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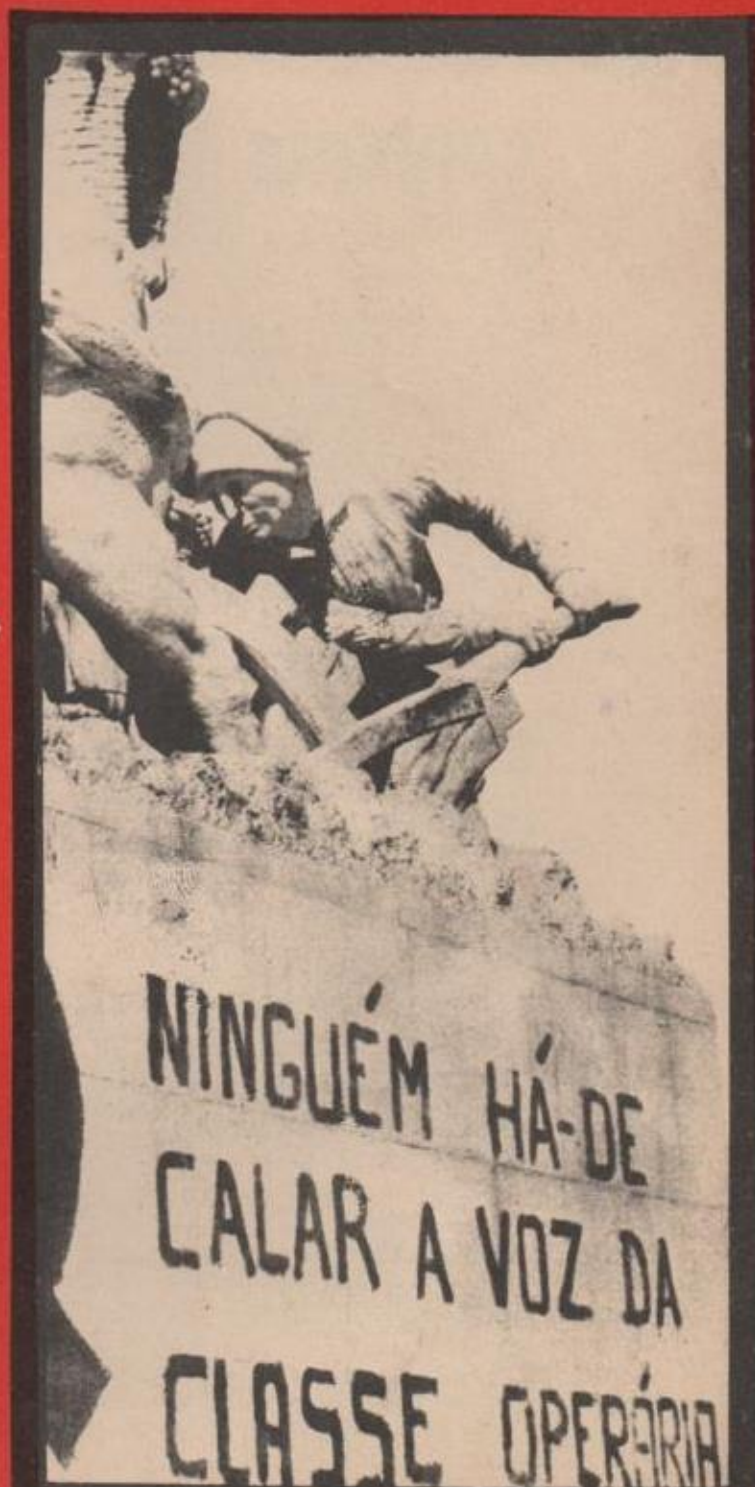
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## Portugal

“no one can  
silence  
the voice  
of the  
working class”

THE  
WORKERS  
WILL  
SILENCE  
EANES





## contents

### PORTUGAL

Eanes: A Fragile Victory —by A. Udry & C. Michaloux 3

### ITALY

After the Elections —by Livio Maitan 8  
Evolution of the Electoral Relationship of Forces 9  
The Far Left Assesses the Elections 11  
    Avanguardia Operaia 11  
    Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo 13  
    Lotta Continua 15  
    Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari 16

### SPAIN

Waiting for September —by M. Saura 20

### BOLIVIA

New Escalation of Repression 22

### CHINA

Behind China's Political Crisis —by S. S. Wu 24

### POLAND

The Polish Workers Say No —Editorial 32

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# portugal EANES... A FRAGILE VICTORY

by A. UDRY & G. MICHALOUX

The Portuguese presidential elections ended in the victory of Chief of Staff Ramalho Eanes. The man who proclaimed at his last meeting in Lisbon, "It is necessary that everyone go to work, even those who sit around in coffee houses or pour gasoline in the streets dreaming of revolutions that have nothing to do with ours, for ours must be rekindled with work" received 61.54 percent of the vote. The coalition of parties that supported him had won 74.91 percent of the vote in the legislative elections of April 1976. A semi-presidential regime has now been set up. Its strength and stability will have to be gauged in coming months.

One of the themes that dominated the campaign of Eanes — the candidate of the PPD, CDS, and SP\* — was the "struggle against the economic crisis," which is another way of saying the attack on the gains made by the workers since April 1974 and March 1975. Eanes, the commander of the military November 25, put himself forward as the leader of a social November 25, a November 25 that would enable the bourgeoisie to restore profits and boost the accumulation of capital.

The decline in production in economic sectors that play a pace-setting role in Portuguese capitalism has been very great since the middle of the 1960s. The figures for 1975 have just appeared (in June 1976). They provide a picture of a situation that further deteriorated during the first half of 1976. For example, the sector of "civil construction," hard hit by the crisis of tourism and the fall of infrastructural industrial investment, declined 12 percent in 1975 compared with 1974. Production in basic metals fell 18.5 percent; the decline was 12.7 percent in mechanics and transport material and 21.2 percent in the "various transformation" industries. The effects of the international recession, economic sabotage, and the fall in investments were violently felt in these sectors. Production in the textile and clothing industry fell 17.3 percent in 1975 compared with the preceding year. The depression here is accounted for by the international recession and the protectionist measures taken in other European countries (especially the quota system in Britain).

On the other hand, the sectors that do not have an "export vocation" (the term already used by the Caetano government) are expanding. The food, drink, and to-

bacco industries, for instance, are growing significantly. This is explained by the increase in the number of employees since April 24, 1974. In addition, the democratic rights won since that date have had a positive effect on the paper, typesetting, and publishing industries! Concurrently, agricultural production, grain production among other things, has increased strongly, not only because of climate conditions, but also because the area of land under cultivation was heavily expanded in the framework of the agrarian reform and the land occupations (since March 1975).

In a certain sense, we are now seeing a block on the tendencies of the accumulation of capital that have prevailed over the past decade, a product both of the new relationship of social forces in the factories and of wage increases. In the general context of the decline of investment, there is a shift of investment toward industries linked to the domestic market. This retroversion is clearly revealed in the following two figures: In 1975 investment in sectors linked to domestic consumption reached about 50 percent of total investment (17.4% for food, 7.3% for paper, 16.4% for drinks, 9.2% for textiles, etc.). In 1971 these branches accounted for only 16 percent of total investment during the year. The metals industry, on the other hand, which absorbed 43 percent of total investment in 1973, accounted for only 0.2 percent in 1975! Hence, when Minister of Finance Salgado Zenha (a member of the SP) proclaims the necessity of "making the nationalized sector profitable" (60 percent of gross fixed capital formation depends on the nationalized industries or those industries in which the state intervenes), he is only emphasizing the bourgeoisie's desire to strike at the gains of the toiling masses in order to prime investment in the direction it had been turned for a decade by capitalist development plans. Soares himself has affirmed: "This (expansion) requires the security and 'dynamization' of the private sector and the reorganization of the public sector in order to make it profitable and efficient." (*Opção*, June 17-23, 1976.)

The prime target of the attack of the employers and the bourgeois state, or, to put it another way, the first concern of the economic plan of the future Soares government, is none other than wages. If the Portuguese capitalists and multinational corporations are to end their investment strike and if the nationalized sector is to be "made profitable," then wage costs must be cut to the bone. This is the only way to fulfill the condition necessary for priming the sector "devoted to export," the sector around which Portuguese capitalism has re-

\*PPD: Partido Popular Democrático — Popular Democratic party; CDS: Centro Democrático Social — Social Democratic Center; SP: Socialist party.

organized itself for some time now. The Portuguese bourgeoisie understands that it must act quickly if it wants to take some advantage of the international capitalist uptick. Throughout the election campaign the bourgeoisie's impatience was striking.

The offensive will be directed essentially against the workers with the lowest wages (among others, the textile workers and those in the assembly industry) and against the strongly organized and militant workers of the Lisbon industrial belt (those who make more than 5,000 escudos a month). The table explains why. It indicates the changes that have occurred in the division of wage categories of male and female workers over the age of 20.

Percentage of workers in three wage categories  
(in escudos per month)

	January 1974	January 1975
less than 3,300 escudos	48.2	1.7
3,300-5,000 escudos	33.1	38.1
5,000-12,000 escudos	17.4	56.5

Overall, real wages have increased 25 percent for the low-wage categories since April 1974. A simple comparison between this figure and the devaluation rate of 30 percent predicted and announced by various sources close to the Ministry of Finance indicates the scope and intensity of the attack on the incomes of the toiling masses. This devaluation — which should also foster some imperialist investment — will trigger significant price increases in, for instance, basic foodstuffs (grain, meat, cod, cooking oil), which form a very large and not easily reducible share of imported food products. Such imports are growing (from 9.5 percent of total imports in 1960 to 15.7 percent in 1974) because of the increase in the number of workers and their purchasing power. The devaluation will thus stimulate inflationary pressure, which has already pushed the consumer price index above 16 percent (April 1976 compared with April 1975 in Lisbon), especially since consumer goods manufacturers will begin to add the interest they must pay on the credits they were granted a year ago onto their prices. And at the same time, the Soares government asks for a more or less rigid freeze on prices!

Concurrently, in applying the plan of "capitalist recuperation" the Social Democratic government will not only impose limits on wages in the public sector (hospitals, teaching, civil service, etc.), but will also seek to reduce the number of jobs in this sector, which had strongly increased since the "carnation revolution."

In addition, the government will press for a restructuring of the nationalized enterprises, closing down many "crippled companies," and will thus increase unemployment, which already stands at 10 percent of the work force, according to the estimate of the Ministry of Labor. The unemployment figure was 3 percent in 1974; it rose to 5.3 percent in 1975. Today it has become a central problem, felt very widely. The rise of unemploy-

ment is a result of the decline of investment (in 1975 only 11,807 new jobs were created, compared with 37,377 in 1973), the return home of Portuguese immigrant workers in other countries, the slowdown of new emigration, the demobilization of the army, and the return of the colons. The creation of a large industrial reserve army is clearly seen as means of favoring the capitalist offensive. For instance, Almedo Santos (of the Socialist party) declared: "Everybody must create wealth. If you are laid off today, you will find new work tomorrow someplace where wealth is being created." So accept it.

Finally, the bourgeoisie is seeking to modify the relationship of forces in the factories, for it is as a result of this relationship of forces that the workers, for example, refuse to accept the consequences of the "normal functioning of market laws," namely layoffs. Soares has raised the colars: "It is important to convince the workers that they must work and that it is indispensable to establish some labor discipline, through appeals to the consciousness of the workers and also through setting down certain rules of coercion. . . . It must be explained to the workers, as Maurice Thorez did in 1947, that it is necessary and revolutionary to be able to end a strike at certain times." (Opção, June 17-23, 1976.)

The further the election campaign advanced, the more these various themes — all facets of what is called "capitalist recuperation" in Portugal — acquired a predominant place in the speeches of Eanes and his supporters. Thus, among broad layers of the workers who have been engaged in struggle for two years now, the already existing deep sentiment of defiance in face of the inability of the provisional governments to resolve even the smallest problems was topped off by an increasingly marked desire to defeat this offensive, personified by Eanes, and to express this in the vote. Especially since practical comprehension among the toiling masses of the depth of the crisis enabled them to catch a glimpse of the sharpness of the attack of capital and its state, independent of the promises of "dialogue" and "social pact" made by Soares. This largely accounts for the votes that went to Otelo and for the drift away from the Communist party.

### **Eanes & the legislative elections**

The legislative elections to the Assembly of the Republic (April 25, 1976) were less a confirmation of November 25 than an assertion of the strength of the working class. Resistance to the attacks of the employers has been expressed continuously since March 1976, that is, since the gas and electricity strike in Porto. Of course, this workers response has been manifested in less spontaneous and more limited forms than was the case during autumn 1975. Nevertheless, on more than one occasion demands linked to workers control have been at the center of mobilizations, when a factory is closed, when a reconversion plan is launched, or when an employer returns. In addition, wage struggles, albeit fragmented, are developing in various factories and industrial branches.

But the defensive capacity of the working class has also been asserted in the realm of unionization, which was also reflected in the electoral domain.

The workers commissions have sometimes lost strength, but in the main they are tending to become organs to which the workers delegate many responsibilities; their capacity to mobilize all the workers was, and often remains, limited, apart from some general assemblies. This is clearly an expression of the change in the period in comparison with the months before November 1975.

Nevertheless, the essential feature of the legislative elections was the affirmation of a working-class majority in the Assembly of the Republic, which placed the question of an SP-CP government based on this majority on the agenda, especially given the attack of capital and the need for workers unity.

