts to recruit Thais to the goal of subversion in Thailand. I invite you to draw your own conclusions about Hanoi's intentions in the region."

To a question about relations with China, he replied: "We have already normalized our relations with China and I hope that diplomatic relations will be established after my trip to Peking in several weeks. Naturally, this would be followed by the immediate end of our relations with the Republic of China (Taiwan). But the Peking leaders have never asked that we cut off our commercial relations with Taiwan, relations which we hope to continue, as have other countries that have recognized Peking. We have had good relations with China for 2,000 years. China and Thailand are not like the others. We can take whatever path we choose." Finally, to a question about what factors would guarantee peace in Southeast Asia, he answered: "They are four in number: independence and internal strength; re-

gional cooperation; coexistence without regard to political ideologies; and, fourth, before the establishment of a zone of freedom and neutrality can be realized, attempts must be made to promote the policy of taking equal distance from the superpowers."

2 These statements of position define very precisely the orientation that the ruling classes of certain Asian states hope to adopt. They would not take the chance of making such statements publicly unless they had already received favorable echoes through diplomatic channels, especially from China.

For many years the Peking leaders have aided this political evolution. This is expressed by: a) the fact that they do not oppose the U.S. military presence in the region; on the contrary, they consider that this presence directly counters that of the USSR, which itself threatens China; b) the disarray into which Peking has thrown its supporters in the region, whether armed or not; these supporters have been politically fragmented and divided, since they no longer represent the major pawn that Peking previously needed in order to penetrate the region, the most striking instance of this today being the case of the Malayan Maoists; c) finally, Peking needs currency to buy industrial equipment and technological facilities that Moscow has refused to provide. Prices for this equipment have been affected by the generalized inflation. Consequently, Peking is undertaking a twofold operation, on the one hand offering its own textile and industrial products at prices below those of all competitors (reductions of more than 20 percent) thus permitting China to drain off currency and on the other hand offering the bourgeoisies of Asia the possibility of making purchases at reduced prices outside the world imperialist market, which offers material little adapted to regional conditions.

3 This ensemble of new features — not yet fully asserted or operative in practice, but nevertheless already clearly defined — has brought about political contradictions that are now emerging in the workers, anti-imperialist camp in the region.

Hanoi's and Peking's conceptions of how to defend their respective interests appear clearly at variance if not actually counterposed. Peking no longer conceives of the defense of China as linked to extending the struggle against imperialism in Indochina in alliance with the struggles in the region. For example, Peking accepts the maintenance of U.S. troops in Thailand, while Hanoi demands their departure. For his part, the Thai prime minister is

simultaneously organizing the departure of the Americans, extending a hand to the Chinese, condemning Hanoi, and proposing that the region become neutral, taking equal distance from Moscow and Washington. The aim of such an operation is quite clear: to maintain the regime in power, reach an agreement with Peking, and limit or even isolate Hanoi by appealing to Sihanouk. Sihanouk's April 15 statement, made in Peking, echoed what the Thai prime minister had proposed for the region: "The regime established in Phnom Penh after the victory of the Khmer Rouge will be nonaligned, democratic, progressive, and noncommunist." His oral declaration to French radio asserted that "after victory, there will be a totally communist government and administration. Thus, either I become a puppet of the Khmer Rouge, or I remain independent, and then there will be trouble." This makes one point quite clear: Sihanouk intends to make use of the social base he still commands in the countryside (the necessarily nationalist character of the present struggle has allowed him to conserve real influence among the masses and among many elements of his former state apparatus who went over to the resistance); he also intends to make use of international support from both the West and the East (which he already has in part from Peking) to counterpose himself to the Khmer Rouge and secondarily to the Vietnamese. It is too early to draw any conclusions, but the problem is posed.

The concept of regional neutrality is a key element for Sihanouk, Bangkok, and Peking, and could inhibit Hanoi both in its work toward the unification of Vietnam and in its regional relations. In return, it imposes a very heavy and clear responsibility on Hanoi: to agree to establish strengthened political ties, and perhaps even military ties, with the revolutionary forces in the region that have traditionally been linked to China. The internal reconstruction of Vietnam may still block this process, but Hanoi knows what isolation could mean.

In this sense, one problem still remains unresolved: The upsurge of mass mobilizations throughout the region, already clearly manifested in the assaults of the students against the ruling classes of each of the countries, lacks real political leadership. The combativity of the masses against imperialism — in its combined American-Japanese expression — is an element that has actively been brought into play by the Indochinese victories; but Peking no longer offers any political leadership, and still less does Moscow. The consequent leadership vacuum poses a considerable problem for the Vietnamese leadership. It is thus on this terrain that Hanoi will demonstrate whether or not it has the will to continue the struggle that it has led so admirably in Indochina. On this field, conflict with Peking is inevitable if Hanoi sets its course positively. ■

AFTER THE ELECTIONS

We are publishing below extracts from the resolution of the executive committee of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal) analyzing the political significance of the April 25 elections.

An electoral victory for the parties that affirm the need for socialism — that is the primary meaning of the elections to the constituent assembly.

The dominant features of the evolution of the situation since April 25, 1974, are these: the forward development of struggles; the strengthening of the workers organizations; the weakness of the political parties of the bourgeoisie, which, because of their traditions, experiences, and implantation, can offer no immediate solution to the crisis of political leadership opened by the fall of the dictatorship.

The workers movement, atomized and weakened by the dictatorship, did not possess any experience in political confrontation or in mobilization of the workers' forces within the framework of a class response against capital. Nevertheless, the workers movement has rapidly acquired a new capacity for confrontation (which is on the rise today) in various ways: through very advanced forms of struggle (self-management, strikes with occupations, democratic organization of strikes, election of workers commissions by general assemblies); through the generalization of demands responding to attacks on the buying power of the workers, to unemployment; and, finally and above all, on the basis of the rapid and determined response in the streets on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975.

The strengthening of the reformist parties (those on which the bourgeoisie counts to contain, paralyze, and channel mass struggles as much as possible so as to reconstruct capitalism) and of the revolutionary organizations is an especially threatening danger for the bourgeoisie because it expresses in real life both the enormous confidence of the workers in their own strength (a confidence achieved on the basis of the new relationship of forces imposed on March 11) and, even more important, the workers' understanding of the need to break with the bourgeoisie.

From this point on, the struggle is no longer merely one against the individual employer in the factory or against the industrialist who is organizing economic sabotage; rather, it is against the whole employing class and its parties.

For the bourgeoisie, it is no longer simply a matter of reorganizing its forces, solidifying its political apparatus of rule, reconstructing a reactionary current linked to the military hierarchy, and trying to impose sacrifices on the workers movement that would enable the bourgeoisie to increase its profits. In order to resolve the serious economic and political crisis, the bourgeoisie has to immediately begin preparing for a political confrontation with the proletariat and its organizations so as to subject them to a significant defeat that would allow for the establishment of a strong state, put an end to class collaboration with the reformists, and restrict the economic, political, and trade-union rights that have been won by the workers. In making these attacks, the bourgeoisie will take account of the lessons it learned on September 28 and March 11.

