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PORTUGAL against the AMI



THE CRISIS OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE

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● contents

EDITORIAL

No to "Francoism Without Franco" 32

PORTUGAL

Toward Centralization 3

Against the AMI! 5

MEXICO

Echeverría's Successor: Friend of Imperialism and the Mexican
Bourgeoisie — by Alfonso Ríos 7

New Wave of Repression 8

MALAYSIA

Repression and Confrontation — by Paul Petitjean 10

ITALY

On the Position of Lotta Continua: From Chile to Portugal —
Nature and Implications of Chinese International Policy
— by Livio Maitan 16

USSR

The Crisis of Soviet Agriculture — by Ettore Salvini 26

FRANCE

50,000 at Fête Rouge 31

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by A. UDRY

PORTUGAL toward centralization

"The Soviet Union and Poland assure us that if we do not succeed in reestablishing authority and discipline, the revolution will be in danger," declared Vasco Lourenço and Costa Neves, members of the Council of the Revolution, upon their return from the USSR. (Jornal Novo, October 7.) After the failure of the occupation of the radio stations, after the response of the CICAP soldiers to the dissolution of their unit, the insistence on discipline in the army now coming from all government spokesmen is not surprising. One of the characteristic features of the course of events in Portugal comes through in these many statements: the advanced crisis of the state apparatus.

Nevertheless, there is a danger in seeing only this aspect of reality. In reality, the characteristic feature of the political situation taken as a whole lies precisely in the lack of correspondence between the advanced process of crisis of the bourgeois state apparatus and the level of development and centralization of the "organs of popular power." The outbreak of the struggle of the soldiers since the beginning of September and the emergence of a tendency toward self-organization in the army (about a dozen barracks now have elected soldiers commissions) have rapidly accelerated the disintegration of what constituted the keystone of the project of the sixth government, the government of "order" of Prime Minister Pinheiro Azevedo. But concurrently, the workers commissions, tenant commissions, and popular assemblies have not experienced an analogous qualitative growth, neither in terms of their expansion and the integration of broad sectors of the toiling masses within them nor in terms of their level of centralization.

By definition, such a lack of synchronization can only be temporary. Either a decisive step forward will be taken in the direction of the centralization of these bodies and the transition from a prerevolutionary situation to a revolutionary situation will take place, or the bourgeoisie will reconstitute more or less effective instruments for imposing its own order and discipline.

The totality of the initiatives being taken today in both opposed camps must be seen in this context. After suffering stinging failures in the first tests of strength, the government has changed its tactics in an attempt to achieve the same objectives: The regime is now avoiding frontal attacks and is seeking to gain time to carry out its military and police projects.

Very concrete measures are now being added to the appeals for discipline. In the air force, the sergeants are organizing. After a five-day meeting, a plenary assembly of air force sergeants — convoked under the impetus of General Morais e Silva — voted a motion insisting on the necessity for "an intransigent defense of the spirit of the MFA program." The meeting also adopted a proposal to create "disciplinary councils" composed of sergeants and members of the commands of various military units in order to "examine disciplinary violations." At the same time, the sergeants launched a public attack against the command of the RPM (Lisbon Military Police Regiment), which is known for having participated in workers and soldiers demonstrations on many occasions. The hierarchy is trying to reorganize and consolidate its own networks in the army.

Concurrently, a real army of civil war is in process of being created: the AMI, Military Intervention Group. The various regiments that were initially supposed to compose this striking force refused to take part, so the general staff opted for recruiting volunteers. Very well paid volunteers, for a rank-and-file AMI soldier will get nearly 5,500 escudos a month, while a normal rank-and-file soldier gets only 250 escudos a month! About 3,000 volunteers, most of them ex-commandos, have already been recruited. Army Chief of Staff Fabião had the audacity to explain that this corps of genuine professional gunmen was constituted "because of the need to send commando troops to Angola in order to establish a sort of bridge to the date of independence." (A Capital, October 23.)

The construction of this professional army has been combined with a reorganization of the police forces (the

PSP and the GNR) and a strengthening of their operational potential.