Thus, after April 25, 1976, the bourgeoisie was compelled to recognize that neither the PPD nor the CDS had emerged as an uncontested leadership in the bourgeois camp, that the ability of the CDS to mobilize petty-bourgeois sectors (and to stabilize the relationship of forces in the North in its favor) had not been extended to an ability to stimulate the offensive of the petty-bourgeoisie and the "returnees" (from Angola), as had been the case in March-April.

Moreover, the PPD's attempts to trigger a government crisis immediately after the elections had failed, as did the offensive of the PPD, CDS, and the right wing of the SP against the constitution. What gave rise to the greatest concern among the bourgeoisie was precisely the inability to implement any real measures freezing wages. Zenha was reduced to remarking: it is necessary

to wait for a "real government." Of course, the bourgeoisie has reconstructed its state apparatus and strengthened its repressive forces, although they remain very fragile and quantitatively limited, both in military and police terms. Nevertheless, the blows dealt to the bourgeois class by the toiling masses over many months still leave their imprint on the subjective plane, and the relationship of social forces is such that the crisis of political leadership of the bourgeoisie remains largely open.

In this context, and on the basis of the pact between the parties and the Council of the Revolution — a pact supported, not to say worked out, by the SP and the CP — the bourgeoisie realized the urgent necessity of unifying its will and forces and of using all its weight to guarantee the emergence of a semi-presidential regime (the constitution includes a provision for granting the president full powers in cases of crisis).

The Social Democracy — repeating with strange similitude the experience of the Weimar Republic — did not fail to support this operation with both hands. Temporarily, Eanes achieved a consensus in the bourgeois ranks, which nevertheless does not mean that there has been substantial progress in homogenizing the bourgeois class. Thanks to the support of the major Portuguese workers party, the Socialist party of Mario Soares, the bourgeois class moved toward the objective of placing Eanes in the presidency through a sort of plebiscite. Palma Carlos had harbored this dream for Spínola on two occasions in 1974. In both cases, it turned into a nightmare. The bourgeois plan is clear: attack the working class by utilizing the SP (a "dialogue" with the SP, whose trade-union influence is rising, was conducted during the past few months, in order to freeze wages); eliminate as far

### LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS

### PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

(percentage of votes received)

	CDS-PPD	PS	PCP	F.L.*	Eanes	Azevedo	Pato	Carvalho
Aveiro	57.6	30.8	3.7	2.0	74.4	15.9	2.7	7.0
Beja	12.4	31.9	43.3	5.6	34.6	6.9	25.6	32.8
Braga	53.7	32.3	4.1	2.4	70.2	19.0	2.7	8.0
Bragança	61.5	22.6	2.6	2.6	82.5	11.4	2.6	3.3
Catelo Br.	42.5	36.4	6.5	3.2	76.2	8.6	3.8	11.3
Coimbra	39.2	40.9	7.2	3.4	71.9	14.1	4.3	9.6
Evora	17.1	30.2	43.1	4.7	36.0	9.5	19.6	34.8
Faro	26.1	44.6	14.5	5.7	52.9	14.7	7.6	24.7
Guarda	57.7	25.1	2.9	3.9	82.9	10.5	2.4	4.2
Leiria	50.6	31.0	7.3	2.7	76.6	9.8	4.3	9.1
Lisbon	29.8	38.2	21.6	4.2	53.5	12.2	10.3	23.9
Portalegre	24.0	41.9	22.0	3.7	56.1	12.8	14.4	16.6
Porto	42.6	40.7	8.3	2.7	60.4	22.8	5.1	11.6
Santarem	33.4	38.4	16.1	3.8	59.6	13.1	8.1	20.0
Setúbal	12.8	32.1	44.3	4.7	29.9	9.6	18.7	41.8
Viana d.C.	56.2	25.5	6.6	3.0	74.6	14.7	3.7	6.9
Villa R.	57.3	26.3	3.1	2.7	81.6	11.3	3.0	4.1
Viseu	63.4	22.9	2.2	2.2	81.2	13.1	1.9	3.9

\*F.L. = far left

as possible the working-class majority that came out of the legislative elections; roll over the CP during an initial period and later cut down the place of the SP as much as possible, for the trade-union militants of this party do not receive the same welcome in the bourgeois ranks as the party notables do.

Eanes's electoral program was fundamentally inspired by the ideology of the PPD. This program counterposes co-management to workers control, which the SP formally supports. To the working class it, like the PPD, counterposes the virtues of a petty bourgeoisie that "continues to calmly till the soil while the workers ceaselessly demonstrate." It stresses the function of cooperatives as against demands for nationalizations. It insists on the role of the private sector and on "making the nationalized sector profitable" and proposes to revise the agrarian reform. The candidate supported by the SP not only embodied all the hopes and current projects of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, but also made himself the spokesman of the PPD! It is this officer, this strong president, that the CP refused to attack openly, after having tried to the last minute to negotiate a place in the next government in exchange for offering Eanes its support, support the CP believed would be sufficient to induce Eanes to reject the CDS.

### **A limited victory**

Fundamentally, these elections must thus be analyzed on the basis of the support the SP extended to Eanes and the CP's refusal to engage in a determined battle against the chief of staff. This explains in large part both the rate of abstention (only 75.42 percent participation) and the loss of SP votes to Pinheiro Azevedo, who was the first to attack Eanes (saying that "he was against April 25"), and Otelo. It also explains the emergence of a broad current behind the candidacy of the former chief of Copcon, who appeared during the campaign as the number one enemy of Eanes and his projects. To neglect this fact, after the legislative elections, is to fail to understand both the relationship between the legislative and presidential elections and the combined character of the votes that went to Carvalho. The table above gives a summary of the electoral results.

First of all, it is clear that a united candidate of the workers movement would have pulverized the candidate of the bourgeoisie. It is in this sense that the militants of the Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers party) and the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI — Internationalist Communist League) had waged their campaign. Second, it is also manifest that the election of Eanes with 61.54 percent of the vote does not represent a deep defeat of the working class. It is more precisely the expression of the lack of a united candidate, the capitulation of the SP, and the character of the CP campaign. Eanes won, but his victory is not solid.

As in the legislative elections, there was a gap between the North and South; nevertheless, there were some

grey areas. Although Azevedo undoubtedly drew SP votes in the "provinces," it is also significant that Otelo and the CP together scored more votes in these areas than the CP and the far left during the legislative elections. The votes for Otelo are the main reason for this (see the combined results in Viana do Castelo, Vila Real, Bragança, Braga, and Viseu), which also reveals the contradictory character of his candidacy.

A simple comparison between the addition of the PPD, CDS, and SP vote in the legislative elections and the vote obtained by Eanes in the presidential elections indicates that the SP was the big loser in the operation. In the North, the former prime minister was able to take advantage of this. In the South, the shift of the SP vote benefitted Otelo. In the districts of Beja, Evora, Setúbal, Lisbon, and Faro the "indiscipline" of the SP voters was massive. Organizationally this was reflected both North and South in the refusal of many sections to support Eanes by participating in common committees with the PPD and CDS (in Chaves, Viano do Castelo, Castelo Branco, Aveiro, Guimares, Vila Nova de Famalicao, etc.). These electoral "breaks" of "party discipline" herald the potential crisis brewing in the ranks of Mario Soares's party. The differentiations within the SP also more or less parallel the North-South division. In the North, in spite of the shifts to Azevedo (and a bit to Carvalho), the support of the SP was a not negligible factor in the virtual plebiscite for Eanes.

### **The fall of the CP**

The Communist party lost about half its votes compared with the legislative elections. The collapse was spectacular in Lisbon, Beja, Evora, and Setúbal. The traditional strongholds of the party of Alvaro Cunhal and Octávio Pato were turned into fields of lost battles. There are many reasons for this. The CP dug its own grave during the summer and autumn of 1975, when it contributed to building up Otelo's charismatic image. It made him the defender of the agrarian reform. After the CP scornfully cut Gonçalves loose, it pushed Otelo. The major was able to take advantage of this. Second, except for a period of several days, Pato approached Eanes with kid gloves. When O Jornal asserted that the candidate of the CP had declared, "Eanes commands the support of reaction," the press service of the CP candidate immediately replied, "O Jornal is exaggerating. . . . The CP affirms that the candidacy of Eanes enjoys genuine democratic support, but also relies on the opportunist support of parties and forces of the reactionary right. . . . The CP does not support Eanes, but it does not fight the military candidates" (read: Eanes and Pinheiro de Azevedo). (O Diario, daily of the CP, June 7, 1976.) In addition, the CP participated in all the provisional governments, under both Spínola and Costa Gomes. It thus was to reap the fruit of the workers' defiance of these governments, which have been incapable of offering even very partial responses to the most basic social problems. To this was added the fact that radicalized layers have grown increasingly suspicious of the policy of putting pressure on the state ap-

paratus, keystone of the CP's strategy. Finally, the bureaucratic methods extensively used by the CP in the trade unions, workers commissions, tenants commissions, and other bodies (popular assemblies, which supported the occupation of municipal headquarters) stimulated anti-CP reactions, which were sometimes reflected in "non-partyism." As the campaign advanced in the context of a polarization of the April 25 versus November 25 type (a polarization fostered by the policy of the CP itself), the call to "make your vote count" increasingly turned against the CP!

Otelo presented himself — and this was partially inherent in the providential aspect of his campaign in the eyes of backward sectors — as the candidate in the best position to beat Eanes. When the latter declared that if a second round were held it "would be between Otelo and me," Otelo's electoral impact could only grow at the expense of the CP. The "useful vote," linked to the theme of the "left majority," lost its force of conviction. To strengthen the positions of the CP within the perspective of a "left government" no longer inspired much enthusiasm.

The CP's refusal to confront Eanes was not simply an expression of government maneuvering. In fact, it falls within an extension of an orientation of support "to the alliance of the people and the armed forces and to the unity of the armed forces in the liberating spirit of April 25 in order to assure democracy and national independence." (Octávio Pato's statement of principles, *Diário de Lisboa*, June 11, 1976.)

Faced with the hard reality of the facts on June 28, the CP had to draw an initial balance-sheet. The leadership emphasized the effects of the Otelo campaign on its own ranks: ". . . on a national scale hundreds of thousands of Communist voters did not heed our warnings; they turned toward a misleading candidacy. They are already finding out that the revolutionary process has gained nothing from this candidacy, nor has defense of democratic gains, nor formation of a left government." (*Avante*, July 1, 1976.) But at the same time the Political Bureau of the CP was compelled to call for a necessary counteroffensive aimed at the layers influenced by the Otelo campaign and at "giving new confidence" to the rank and file: "It (the Political Bureau) . . . calls for attention from all militants so that difficulties are not created with regard to those who, under the effects of a misleading mirage, did not vote for our candidate. . . . It warns all militants not to allow themselves to be influenced by the speculation of reaction, which, together with pseudorevolutionary verbiage, is seeking to undermine the morale of our party." In spite of all this, the CP is compelled to make an addition of the votes for itself, Otelo, and the SP (in the legislative elections) in order to reaffirm the applicability of a "left government."

This overall appreciation indicates the shock suffered by the CP. It shows the CP's desire to engage in a policy of "cooptation." This will above all be expressed in the trade unions, especially since the congress of the

Intersindical (the trade-union federation) is approaching. The repercussions of the defeat of the CP — and the success of Otelo — will certainly not make for happy days for the Soares government, which was counting on a CP policy of collaboration (from the outside) with a "purely SP" government.

## Against austerity!

The Otelo campaign fit into this vacuum left by the policy of the two reformist parties. The campaign had many contradictory and ambiguous aspects ("non-partyism," initial proclamations of independence of the forces supporting him, explicit reference to the MFA-people alliance in the official declaration of candidacy, support to the constitution, like the CP, etc.).

Nevertheless, no sector of the Portuguese or international bourgeoisie gave Carvalho the slightest support; on the contrary! The same is true of the army. His program — despite all its ambiguities and errors — integrated some clear anticapitalist demands and garnered the protest vote of broad layers of workers against the austerity plan of Eanes-Soares. As for the forces supporting him, they are part of the organized workers movement. All this indicates that a vote for Carvalho could not be excluded on the basis of principle. Moreover, the votes against the offensive of "capitalist recuperation" and for the extension of the gains won by the Portuguese revolution so far were in fact grouped behind Carvalho and Pato.\*

In addition, because of the context we have described, under the very effects of the social polarization the objective function of the Carvalho campaign, like its explicit content, appeared more clearly as anticapitalist (see, for example, the economic program published in the last days of the campaign).

To be sure, Carvalho picked up votes of varied origin, which reflects the strongly uneven process of development of the Portuguese workers movement. Nevertheless, there is no doubt — and the CP has understood this — that a potential combativity is being manifested to the left of the CP that already heralds a danger for the CP if it pursues a policy of open collaboration with the SP government.

This government will have many difficulties implementing its program. Its base of support, the SP itself, threatens to break up rather quickly. The resistance of the workers is being manifested already (public services, metalworkers, etc.). The presidential elections will not correspond to the wishes of the bourgeoisie. Workers struggles, unionization, and government crisis are on the agenda.

July 2, 1976

\*The next issue of INPRECOR will devote a special article to the Carvalho campaign and the perspectives offered by it.