The pact that has been proposed by the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) directly reflects the marginalization of the Spinoist elements. But these elements have not been eliminated; they still hold important positions. The institutionalization of the MFA, the intervention of the Council of the Revolution, and the collaboration that has been agreed to both by the parties of the right and the far right (with the exception of one bourgeois grouplet: the Popular Monarchist party) and by the major workers parties and the FSP (People's Socialist Front) are strengthening the MFA as the center of political power. This is occurring under the cover of defending democracy, but in reality, it is the only solution for a bourgeoisie that found itself compelled to accept this solution or risk the loss of a good part of its social base before the elections.

Obviously, the strength of the reformist elements within the MFA cannot be overlooked. It was even decisive in accelerating the process of institutionalization and in working out the pact. In the immediate sense, these measures also serve the reformists of the Portuguese CP, who although they are a minority in the constituent assembly are assured of not being left out of the government and will be able to continue their policy of class collaboration in the name of peaceful reforms, the partial conquest of the state apparatus, and socialism without revolution. But what is more significant is that the MFA

has not ceased to be a fraction of the state apparatus, or more precisely, of the army.

The perpetuation of the MFA's intervention and, especially, the guarantee that it will have the last word — which is assured by the pact — signifies the opening of the road to strengthening of the right, allowing growing institutional control by the bourgeoisie, and preventing the workers struggles from being complemented by proletarian class consciousness, a break with the bourgeoisie, ceaseless struggle for socialism, and, in the final analysis, an understanding of the need to take power and destroy the bourgeois state.

In this context, the nationalizations are not solely the reflection of the mass movement or the conquests of the mass movement. They can also represent measures enabling the MFA to base itself on the petty bourgeoisie of the cities and countryside by extending aid to the small and medium-sized enterprises and by taking initial measures of agrarian reform. The nationalizations do not completely dismantle the power of big capital, and they can be coopted into the framework of the capitalist system; but they do limit that power and, in view of their relation to the rise of the mass movement, they nevertheless create a dynamic that is dangerous for the bourgeoisie and they open the road to the strengthening of the anticapitalist struggle of the masses.

The elections were supposed to allow for the reinforcing and reorganization of the capitalist right. The events of March 11, the emergence of a pre-revolutionary situation, and the deepening of the anticapitalist and class conscious mobilizations of the proletariat profoundly altered the relationship of forces between the classes. Thrown onto the defensive, the bourgeoisie agreed to both the institutionalization of the MFA and the nationalizations. It now finds itself compelled to try to reorganize a reactionary current within the army, to strengthen its parties, to institute a strategy whose target dates are very different from those initially foreseen on the basis of hypothetical election results.

The elections that have just occurred can in no way modify the relationship of forces between the classes. In the immediate future economic sabotage, the attacks of the far right, and the anticommunist campaign will furnish the bourgeoisie its weapons for generating political and economic instability and for seeking to win large sections of the petty bourgeoisie and the peasantry to the capitalist parties.

The next elections (in October) will take place in a quite different context. The political confrontations will be much more violent. The decisive factor in determining whether or not the proletariat will intensify its initiatives and win massive support among

the soldiers, peasants, and significant sectors of the petty bourgeoisie will in the final analysis lie in its ability to coordinate and centralize all its actions, setting this central objective: the struggle for a workers government, for the ousting from the government of Spínola's lieutenants in the counterrevolutionary attempts, of the parties of the bourgeoisie, and of all the capitalist ministers.

The present crisis of the bourgeoisie and the current relationship of forces could not but be reflected in the elections to the constituent assembly. Nevertheless, many observers, especially bourgeois commentators, were surprised at the results.

The large electoral majority won by the workers parties confirms both the enormous confidence of the workers in their own strength and combativity and the absence of a bourgeois alternative.

But the victory of the Socialist party is contradictory. A reformist party with a workers base but a bourgeois political leadership (a bourgeois workers party, to use Lenin's definition), the SP achieved an electoral score that does not correspond to its real capacity for mobilizing and controlling the workers whose support it won on the electoral field. The political function of the SP is obviously to contain the workers struggles, to implement a policy of class collaboration, to gain an influence over important sectors of the state apparatus, and to offer an alternative loyal administration for capitalism. The party's links with European Social Democracy strengthen this policy, although Soares repeats that "Social Democracy does not have any breathing space in Portugal."

But to interpret the SP vote as an anticommunist and bourgeois vote as do the centrists (the MES — Left Socialist Movement — and the FSP) would be an error that would disarm revolutionaries.

But above all, the electoral results reflect the convergence of two decisive factors:

a) The political backwardness of the Portuguese workers movement. The explosion of workers struggles and the massive radicalization of the workers naturally develop at very different rates, both in regard to the forms of struggle utilized to win demands and in regard to the consciousness of various layers of workers. In the absence of a revolutionary party coordinating the struggles, unifying all the workers' experiences, and providing an overall political outlet for each movement for specific demands, the reformists of the CP and especially of the SP will be able to play on this political backwardness and win over sectors that are combative but lack a permanent experience of struggle and organization.

b) The new relationship of forces between the bour-

geoisie and the proletariat. The vote for the SP is the most immediate expression of this relationship of forces, which means that the bourgeois parties find themselves in a situation of great weakness in face of the workers and their parties. The vote for the SP also expresses the will of broad layers of workers to struggle against the exploitation to which they are subject. Nevertheless, the bourgeois policy of the SP leadership, which often takes on the aspect of anticommunism, also allows it to attract important sectors of the petty and middle bourgeoisie.

In this context, even though it will not abandon its policy of class collaboration nor even the prospect of conjunctural alliances with the bourgeois parties, the leadership of the SP, particularly in view of the pressure from its own rank and file, will find itself compelled to pursue a policy of unity with the CP and to seek to organize its own forces for work in the trade unions and the factories, thus seeking to contest the Stalinists for leadership of some sectors of the workers movement.

The "electoral marginalization" of the CP (which was in any case predictable) and the rout of the MDP (Portuguese Democratic Movement, closely allied with the CP) will compel the Stalinists to maintain a high level of mass mobilization in order to exert pressure on the bourgeois state apparatus, to gain ground, to strengthen their influence within the MFA, to maintain a government of class collaboration, and to appear as the leadership of the workers movement and as the strongest and most structured party.

But a policy of alliance with the SP is necessary to attain this goal, although this policy could easily be overtaken by mass mobilizations. As for the MDP, it will be able to present itself as a body lending civilian support to the MFA. Its limited strength will make it appear even more strongly as an instrument of the CP. It will have to limit itself to being used as an instrument to penetrate the most isolated villages as well as key posts in the ministries, an area in which it has already demonstrated its utility for the CP.

It is in this context that the contradictory significance and character of the vote for the SP and the weakness of the vote for the CP must be understood. The SP accumulated a lesser-evil vote against communism from broad layers of the petty and middle bourgeoisie. It also harvested the political fruit of the radicalization of backward layers of the proletariat, and also got the votes of many workers who want to struggle for socialism.

As for the CP, its results do not correspond to its capacity for mobilization and its political strength. Its electoral weakness is the product of its inability to develop a class policy, of its liquidation of many struggles in the name of the policy of class collabora-

tion, of its subordination of any unity in action with other workers parties to the immediate possibility of putting pressure on the state apparatus, and, finally, of its refusal to orient itself toward a policy of political unification of the working class against capitalism.