The setting in motion of this project goes hand in hand with the de facto dissolution of a large part of the units of the land army: about a third of all soldiers are going to be demobilized. In addition, many militia officers known for their militant activity have been placed on unlimited leave.

While the crisis in the army is extremely deep and while the progress of self-organization among the soldiers is important, in the present situation it would be erroneous and dangerous to believe that the disintegration of the army has gone so far that the hierarchy is incapable of taking any initiative. To be sure, the hierarchy needs time to reconstitute militarily solid elements that are worthy of confidence, but its project can fail only as a result of the capacity of the soldiers and workers to take decisive new steps in the organization of self-defense, within the framework of the extension of the "organs of popular power."

For example, the surveillance of arms stocks has become an important point in the battle for the restoration of "capitalist order and discipline" in Portugal. In face of the maneuvers of reaction, which at the moment that it is arming the soldiers of the counterrevolution is trying to prevent at all costs a possible arming of the "organs of popular power" for their own self-defense, the control of arms stocks becomes a task that can be jointly planned by the soldiers and workers. That has been stated clearly by several hundred soldiers in Lisbon in a public declaration.

In face of the creation of the AMI and the repressive measures that may come down on the most militant soldiers, the coordination and centralization of the soldiers commissions, once their development has attained a certain level, can permit an effective response. That is one of the lessons drawn by those who led the struggle of the RASP and the CICAP (Artillery Regiment of Serro de Pilar and Instruction Center for Military Vehicle Drivers of Porto).

Finally, the mobilization of the workers of the estabelecimentos fabris, a group that includes all the arms factories, can also be part of the development of self-defense. On October 6 several thousand workers of these various factories organized a demonstration in Lisbon. They demanded: "The reconversion and restructuring of the factories, the abolition of the Rules of Military Discipline, workers control, wage increases, improved social conditions." The mere control of deliveries of military matériel, like the publication of the list of some of the AMI volunteers, could throw some light on the government's projects and give the lie to Fabião's assertions about the function of these shock troops.

The deepening of the economic recession and the structural crisis striking many industrial branches (textiles, clothing, shoes, shipbuilding, etc.) are stimulating a new rise of movements for workers demands. These move-

ments are taking on two new characteristics:

First, they are confronting a government that is not prepared to make many concessions. Thus, for the first time, broad sectors of the working class are developing an attitude of distrust and opposition to the government. Their politicization is accelerating. Second, the depth of the structural crisis is such that the limitation of demands for wage increases, shorter hours, or simple demands against layoffs are rapidly becoming clearer. Hence, there are more and more lists of demands that more or less clearly call for the nationalization of the entire sector, branch-wide planning, and even socialist planning of the whole economy "in order that the reconversion of one sector does not enter into contradiction with the reconversion of another," as was affirmed in a joint declaration of the workers of Lisnave and Setnave (shipyards).

During a general assembly of the workers commissions of the CUF company held October 4 the following motion was passed: "If, within one week, the governmental bodies do not take concrete measures for the solution of the grave problem of fertilizer with which the agricultural workers are confronted, the Unity Commission of the CUF will convoke a general assembly of workers to decide to immediately and directly grant the organizations of agricultural workers the fertilizer needed to advance the agrarian reform. The bills, with a discount of 30 percent, will be sent to the nationalized bank." (República, October 7.) The junction between the agricultural and industrial workers is being established on a level never attained before. Moreover, on October 12 a meeting was held near Evora of 800 delegates of agricultural workers and metalworkers of the South to discuss their respective problems.

While the influence of the Communist party has been felt in all these motions, which talk about the benefits of the agrarian reform not only for the workers but also for the "small and medium-sized agricultural-material enterprises," there is no doubt that the quality of the demands indicates that the problems of socialist planning are posed on the agenda.

Hence, the objective of the development and the centralization of the "organs of popular power" is becoming concretized. In fact, this is increasingly tied to the effective needs of broad layers of workers, needs that are expressed in the demands for planning, generalized workers control, and so on. Further, on the basis of such demands, the objective possibility of unifying the various components of the working class is much greater.