L'ITALIA HA SCELTO LA DEMOCRAZIA

Nettamente spostati a sinistra i rapporti di forza nel Parlamento uscito dalle elezioni del 20 giugno

# Vittoria della DC

# Nuova impetuosa avanzata del PCI

# ITALY AFTER THE ELECTIONS

by LIVIO MAITAN

The results of the Italian elections of June 20 provoked immediate reactions of disappointment on one side and relief on the other. Disappointment in the far left, which had counted on the workers parties' receiving the absolute majority of the vote, among militants the Partito Comunista Italiano (PCI — Italian Communist party), who had hoped to overtake the Democrazia Cristiana (DC — Christian Democracy) as the party with the largest vote, and among Socialists, who lost ground. Relief among all the bourgeoisie, both in Italy and throughout the world, who had feared a new defeat of the DC and the advent of a government of the left. In fact, the major bourgeois party gave proof of an incontestable power of recovery; once again it represents the pole of crystallization of all the conservative forces. Consequently, the battle of the working class for an alternative at the government level will have to overcome additional obstacles, and mass struggles during the period now opening will unfold under relatively less favorable conditions than those generally hoped for a few weeks ago.

Nevertheless, one must avoid drawing false conclusions. Overall, the formations adhering to the workers movement made further progress, especially the PCI, amplifying the spectacular success of last year's regional elections. The phenomenon of polarization that incontestably took shape went hand in hand with an evolution of the relationship of forces in favor of the workers movement. That is the essential feature that must not be overlooked or underestimated. This is especially true in that the DC held its ground essentially at the expense of the other parties of the center or center-right, especially the PSDI (Democratic Socialist party) and the PLI (Liberals), and only to a very limited extent at the expense of the far right (MSI — Italian Social Movement), which did not lose much compared with 1975.

It follows that the formation of a new government will not be an easy task. The center majority that used to exist has now disappeared; a center-right majority is also impossible. On paper, the center-left could be

reconstructed. But the PSI (Socialist party), which has paid a heavy price for its participation in the government and the parliamentary majority, has reiterated its decision not to participate in any government in which the PCI does not also participate, whether directly or not. Obviously, the historic compromise (the PCI's proposal for a bloc between the PCI and the Christian Democracy) would have an overwhelming majority; but the DC has waged a virulent campaign against this solution and would have great difficulty accepting it, at least in the immediate future. In coming days, when the new Chamber of Deputies is convened, Rome will be the scene of quite a number of maneuvers, intrigues, and bluffs. The evolution of the economic situation will not help matters. It is true that production is rising again in most sectors. But the problems of the balance of payments deficit and the deficits of the state and local administrative budgets remain dramatic. The rate of inflation is rising again after the decline of 1975, and if there is no change during coming months, the 1976 inflation rate threatens to break all postwar records. At the same time, up to now there has been no real prospect of reducing unemployment.

In other words, once again the bourgeoisie will have to deal with extremely grave problems without having resolved its crisis of leadership. As for the reformist leaderships, it will not be easy for them to find a concrete basis for compromise, regardless of their desire to collaborate in priming the economy and stabilizing the political situation. Even if some form of the historic compromise is realized in the last instance, it would occur in a very unstable context laden with explosive conflicts. That is a major difficulty that all the tactical astuteness of Berlinguer and Company will be unable to easily surmount.

The vote won by the far left will undoubtedly be one of the major subjects of discussion in Italy and elsewhere during coming months. As is shown in the documents we are publishing below, the 1.5 percent of the vote won by Democrazia Proletaria (DP — Proletarian Democracy) was generally considered a failure. The



document of the Italian revolutionary Marxists, large excerpts of which are published below, analyzes the reasons for this failure, partially admitted by other components of DP. In addition to the incontestable objective factors, the form in which the unity agreement was reached and the conditions bureaucratically imposed by the Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PDUP — Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism) and Avanguardia Operaia (AO — Workers Vanguard) represented serious obstacles to extending the influence of the far left toward the masses under the hegemony of the traditional parties, notably the PCI. The DP committees, which were sometimes presented as the vehicles of the campaign, were built only on a modest scale, and most often they were instruments functioning within the logic of special collaboration between the PDUP and AO, discriminating against all the other components.

In spite of this, the agreement on a united slate of the far left was the product of a rather strong sentiment for unity among the broad vanguard; and it is nevertheless important that the unitary framework for the far left was built through a crucial political battle. This gain must not be lost. This means that a serious effort must be made to maintain this unitary framework, with the aim both of achieving unity in action in the struggles now shaping up and of developing the necessary confrontation between the various organizations around the problems that were brought to light and defined more sharply by the electoral campaign (the problems of the nature of the transitional phase, of the paths to the seizure of power, of the conception and role of the revolutionary party).

As far as government perspectives are concerned, the revolutionary left must correct certain electoralist deviations. The perspective of a PCI-PSI government must not be linked exclusively to the conquest of 51 percent of the vote. Even after June 20, it must serve as the essential axis of orientation, independent of all questions of emphasis and rhythm that are posed at each moment.

At the same time, a clarification is necessary on the very content of the formula "government of the left." In fact, there is now a tendency within the centrist organizations to include both the PSDI (Democratic Socialist party, a right-wing split from the Socialist party) and the PRI (Republicans) in such a government. More particularly, *Manifesto* (daily of the PDUP) and *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori* (daily of AO) have asserted that the left commands a majority in the Rome municipal council, explicitly counting the seats of Saragat's PSDI and the PRI in this majority. We must struggle against such conceptions, giving no concessions. The PRI particularly is a bourgeois party in the strictest sense of the term, directly linked to industrialists and financiers. Collaboration with such a party would thus be nothing but a form of class collaboration. It was not within that perspective that the battle for June 20 was waged.

July 2, 1976

## Evolution of the Electoral Relationship of Forces

It is not possible here to present an in-depth analysis of the evolution of the electoral relationship of forces in Italy over the past thirty years. Several points, however, should be stressed:

a) The sharpest polarizations occurred in 1948 — during the effort at bourgeois restoration in the context of the opening of the "cold war" — and in 1976. In the first case the PCI, together with the workers front, suffered a defeat; in the second, it registered a very clear advance.

b) At the most critical moments the conservative forces have concentrated maximum efforts around the DC, since the far right lacks sufficient credibility for a decisive confrontation. It is significant that the right obtained the most favorable results in relatively calm years (1953, 1958), which indicates that the strengthening of the right was conceived not as a possible alternative solution, but as an instrument of pressure.

c) The PCI stagnated during the 1950s and between 1963 and 1972, while it experienced a first leap in 1963 — probably thanks to the response to the reactionary attempts of the Tambroni government in 1960 and to the outbreak of "new" workers struggles in 1961-62. The second leap came in 1975-76, as the PCI capitalized on the 1969 wave, although with a certain delay.

d) The PSI, which in 1946 had benefitted from the traditions of the prefascist era, won its largest vote during the period of gestation of the center-left, which also saw a consolidation of the PSDI.

e) A comparison between the Senate results and the Chamber of Deputy results permits a relatively accurate check on the orientations of young voters, since the voting age is 25 for the Senate and 18 for the Chamber of Deputies. According to some calculations published in the press, the votes of the 5,300,000 people between the ages of 18 and 25, who voted only for the Chamber of Deputies on June 20, were divided as follows: DC 37.5%; PCI 37.4%; PSI 6.1%; PRI+PSDI+PLI 5.8%; MSI 2.8%; PR+DP 10.4% (of which, most likely, 7% for DP and 3% for PR).



ELECTIONS TO THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (1946) & THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES\*

	PCI	PSI	PSIUP	DP	VL(1)	PR(2)	PSDI	PRI	DC	PLI	PDIUM(3)	UQ(4)	MSI
1946	18.97	20.72			0.11			4.37	35.18	6.81	3.09	5.28	
1948	31.03(5)				0.08		7.09	2.49	48.48	3.83	2.79		2.01
1953	22.64	12.73					4.52	1.62	40.08	3.02	6.92		5.84
1958	22.72	14.26					4.56	1.37	42.35	3.55	4.87		4.77
1963	25.31	13.87					6.11	1.37	38.27	6.99	1.77		5.11
1968	26.96	14.51(6)	4.46		0.01			1.97	39.09	5.83	1.36		4.46
1972	27.21	9.62	1.95	0.67(7)	0.30		5.15	2.86	38.74	3.89			8.68
1975(8)	32.0	12.0		1.2			5.6	3.3	35.5	2.5			6.8
1976	34.4	9.6		1.5		1.1	3.4	3.1	33.7	1.3			6.1

\*The voting age was lowered to 18 beginning in 1975; previously it had been 21. The voting age for the Senate is 25. The results for the Senate elections this year (voting age 25) were: DC 38.9%; PCI 33.8%; PSI 10.2%; PSDI: 3.1%; PRI 2.7%; PLI 1.4%; MSI 6.6%. In some districts the PSDI, PRI, and PLI presented common candidates, obtaining 1.1%. DP ran only in Lombardy.

1. VL refers to various far left lists (Bordigists in 1948, Posadists in 1968, PCI(m-l) in 1972).
2. The PR had voted Socialist during previous elections.
3. The PDIUM includes the total vote of the monarchists, even when they were divided among different states. Since 1972, the monarchists have made a bloc with the MSI.
4. UQ (Uomo Qualcuno — Everyman) was a reactionary rightist formation.
5. In 1948 the PCI and the PSI, along with other much less important formations, constituted the Democratic Popular Front.
6. In 1968 the PSI and the PSDI were unified.
7. DP did not exist in 1972; the indicated vote refers to the candidates of the Manifesto group.
8. References to 1975 concern the regional elections.

KEY TO INITIALS

- PCI: Partito Comunista Italiano — Italian Communist Party  
 PSI: Partito Socialista Italiano — Italian Socialist party  
 PSIUP: Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria — Italian Socialist party of Proletarian Unity (left split from PSI in 1964)  
 DP: Democrazia Proletaria — Proletarian Democracy (far left)  
 PR: Partito Radicale — Radical party  
 PSDI: Partito Socialista Democratico Italiano — Italian Democratic Socialist party (a right-wing split from the PSI)  
 PRI: Partito Repubblicano Italiano — Italian Republican party  
 DC: Democrazia Cristiana — Christian Democracy  
 PLI: Partito Liberale Italiano — Italian Liberal party  
 PDIUM: Partito di Unità Monarchica — Monarchist Unity party  
 MSI: Movimento Sociale Italiano — Italian Social Movement (fascist)

# ITALY/DOCUMENTS

## the far left assesses the elections

We are publishing below four brief commentaries on the results of the June 20 elections. The first is a statement of the National Secretariat of Avanguardia Operaia, published in the June 23 issue of *Quotidiano dei Lavoratori*, daily of AO; the second is a declaration of the Political Bureau of the PDUP\*, published in the June 26 issue of *il Manifesto*, daily newspaper of the PDUP; the third consists of excerpts from a long editorial published in the June 23 issue of *Lotta Continua*; the fourth is excerpts from a resolution adopted June 27 by the Central Committee of the Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari (GCR — Revolutionary Communist Groups), Italian section of the Fourth International, and published in the July 1 issue of the GCR's journal, *Bandiera Rossa*. Both *Avanguardia Operaia* and *Lotta Continua* have published texts adopted by their Central Committees (held June 27-28), but we had not yet received copies of these documents at press time. Hence, we are publishing only documents indicating the immediate reaction of these organizations to the electoral results.

\*The Partito di Unità Proletaria per il Comunismo (PDUP — Party of Proletarian Unity for Communism) has its origin in the split from the Communist party in 1970 of the group organized around the newspaper *il Manifesto*. (The major leaders were Rossana Rossanda, Lucio Magri, Luigi Pintor, and others). They formed an organization and began publishing a daily newspaper in 1971. In 1974 they fused with the Partito di Unità Proletaria (the new group retaining the initials PDUP), which had arisen from a split from the Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria (PSIUP — Italian Socialist party of Proletarian Unity), which had itself split from the Socialist party in 1964. For information on the origins and evolution of *Avanguardia Operaia* and *Lotta Continua* see INPRECOR, No.54, June 24, 1976.



# ● Avanguardia Operaia

Milan, 21 June, 11:00 p.m.

1. The results of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies, still very partial, confirm and strikingly accentuate the trends that have already emerged in the Senate results:

a further, stronger advance of the left compared with June 15 (1975), which brings it close to an absolute majority. This is the first and fundamental element that characterizes the June 20 vote. The second element is the staying power and recovery of the Christian Democ-

racy, in particular compared with the collapse of June 15. This strengthening, obtained at the expense of both the MSI (Movimento Sociale Italiano — Italian Social Movement, the fascists) and the secular parties, accentuates the DC's character as the "party of the right." Further, it highlights two additional elements: first, the fragility of proposed alternative bourgeois leaderships to the Christian Democracy (such as those advanced by the Republicans); second, the objective strengthening and solidifying of the DC inherent in the various proposals of the reformist workers parties, all of which considered the DC as an "indispensable component" of any new majority. Finally, the noteworthy decline of the PSI (the Socialist party) shows what a heavy price this party pays for its uncertain policy, its slick tactical oscillations, accompanied by high-sounding but nebulous strategic formulas.



Marino Gorea

2. Several political points clearly emerge from these facts. To be sure, the new parliament will not automatically have a left majority in both of its houses; thus, the left government is not posed as an immediate result of these elections. But at the same time, none of the other solutions proposed, whether by the DC or by the reformist workers parties, is practicable today. Even less so is the proposal for an emergency government, which proved to be unrealizable in the old parliament and will be even more excluded in the new one, given the "polarization" around the DC and the PCI as expressed in the elections. What is therefore on the agenda is a phase of acute political instability during which the parties of the workers movement — if they want to point to a way out — will have to be able to profoundly rethink their own strategy and the government formulas they put forward. It would be useless to seek a solution in some sort of complicated parliamentary alchemy; in particular, the lesson of the vote should teach the PSI how suicidal it would be to support a new edition of the center-left, even in the guise of a "preferred axis."