More fundamentally, the leadership of the SP, within which contradictions may develop, will command a greater maneuvering room in bringing pressure on the MFA in order to win recognition as the essential interlocutor and to strengthen the currents within the MFA that support Social Democratic positions.

The electoral results thus entail contradictory effects:

*On the one hand, insofar as broad layers of workers see these elections as a victory, the results will increase the confidence of the toiling masses and intensify the rank-and-file pressure within the SP and the CP toward unity against the bourgeoisie and its parties.

*On the other hand, there will inevitably be some disillusionment and demoralization among some layers of the proletariat that, under the impact of the triumphalist and electoralist campaign of the CP, did not expect the CP to get such a low percentage of the vote. The leadership of the CP has more than once paid dearly for the illusions it has spread among the working class. And the workers have more than once paid for the errors committed by the reformist leaderships, especially the CP.

It is important to draw a fundamental conclusion from all this: Either the development of workers struggles will take place through the deepening of mobilizations, the rejection of electoralism, and the independence of the proletariat in its struggle against the bourgeoisie and will thus move toward the emergence of a revolutionary situation and toward the creation of a revolutionary party with a strong base that is capable of mobilizing the masses around revolutionary objectives; or, on the contrary, because of the lack of an alternative and because of the traitorous policy of the reformist leaderships, the anticapitalist potential of the workers struggles will be paralyzed.

The recomposition of the workers movement has resulted in both a restructuring within some far-left currents (especially within the Maoist current, where a whole wing of the PUP — Party of People's Unity — has gone over to the UDP — People's Democratic Union) and a modification of the relations among various components of the revolutionary left. The results obtained by all the far-left organizations were rather indicative of their implantation and political influence. This is seen particularly in the districts with the highest concentrations of workers (Lisbon, Porto, Setúbal), where the vote received by the far left was significant in comparison with the CP's vote. April 27, 1975



ITALY

14th congress of the PCI:

POLITICS AND IDEOLOGY OF THE «HISTORIC COMPROMISE»

by LIVIO MAITAN

The fourteenth congress of the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI — Italian Communist party) was held March 18–23 amidst great fanfare aimed at highlighting the strength and effectiveness of the organization. But it must be said that there was no need to resort to gimmicks to draw general attention to the congress. Whatever orientation it may have decided on for the present, the Italian bourgeoisie is perfectly aware of the great weight the PCI has in Italian political struggles and of the possibility that the PCI's attitude may at some point become decisive in avoiding a crisis with an uncontrollable dynamic for the regime. Thus, the entire press and all political observers followed the work of the congress with the greatest interest and analyzed all its possible implications.

The historic compromise reaffirmed

There was no reason to have doubts about what would be formally ratified by the congress. The strategy of the so-called historic compromise, the essential terms of which were defined in autumn 1973 immediately after the fall of Allende, was accepted nearly unanimously, although there were some partial differences in interpretation and emphasis. Once again the PCI demonstrated that it is far and away the most cohesive and effective political force in the country and that it is in process of further enlarging its influence and further strengthening its

organizational structures. For the rest, some of the differences that had emerged during the preparatory discussions in *l'Unità* and *Rinascita* (the daily and weekly of the PCI) were considerably played down during the sessions of the congress. For example, Pietro Ingrao muted his thesis that the realization of the historic compromise would imply or presuppose splits within the Democrazia Cristiana (DC — Christian Democracy), a thesis that others had vigorously rejected. Nor was there any resurfacing of the disputes over economic policy between those who uphold the necessity of taking investments as the starting point for action (like Trentin and other trade unionists) and those who instead opt for action around consumption (Barca). It is true that one voice of explicit opposition was raised at the congress (and during the preparatory phase); that was Umberto Terracini, one of the founders of the party and presently a member of the leadership. But Terracini, while he correctly criticized the party's official position, which avoids clearly defining the class character of the DC as a party under bourgeois hegemony, did not draw the necessary conclusions and did not question the party's overall strategy. For this reason he will continue to play the role of an outsider who may be allowed to speak in an unorthodox manner from time to time inasmuch as he does not represent any alternative to the line of the leading group, even embryonically.

The sessions of the congress were characterized above

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all by the top position occupied by discussions on the long- and short-term problems of the realization of the historic compromise and by the outbreak of polemics about the Portuguese events.

The contradiction between the urgency of responding to the problems posed by the current situation (the seriousness of which was not underestimated in Berlinguer's report) and the assertion that realization of the historic compromise requires that a number of prior conditions be created (and the consequent implication that the historic compromise is a relatively long-term proposition) could not continue to be expressed solely through indirect polemics; above all, this contradiction had to be overcome in some way. In particular, it was necessary for Berlinguer and company to take a concrete attitude toward a DC whose leading group has taken a position vigorously hostile to the historic compromise. The necessity of doing this could not be postponed after Amintore Fanfani, the secretary of the DC, provocatively took advantage of the decision of the Portuguese military barring Christian Democratic candidates from running in the elections to order the noisy withdrawal of his party's delegation from the dais of invited guests of the congress, relaunching a 1950s-style anticommunist campaign. The Berlinguer group responded to this in various ways. First, in his report itself, Berlinguer explicitly declared that the solution to the most urgent problems, especially the economic ones, was not dependent on reaching agreement on the historic compromise at the government level. "In order to advance solutions for these problems," he said, "we can certainly not wait for the advent of a government of democratic turn. It is necessary to fight for all of these (economic) objectives immediately, seeking to influence as much as possible the direction of economic policy and the methods of governing and administering public affairs."

Concurrently, Berlinguer could not pretend to ignore the DC's rejection of the perspective of the historic compromise or the increasingly conservative and reactionary orientation Fanfani has been giving his party, especially in view of the campaign around the coming regional and administrative elections. Berlinguer thus devoted a good part of his concluding remarks to a massive attack on Fanfani and set attacks on the present Christian Democratic secretary as an immediate objective around which to mobilize. This was a rather clever tactical way of overcoming the disputes over how to force the DC to "change" and of stimulating an active and united participation of the whole party in the coming electoral campaign. The DC could come out of such a campaign weakened, and Berlinguer now considers such a weakening of the DC as one of the preconditions for realizing the historic compromise.




Second, conscious of the dangers of an electoral battle centered on the events in Portugal, the leading group of the PCI tried to turn the situation around, utilizing the case of Portugal to offer a solemn new demonstration of the PCI's "independence" of other Communist parties and of its own fidelity to the conception of a democratic and gradual transition to socialism. Berlinguer thus clearly took his distance from the decision of the Portuguese Armed Forces Movement and therefore from the "fraternal" party of Alvaro Cunhal, taking yet another step in affirming the independence and specificity of the "Italian road to socialism."

Tracing out the 'Italian road'

But the attempt to provide the strategy of the historic compromise with a more systematic political-ideological foundation was one of the distinctive features of the fourteenth congress even apart from the Portuguese "incident." Some of the contributions



BERLINGUER:
**«emerging
from
the
realm
of pure
utopia»**



to the pre-congress discussion, beginning with the opening document approved by the central committee, had moved in this same direction. They tried to systematize the conception of the Italian road to socialism, detailing its content especially with respect to the phase that would be opened if the historic compromise were actually applied in practice. At the congress it was Berlinguer himself who pushed forward on this field with a vigor well above that of all his previous performances.