To take advantage of this opportunity to resolve the above-mentioned lack of synchronization in a positive direction — that is, to stimulate a centralization of the workers commissions, tenant commissions, popular assemblies, and soldiers commissions into a National Popular Assembly — remains the priority task of revolutionaries. That requires an initiative capacity linked to a correct policy of the broadest unity in action in order to avoid the traps of "partisan" pseudocentralization, which facilitate reformist maneuvers.

SUV
SOLDADOS, SEMPRE,
SEMPRE AO LADO DO POVO



In the last issue of INPRECOR (No. 36, October 23) we published an interview with a member of one of the commissions set up during the occupation of the barracks of the RASP (Artillery Regiment of Serro do Pilar), an occupation that constituted the first response to the government's dissolution of the CICAP (Instruction Center for Military Vehicle Drivers of Porto).

The struggle of the RASP and the CICAP is of extreme importance at a time when the general staff is creating a professional army (as is shown by the new Military Intervention Group, AMI) made up of volunteers, ex-commandos, ex-legionnaires, dismissing thousands of recruits, and placing militia officers on indefinite leave and when the officers of the general staff who claim to be "progressive" are trying to control the movement of soldiers by all available means.

We are publishing below an interview with a member of the northern region of the SUV (Soldados Unidos Vencerão—Soldiers United Will Win) who was elected to the RASP-CICAP "struggle commission," the commission that was charged with directing this struggle. A plenary session of the RASP-CICAP was scheduled to be held on October 24 to examine the situation and draw up a balance-sheet in the wake of the promises made by Army Chief of Staff Fabião on October 14. (See INPRECOR, No. 36, October 23.) But the general staff of the northern region, utilizing the pretext that there was danger of a coup, consigned the soldiers to barracks. Thus, the plenary assembly was able to draw only a minority of soldiers, about 300 of them. On October 29 a demonstration was organized in Porto. Its relative success — 500 soldiers and several thousand demonstrators — illustrated both the problems posed by such a protracted mobilization and the maneuvering abilities of the general staff, which ordered nighttime maneuvers for October 29 in an effort to prevent the soldiers from leaving the barracks. We have deliberately limited the interview to the questions of most general interest. It was taken in Porto on October 24.

INTERVIEW

against the AMI

INPRECOR. What tactics are the military hierarchy and the government using right now? For example, Fabião was the first to denounce the SUV as "counter-revolutionary"; but today he is trying to coopt it. What do you think the response of the soldiers will be?

Answer. For us it is obvious that the officers and the hierarchy are trying to defend their positions, the basic positions that they won and defended for years in the service of the bourgeoisie. The whole hierarchical structure acts with the aim of opposing the development of the independent organization of soldiers. We can see this through many concrete examples. None of us have forgotten that Fabião's first response was to characterize the SUV as counterrevolutionary. Today he is trying to raise the slogan of integrating the SUV into the hierarchical apparatus of the army in order to disarm us and reestablish discipline. What is also significant is that he never opposed the measures taken by Veloso (commander of the northern military region) or the constitution of the AMI. All his position — about which the reformists keep quiet — actually allow the reactionaries to make gains. This must also be seen in relation to the government's attitude to the workers movement. For the moment, the present government is not taking open and violent repressive measures. Instead it is trying to maneuver and isolate the most advanced struggles of the workers, avoiding an open and decisive confrontation in the short term in order to prepare the ground for dealing new blows to the workers movement.

All the comrades who believe in the possibility of using Fabião against Veloso, one wing of the hierarchy against another, must understand that such a tactic can only create confusion and pave the way to defeat.

INPRECOR. The victory of the struggle of the RASP required a mobilization of the workers movement on a regional and national scale. What is the position of the Socialist party and the Communist party on the necessity for this mobilization?

Answer. In reality, the mobilization was inadequate on a national scale. Nevertheless, conditions did exist for using the enormous capacities of the movement of soldiers to create "support commissions" for our struggle. In Lisbon, for example, solidarity was organized only when Fabião came to Porto (October 14). That was already belated.

In a certain sense, the parties implanted in the working class are the main ones responsible for this state of affairs.