3. In this situation, the prime motor-force political function of the mass movement in determining future developments on the political scene is clearly reconfirmed, the function that we have always stressed, often in polemics with the reformist leaderships of the workers and trade-union movement. On the political-institutional level, experiences such as that of the left council in Naples offer an embryonic and politically valid lesson (although they cannot be mechanically transferred to the national political field): Today only the left — if it is supported by a vast popular movement — can develop a policy that deals with the urgent problems of the crisis. This is the decisive factor, which goes beyond strict parliamentary arithmetic.

4. Given this perspective, what specific weight and role can Democrazia Proletaria exert? In their general lines, the electoral results strikingly confirm our political analysis and the proposals we have advanced. But this was not reflected in a commensurate electoral success for our formation. There are many reasons for this. First, a force that was barely present at the institutional level (and here only locally) does not automatically transfer its credibility to the national political-institutional level; it thus suffers the effects of the "polarization" that characterized these elections. In addition, a process of transformation of our social base is under way (which we consider positive). This transformation separates us from traditional fringes of the "left reformist" voters (who move toward the reformist parties of the workers movement) and from the radicalizing petty bourgeois voters (who move toward the Radical party), without the growth of our influence (which is developing among the proletariat) yet being consolidated in terms of votes. But it is important to draw correct political conclusions for our future development from these elections and from our own results within them:

a) We definitely paid the price for the still insufficient level of political unity of the revolutionary left; the conclusion that should be drawn from this is certainly not to deprecate the value of the electoral unity but rather to consolidate it politically.

b) The results (and the impossibility of immediate government solutions) confirm the political primacy of the mass movement, but this does not mean bending to "movementism"; on the contrary, it means that we must make maximum use of our political-institutional presence (i.e., in parliament and the local councils — INPRECOR) to augment the political influence of the mass movement.

c) Finally, the confirmation of the government of the left (which all the reformist parties refuse to choose up to now) as the only workable perspective accentuates the political role of a sector of the workers movement that is politically independent of reformist hegemony; we must thus strengthen our political independence. The struggle against the DC is more than ever on the agenda today; but it is more closely linked than ever to the objective of the government of the left. It is on this road that we must firmly develop our initiatives.



# OPDUP

In spite of the recovery of the DC, the June 20 vote transformed the left into the largest political bloc. Unity around a program can already begin to break up the moderate regroupment around the DC and launch the alternative. The analysis of the vote and the prospects of the PDUP are described in the following communiqué of the Political Bureau.

1. The June 20 vote marks the consolidation of the shift to the left expressed in the divorce referendum of 1974 and the regional elections of 1975; it is especially significant in that this time what was at stake was the assumption of government responsibility. This shift to the left occurred even in the South. Although it must not be forgotten that the vote for the PCI went to a political line that shifted further to the right in the course of the electoral campaign, subjectively this vote nonetheless expressed the will to overturn the Christian Democratic regime, since this is what was at stake.

The DC managed to recover compared with the 1975 results. In spite of this, for the first time the Christian

Democrats are not in position to put themselves forward as the absolute arbiter, nor is it possible for them to block important measures in parliament without resorting to the votes of the fascist deputies. In no case could they reassemble a majority on the question of abortion, for example.

2. The advance of the left compared with 1972 has not created the immediate conditions for a left alternative, not only because a 51 percent majority of the vote was not achieved, but also because of the disintegration of the area between the left and the DC, which could have initiated processes of construction of an alternative majority, as has sometimes been the case on the local level.

The unification of the moderate front around a DC that went into the elections totally bankrupt not only constitutes a parliamentary obstacle to the alternative, but also demonstrates how the failure of the Christian Democratic regime and the end of the credibility of this party and its politicians are not sufficient to establish the conditions for breaking its politically representative character and assembling a new bloc, unless this is accompanied by a line of initiative capable of disintegrating the moderate social bloc, breaking its political representativeness, and assembling a new bloc. This is more essential today than it was in the past. In fact, there is a possibility, and we have already glimpsed some signs, that the coalition of moderate forces assembled in defense of the DC will act as the organizing instrument of a new aggressive bloc in the context of the crisis. The PCI's tactic of tailing after the DC and making proposals for unity has reached its height just at the moment when it could have led to a new majority. What was lacking was programmatic precision, an adequate base in the country, and a lineup not limited solely to the PCI. The historic compromise has thus wound up producing exactly what it did not want, polarization.

A situation of stalemate has thus been created. The Christian Democratic regime is finished, but there is no immediate alternative. Within this stalemate, the spontaneous pressures of the crisis remain operative, as do the wildcat initiatives of capital that react on the crisis. Hence, it would be irresponsible of the left to accept this situation.

3. The proposal for an emergency government that would include almost all the forces in parliament and within which the guiding role of the DC would still be acknowledged, provided only that the DC "renounced" anticommunist prejudice, is fated to produce paralyzing solutions because it ignores reality: the even more purely conservative character of the DC and the content of the alleged "emergency" with respect to social interests.

4. We, on the contrary, reaffirm the left alternative as the only way to confront the crisis of the country, not as a demand for tomorrow nor as a propagandistic

proposal, but as a political objective that is realizable after this vote.

This immediately requires that the left, although divided on many problems of perspective, assert its own unity against the DC, demand the leadership of the government as the relative majority, define an immediate program that defends the vital interests of the masses and calls for radical transformations of the economic and institutional bases of the country, calls for a confrontation with the secular forces around such a program, and puts pressure on the DC, forcing it into a confrontation and a choice that requires and prepares its break.



Exactly because it must break the moderate bloc and construct an alternative social bloc, this initiative must be accompanied by a basic social and political action.

5. The hypothesis of a government of the left cannot be reduced to the dimension of the electoral lineup, as has sometimes been done. In order to advance, a mass movement must be relaunched that is capable of preventing the crisis from being eased, even partially or temporarily, by saddling the working class and the popular layers with the political and economic costs. It is also necessary for this movement to go beyond militant trade-union and economic limits. Only a struggle that in itself already embodies government action and the affirmation of power can break up the enemy social front and create an alternative bloc.

Finally, it is necessary that there be a basic political initiative aimed at the breakup of the Christian Democracy, at the restructuring of the secular democratic forces. In particular, the role and character of the PSI on the one hand and the construction of a credible force to the left of the PCI on the other must be reconsidered.

Not to take account of the necessity for a deep rethinking that will affect the political lines of all the components of the left would mean to allow an ebb to take shape, as well as a reorganization of the right around the DC, which has already begun. Moreover, this could lead the traditional left, and in particular the PCI, to a gradual process of backsliding.

6. Such critical reflection must also be directed at the new left. The electoral results of the DP do not amount to a defeat, but they are a sign of grave political limits. We have been victims of the "polarization," but why? Why after many years of work and of significant presence in struggles has not the unity of the left been a real political stimulus capable of reflecting itself in a consistent electoral score?

To avoid this question or to approach it on the basis of secondary elements or to outright mystify it by speaking of a process of "purification" of our electoral base would be destructive and would lend a mistaken significance even to the acquisition of new proletarian votes for our list.

The discussion must be waged to the hilt, publicly and in a united manner. Many problems are posed: the separation between political line and mass practice; the gradual economic reduction of the line and practice; bureaucratization and the new development of an old way of conducting politics within the organization; insufficiently combatted minority tendencies. "More unity and more diversity" — this is the objective toward which to orient our search.

This process of reflection can be carried forward only within the movement, through the experience of struggle, without confining it to each separate organization or subjecting it to the tactical exigencies of strengthening each organization. In short, it is a search that must be conducted together with all the real protagonists of the movement reached by our political discourse, even if they did not vote for Democrazia Proletaria (unionized workers, Catholics, women, southern masses, etc.).

7. The Political Bureau of the PDUP convokes a Central Committee meeting in Rome on July 3-4 and calls for an open discussion within the party and with the other forces of DP, in particular with AO, taking account of the important steps forward toward a unitary perspective taken during the electoral campaign which have posed new and important themes of discussion on the forms of the process of unification.

After June 20, in face of the situation of stalemate and the predictable negative tendencies of the forces of the traditional left, in face of the difficulties of the movement in the grip of crisis, the problem of the formation of a new class-based party is once again posed more urgently, but at the same time it is even less reducible to the sum of the existing groups or to the linear extension of their own heritages of elaboration and experiences, precious as they are. □



# Lotta Continua

The results of the Italian elections did not correspond either to the expectations of the Italian proletariat or to the fears of national and international reaction.

The great new advance of the PCI, around which the left vote was concentrated even more than last June 15, an advance that led to extraordinary success in some cities, such as Naples, was not sufficient to compensate for the decline of the PSI and the modest results of Democrazia Proletaria and the Radical party, thus leaving the total left vote sensibly below 51 percent. But above all it was not sufficient to counterbalance the strong staying power of the DC, which capped an electoral campaign conducted in the name of the most overt and miserable antiworker, antipopular and anticommunist crusade. . . .

For the moment, the only effect of the new victory of the PCI will be to confirm and accentuate the political orientation that emerged after June 15, namely, the substantial will and the partial capacity to "freeze" the political context, even resorting openly to repression of struggles and bureaucratic control of the unions.

The picture of the left would not be complete without taking account of the substantial reduction of the political impact of Democrazia Proletaria, for which we feel fully responsible, along with the other components. . . . This political result will not be without consequences on the relationship of forces between the revolutionary class-struggle component and the moderate class collaborationist component of the working class

spectrum; nor will it be without consequences in the realm of repression, which will undoubtedly emerge emboldened from this important Christian Democratic success, nor on the support the proletarian program and the advance toward people's power will be able to obtain in the movement. . . .

In reality, behind the results of these elections a new and substantial step has been taken, certainly not under the most favorable conditions, toward a tougher class confrontation. The government solution that was unable to be created by these elections will certainly not be able to emerge from a second run of elections in the rather short term, as many are already proposing.

**VIA LA DC!**

**POTERE A CHI LAVORA**

**VOTA DEMOCRAZIA PROLETARIA PER IL GOVERNO ALLE SINISTRE**

*(Small, illegible text in columns, likely a manifesto or list of demands)*

The ungovernability of the country — which is the richest and most complex, and thus most ambivalent fruit of the growing class confrontation in Italy during past years — can find its outlet only on the terrain of the relationship of class forces.

It must be the growth of the mass movement, the movement of the organized forces of the workers in the factories, of the unemployed, of the soldiers, of women, youth, students, of the general mobilization against fascism and reaction that we have seen at work so powerfully in this election campaign; it must be this force that imposes its own solutions to the institutional crisis of the country, to prevent the PCI and PSI from continuing to fuel the Christian Democratic desire not to let itself be removed from power.

The crisis of the DC has reached a point of no return that the political events of the past year have highlighted beyond all doubt and which will certainly not be able to be turned around by the electoral success of

June 20. This crisis must go through to the end: the break of the DC, which will create a left majority in the country and in parliament that is not yet possible through electoral arithmetic. . . .

We are not yet prepared to draw a balance-sheet of these elections, both because we frankly did not expect the results and because we still lack all the analytical data. We may nonetheless note that it would be an important verification of the unity achieved through the united slate (which we continue to consider a politically positive and irreversible result) if all the organizations that must share responsibility for the result, whether they like it or not, choose to proceed to a common analysis of it.

Here we only want to mention a few points that seem to us important to bear in mind: There is no getting away from recognizing the modest character of the results achieved. But this must not lead us to ignore the fact of the richness of relations with the masses that we of Lotta Continua, and in various ways the other components of Democrazia Proletaria as well, established in the course of the electoral campaign. This feature of the campaign has no comparison in any other period of the history of the revolutionary left; it can and must immediately constitute the point of departure for advancing a mass discussion on the political perspectives of this phase and on the role of revolutionaries, a discussion that is now fully maturing within the movement and which it is no longer possible to avoid.

As for the numerical aspect of these election results, we do not intend to underestimate the manner in which a series of factors weighed negatively on Lotta Continua: the exclusion from the head of the slate in all districts; the small number of candidates we got and the refusal to run some of our comrades as candidates; our substantial exclusion from television and radio broadcasts; the insufficiency of the material resources placed at the disposal of our campaign, and the absurdly "separate" character that was most often imposed on our campaign by the other components of DP.

But all these elements came to bear as factors intensifying the more general tendency which, in large part independent of our role, impelled the workers to bloc solidly around the PCI even more than last June 15, a tendency that expressed the will to "overtake" the DC. This was probably underestimated on our part.

It was this tendency which cut to the bone the number of our voters among the "spectrum" of workers influenced by our intervention and proposals, and resulted in a real collapse of the previous electoral base of Democrazia Proletaria and in particular of the PDUP. This collapse was probably not unrelated to the desire of a component of the PDUP to "punish" the united list that was imposed against its will. But this is a subject we intend to take up again when we have more documented facts at our disposal. And, we repeat, we will do so in a frank and unitary confrontation with the other components of Democrazia Proletaria. □



# OGCR

More than any other election of the past thirty years, June 20 reflected a growing political and social polarization in the country, whose roots go back to 1968. The two antagonistic classes assembled around the DC on the one hand and the PCI on the other as their fundamental political expressions. The inevitable consequence has been the erosion and crumbling of the so-called minority or intermediary parties. . . .

The DC was able to recover to a greater extent than it had hoped exactly because it was once again considered the only valuable, or relatively valuable, pole by all the exploiting layers, by all those who have something to defend, who have, or think they have, a privileged position, who fear that they would bear the costs of the more or less profound transformations that could have occurred in the event of a victory of the workers parties. In the context of this generalized offensive, some of the traditional ideological arguments that exert a mystifying influence on some popular layers that have no objective interest in defending the status quo found a certain echo, even though limited.