It is worthwhile to look at some quotations. In regard to the international situation, the central committee's preparatory document contained a rather clear contradiction between an analysis that did not ignore the structural aspects of the world economic crisis nor underestimate its seriousness and the presentation of solutions based merely on rationalizing the system (systematic agreements among countries of diverse class natures, universal economic collaboration, etc.). In his report to the congress Berlinguer tried to go further:

"If we take a more long-term look, we could think that the development of peaceful coexistence and of a system of cooperation and integration extensive enough to progressively overcome the logic of imperialism and capitalism and to include the most varied aspects of the economic and civic development of all humanity could also make it realistic to consider the possibility of a 'world government' that would express the consent and free cooperation of all countries. This hypothesis could thus emerge from the realm of pure utopia to which the projects and dreams of various thinkers have been restricted during past centuries."

It may be that Berlinguer's hypothesis would permit certain ancient conceptions to emerge out of "the realm of pure utopia." But when he outlines a murky gradual overcoming of imperialism and capitalism, disregarding the essence of the revolutionary doctrine of Marxism and Leninism, and speaks of a world government on this basis, he enters the realm of new utopias no more credible than those of antiquity. His originality boils down to pure and simple arbitrariness.

Moving to domestic perspectives, what is the character of the process within which the strategy of the historic compromise must be viewed, according to the interpretations of Berlinguer and the fourteenth congress?

In the reports to the congress and in various documents reference was made to "elements of socialism" that are supposedly to be introduced little by little. It is true that there was some vacillation on this point — it was probably not at all accidental, for example, that the final resolution did not repeat this notion. But apart from the vacillation, the concept of gradually developing elements of socialism does not constitute an original discovery by the ideologists of the PCI; rather, it is part and parcel of the rusty old arsenal of reformism (even in Italy, it would be only too easy to cite precedents).

The real substance of the strategy of the historic compromise, however, emerges above all from the characterization of the phase that is presented as the "second stage of the democratic antifascist revolution" (the first stage being the period of the end of the second world war and the years immediately following). "The new features," Berlinguer explained, "must add up to a process that involves progressively moving beyond the logic of the mechanisms of the capitalist system and thereby to the full assertion of the leading function of the working class and the laboring classes on a national scale."

Beyond the deliberately elastic formulations, the central idea is that the "democratic antifascist" collaboration that was interrupted in 1947 by the

Christian Democracy acting at the behest of American imperialism can and must be taken up again, this time carrying out what was not realized thirty years ago because of the interruption of the process. Berlinguer and company may also spice the dish up with a dash of "socialism." The real substance of the perspective of the historic compromise can only be a perspective of class collaboration within the framework of an "advanced" democracy under which the most that can be hoped for is the introduction of some reforms aimed at rationalization. Nobody could seriously believe that a policy based on collaboration not only with the Socialists, but also with the Christian Democracy, which continues to be the major political instrument of the ruling class, could actually lead to breaking down or going beyond the system.

In an attempt to further clarify his thought and to explain the full import of the concept of the historic compromise, Berlinguer wandered off into a digression on Italian history of the nineteenth century. According to him, the process of building a united Italian state developed positively primarily because of the convergence, or alliance (the "compromises"), established on various occasions among different social and political forces. "The lesson of the strategy of more than a century of national history," said the secretary of the PCI, "is that the revolutionary forces actually altered the course of events when — avoiding the opposite but complementary errors of tail-endism and vanguardism, opportunism and radical-sounding extremist sectarianism — they were able to line up with progressive currents and to draw the most diverse forces into their struggle. Every advance, all real historical, political, and civic progress, has always been the result of an alliance of diverse forces, not homogeneous, but heterogeneous, both socially and ideologically. But this is not merely the definition of a purely political strategy that only we support. For us it is — and we think it must become so for everyone — a general vision of the way in which Italian society can develop, the way in which it can develop its political relationships, including those among individuals and thus moral life itself. That is precisely one of the characteristics of Italian Marxism."

* Let us leave aside Berlinguer's facile interpretation of Italian history and especially his facile overlooking of the consequences that certain compromises have had on the structures and dynamic of Italian society after the establishment of the united state. Even then, it remains unacceptable to develop a general method that is at bottom based on making an analogy between the transition from a feudal or precapitalist society to a society in which the bourgeoisie has imposed its own hegemony and the transition from capitalism to socialism. Marxists have long known why such an analogy is invalid. Berlin-

guer has obviously forgotten this (or else has never had the time to bother with it). And it remains absurd to project an evolution toward socialism on the basis of an organic compromise (that is, a long-standing collaboration) among forces that are not simply varied and heterogeneous, but downright antagonistic.

The prospects

The attempts to give more substance to the ideology of the historic compromise and to the political-tactical choices that flow from it have initially helped and will help the leading group of the PCI to keep the party together and perhaps even to further increase its influence. But while this will have the effect of accentuating the reformist development on the ideological plane, it will not be able to prevent problems and contradictions from coming up on the political field, even in the short term.

In particular, a new sharpening of the crisis in the country — which is anything but excluded — could once again urgently pose the necessity of moving toward applying the historic compromise in practice. This could also happen simply as a result of an aggravation of the crisis of political leadership. This variant could come to pass in three or four months if the regional and administrative elections scheduled for June 15 result in a defeat for the Christian Democracy of the type that occurred during the by-elections last year. Furthermore, we should not lose sight of the fact that despite various triumphant announcements currently being rashly published and distributed by "authoritative" organs of the international press, the economic crisis is continuing at full steam, and its most serious consequences could unfold precisely during the next few months or even after the summer. In such a context the Italian bourgeoisie — whose most representative spokesmen, from the president of Fiat to the governor of the Bank of Italy, have rejected the historic compromise during past months, at least for this period — could find itself obliged to change its tune. In that case the PCI would not be able to limit itself to tactical responses or to continuing to harp on supposedly necessary preconditions without running the risk of losing favorable opportunities.

But the difficulties of the PCI's leading group have deeper roots.

Consider, for example, the possibility that the Italian bourgeoisie, once again finding itself in dire straits, draws the conclusion that there is no alternative but to repeat the experiment of collaboration of the 1944-47 period and accepts the historic compromise, that is, agrees to PCI participation in the political leadership of the country. In that case,

schematically, the possible variants would be reduced to two. The government of historic compromise could turn out to be not very different from those of the first phase of the center-left; that is, it could refuse to introduce sufficiently important reforms to channel and normalize the situation. In that case, the projects of the PCI would remain mere pieces of paper and the party's links to the masses would be placed in danger. On the other hand, if the government of historic compromise took the road of significant reforms, such as striking at the interests of at least some sectors of the ruling class and even of some conservative strata of the middle classes, even then there would be no guarantee of a restabilization. A dynamic of the 1971-73 Chilean type could be set in motion, with on the one hand a tendency for the masses to go beyond the government and on the other hand a tendency for the ruling class — or sectors of it — to create ever greater tensions and to move toward sabotage. In the long run, "conciliation" would not be possible, and the PCI could find itself confronting an explosive situation in which it would be faced with choosing sides — exactly the situation the historic compromise is designed to avoid. In such crucial moments tacticians, no matter how clever, would not be of much use; the strength, effectiveness,

and general prestige of the organization are not at all sufficient, and the murky ideological schemas would thus be rendered completely useless.