The SP was constantly screaming about discipline. The result of this policy is obvious: It facilitates the maneuvers of the worst reactionaries, who grab onto the coattails of the SP, even if the Socialists sometimes try to shake them loose.

It is important to mention that tomorrow, October 25, there will be a demonstration in support of Pínhairo de Azevedo (the prime minister). The SP has published a statement in which they accuse the CDS (Centro Democrático Social—Democratic Social Center, a far-right party) of trying to take advantage of this demonstration. The SP understands that it has rather unsavory allies at the moment. But that in no way reduces the responsibility of the Social Democratic leaders, who are turning the workers against the workers in uniform, against the soldiers struggling for their democratic rights and against the creation of a professional army, which represents the essential foundation of our struggle.

Nevertheless, the participation of many Socialist workers in our struggle was very positive.

As for the CP, the problem is the following: The CP wants to make use of the movement of soldiers to win an influence among sectors of the military hierarchy and also wants to play on the contradictions that exist within the hierarchy. Already the CP has said that it was possible to win Fabião over to the side of the workers. The function of all this is to impose a new government, a sort of fifth-and-a-half government mixing together the fifth and sixth governments. That is, a government prepared to apply an austerity policy (like the fifth government) and a government beaten by the workers who see the necessity of defending their interests, as was the case with the metalworkers, the agricultural workers, the soldiers of the RASP.

So we can say that the reformist perspectives are contributing to demobilizing the soldiers and creating confusion in their ranks.

INPRECOR. What are the SUV's perspectives for the campaign against the AMI and for the development of the autonomous organs of the soldiers?

Answer. The SUV is a front of struggle that encompasses a great number of soldiers who are ready to fight for self-organization. Its platform is clear; the SUV

does not pretend to represent all the soldiers, and in this sense it is a very limited organization with very specific functions in this phase of the class struggle. The SUV does not claim to be a substitute either for a political organization of revolutionary soldiers and sailors (which remains a strategic project) or for the soldiers commissions. It is very important to stress this in order to avoid false interpretations.

As for the central task, at the moment it is incontestably to step up liaison among the organizations of the workers and soldiers themselves in order to engage in the battle against the creation of a professional army: the AMI. The formation of such an army would mean that any step forward for the proletarian revolution would involve violent confrontations with a professional army firmly determined to prevent the establishment of socialism.

We should not suggest that the AMI would simply function like the Amadora commandos or some other force designated by the sixth government to carry out tasks of repression. This professional army would be a terrible weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie, recruited from among the troops most influenced by the fascists and Spínolists.

The forces of the militarized police, the PSP and the GNR, are already being rapidly reorganized. Confirmed Spínolists have been placed in many posts. They will not be satisfied merely with a reestablishment of order in the manner of the sixth government. Here is an example: During the SP demonstration (October 10 in Porto) well armed and organized fascist gangs with light automatic weapons and pistols took to the streets and attacked the headquarters of organizations of the workers movement. These gangs, like the Spínolists, will be satisfied only by a complete defeat of the entire workers movement.

That is why the struggle for socialism, in which the soldiers of the RASP-CICAP are trying to provide an example, is a decisive struggle that must be waged with all our strength. If the reactionaries win this first battle against the movement of soldiers, they will also try to strike at all the mobilizations of soldiers on a national scale and at the whole workers movement too.

We do not rule out the possibility of a short period of hesitation during which the soldiers retreat a bit, partially. That is the price we pay for the illusions and confusion that exist. Then it will be a question of drawing the lessons and of preparing to enter the next struggles better armed politically.

I am convinced that the task of revolutionaries is to prepare for new offensives, to take a step forward in the movement of self-organization of the soldiers during new mobilizations around precise objectives.

The struggle against the AMI — that is the task of revolutionary soldiers wherever they are stationed.



López Portillo

MEXICO: Echeverría's Successor...

Friend of Imperialism & the Mexican Bourgeoisie

by ALFONSO RIOS

The Mexican political apparatus is moving full steam ahead in preparing the campaign of José López Portillo, former minister of finance and now designated successor to President Luís Echeverría for the six-year term 1976-1982.