The new success of the PCI, which registered important advances nearly everywhere, even compared with the results of the June 1975 regional elections, is the electoral and parliamentary expression of two convergent phenomena. The first is the growing homogenization







and political maturation of the working class, with the consequent search for an instrument of political and organizational unification, a sentiment that is felt even among strata that in the past were not politicized or were even under the ideological influence of the class enemy. The second is the tendency, ever more notable, toward a polarization around the working class of broader tailing strata and considerable sectors of the petty bourgeoisie. It is the simultaneity and extent of these two factors that explain both the general electoral success of the PCI and its leaps forward in certain striking cases (such as Naples).

The PSI, which has historically played the role of moderate force in the workers spectrum (in spite of occasional pseudomaximalist outbursts the tactical character of which was only too clear), inevitably had to pay the price for the radicalization and polarization that the strategy of the center-left had tried for long years to avert. For the rest, the secretary of the PSI himself was compelled to declare, significantly: "If radicalization was characteristic of the election, it must be recognized that this did not help the PSI, just as it has never helped it at any time in the party's history."

The DC succeeded in avoiding a further electoral decline and was able to recover, maintaining its position of relative majority. It won a significant vote among the youth, not only as a result of the factors mentioned above, but also because of its considerable efforts to actively organize and mobilize at least a part of the social strata among which it had long since tried to maintain its hegemony through institutional structures and patronage (the effort made through the organization "Comunione e Liberazione" is typical in this regard). The results achieved by the DC are obviously an important point to the advantage of the bourgeoisie. But this observation must not allow us to forget that:

a) In very large measure the recovery of the DC occurred at the expense of formations that over the past thirty years at various moments and in various combinations have constituted integral elements, nearly always needed in parliament, in the formation and maintenance of the ruling political bloc. . . .

b) In spite of the decline of the PSI and the stagnation of DP, the front of the formations that are part of the workers movement registered a further advance. All things considered, this remains the most significant aspect of the evolution of the relationship of class forces, which thus continues to be favorable to the working class, even as reflected in the deformed mirror of an election.

## Why the failure of Democrazia Proletaria

The overall results of the list of DP, more modest than had been foreseen even by the most sober forecasts, uncontestedly represent a failure for the far left as a whole. This is especially true since in some districts of Emilia and Tuscany and in the district of Calabria there were especially notable declines and even in the bastion of Lombardy and Milan there were slight dips. The limited advances elsewhere (for the most part explainable by the specific characteristics of the situation; for example, the case of Turin, where last year the list was exclusively of AO), the achievement of a quorum in the Milan-Pavia district, and the election of six parliamentary deputies, which is not negligible and can offer new margins for political action, nonetheless do not compensate for the overall failure.

Objective factors most probably played the decisive role here. Fundamentally, it must be noted that the acute polarization that occurred in the campaign acted to the disadvantage of DP, some of whose potential voters preferred to give the PCI a boost (this occurred above all in the areas in which the PDUP ran alone in 1975). But unless it wants to accept being placed in the category of the "minor" or "intermediary" formations, DP must fully assimilate the meaning of this fact. During times of social and political crisis, a revolutionary formation ought to be aided by the polarization and should grow, not decline. If the contrary occurs, as happened to the DP on June 20, this means that the formation in question was not or did not appear to be capable of fulfilling its tasks, either because it did not emerge as an effectively proletarian force or because it made mistakes that compromised its credibility as an alternative pole to the reformist organizations.

The electoral test has in fact furnished new elements with which to analyze the social composition of DP and of the far left more generally. The fact that a not unimportant part of the DP's potential base was attracted to the Partito Radicale (Radical party) is a confirmation of the breadth of the radicalized petty-bourgeois component on which the far left has been able and will be able to exert an influence, not because of its ability to provide an overall revolutionary strategy, but because of its ability to wage certain consistent democratic battles to which the traditional workers parties either have not committed themselves at all or have done so only belatedly and with constant vacillations. The exodus of a part of the voters of the PDUP — which originated politically from the PSIUP and whose social com-

position is proletarian or popular — on the other hand, demonstrates the precariousness of an influence that has been gained not on the basis of clarity but with a large measure of ambiguity.

Even more important, in the final analysis, the majority of the people who voted for DP on June 20 are petty bourgeois. A detailed analysis of the breakdown of the vote within districts will permit more precise evaluation. Nevertheless, both on the basis of the summary analysis of the vote by area and on the basis of the assumption that a not negligible number of the millions of student voters went with the DP, it follows that only a very modest if not insignificant part of the working class opted for the united list of the far left. There is no doubt that the attitude taken during the labor contract battles by the PDUP, and to a lesser extent by AO, neither of which contributed at any time or at any level to constructing a real alternative to the bureaucratic leadership in the unions and factory councils, and the incapacity of the far left in general to appear as a credible reference point for all the militants and cadres who were strongly critical of the official platforms and methods of struggle constituted a very serious obstacle — in the given context, probably a decisive one — to a broadening of the influence of the far left within the working class and to the improvement of its social composition.

The situation that has arisen in the student movement during the past year also affected the results of the DP. The uncertainty of strategies and methods, the opportunist oscillations that emerged at the time of the fight against the government-decreed educational reform, and above all the negative conclusion of that fight, contributed to the relative weakening of the movement, which retained its vigor only in some sectors and for a limited period. A visible consequence of this was not only the progressive broadening of the area of influence of the reformists, but also of the audience won by reactionary forces like the DC's *Comunione e Liberazione*. . . .

The manner in which the united list was arrived at and the way the electoral campaign was waged increased the difficulties and probably contributed to the failure that occurred. The absolutely necessary critical and self-critical reflection must be based on the following elements:

a) The initial rejection of the united list by the PDUP, confirmed in its theoretical line by the last Central Committee session before the elections, and the limited acceptance of the unitary solution on the part of AO made the operation less credible from the very outset. The argument advanced after the accord by the PDUP and to a lesser extent by AO that the united list represented a device aimed at preventing dispersion of the vote much more than a political convergence worked in the same direction. Moreover, in spite of various attempts, not even the two original components of DP were able to arrive at a common program, thus giving DP even more the appearance of a formation with little

homogeneity. All this had that much greater effect in that the PDUP made by far the preponderant use of the mass media during the campaign.

b) The formation of the slate was carried out in a clearly discriminatory manner, primarily against Lotta Continua but also against other components such as the GCR, with genuine bureaucratic impositions and without a correct application of objective criteria. The same criterion, proclaimed in words by everyone, of the priority of having a "movement" candidacy was applied or ignored according to the convenience of the PDUP or AO, with the result that some meaningful candidacies were rejected while others, much more dubious to judge from the results, were imposed without so much hair-splitting. The agreements reached at the top on preference votes and the competition that inevitably resulted completed the picture. Result: none of the "movement candidates" were elected and only one was able to get a seat, after one of the PDUP leaders stepped down.



c) In nearly all cases, the PDUP and AO rejected any form of common electoral campaign, as a result of which DP appeared as a formation supported by two, three, and even four campaigns that were anything but convergent. The rank-and-file campaign organizations, the DP committees, were created only in a very partial way. On this field also the monopolizing will of the PDUP and AO prevailed; in the best of cases, they favored DP committees as instruments for their own process of political and organizational unification.

d) Efforts at programmatic elaboration were undoubtedly made by various formations, and these efforts, together with the discussions that preceded the formation of the united slate, constituted one of the most positive elements of the process now under way within the far left. But these efforts did not give rise to real confrontations and, worse yet, they were reflected in the electoral campaign only in a fragmented and marginal way. Only several thousand of the readers of the far left dailies were involved in reading and thinking about the texts, while the hundreds of thousands of voters were not affected.

e) All the components of DP, including the GCR, proved little capable of using language understandable to the broad masses, thus making it more difficult to conduct the indispensable dialogue with the militants and voters of the traditional workers parties.

All this seriously compromised the possibility of DP appearing as a credible pole to mass sectors influenced by the reformist bureaucracy. At least one of the components of DP squarely renounced attempting to win PCI and PSI voters to DP (with the result that in certain areas former PDUP voters were won over by the polemics of the PCI). More generally, there was often a combination between a weak consistency of strategic counterposition and a banal polemic, often waged by the leaders of the organizations, sometimes even incorrect but in any event counterproductive.

### Political crisis of the bourgeoisie is not overcome

The Italian bourgeoisie, like the international bourgeoisie, can rejoice at having escaped the danger of a majority of the workers parties. More concretely, the bourgeoisie can consider it positive — correctly so, from its standpoint — that the DC survived the most difficult test of its history and continues to represent a decisive political instrument, the central element of the future government formula. In this sense, disappointment at the results of June 20, not only among the militants of the far left but also, in a different way, among the militants of the PCI, has an objective base. It is clear that in the period immediately ahead this will create a less favorable general context for relaunching great struggles than was generally thought before June 20.

Nevertheless, the objective situation and its trends do not point to any reversal of the trend, nor to any important change. After all, as we have already pointed out, the results of June 20 have revealed a further evolution of the relationship of forces in favor of the working class, even compared with June 15, 1975, which had also registered a very pronounced evolution in this direction.

The principal consequence is that no more than in the past does the bourgeoisie command any new government formula that can be put into practice in the short term capable of crystallizing a new ruling political bloc. In parliamentary terms, and even more so in terms of the real relationships in society, the possible choices have not widened but have been narrowed down. Indeed, the center majority no longer exists, nor does a center-right majority that would include the MSI-Destra Nazionale. Theoretically, the only possibilities are a return to the center-left or a historic compromise formula (given the present relationship of forces, it is secondary whether the minor parties are included or not). Solutions of a one-party government or other possible concoctions would be only variants of the two major

alternatives. It is not possible here to go into the relative probability of this or that solution. But if one recalls the elementary fact that the paralysis that led to the early elections was created because the center-left was exhausted and the Christian Democracy and its allies firmly rejected the historic compromise in all its possible variants, then the impasse that continues to exist after June 20 appears in its full clarity. In the immediate future, this impasse is aggravated by the PSI's confirmation of its opposition to a new version of the center-left (comprehensible in that the PSI does not wish to suffer further losses on its left) and by the attitude of the DC, which, after waging the electoral campaign in a very precise direction, would have enormous difficulties in making a 180 degree turn and accepting the overtures of the PCI (in such an eventuality, there would be possibilities of revolts by some parliamentary groups and even organizational breaks with the party).

The conclusion is that the crisis of leadership of the bourgeoisie has not at all begun to be solved and that the immediate period now opening will continue to be one of strong instability, of persistent internal contradictions in the ruling class front. . . .

The entire preceding analysis, in addition to the more comprehensive analysis of the past several years, implies that the workers movement may find itself in a situation that is contradictory in certain respects. As far as the state of spirit of the masses is concerned, at least in the short run, the combination of relative disappointment at the fact that the Christian Democracy hung on and consciousness of the increased strength of the major workers parties will have effects. More generally, the pressures of fundamental needs, which in the final analysis can be reduced to the demand for job security and defense of living standards, not only will not be attenuated but may become even stronger, if the present economic trends continue. In such a context, conditions will exist for new impetuous mass mobilizations with the working class at the center but capable of drawing in broader layers of the toiling population. The obstacle to the effective development of such movements, and, even more clearly, to their positive outcome, will continue to be the difficulty of developing mobilizations of such scope with the advanced objectives dictated by the situation, objectives that tend to be of a transitional nature, in the absence of a leadership determined to relaunch the confrontation and to favor an anticapitalist dynamic of the movement.

Even more than in the past, then, the role of the trade-union and political organizations of the proletariat will be decisive for the very initiation of broad mass movements. New possibilities are opening for the new vanguard and the organizations of the far left, and they will be put to new tests. Objectively, it will be possible to take those steps forward that were not taken during the last campaign around the labor contracts. The possibility of concretely and credibly relaunching struggles for overall political objectives will depend in large measure on success on this terrain. □



CORTES

# SPAIN waiting for september

by M. SAURA

What is going to happen in September? For the past few weeks, this question has been on everyone's lips throughout the country, the bourgeoisie asking it fearfully, the workers in a defiant tone. The specter of September goes hand in hand with a record rate of inflation, on the order of 25 percent a year, a clearly unviable government referendum, an ever greater and more threatening activity on the part of the masses. It is this specter that provoked the fall of Arias Navarro.

It is easy to give a more detailed listing of the basic reasons for Arias's "resignation." What is genuinely difficult is to explain how he had been able to maintain himself at the head of the government for so long, during the most combative six months of the postwar period, the most economically disastrous six months since 1959, the most uncontrolled political, social, and economic period in the entire history of the dictatorship. Only the profound crisis of power of the Spanish bourgeoisie accounts for how a government whose function consisted of "controlling the reform of Francoism" was able to hold on so long in spite of its very lack of control.

There was no "control" and almost as little "reform." Especially during past weeks, when the most important laws of the government project were supposed to be passed (the law on political association and the reform of the Penal Code), the situation has been virtually surrealistic.

In Spain today there is a law, approved by an overwhelming majority in the Cortes (parliament), that authorizes the formation of all political parties, "except those prohibited by the Penal Code." But at the same time, the Penal Code prohibits all parties, without ex-

ception. This same Cortes approved, practically unanimously, some general guidelines for reform of the Penal Code explicitly proposing that those "organizations, subject to international discipline, that aspire to establish a totalitarian regime" be kept illegal, an "astute" formula by which to maintain the communist organizations in illegality while authorizing the Falange, whose program upholds "the totalitarian state." Only one week later, the Cortes committee entrusted with converting these "orientations" into a specific bill adopted, again by a large majority, a new draft of the text in which all reference to "totalitarianism" and "international discipline" has disappeared, replaced by a vague allusion to the necessity of "respecting human dignity" and defending "political pluralism."