Finally, let us consider a different possibility, one that we believe still remains the least probable: that the Italian bourgeoisie succeeds in the short or relatively short term in restabilizing the situation (even if only partially), achieves a new ascending phase of the economy without great upheavals, and succeeds in presenting a less discredited political leadership capable of offering a minimum of operating effectiveness. In that case also, the present strategy of the historic compromise would enter a crisis. In fact, there would no longer be any possibility of realizing the historic compromise in practice; on the contrary, it would be relegated to the indefinite future. Then Berlinguer — or someone else — would be compelled to work out some other alternative seasoned with some new ideological justification.

Conjuncturally, the fourteenth congress represented a success for Berlinguer and the leading group closest to him. But, as we have sought to demonstrate, it does not at all follow that the strategy of the historic compromise faces a very bright future. ■

EGYPT

the january workers strikes

interview with a revolutionary marxist

INTRODUCTION

On April 13 Abdel Aziz Hegazi, president of the Egyptian Council of Ministers, presented his resignation to President Anwar el-Sadat. Three days later, Sadat appointed the fifth Egyptian government since the death of Nasser. Hegazi was absent from it, being replaced as president of the Council of Ministers by Mamdouh Salem, a career policeman who had been vice-prime-minister and minister of the interior under the Hegazi government.

The ministerial shake-up was Sadat's response to the intensifying economic crisis and to the rise of the workers movement. The reawakening of the Egyptian workers movement, largest and most decisive in the

Arab world, had shaken the regime twice since the beginning of the year: early in January, when there was a wave of strikes and demonstrations throughout Cairo and Lower Egypt, and in March, when strikes broke out in the factories of Muhalla el-Kubra. The demand for the removal of Hegazi, leading exponent of Sadat's "economic opening" and his turn to U.S. imperialism, had been prominent in the workers demonstrations.

By removing Hegazi, Sadat sought to give the appearance of granting a concession to the workers. But Salem will certainly continue the economic policies of the Hegazi government — most likely with

the addition of a stronger dose of repression. In face of the deterioration of the economy and the reawakening of the workers movement, Sadat has no available response except repression.

In the Western press, the January demonstrations were widely presented as spontaneous, apolitical riots. The interview we are reproducing below clearly shows that the reality was otherwise. In fact, the Egyptian workers are increasingly tending to turn to methods of struggle that have been used by the workers in the leading imperialist countries of West Europe. And this tendency shows every sign

of continuing and deepening as the Egyptian workers again take up their role as the vanguard of the revolutionary movement in the Arab world.

The interview was taken in Cairo at the beginning of February with one of the comrades of the Mustafa Khamis Revolutionary Communist Group, a recently formed revolutionary Marxist organization in Egypt. (See INPRECOR, No. 14-15, December 12, 1974.) It appeared in the March-April issue of el-Munadil, journal of the Revolutionary Communist Group in Lebanon, sympathizers of the Fourth International.

QUESTION. Can you describe the conditions surrounding the January events?

ANSWER. Certainly. First of all, it is important to stress that the January demonstrations were not a spontaneous explosion caused by the crisis in urban transport, as has been presented outside. Just the opposite. The demonstration on January 1 was an organized action that capped a working-class upsurge that had been going on for several months. Last autumn there was a series of strikes — the most powerful ones were in September — that succeeded in forcing the government to pay the workers one month's wages out of their accumulated compulsory savings. But the workers were demanding full payment of the entire backlog of their savings and, in addition, a wage increase to partially compensate for the monstrous price increases.

The workers movement continued to fight for these demands, and our comrade textile workers in Helwan printed leaflets about these demands and distributed them to other layers of workers. In fact, these leaflets reached Shubra, el-Mahalla, and Alexandria, as well as other centers of working-class concentration. Naturally, this stimulated the repressive apparatus; three workers of the el-Sharq factory in Albaba were arrested and tortured to get information out of them. But the workers upsurge was still on the rise. In December the workers of Shubra organized assemblies inside the factory to demand an increase in wages and the payment of their savings. Then they organized workers councils, which moved into the building of the textile workers union and continued to operate on an almost daily basis for ten days. The regime got very frightened, and Saleh Gharib, the minister of labor, personally intervened to order the workers expelled from the building and then to shut the building down to prevent further meetings from taking place there.

As a protest against these maneuvers, which had been supported by the trade-union bureaucracy, the workers of Helwan demanded that their union with-

draw from the general union. When news of this demand reached the minister of labor, he ordered an investigation of five of the prominent trade unionists in the Misr-Helwan textile factory. But he did not dare arrest these workers, because the workers immediately threatened to burn down the factory if any repressive measures were taken. The workers of Helwan went even further; in a secret decision they voted to strike for their demands. All the most important industrial concentrations of workers in Helwan — the steel, foundry, chemical, and coke workers — solidarized with this decision. The date of the strike was set for January 1.

On that day the workers gathered in front of the Bab el-Loq railway station in Cairo (departure point for the Cairo-Helwan train) and then marched through the streets of Cairo chanting slogans about their living conditions. The slogans were directed not only against the government, but against the regime as a whole. This demonstration of several thousand quickly ran up against the police. An intense battle ensued, the police using clubs and tear gas, the workers using stones. The demonstrators scattered in several directions and began to smash up some bourgeois shops, a few police cars, and a couple of buses. There were scores of arrests.

The next day the Shubra workers went on strike; the workers of the Shubra branch of the Misr-Helwan factory in particular met with further repression. A wave of anger and indignation swept the workers movement. On the third day (January 3) the Misr silk workers decided to go on strike in solidarity with the Helwan workers. But the security forces surrounded the factory with more than 200 police vehicles, refusing to let any demonstrators leave the factory and trying to ensure that production would be continued. Despite this, the workers refused to work for five hours, until finally, under the pressure of threats, they returned to work. Arrests began that night, the workers being taken from their homes.

QUESTION. Was there any parallel movement in the universities?

ANSWER. Most certainly. In fact, there were mobilizations during December at the University of Cairo. Posters opposing the regime appeared on the walls; they concentrated on the rising cost of living and the regime's rapprochement with American imperialism. In the middle of December the security police arrested nine students, kidnapping them right off the street. This led to a call for a student meeting, which demanded the release of the imprisoned students and an end to their torture by the police. The meeting also demanded the dissolution of the "university police," which had been reestablished after the student mobilizations in 1972. (This police force had been abolished in 1968.) The meeting also demanded certification of 100 students of the Arts College who had failed by one mark, whereas Sadat's daughter had passed the previous year despite the fact that her yearly average had been five marks too low.

These events were percolating in the university when the January 1 demonstrations took place. On January 2 the students announced that they were going on strike. The strike lasted five days, until the police surrounded the university. But since then there have been continual meetings, discussions, conferences, and loudspeaker announcements demanding democratic rights and the release of those arrested.

QUESTION. Can you give us an idea of the extent of the arrests?