The procedures used to "designate" the candidate of the official party, which no way differed from the procedures used on similar occasions in the past, demonstrate more clearly than ever the totally antidemocratic character of the Bonapartist system that has been oppressing the Mexican people for more than fifty years now.

Revolutionary Marxists have always considered the system that reigns in Mexico as a dictatorial system. Obviously, official ideology denies this and claims that Mexico is a "democracy" — a very special democracy, of course, a democracy "à la mexicaine," but a democracy nonetheless. A mountain of books and studies have been produced, each more "knowledgeable" than the next (most of them originating from the "Latin American Studies" departments of Yankee universities) presenting the most sophisticated theories on the mechanisms of "oligarchic Mexican-style democracy." In practice, however, there is only one great elector in Mexico, and that is the reigning president. It is the ruling president who chooses his own successor. That is how Mexican Bonapartism has held on for fifty years without altering its methods, simply changing the Bonaparte every six years (at first it was every four years).

A brief description of how López Portillo was designated is therefore instructive.

Although no democracy exists, the regime has permitted and even favored a certain flexible facade and has allowed for the possibility of a contest among the strongest ministers over the presidential candidacy. This time, two blocs were formed during the race for succession, one around Mario Moya Palencia, the secretary of the interior, the other around Hugo Cervantes de Río, secretary of the presidency. At first, the former appeared stronger, and the layer of professional politicians, especially those of the official party, the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI — Institutional Revolutionary party), were leaning toward this bloc. It also became clear that Echeverría was trying to overlay the traditional methods with a democratic veneer. But it later became obvious that this was only a crude presidential maneuver aimed at exerting the president's hegemony even more strongly and routing potential opponents.

It was declared that the PRI would first work out a program, then it would think about what man should be placed in charge of implementing this program during the next six years. Thus, up to a few days before September 22, when López Portillo was designated, it was still being said that the PRI candidate would be named only at the beginning of October, after the holding of the Regular National Assembly of the party, that is, after September 22-25.

A Marxist analysis of what happened must take account of the impossibility of discovering the most concrete and precise details of what went on and must try to develop this analysis within the framework of a general understanding of the character of the regime. It is necessary to take all this into account in order to understand what finally happened.

NEW WAVE OF REPRESSION

A series of arrests was launched against the members of revolutionary and democratic organizations in Mexico during the second half of September. Under the pretext that a big action was being prepared for September 23 by the militarist organization named after that date (the September 23 League), the police arrested, tortured, and imprisoned dozens of alleged guerrillas. Some militants were later released, such as our comrades Carlos Ferrá Martínez, María Elisa Villaezcusam and Margarito Montes Parra of Mexico City, but others remain in prison, such as our comrade Raúl Villagas of the city of Juárez near the U.S. border.

The Grupo Comunista Internacionalista (GCI — Internationalist Communist Group) was hard hit by the repression; the police raided the GCI headquarters, where *Bandera Roja*, the group's newspaper, is composed and edited. The GCI comrades were also subjected to terrible torture, which was neither explained nor justified after the Mexico City comrades were released. In fact, there is nothing new in this. As was pointed out in a leaflet signed by more than seventy organizations, "It is common police practice to pick up people who have opposed official policy in one way or another, deny that they are being held, and torture and interrogate them for several days until 'confessions' are extracted; then they are officially arrested, released, or, in some cases in which the torture inflicted has been excessive, they simply disappear." The same leaflet, which was widely distributed among democratic organizations and public opinion as a whole, stressed that these arbitrary actions are part of the repressive logic that is being developed in this country under the pretext of combatting "terrorism." In the state of Guerrero hundreds of peasants have been detained and accused of belonging to the guerrilla group of Lucio Cabañas, who has recently disappeared. The number of political prisoners is on the

rise, as is shown by the cases of the trade-union leader Moisés Escamilla and the militant Manuel Anzaldo, the latter accused of being linked to the September 23 League.