As is well known, the projects of the government call for continuing the illegal status of the Communist party "during an initial phase." But the key men of the government, such as Minister of the Interior Fraga, have told their own political groups — Reforma Democrática in Fraga's case — that the CP should have been legalized immediately and that the government made a serious mistake in not doing so. The future has to be guaranteed.

All these events, and the list could be lengthened, correspond to the impossibility of reforming Francoism on the basis of the Francoist apparatus itself and to the awareness on the part of the bulk of the bourgeoisie that granting legality to the entire workers movement is inevitable in the short term. These are the walls that enclose the narrow alley of the "Francoist reform."

The culmination of the crisis centered around the referendum, posed under conditions that endangered the crown. A few days ago, leading representatives of the

"democratic" bourgeoisie sent a memorandum to the king warning him of the dangers involved if the referendum were actually held, not only because the result of the vote could be negative — which had been totally excluded by the farcical electoral rules under which it was to be conducted — but also because the king would appear directly implicated in the fraud, and it is well known that the bourgeoisie has an interest in making the monarchy the fundamental political factor stabilizing the state. Moreover, the political aggressiveness of the Francoist far right was on the rise, with the deliberate objective of forcing the king to reaffirm his oath of loyalty to "July 18." The Francoist Senate had passed a similar motion, and Girón, one of the leaders of the Francoist bunker, wrote a similar memorandum, sent, significantly, to the most fascist general in the Spanish army, Milans de Bosch, chief of the Acorazada Brunete Division, the most powerful and best equipped unit of the Spanish armed forces.

In this situation, the king decided to dispense with Arias. This move met with an enthusiastic response from the majority of the bourgeois opposition; only the far right expressed timorous reticence.

There is a Spanish proverb that says, "Man is the only animal that trips twice on the same stone." This bit of old popular wisdom gives a good picture of the immediate political future of the bourgeoisie. The fall of Arias marks the end not of the project of "Francoist reform," but only of the first version of it. Now the second will begin. Until the composition of the new government is known it will not be possible to detail the new tactics of the Francoist monarchy. But one may assume that:

\* there will be an attempt to convoke the general elections now scheduled for the second quarter of next year, maintaining the communist organizations in a position of "tolerated" illegality, the margins of tolerance obviously being dependent on the circumstances and the activity of the various organizations;

\* there will be an attempt to obtain the more or less critical support of the bourgeois opposition sectors and of the Social Democracy;

\* there will be an attempt to make the government independent of the Francoist apparatus.

In sum, the government will try to directly assume a "Bonapartist" role within the bourgeoisie; the king himself will be presented as having broken completely with Arias already several months ago. The methods will change, but the objective remains: Big capital hopes to realize its dream of commanding a strong monarchist state with a parliament with a solid bourgeois majority and with a considerable sector of the working class under the hegemony of the Social Democracy.

But September will come. It will undoubtedly bear new promises. The majority of the bourgeois opposition will probably ask for a "margin of confidence" in the new government, but without directly compromising itself with that government. The far right will continue to conspire, blocking the reform projects within the Francoist institutions as far as possible, preparing its own intervention in the elections, organizing its "strategy of tension" through the threats and attacks of its armed gangs. There is not sufficient space here to give a detailed analysis of the new internal political contradictions of the bourgeoisie, the form in which its various factions will adapt to the new situation. But in any event, what is certain is that the activity of the masses will spread, that the struggles in the factories, neighborhoods, and schools, the struggles of youth, of women that we have seen since January will be but a modest prelude to a "hot autumn." The mobilization of the workers will not be held back by promises or "partial conquests."

A few days ago, 50,000 demonstrators from all the popular neighborhoods of Madrid shouted "Madrid is ours!" This was not an illusion, but a challenge. It reflects the state of mind of millions of Spanish workers who will not cease to fight until "Madrid" is really theirs.

July 3, 1976



# BOLIVIA

## NEW ESCALATION OF REPRESSION

Thousands of high-school students in the major cities of Bolivia had been mobilizing for reduction of military service and for freedom to form their own "federaciones de estudiantes de secundaria" (federations of high-school students). When the news came that former Bolivian President J.J. Torres had been murdered in Argentina, the protest spread, students demanding that the murderers be extradited; the student mobilizations gained greater amplitude. On June 8 police and army units opened fire on a street demonstration in Oruro. The response to this crime was the generalization of the student mobilization throughout the country. The dictatorship canceled classes in all educational institutions, decreeing "winter vacation."

The murder of General Torres shook all sectors of the country and triggered protest strikes in the mines and some factories; there were declarations of mourning and demands for the extradition of those responsible.



Banzer

Banzer and company reacted to this in a contradictory manner, which revealed the existence of differences and conflicts within the ruling apparatus. At first he decided to have Torres's body shipped back to Bolivia, declared national mourning, and then, in a written message, stated that "the doors of Bolivia are open to all those Bolivians who feel persecuted abroad." But then, the next day, the dictatorship had to make a shift. In face of the impact of the death of Torres, with the miners demanding that he be buried in the mines, mobilizations being prepared to accompany the funeral cortege, and so on, Banzer and his generals became frightened and canceled the repatriation of the body.

The Miners Congress of Corocoro, which met May 1-7, after approving its socialist theses, voted to launch a struggle for wage increases of at least .80 Bolivian pesos, which is nevertheless below the basic minimum and barely compensates for the decline of real wages that has occurred during the past three years of wage freeze.

### Repressive escalation

Faced with this situation, the dictatorship of the fascist gorillas resorted to violence. In the early hours of June 9 the dictatorship, which had tried to assert its authority and popular support, lost its head and decreed a state of siege. The mining districts of Catavi, Siglo XX, Huanuni, Colquiri, Corocoro, Quechisla, and San José were ordered occupied by the military. Leaders of the miners union were seized, as were university students in Sucre, Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz.

The heroic districts of Catavi-Siglo XX launched a workers counteroffensive. They avoided an armed clash with the army occupiers, whose first objective was to silence the workers radio stations, but at the same time they declared a strike. The workers walked out. The trade-union leaders took refuge in the mines, with their thousands of meters of tunnels, and from these bastions they directed the resistance, which was waged around the following demands:

- 1) Immediate withdrawal of all military forces from the mining districts.
- 2) Release of all leaders of the mineworkers union, other workers leaders, and students who had been de-



tained.

3) Return of the miners radio stations, especially Voz del Minero, 21 de Diciembre, and Radiomesoras Pio XII. Guarantees that these stations could function.

4) Wage and salary increases for the mineworkers.

5) Immediate extradition of those responsible for the murder of ex-president J. Torres.

The leaders of the mineworkers union who had not been arrested reconstituted the leadership, and on June 13 they approved a resolution calling for generalizing the strike to all nationalized mines and all sectors affiliated to the miners federation. Huanuni, Quechisla, Potosí, San José, Colquiri, and other smaller mines in the nationalized mine system immediately went on strike. The mining cooperatives joined in. Seven of the country's nine universities declared indefinite general strikes in support of the miners. The most militant factories also went on strike for periods of twenty-four or forty-eight hours.

Banzer had not expected such an energetic workers and people's response. In desperation he concentrated all his forces on breaking up the strikers in the mines. The nationalized mines were declared military zones and their inhabitants, the miners, were subjected to the Military Penal Code. The dictatorship threatened to invade the mines with "armed peasants" and a number of supposed peasant organizations were ordered to issue communiqués and resolutions calling for this.

### A genocidal crime

In an attempt to prevent the trade-union leaders who had taken refuge in the mines from continuing to direct the resistance, army soldiers were posted at the mine entrances to prevent any persons or supplies from entering. Electrified wire fences were strung up and the water and air supplies were cut off. The miners responded with greater firmness.

Then, in an attempt to defeat the civilian population of the two districts, which is estimated at 50,000 including the miners and their families, the dictatorship surrounded the food warehouses (Pulperías) and cut off the electricity and drinking water in all mining camps. This was an unprecedented crime, of a genocidal type.

The inhabitants of the mining camps — miners, women, children, and old people — were thus condemned to hunger and disease, without recourse to hygiene and medicine. This crime must be denounced by the whole civilized world. The revolutionary organizations throughout the world must raise their voices to condemn and denounce it before all international bodies. Commissions must be prepared to go to Bolivia to support the miners in struggle.

In its attempts to divide and break the resistance of the miners, the military dictatorship decreed a wage increase (called a "rationalization") that amounts to 22-30 percent and claimed to open a "dialogue" with the rank and file miners. After making this claim, and after the military occupation of Catavi, Banzer visited this district. But he was rejected by the miners. After this experience he refrained from going to Siglo XX and Huanuni.

## it is urgent to organize a campaign to denounce the conditions under which bolivia lives

The struggle of the Bolivian people is a difficult one. But Bolivia is the country in Latin America in which the recomposition of the workers movement and the left has advanced furthest since the fascist military coup in 1970. The situation in Bolivia must continue to occupy an important place in the concerns of the revolutionary organizations and masses of the world. It is urgent to organize a campaign to denounce the conditions under which Bolivia lives; the struggle of Bolivia's proletariat, especially the miners, and students must be supported. World solidarity can prevent the isolation of the mining centers surrounded by the army. World solidarity must prevent the isolation of the Bolivian masses in struggle.

Huanuni, June 15, 1976

# BEHIND CHINA'S POLITICAL CRISIS

by S. S. WU

Just when general speculation had it that the "anti-rightist" campaign was fading from the Chinese political scene, there was an unexpected eruption: the violent, spontaneous demonstration in Peking on April 5 (see INPRECOR, No.50, April 29), followed by the decision of the party Political Bureau to discharge Teng Hsiao-ping from all his posts, leaving him only his membership in the Communist party. What will be the consequences of these two political events? What is the reason for the "anti-rightist" campaign? Is it simply a continuation of the cultural revolution? What are the underlying social causes of the recent struggle and how will the masses respond to it? What is the nature of the contending factions within the Communist party? These are some of the important questions posed by the events.

To attempt to answer them, we must first examine the situation that prevailed in the country after the cultural revolution.

## I. THE POST-CULTURAL-REVOLUTION SITUATION

The period that began with the Ninth Congress of the Chinese Communist party (CCP) in April 1969 and ended with the death of Chou En-lai in January of this year was marked by two characteristics: first, the increasing power of the army in the state apparatus with the consolidation of Lin Piao's position, followed by its decline with his downfall; second, the quiet rehabilitation of an entire layer of "capitalist roaders" who had been deposed during the cultural revolution. This turn was accompanied by a number of political campaigns representing partially hidden factional struggles in the party. As former administrators regained their posts, the "new-born elements" of the cultural revolution disappeared or were weakened and some pre-cultural-revolution domestic policies were reinstated. The death of Chou represented the disappearance of the indispensable bridge through which the party and state apparatus had been able to reestablish their unity and functions, despite the temporarily concealed hostilities among various factions and groups.

In fact, the cultural revolution had not established unity within the CCP. The only point on which all the various factions and groupings were united was the urgent

need to uproot the independent political development that emerged from the rebellious Red Guard movement and to rebuild the party and state machine, fragmented during the cultural revolution. The Maoist faction did not win politically. In bringing the cultural revolution to an end, the Maoist faction was compelled to make two concessions. The army was recognized as the only effective instrument with which to reestablish social order and put an end to the mass movement. At the same time, concessions were made to the majority of state and party cadres, not a few of whom had been fought as followers of Liu Shao-chi's "black line." Based as it was on a compromise, the new unity was bound to be short-lived. Two years after the Ninth Congress, Lin Piao was suddenly purged under circumstances that remain mysterious. But considering the qualitative change that had occurred in China's foreign policy vis-à-vis the imperialist powers and the Soviet Union and the charge that Lin had been siding with the "Soviet revisionists," it may be assumed that there had been a sharp conflict over foreign policy. This was one aspect of the background to the purge of Lin. The other aspect was that as long as the army retained its control over society, the party's weight in the running of the state would be reduced and the close ties between the party and the masses would consequently be jeopardized. This would be in contradiction to the positions, policies, and interests of the Maoist faction.

But apart from the details of the Lin Piao purge, the event itself confirmed that the cultural revolution had in fact ended in a compromise without which the entire fragmented bureaucracy would have been in grave danger. But it was a compromise the Mao faction would tolerate only temporarily and for purely tactical reasons.

## Back to the 'good old days'

In the wake of the downfall of Lin Piao, the pre-cultural-revolution order began to reemerge, as was most tellingly manifested in the return of Teng Hsiao-ping in April 1973. In fact, almost all the "capitalist roaders" who had been purged during the cultural revolution, except for Liu Shao-chi himself, emerged from their political exile and returned to the party and state apparatus, in many cases in posts even higher than those from which they had previously been deposed. This was a



Since the dramatic clashes in Peking's Tien An Men Square last April 5, events in the People's Republic of China have held the attention of world public opinion, particularly in the international workers and revolutionary movement. We are publishing below a contribution to the analysis of these events written by a revolutionary Marxist comrade active in the Asian region. Because of its length, we are publishing the article in two installments. In this issue Comrade Wu deals with the situation in China after the cultural revolution and with the attempts of the Maoist faction of the Chinese bureaucracy to "continue" the cultural revolution. The second installment, which will appear in the next issue of INPRECOR, will treat the April 5 events themselves, analyze the ideology and orientation of the contending factions in the Chinese Communist party, and examine the prospects for the future unfolding of the struggle.

natural trend. For one thing, who else could fill the vacuum after several years of semimilitary control followed by the sudden exit of the army from the political scene? For another, the policies of the Maoist faction became extremely ineffective, unable as they were to arouse mass initiatives under the existing bureaucratic control. Thus, there was growing discontent among the masses and at least doubts among many party cadres.