ANSWER. The wave of arrests has been very wide — hitting more than 250 people so far. This does not include people who have escaped and are being sought by the police. The detainees come from a wide variety of social milieus and leftist political currents. Among them, for example, are Rashad el-Jabali, Sayid Fayid, and Muhammed Raslan, all trade unionists. Then there are Muhammed el-Shadhli, Fikri el-Kholi, Muhammed Mustafa, Muhammed el-Manshawi, and Najati Abdel Hamid, all workers. Hamdi el-Hinawi, Muhammed Fahmi, Muhammed Khalid, Sidqi el-Qasir, Abdel Qasir, and Ibrahim Fathi are clerks. Abdel Muhsin Shasha, Salah Issa, Zaki Murad, Adil Kamel, and Abdullah el-Zaghbi are lawyers. Saad el-Saai is a teacher and Mukhtar el-Sayid is a doctor. Adliyah Michail, Ahmed el-Shadhli, and Sayid Ashmawi are students. These are just a few of the people who have been arrested.

News of torture of prisoners is continuing to come in, and many have had to be taken to the hospital.

Those arrested face three main charges: sabotage, establishing organizations whose intent is to overthrow the regime, and making contact with foreign countries (implying the Soviet Union and East European countries). ●

QUESTION. What are the perspectives in your opinion?

ANSWER. One thing is certain. The January events marked the beginning of a long road that will be filled with similar happenings and even more violent ones. This is the road of revolutionary uprising that will overthrow bourgeois rule and establish the rule of the workers and poor peasants.

In the short run, movements demanding the release of the prisoners are on the rise in the working class and among the students. There is a tendency toward the coordination of the struggles, which must be strengthened. We are extremely optimistic about the future of revolutionary struggle in Egypt.

What is required of revolutionaries in all Arab countries and throughout the international revolutionary movement is that they raise their voices in solidarity with the victims of Sadat's repressive regime. There is no need for me to stress the importance of Arab and international solidarity in embarrassing the regime and preventing it from continuing its indiscriminate and vicious repression.

This question has special importance for our Arab comrades, who in the course of organizing solidarity with the struggle of the workers and students of Egypt can point the way forward to the real future of revolutionary struggles in the Arab world. ■

THE SOVIET WORKING CLASS & THE ECONOMIC REFORMS

by ERIC LAURENT & M. I. HOLUBENKO

The application of the various reforms in the USSR has apparently left the working class indifferent. This can be explained in part by the marked caution that has been displayed by the bureaucracy, which at no time has taken measures that the working class could have seen as direct attacks, measures like the sudden increase in the prices of basic consumer goods that was decreed in Poland in December 1970. It is also and above all to be explained by the fact that forty years of Stalinism have not passed without having deep effects on the working class. In particular, the bureaucracy's entire policy, carried out through the party and its mass organizations, is aimed at atomizing the whole of society and especially the working class, at preventing any form of assembly or collective action outside the official channels. In fact, since the death of Stalin the working class has never burst forth onto the political scene with its own demands in defense of its own class interests against the bureaucracy. The workers also remained quite outside the democratic opposition movement during the 1960s.(1) As for the Samizdat documents, they ignore the situation and current problems of the working class.

Under these conditions, the opposition of the working class to the bureaucracy is manifested essentially in individual acts: sabotage of production, very slow work pace, disinterest in the quality of production, very high absenteeism, considerable moving about by the work force, and even hooliganism and alcoholism, which the official press reports as deviations from, and lack of adaption to, "communist" society. Drunkenness is the most widespread manifestation of the feeling of social frustration; it has taken on such dimensions that in 1972 the bureaucracy enacted a whole series of special decrees to struggle against alcoholism. While under Stalin alcoholism was simultaneously an important means of controlling the work-

ing class and a significant source of income (vodka stands were set up at factory gates), today the official campaign against alcoholism is part of the systematic effort aimed at increasing the productivity of labor. This campaign does not seem to have registered much success — precisely because alcoholism is born of a deep feeling of social dissatisfaction.

We will not spend any more time discussing these phenomena of individual resistance and despair on the part of the working class, for they are relatively well known. Instead, we will concentrate essentially on examining how the introduction of the various reforms since 1965 has been able to change the situation of the working class, and to the extent possible we will look at the reactions of the workers.

The 1965 reform

The 1965 reform was aimed above all at altering the system of management of the factories; it was introduced with a profound indifference and often even ignorance on the part of the working class. During an inquiry conducted in 1967, some 400 workers of a factory in Lugansk were asked what effects they thought the reform had had on production and on the workers personally (wages and bonuses). When asked whether the reform had increased production, 141 workers said "yes," 43 said "a little," and 221 workers said "no" or did not know. When asked whether the reform had raised wages or bonuses, 94 said "yes," 130 said "somewhat" or "not at all," and 181 did not know.(2)

Even though it is impossible to draw general conclusions from such a small sample space, the considerable number of indifferent or negative replies

(especially to the second question) is relatively significant. In 1973, some 78 percent of the workers of a factory in Voroshilovgrad stated that they did not even know that an economic reform "aimed at increasing the efficiency of production and at raising wages" had been enacted.

Hence, the consequences of the economic reform have been particularly meager for the working class. The desires expressed by some liberal economists like Birman and Anasenkov who have recommended increasing workers participation in the management of factories have remained a dead letter. As for the so-called encouragement funds, their main beneficiaries have been the factory managers. In particular, the bonuses paid out of special funds go only to engineers, technicians, and supervisory personnel. When it is also known that on the average only 20 percent of the workers receive bonuses paid out of the encouragement funds, it can be better understood why indifference or ignorance is manifested by workers who are polled. The diversity in the utilization of encouragement funds among various factories and branches of industry has resulted in very clear disparities in the wages paid in different areas for the same work. (See Maximov: *Pre-mirovanie Rabosikh*, Moscow, 1971.)

This also explains why the 1965 reform proved incapable of changing the attitude of the working class toward production (persistence of extensive spontaneous moving about, absenteeism, relatively slow growth of productivity). In trying to enact new reforms since the beginning of the 1970s, the bureaucracy has centered all its efforts on the more "rational" utilization of the work force. Many studies and "experiments" in this direction have been made. But in this domain the bureaucracy appears to be leaning toward attacking a problem on which the sensitivity of the working class is very great: the realm of employment, or more precisely, that of security of employment.⁽³⁾ Moreover, the bureaucracy is more or less aware that it is venturing into dangerous territory, and it has thus been very cautious. In this context, the experiment of Shchekino provided a test case, for its purpose was to permit a rapid development of productivity on the basis of a significant rationalization of the utilization of the work force (in five years, 1,300 jobs were eliminated). Many studies have been devoted to this experiment, but the reactions of the workers to the various measures that were taken scarcely figures in these studies. Nevertheless, some articles let a certain workers discontent come through. For example, the secretary of the party committee of the combinat (a grouping of related industries) explained that it was necessary to take a series of "psychological precautions" and that in particular they "avoided talking about layoffs and spoke especially of liberation of work force reserves." The workers of Shche-

kino also expressed their hostility to agencies like the Scientific Organization of Labor and the Laboratory on Research into Norms, which were seen as agencies aimed at paving the way for the layoff of personnel. It was also reported that there were cases of collective resistance in the workshop to the planned rationalization measures.

While the importance of these reactions must not be overestimated, they are nonetheless meaningful, especially in that the Shchekino project was carried out in a sort of "antiseptic" context — a situation of relative labor shortage in which the problems of transferring workers did not pose great difficulties. (In a work devoted to the Shchekino experiment, a journalist mentioned that there were recruiting agents posted at the gates of some factories trying to hire workers for other factories.) But the publicity the bureaucracy has released around this experiment and others like it also seeks to issue a warning to the working class: The workers have to change their attitude toward labor, because soon only the most qualified and "productive" workers will be able to get good jobs. And in fact, the generalization of such measures in a great number of enterprises would pose the problem of layoffs and transfers in quite different terms.