In this sense, the late Chou En-lai's ascendancy in the state apparatus was not at all a personal achievement. Rather, it corresponded to the aspirations and mood of significant sections of the masses and many cadres who were then looking for "stability." This was a silent but very powerful tendency. The Maoist faction yielded to it, and it was further strengthened by the return of many "capitalist roaders." Chou En-lai's last great "contribution" to the CCP was to lead it through this silent "revolution" while avoiding open confrontation.

The Maoist faction began to cautiously resist this process through organizing political mass movements like the "criticize Lin-criticize Confucius" campaign, the "against the tide" campaign, the "anti-bourgeois-rights" campaign, the agricultural campaign, and the "education revolution" campaign. With the exception of the last one, however, all these campaigns remained on the level of propaganda and acted mainly to test the strength of the Maoist faction within the party and among the masses. The Maoist faction avoided open confrontation with the returned bureaucrats and their

supporters in the party, who in turn responded to the Maoist campaigns by containing and redirecting them. They were able to do this primarily because the major components of the state machine were on their side and the Maoist campaigns lacked popular support anyway. The masses received these campaigns with a sort of ritual and formal response at best. Thus, the returned bureaucrats and their supporters in the party (whom, for simplicity's sake, we will refer to as the "reversionists") held a better position than the Maoists in terms of the relationship of forces within the party and state apparatus and among the masses.

### The lower cadres: confusion and demoralization

Throughout the post-cultural-revolution period, perhaps no other forces were as disturbed, confused, and demoralized as the lower-ranking cadres of the party and the state apparatus. Their dilemma was — and remains — rooted in the fact that they had no choice but to implement the policies decided on by higher authorities. To defy those policies would mean political extinction. But in implementing these policies they were liable to future punishment for having carried out a line suddenly deemed to have been false. This is a lesson they had learned from all the twists and turns and ups and downs of the line struggles of the post-liberation period, lessons that were learned most painfully during the cultural revolution. At the same time, the shifts in policy were

## 把批林批孔的斗争进行到底



totally unpredictable. Yesterday American imperialism was the embodiment of all evil; today one had to give the warmest welcome to the chiefs of this same imperialism. Yesterday Lin Biao was the infallible revolutionary successor to Chairman Mao; today, as it turns out, he was a counterrevolutionary virtually since birth.

These cadres found the line struggles unfolding in the top leadership virtually incomprehensible, and this was more true than ever after the cultural revolution. There is no mystery about the reason for this. In the absence of democracy within the party, internal differences were never discussed and resolved by majority decision. In fact, the lower cadres were never even informed as differences emerged in the leadership. The strange evolution of the internal struggle remained an enigma to these cadres, who were constantly compelled to guess which way the wind was blowing. And guessing was risky. One could always fall in with the wrong side and then be victimized.

At the same time, these lower-ranking cadres had another dilemma to face. The third Chinese revolution, which won victory in 1949, did not give rise to a powerful bureaucracy comparable to that which existed in the Soviet Union after the Stalinist reaction. To be sure, bureaucratic control existed — and still does. But the mode of existence of this control still depends to some extent on the people's trust in the party, the party which led them to victory. Concurrently, the bureaucracy is sufficiently weak that in order to implement its policies, which are decided on in the absence of proletarian democracy, the cooperation of the masses is necessary. It is in this sense that even now China maintains a sort of horizontal democracy. The masses are allowed to discuss how best to implement the assigned policy (formulated outside their control) and to work out all details in doing so. Because of this, the lower-ranking cadres are compelled to remain closely linked to the masses and must respond to their moods in one way or another. In addition, in implementing the assigned policy, these lower cadres are obliged to explain its meaning to the masses, for active implementation would otherwise be impossible. Hence, cadres who have no idea what the policy is all about have a hard time mobilizing the masses in its support.

During the post-cultural-revolution period, and especially during the past few years, the way these cadres responded to this dilemma was simply to avoid concretely implementing the policy, thus leaving themselves a cover in the event that a later turn deemed the policy completely wrong. This phenomenon was so widespread that time and time again the party and state had to call upon the cadres to implement the policies they received from the top.

The cadres did not dare to entirely ignore the various campaigns they were instructed to carry out, but they offered only ritualistic and formal responses. This is one of the reasons why the various campaigns initiated by the Maoist faction petered out ineffectively. The bureaucracy as a whole was thrown into real crisis by this

de facto sabotage on the part of local cadres throughout the post-cultural-revolution period, for it meant nothing other than the weakening of bureaucratic control, which threatened to effect the entire social structure of the country. At the same time, the vacuum that arose between the central authorities in Peking and the grass roots offered room for independent development among the masses. The chain of events thus set in motion was to culminate in the confrontation in Tien An Men Square on April 5, 1976.

## The working class awakens

The Chinese revolution of 1949, unlike the Russian revolution of 1917, was not a product of the ability of the working class to capture and centralize state power in its own hands. In this sense, the Chinese working class has never "won" in the full sense of the word. On the other hand, since it served as the party's main base in the transformation of old China and acted as the backbone of socialist economic construction, the working class was also never defeated politically. As the class that benefited most profoundly from the revolution, the working class tended to become dependent on the party and almost unaware of the rapid bureaucratization of the revolution. As far as the party was concerned, the submission of the working class was of central political importance in the implementation of its campaigns. Conversely, dependence on the party was the political weak point of the class. At the same time, this relationship represented a fragile aspect of the power of the party and the bureaucracy, since the bureaucracy could not risk an open political break with the workers. Consequently, any independent political development among the working class could have a direct and important effect and impact on the bureaucratic caste.

For more than twenty-five years, the CCP did not have to worry about the political loyalty of this class. Last year, however, this state of affairs changed drastically. The decades-long docility of the proletariat came to an end. Workers struggles for better working conditions and pay increases were reported beginning during the second half of 1974. In Canton there were demonstrations by retired rank-and-file soldiers who went so far as to question the party's management and attack it openly as "bureaucratic." These retired soldiers had been workers before joining the army and had become workers again upon leaving it. According to information received in Hong Kong, the 1974-75 wave of workers struggles was highly spontaneous and had chain-reaction effects. This indicated that the relatively high political consciousness manifested during the strike actions was not simply a local or regional phenomenon but was a national expression of the working class.

The way the CCP intervened to end these strikes was significant, the events in Hangchow being the most revealing case. Wang Hung-wen, "radical" rising star in the party hierarchy, a man highly touted for his proletarian origins, failed in a desperate effort to pacify the workers of Hangchow. The magic of Maoism, the

glorious "revolutionary" appeal, and the authority of the Communist party had lost their power of persuasion and moral authority. For the first time, the working class said "No" — and strongly — to the party that was supposed to represent them and to which they had tendered their full trust and confidence. The strike was finally ended when the regime resorted to the intervention of the army, thanks to Teng Hsiao-ping, who had meanwhile returned to his post.

The wave of strikes must have been very extensive, for many units of the army were placed on full alert and national railway traffic was in disarray because of labor disturbances. This is further confirmed by reports of substantial reductions in production as a result of strike actions. But above all, the workers initiatives signified that even the firmest segment of the party's political base had been eroded and gradually weakened. Moreover, the workers strikes represented the first appearance of a mass movement completely independent both of the party as a whole and of any factions of the party, for even the well-known ultraleft tendency of the rebellious Red Guard movement owed its emergence to the Maoist faction.\*



Teng Hsiao-ping

\*We are referring here to the tendency that called for the complete destruction of the state and party apparatus. This tendency was somewhat different from the more general rebellious Red Guard movement, for the latter never had any clear idea of what to do with the state. On the other hand, the rebellious Red Guard movement as a whole was quite different from the conservative Red Guards, who wanted to shelter important portions of the bureaucracy from attack.

## The problem of agriculture

Agriculture is a severe problem for China. For a quarter of a century the party leadership has faced the problems of ownership, of how to make collective agricultural labor workable and effective, of how to achieve primitive accumulation based primarily on a subsistence level of agricultural production, and finally, of how to begin to mechanize and modernize agriculture. After twenty-seven years of rule, the CCP still confronts these same problems, although in altered forms. History has shown that what is involved in these problems is not merely the question of agricultural production, but political and social problems as well.

Before the cultural revolution, there were two different approaches to agriculture. The Maoists' approach was a sort of "voluntarist" one, arguing that high political consciousness would enable the masses to solve all problems. This policy ended in the ruins of the Great Leap Forward and the economic catastrophes of the early 1960s. The policy advocated by Liu Shao-chi placed greater emphasis on increasing the material gains of the peasantry and even allowed the temporary development of capitalism in the countryside, so long as agricultural production could be put on a sound footing.

During the post-cultural-revolution period nothing in the countryside has been substantially changed or improved. The development of industry is still too weak to render very much support to the countryside. On the contrary, industrial development has continued to rely on "squeezing" the peasantry. The black market still flourishes, at least in southern China. Private exchanges of products between brigades or production teams still exist. Private plots, distinct from the collective lands, still thrive, and the peasants continue to exert greater efforts in growing their own crops than they do in the collective fields. It would be extremely difficult to speed up agricultural production without raising the standard of living of the peasantry and without an elementary industrialization of agriculture. At the same time, the CCP, which continues to pursue the policy of maximum accumulation at the cost of holding down the living standards of the masses, is unable to improve conditions in the countryside substantially.

Moreover, there is another burning problem in the countryside: that of unemployable urban youth who are often forcibly sent to settle down in villages for the rest of their lives. According to official figures, there are now 12,000,000 such people. During the early and middle 1960s many youth volunteered to go to the countryside in response to romantic appeals issued by the party. But this idealism lost all its attraction as it ran into the hard facts. Life in the countryside proved miserable. The urban youth who arrived there encountered hostility from the peasantry, found it difficult to support themselves (let alone marry and raise families), and have often been compelled to seek monthly stipends from their working-class parents, financially hard-pressed in any case. In fact, many of these youth illegally made their way back to the cities. The deep-seated political discon-



Chinese factory workers being sent to labor on farms

tent among them (particularly since they had been politically active and experienced the upsurge of mass movements during the cultural revolution) serves as a fertile ground for the spread of revolutionary thought and action.

## II. "CONTINUATION" OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION

Long before the present "anti-rightist" campaign, the Maoist faction had initiated abortive attempts against the "reversionists." Two of the most obvious ones were the "against the tide" campaign and the "anti-bourgeois rights" campaign. They were abortive in the sense that they were blunted by the "reversionists" and lost their political content. In order to understand these campaigns it is important to remember that political polarization first appeared within the top leadership of the party. Moreover, the process of polarization and the resulting conflicts take place in a bureaucratic structure within which there is no internal democracy. It was therefore difficult for any faction formed on the leadership level to accurately judge to what extent it could draw on support from the party, partially because cadres often hesitated before affiliating to one or another faction. Because the relationship of forces between the two factions has been unclear, the struggle between them has taken a peculiar path. The grouping taking the offensive generally launches a tentative and educative campaign, tentative in the sense that the results of and responses to the campaign would allow for calculation of what sections of the bureaucracy had understood and positively responded to the campaign's message, educative in the sense that the campaign would serve as a signal to the whole party bureaucracy that another line struggle was shaping up. At the same time, the positions and arguments would be conveyed to the party cadres. But the practical implementation of the campaign would not yet be fully explained. This is the social mechanism of the factional struggles in China.

The abortive results of these campaigns showed that the Maoist faction was not in a good position within the party and state apparatus in terms of the balance of forces. But because of the very abstract character of these campaigns, their failure did not entail the defeat of the Maoist faction in the struggle. At most, they may be defined as setbacks for the Maoists. There were many such setbacks before the present "antirightist" campaign was launched. Nevertheless, last November the Maoist faction launched yet another campaign, one with a more directly confrontational and provocative nature than most of those of the past several years.

### The 'education revolution'

The "education revolution" exploded in November 1975. Its ostensible aim was to oppose changes in the "new-born" educational line that had followed the cultural revolution and to attack Chou Jung-hsing, minister of education, in particular.

Of the "new-born things of the cultural revolution," two features stand out. One is the dogmatization and vulgarization of the arts and literature — Chiang Ching's "model operas" provide the best illustration. The "cultural" campaigns have enabled the Maoist faction to gain tight control over propaganda channels. The second feature is the overhauling of educational policy. Under the new policy, institutions of higher learning no longer recruit students directly from the high schools. Enrollment is limited to young people already at work, who are not necessarily high-school graduates. They must be recommended by the party committee of the unit they are working with and then must gain the approval of the institution to which they apply. Obedient political activity, not scholastic achievement, is the main criterion. The new university students tend to support the "new-born things" in the field of education, for otherwise they would not have been able to get into universities. In other words, they are the ones who have benefited from the system introduced by the Maoist faction, which explains why it was on the basis of this new system that the Maoist faction once again took the offensive against the "reversionists." In this milieu the Maoists could count on positive and obedient support.