It hasn't come to that yet, but already a certain number of measures have been taken that move in this direction: in particular the establishment of a State Committee for the Utilization of Labor Resources, which has local branches whose essential aim is to organize and control workers seeking employment. For the moment this committee is playing only a secondary role; 90 percent of the workers prefer to look for jobs on their own. But in the framework of an extension of measures of the Shchekino type, this committee could be led to play a much more important and authoritative role in the redistribution of the work force according to the needs of the economy — needs that, at least as far as the bureaucracy is concerned, do not coincide with the needs of the workers.

Up to now the legal possibilities of a factory director laying off workers after a reduction in the number of employees required have been strictly limited; in particular, the director is required to guarantee the workers other jobs: "The absence in the factory or institution of positions to which workers or employees can be transferred instead of being laid off because of a reduction in personnel needs does not free the administration of the obligation to make sure that these workers or employees are moved to other factories or institutions in the same area."⁽⁴⁾ Moreover, the factory must pay the wages of the worker until he has found another job and must also pay the costs of moving should that be necessary.

The factory directors are exerting very strong pressure to get these obligations abolished (they are presented as the main obstacle to an "efficient" employment policy) and to shift the responsibility for relocating workers onto the offices of the State Committee for the Utilization of Labor Resources: "In the course of discussions with the author (a Soviet economist), a great number of factory directors in Moscow, Volgograd, Kuibyshev, Saratov, Chelyabinsk, and other cities have quite correctly linked the problem of the liberation of the work force (again the same euphemism for layoffs!) to the development and deepening of economic reform. They noted that the reduction of the number of workers and employees would be considerably facilitated by the enactment of the following measures: expansion of the prerogatives of the enterprises, in particular their obtaining the possibility of completely controlling the wage fund; significant strengthening of material incentives for the personnel, especially through the payment of high wages and bonuses to the most qualified and valuable individuals who successfully fulfill not only their own obligations but also the functions of people who are laid off; elimination of the enterprises' responsibilities for finding new jobs for laid-off workers and of their obligation to pay such workers compensation during the period of their retraining and search for new employment."(5)

The interest of the technocratic layers in the development of the reform could not be expressed any more clearly. But the open application of the totality of these measures would involve a frontal attack on the working class, which the bureaucracy wants above all to avoid; hence the buffer role that the bureaucracy has to play between the currents that advocate "rationalization" at any price (that is, essentially at the expense of the working class) and the working class itself, which is certainly not prepared to passively accept the challenging of one of the major gains that remain of the revolution of 1917: security of employment. Thus, certain official bodies like the Wages Committee, have intervened to slow down the extension of the Shchekino experiment to a great number of other enterprises.

Wages and productivity

Since the problem of the growth of productivity is the central problem today, the bureaucracy has sought to link wage increases ever more closely to increases in productivity, more and more limiting automatic wage raises. Thus, it is stressed in an official report: "In the present five-year plan, only half of all wage increases will come through the introduction of new scales of wages, salaries, and other forms of remuneration; the other half will be obtained by the workers and employees through successes in production."

The will to extensively subordinate increases in wages to increases in productivity (one of the objectives of the bureaucracy is to struggle against the inflationary tendencies that were manifested in the late 1960s because of uncontrolled wage increases in some economic branches) has provoked a marked slowdown in the growth of workers' wages since the first year of the current five-year plan. During the 1965-70 period, wage increases tallied very closely with productivity increases (5% and 5.7% respectively); in 1970 productivity increased 7.7% and wages only 4.4%. In 1971 a worker received in rubles for a 1% increase in productivity only a third of what he had gotten in 1968; in 1972 he got half of what he had got in 1968. In 1973 the average wage of workers increased 3.7%. But this increase in average wages was due in large part to an increase in the minimum wage, which passed from 60 to 62 rubles a month, and to bonuses paid for transfers to the Great North or to Siberia. For 1974 the plan calls for wage increases of only 3.6%. This wage policy seems to have generated growing discontent in the working class. *Izvestia* gave some indication of this at the beginning of the year when it published the results of a poll made in a locomotive factory in Voroshilovgrad. What is interesting about this poll is that it compares the workers' responses with those given during a similar inquiry conducted in 1968. In 1974 some 75% of the workers said they were not satisfied with their wages; in 1968 the figure was only 54%. The majority of workers expressed discontent with the smallness of the increase in consumer goods; 65% more workers complained about working conditions than had complained in 1968.

During the winter of 1973-74 several strikes broke out in Moscow, especially in the construction industry; the issues involved were wages and bonuses.

Another means of putting pressure on wages so as to increase productivity — and this technique was used even before the reforms — is to raise production norms; this often results in wage decreases. In fact, under the present system by which the workers are paid, base wages represent only 62.4% of the total real wages; in many factories they represent only 46.1%. An important part of the remainder of wages is made up of bonuses paid out of the wages fund, disbursement of which is linked to realization or overfulfillment of the plan. In addition, any revision in production norms entails a noticeable fall in average wages, exactly because of the role played by bonuses in the composition of wages. In the case of engineers and technocrats, the "normal" salary does not include bonuses linked to realization or overfulfillment of the plan. The bonuses received by engineers and technicians come only from the encouragement funds and the special funds. This

explains why sharp increases in production norms have been at the root of many strikes.

For example, in Sverdlovsk in 1969 the change to a five-day week in a rubber plant and the sharp revision of production norms provoked a fall in wages of about 40%. The workers immediately went on strike. Although the factory director and the local authorities were advocates of an "energetic" response (sending out the militia against the strikers), the leading bodies in Moscow initially preferred to cut their losses: The old wage system was reestablished and the factory director was "laid off," only to be offered a responsible post in a ministry in Moscow some time later. It was only later that the KGB began looking for the "ringleaders." This initial temporizing attitude on the part of the bureaucracy is rather characteristic. Similar strikes have occurred in factories in Vitebsk, Kopeisk, and other cities.

Factory cops and psychologists

In face of the many tensions that are emerging in the factories, the initial response of the bureaucracy is to tighten discipline. More and more frequently, this is evidenced in the affirmation in the press of the need for the presence within the factories of representatives of the Ministry of the Interior. In an article in the July 9, 1972, *Izvestia* the director of a Moscow factory explained that "police officials visit the factory systematically. They conduct inquiries into cases of violation of the legal order in our enterprise." In another article we read: "The offices of the district prosecutor in Sverdlovsk have verified the state of labor discipline in our enterprises. They presented to the management a report on violations of labor discipline and public order by the workers of the factory." Many additional quotations regarding ever closer collaboration between the cops and the factory managers could be given.

Concurrently, the bureaucracy is discovering with amazement the virtues of American-style labor psycho-sociology in the prevention of social conflicts. In the August 28, 1971, *Pravda*, we read: "Why shouldn't a psychological physician be included in the personnel of the big factories? Working hand in hand with the social organizations, he would make his contribution to the prevention of conflicts of all sorts." Or, in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* of May 24, 1972: "You have to know how to make subordinates talk. A silent worker always represents an enigma and a difficult subject for the management. But it is no less important to quickly stop a subordinate who talks more than is necessary."