Even before the campaign, two orientations had clashed within the universities. An open letter to Mao from graduates of Chao Yang Agricultural College, which is under the guidance of Mao's nephew, stated that "last year, during the three months of July, August, and September, there appeared in the educational field various kinds of grotesque talk and strange theories, and a wind of rightist attempts arose to reverse the verdicts." (People's Daily, January 26, 1976.) From the attacks organized by the Maoists, it seems clear that the "reversionists" wanted and perhaps tried to remodel the educational system because they believed that the present education was considerably lower in quality than that of the pre-cultural-revolution period.

The new campaign on the campuses had two specific features that distinguished it from previous campaigns. First, a particular official (the minister of education) was selected as a target. Second, there were hints that the Maoist faction might try to haul others into the net as the campaign proceeded. The target was not yet Teng Hsiao-ping. But those who experienced the unfolding of the cultural revolution remembered that Liu Shao-chi was not singled out as the target at the beginning of that movement. This is another particular Maoist tactic, which is quite easy to understand. If the top representative of the opposing faction were challenged openly from the outset, the campaign would have no room for maneuver, which could become fatal if it turned out that the tide of battle was going the wrong way. The Maoist tactic allows for the following flexibility: If the situation develops favorably, the Maoist faction can step by step encircle the top leadership of the opposing side and eventually eliminate it; on the other hand, if the situation after the launching of the campaign turns out to be not so positive, the Maoists can retreat without having openly challenged the other side (thus restoring a kind of "peaceful coexistence") and wait for a better moment for renewing the attack.



Before the death of Chou En-lai it seemed that the "education revolution" was already being contained by the "reversionists" and that it would very soon be diluted into another harmless political campaign of virtually no real effect. The People's Daily of January 14 toned the campaign down, saying that "in the preceding period, the grotesque talk and strange theories of the rightist attempts to reverse the verdicts had created ideological confusion, and if that situation had not been changed in time, it would definitely have resulted in splits and damaged the state of stability and unity. Through this great debate the rights and wrongs of the line have been cleared up and the people's thought is united. Today, on the basis of Chairman Mao's revolutionary line, comrades who had ideological differences in the past few months are uniting again and carrying out the struggle side by side. They are saying, 'Again we are fighting in the same trench.'"

The message here is clear: As a kind of "great debate," the "education revolution" was finished. Although the campaign had begun at Tsinghua and Peking Universities as early as November 3, 1975, as of November 18 it was already under the control of the party's university committees, party committees under the leadership of the very same minister of education who was under attack. In addition, under the leadership of these commit-

tees, the formation of combat groups and linkups with other university groups was forbidden.

The results of the "education revolution" indicated that the Maoist faction was unable to continue to deepen its campaign and confront the other side, while the latter was compelled to temporarily dampen its own rhetoric in the field of education. Thus, the "reversionist" faction retreated during this battle, but at the same time the Maoist faction was unable to press ahead with its own offensive. The conflict therefore headed into a deadlock, and peace could have reigned for some time, had not the death of Chou En-lai occurred just at that moment.

Tension in the party mounted with the death of Chou. The conflict centered on a burning question: Who would succeed Chou as premier of China? Formally, this was a question of power and not of line. But in a structure as highly bureaucratized as the CCP, in substance the question of power is the question of line. Both sides understood the simple truth that any line could be realized through the seizure of the leading posts. The succession struggle seems to have been fierce. According to foreign news dispatches from Peking, a general meeting of the party Central Committee held at the end of January and beginning of February was unable to pursue its scheduled agenda after running into a deadlock on the question of Chou's successor. The fact that Hua Kuo-feng, a man of little prominence, won the position instead of Teng Hsiao-ping or a well-known leader of the Maoist faction indicates that neither side was able to impose its will on the other.

Nevertheless, the death of Chou, who had enjoyed great support among both the party cadre and the masses, broke the inner-party balance between the two sides at various levels. Freed from having to contend with Chou's great personal influence, the Maoist faction moved swiftly into position for another offensive aimed at uprooting the other side. The uneasy truce fell apart.

### The 'anti-rightist' campaign

The signal for war came on February 6. It was unmistakable. An article appeared in the People's Daily with the ominous title "Continuation and Deepening of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." This article defined the January campaign on education and science as a great struggle between the proletariat and bourgeoisie. It even specified that "the capitalist roaders are still there, and so are the capitulators. They are the power-holders within the party who insist on following the revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Biao and who still refuse to correct their mistakes." The article ended by issuing a warning: If these "capitalist roaders" refused to properly atone for their sins, they would share the fate of Liu Shao-chi. In issuing this warning, the Maoist faction was brandishing both a carrot and a stick.

A carefully escalating wall-poster movement began, first in Peking and later in other major cities, a gesture

quite similar to the initial phase of the cultural revolution. Students from Peking were organized into Study Teams and sent to Shanghai to agitate among workers and students there. Movement meetings were held in universities, high schools, and factories. Workers were bused to Peking's university campuses to study the wall posters there. Throughout the world, people began asking, Is the second cultural revolution on the way?

The answer to this question depends on how one views the cultural revolution. If one characterizes it simply as a power struggle among factions and individuals, then a second cultural revolution is indeed possible. In our view, however, the cultural revolution, although initiated by the Maoist faction, was characterized by a release of mass spontaneity that managed to some extent to escape the control of any faction of the party; it led to a mass assault on the bureaucracy and resulted in an independent political mass movement that directly threatened the continuation of the rule of the CCP and the bureaucratic structure it had built.

This is precisely the factor that was lacking during February and March of this year. Despite the noisy political activities, independent mass activities and organizations were officially forbidden throughout February. The shape and forms of the movement were set down beforehand by the Maoist faction, and the masses were to merely follow directives issued from above.

There is no mystery about the reason for this. Before the cultural revolution the Maoist faction had good reason to be confident of mass support, for the Maoists were able to make use of the prestige of Mao himself, who personified the victory of the Third Chinese Revolution. But the cultural revolution itself produced the antithesis of the bureaucracy: the far leftists of the rebellious Red Guard movement, who called for the complete destruction of the state. This was a painful lesson for the Maoist faction. The obvious conclusion was that the mass movement must be held under very tight control at any cost; otherwise there is great risk of the Maoists' being overtaken by events.

This is the weakness of the Maoist faction as long as it attempts to use the mass movement to put pressure on opposing factions or power holders. On the other hand, while the "reversionists" appeared not to realize this weakness before February 1976, by late February they clearly did. Accordingly, in March the tone was changed. The Maoists simultaneously scaled down the campaign and zeroed in on a single target. No longer did they aim at extirpating all the "capitalist roaders" in the party; instead they centered their broadsides at one person, Teng Hsiao-ping. But the "reversionists" remained strong, their numerical base and posts not yet undermined by the Maoist faction. The movement initiated by the Maoists began to lose momentum. Although the personal fate of Teng Hsiao-ping still hung in the balance, all signs were that the "continuation" of the cultural revolution was fading away.

❁(To be continued.)❁

NUMBER 3

# SOUTH ASIA Marxist REVIEW

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**WHAT IS INDIRA UP TO?**


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**STRUGGLE IN THE ARAB EAST**


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**WOMEN'S LIBERATION MANIFESTO**


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**THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION AND THE TECHINOCRACY**


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36p

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**POLISH  
WORKERS  
SAY NO**

**cont'd from  
pg 32**



the prices of prime-necessity consumer goods at a level not essentially different from that of December 1970 — that is, one of the lowest, if not the lowest, in Europe; in the capitalist countries prices have risen between 50 and 150 percent since that date! — the government had to grant enormous subsidies to the food industry, the peasantry, and the trade system, subsidies that will exceed the equivalent of \$2,000 million for the current year. This phenomenon simultaneously reflects and fuels inflationary pressures.

The failure of Gierek's economic policy lies not in the fact that the government failed to foresee this long-term effect of the price freeze, which the "Gomulkaist" technicians had called attention to ever since 1970. Rather, it results essentially from the failure to achieve a growth in the production of consumer goods parallel to the increase in the nominal wages of the toiling masses. The turn toward a policy of acceleration of growth and investment has not had the hoped for effects on expansion of production and circulation of consumer goods. Once again, that is the Achilles heel of bureaucratic planning.

Secondarily, the Polish economy has paid its price for the international inflation and especially the rise in prices of oil and other imported raw materials, increases that were particularly virulent during 1972 and 1973 and were reflected in the price adjustments within the Comecon (which now occur annually) especially in 1974 and 1975. Polish exports were likewise hit by the effects of the recession. This is a sharp reminder to the advocates of the theory of "socialism in one country" that it is impossible to completely isolate a workers state from the perturbations of the world market, even though the dynamic of production and employment in Poland in 1974 and 1975 was completely different from that of the capitalist countries of Europe, which strikingly confirms the non-capitalist character of the Polish economy.

It will thus not be possible for the bureaucracy to simply and lastingly annul the price increases the way it was compelled to do in 1970. The concession made by the Jarociewicz government the very night of the first strike must be considered a temporary one. It was forced above all by the necessity of averting at all costs an extension

of the strikes and a bloody clash between the workers and the repressive forces so long as the conference of European Communist parties was in session in East Berlin. The threat of seeing Santiago Carrillo, Enrico Berlinguer, or even Georges Marchais, under the pressure of the workers and the political situation in their own countries, publicly take up the defense of the Polish workers was sufficiently real for Brezhnev, Gierek, and company that the Polish bureaucracy had to do everything to avoid it.

Once the East Berlin conference was over, the tone hardened in Warsaw. Probably the hoped for outcome is a compromise that, while not reinstating the increases originally decreed, will nonetheless reintroduce some of them. The workers would win something, but the government would nonetheless slow down the process of inflation.

This is especially indispensable for the bureaucracy since inflation and supply difficulties are widespread throughout East Europe and the Soviet Union. The price for spectacular concessions to the Polish workers in these domains would have to be paid in part by the economies of the other countries of Comecon. According to all evidence, this would risk provoking a development in the consciousness of the proletariat in these countries, a consciousness that "struggle pays off." This could in turn provoke strikes and demonstrations in those countries for goals similar to those of the Polish workers. All this means that there will be enormous pressure on Warsaw from the Kremlin to prevent the Polish bureaucracy from going too far in making lasting concessions to the strikers.

Moreover, the bureaucracy no longer holds a Gomulka in reserve as it did in 1956 or a Gierek as it did in 1970. There is no political personality in the Polish Communist party who is relatively popular among the workers but who still inspires the confidence of the apparatus in his ability to channel a powerful mass movement toward a simple change at the top within the bureaucracy. Under these conditions it is not astonishing that Gierek was cautiously held in the background during the events of past weeks, that he has not taken a public position either in favor of the price increases or in favor of their elimination. It is Gierek himself who remains the bureaucracy's "reserve."

The bureaucracy has now mounted an operation aimed at regaining its grip through political means, that is, a combination of ideological bludgeoning through the mass media and agitational meetings and sessions. The immediate results do not seem to be very convincing, given the at least hesitant behavior of the party members who have been mobilized, particularly during the big meeting in Warsaw to support the government. It remains to be seen whether the workers are prepared to go further this time or whether they will be content for the moment to simply plant the seeds of the future.

The next issue of INPRECOR will contain a more detailed analysis of the strikes and events in Poland. □

# The Polish Workers Say NO



Gierk

For the third time in twenty years, the Polish proletariat has moved into direct action in defense of its interests against the bureaucracy. This continuity of combativity is in itself an important factor that explains, at least partially, the different political situation that exists in Poland compared with the situation in the other "people's democracies," with the exception of Yugoslavia, of course.

Even though on each occasion the Polish working class has been robbed of a more or less important share of the gains obtained through its direct struggles, it does not have the feeling of having struggled in vain, nor of having been crushed or even defeated in struggle. The sentiment of strength and self-confidence among the workers limits the bureaucracy's freedom of maneuver. It also determines a higher level of class consciousness among the Polish proletariat than among the working class of most of the other "people's democracies" and the Soviet Union.

As during the strikes in the Baltic ports in December 1970, again this year foreign observers, even pro-



October 24, 1956, 500,000 Polish workers throng Defilee Square to hear Wladyslaw Gomulka, new First Secretary of the Polish Workers party.

imperialists, have been compelled to note the absence of slogans or themes of an anticommunist nature among the strikers and demonstrators. Even the sacking of the Communist party headquarters in Radom had a particular character, marked by the pronounced class nature of the action of the Polish workers.

As during the Poznan strikes in 1956 and the strikes in the Baltic ports in 1970, this time once again the initiative was taken in an individual factory, the Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw. As in 1956 and 1970, the use of forms of struggle to defeat the bureaucracy's attempt to isolate the strikers and even to hide the strike from the whole of the proletariat achieved immediate success. Workers solidarity began to come into play almost instantaneously. The movement spread.

The factor that detonated the strike in June 1976 was the same as had triggered the December 1970 struggles: an increase in the price of consumer goods, equivalent to a sharp decline in the standard of living of the masses. In December 1970 the workers forced the bureaucracy to back down on the price increases. At the same time, the bureaucrats were forced to substitute Gierk for Gomulka, who no longer conserved an iota of the great popularity he had acquired in 1956 when he partially identified with the revolt of the masses, and even with the legitimacy of strikes. It is not likely that we will see a pure and simple repetition of the 1970 scenario, for two basic reasons:

First, on the purely economic level, the Polish economy no longer commands sufficient reserves for increasing the rate of growth, which is what permitted partial reabsorption of the concessions the Gierk regime made to the workers after the December 1970 strikes. This reabsorption was in any event only partially successful, less and less so as time went by and Gierk's initial economic project ran up against obstacles that were increasingly difficult to surmount. In order to freeze

**cont'd. on pg. 31**