The bureaucracy has invented nothing new in the realm of factory cops and psychologists. Once again,

this testifies to its present inability to resolve the problems with which it is confronted: more and more marked distrust and resistance by the working class to a system that appears totally foreign to the workers in spite of all the official declarations to the contrary.

Discontent among the youth

In the past several years, the Soviet press had devoted more and more space to the growing discontent among the youth in regard to the prospects offered them by society, especially as concerns their work.

This phenomenon is linked to the extreme vertical social mobility that characterized the first decades of the Soviet regime, when the need for trained personnel at all levels and in all sectors was considerable. Today, the chances of social promotion — from the countryside to the city, from the working class to the layer of supervisory personnel, etc. — have been considerably reduced.

One figure is especially significant in this regard: the percentage of youth who, having finished secondary school, go on to the university or to similar institutions:

	1951	1958	1965
% of the total:	72%	13%	29%

In 1966 some 1.2 million young people directly entered production at the end of their studies in secondary schools.

This phenomenon has one especially important consequence: The working class is growing larger and larger because of the influx of new layers into its ranks; it now includes an ever greater number of hereditary workers. In fact, there is a rather clear correlation between the social situation of parents and the professional aspirations of youth, as the tables on pg. 26 demonstrate.

Various local inquiries have shown that the great majority of youth who entered into production before completing their studies come from working-class or kolkhozi (state farms) families that have low incomes.

A second point of tension derives from the very sharp contrast between the level of general education and training of the youth before they enter into production (a great number of whom have completed secondary school) and the professional training that they later receive: Presently, about 90% of young workers are trained in the factories directly on the job in a very short time and in a purely practical

REALIZATION OF THE PLANS OF YOUTH WANTING TO CONTINUE STUDY

1. On the basis of parents' income:

Level of monthly family income (per capita)	Realization of plans (in %)		
	Working	Working and Studying	Studying
less than 50 rubles	17.6	17.6	65.4
50-70 rubles	15.5	13.9	70.6
70-90 rubles	14.7	14.0	71.3
more than 90 rubles	5.1	6.1	88.8

NOTE: A poll of 10,000 worker families in Leningrad in 1963 revealed that 40% of these families had a per capita monthly income of less than 50 rubles.

2. According to parents' cultural level:

Education of parents	Realization of plans (in %)		
	Working	Working and Studying	Studying
Up to 6th grade	41.2	27.8	31.0
7th to 9th grade	33.6	13.3	53.1
middle grades	21.2	13.8	65.0
superior grades	9.0	9.4	81.6

SOURCE: *Social'nye problemy truda i proizvodsta*, 1969, p. 53.

and utilitarian manner. This explains the discontent young workers feel about their occupational situation, discontent that is expressed by an especially great spontaneous mobility and by the less intense docility of the young workers. The factory directors increasingly complain about these young workers, for the directors do not want to understand why the young workers seem less and less prepared to accept the role of simple "objects of planning" that the bureaucracy wants to impose on them.

In fact, as a somewhat cynical bureaucrat said: "You can't make people happy by deciding things without them and for them. What is important is not only what is being planned but also who is doing the planning. And the first depends largely on the second. It is urgent to reach agreement on whether the factory collective is to be solely an object of planning or whether it is also to be the subject of planning."⁽⁶⁾ It is to be hoped that the Soviet working class will one day give a clear response to this anxious bureaucrat.

Conclusion

The application of the reforms in the USSR has gone through many vacillations. That is because the bureaucracy's room for maneuver is narrow. On the one hand, even if the bureaucrats are rather obtuse,

they are not unaware that a reformist process having a snowball effect in the direction of the restoration of capitalism would destroy their caste privileges, for only a minority of them would be in position to transform themselves into "capitalist managers." On the other hand, the bureaucrats have every reason to fear a violent reaction from the workers in the event of a frontal attack on the gains of the working class (the workplace, employment security, etc.).

But the hesitations are also due to the USSR's position as the lynchpin of the other bureaucratized countries. If one of the other bureaucracies sets in motion a dangerous sociopolitical dynamic or goes too far along the road of reforms, the USSR always has to be in position to assume its "internationalist responsibilities" by sending in tanks. The stability that is consequently required for the Soviet bureaucracy can only be achieved by maintaining greater power in internal policy.

Nevertheless, it is hazardous to say with certainty that the reforms will always be condemned to failure. This question is important politically, for our response to it relates to the probable framework in which the activization and politicization of the working class will take place: either in struggle against the whole bureaucracy and its privileges or in struggle against the process of restoration of

capitalism and the wing of the bureaucracy that could be the driving force in such a process. The response cannot be simplistic.

The factors that are pushing the bureaucracy to pose the problem of the economic reforms derive from the general characteristics of the Stalinist period, from the general crisis and decline of the bureaucratic regime. The slowdown of economic growth and the ever greater bureaucratization of the economy will undoubtedly periodically push the bureaucracy down the road of reforms. Nevertheless, equally periodically, the factors we have mentioned will probably block these reform efforts.

FOOTNOTES:

1. The struggle for democratic rights — freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly — has in fact been waged solely through the mobilization of the intelligentsia in defense of its own interests as a social layer. The program of liberals like Sakharov essentially upholds the demands of the technocracy against incompetent bureaucrats. Medvedev, who claims allegiance to Marxism, devotes very little space in his book *On Socialist Democracy* to the problems and role of the working class in the struggle for real socialism. What characterizes most of the opposition currents that have emerged from the intelligentsia is fear of the "disorder" that would be provoked, according to them, by the mobilization of the Soviet masses against the bureaucracy. In his book *Will the Soviet Union Survive Until 1984?* Amalric offers a good resumé of the idea that is most widespread among the Soviet opposition when he counterposes what he calls "the constructive and reformist movement of the intelli-

gentsia" to the "destructive movement of the lower classes." The reformism of the opposition essentially expresses a deep distrust of the masses, and of the working class in the first place.

Nevertheless, some clandestine groups dissolved by the KGB during the 1960s — groups about which we often know only the name and a few passages from their programs — included workers in their ranks and undertook some agitational work directed at the working class. (Examples are the Party of Real Communists, the Party of Young Workers, the Party of Workers Without a Party Struggling for the Restoration of Socialism.)

In the non-Russian republics the national question, born of the policy of total Russification practiced by the bureaucracy, has mobilized layers much broader than the intelligentsia. This emerges clearly in the documents of the *Samvidav* (the Ukrainian *Samizdat*), in which national demands and workers demands are linked. (See, for example, the Koval letter to the deputies of the Ukrainian Soviets.)

2. Cited by A. Birman in "Sut' reformy," *Novy Mir*, No. 12, 1968, p. 186.
3. This significant remark has been attributed to a Soviet worker: "They can launch campaigns and do whatever they want, but we will not work harder. The right not to work hard is probably our only right."
4. See *Comments on Labor Legislation*, Moscow, 1967, p. 88.
5. See *Osnovnye problemy racional'nogo izpolzovaniya trudovykh ressursov USSR*, Moscow, 1971, p. 17.
6. Statement of the first secretary of the party in Tambov, quoted in *Novy Mir*, No. 5, 1972, p. 197.

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N = News of the Workers Movement & the Fourth International
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