President Luís Echeverría has shifted the course of his policy against the revolutionary and democratic movement and has altered some of the means of applying this policy. The new methods were set in motion in conjunction with the policy of "democratic opening" the regime initiated in 1971, a policy that has enabled the government to carry out, with virtual impunity, a selective repression against the revolutionary groups and, above all, against the militarist groups. But, as we have pointed out, this repression is now striking both political groups and broader social sectors; such is the case with the peasants of Guerrero and with the GCI.

During 1975 the GCI experienced growth that undoubtedly made it the largest revolutionary group to the left of the Mexican Communist party, which had monopolized the functioning of the Mexican left for decades. Today, as is apparent from the rejection of Echeverría at the University of Mexico and the demonstrations in solidarity with the struggles in Spain, the GCI is a pole that is recognized by thousands of militants who are moving closer and closer to revolutionary Marxism. Last September the successful visit to Mexico of comrade Ernest Mandel (see INPRECOR, No.35, October 9) allowed us to hold several very large meetings, particularly the final one, in defense of Portugal, which was attended by more than 2,000 people. All these meetings, organized by the GCI, convinced the regime and its police instruments that the GCI had to be watched more closely. That is what accounts for the repression now coming down on the GCI, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Mexico.

The Regular Assembly was to take place during days that were crucial for the designation of the candidate. A massive demonstration of the Confederación Nacional de Organizaciones Populares (CNOP — National Confederation of Popular Organizations) called for September 24 was destined to be the scene of possible surprises. The astute leaders of this branch of the PRI — which, along with the Confederación Nacional Campesina (CNC—National Peasant Confederation) and the Central de Trabajadores Mexicanos (CTM—Mexican Workers Federation), is one of the main pillars of the party — had publicly declared that the vote of the president in the selection of the presidential candidate would be decisive. It was later known why that declaration was made.

The president chooses his successor, but his choice is not arbitrary; it is made over a limited field. In the case of the last five presidents, the secretary of the in-

terior has held a favored position in this field. The inertia of the enormous political bureaucracy and the decisive weight exerted by the control of the masses through the PRI and the other official organizations that are coordinated by the Secretariat of the Interior gives the holder of the post of secretary of the interior a decisive advantage over the other members of the cabinet.

But with the growing number of conflicts and contradictions building up on the political and economic scene, the political apparatus of the government-PRI has been increasingly shaken ever since 1968, the year of the great crisis. Echeverría responded to these tensions with his "democratic opening," partially neutralizing these tensions with more or less timid reform measures. Thus, under this government, even though all the possible successors declared their fidelity to Echeverriism, the secretary of the interior was always considered as most closely linked to the repressive sector and as the main advocate of a stronger style of rule.

In addition, in the middle 1970s the Echeverría regime finds itself confronted by increasingly serious economic problems: growing trade deficit, colossal debts to the agencies of imperialism, structural unemployment organically linked to the very heart of the economy, and a rising cost of living that is impoverishing vast sectors of the "middle classes." With Echeverría, for the first time in this country a technocratically worked out plan was set in motion to coordinate the existing financial, administrative, and political chaos of the federal government. For the first time, the technocratic layer had direct responsibility for the political orientation of the gigantic bureaucratic apparatus of the Mexican government. Today it is more than ever necessary for the bourgeoisie to take technocratic measures, above and beyond the traditional repressive measures, to resolve (partially, of course) the grave national problems.

The designation of López Portillo is a response to this situation. Although secretary of finance for only three years, he has proven capable of surrounding himself with and receiving the advice of one of the most clever sectors of the technocracy. In this way he participated in raising the prestige of the "triangle of government efficiency": the secretariats of Finance, the Presidency, and National Patrimony. Moreover, last but not least, his relations with the financial agencies and the national and international banks made López Portillo a logical candidate, even though he is somewhat different from past Mexican presidents.

But in order to impose his choice on the official world, Echeverría had to make a maneuver that underlines the profoundly antidemocratic character of the regime. Moya Palencia had been counting on the inertial force of previous choices to act in his own favor. But on September 22, before any program had been adopted and even though Echeverría himself had declared the day before that in Mexico "it is the majority that decides the presidential succession," the propaganda apparatus of the presidency came out with the word: "López Portillo is the one."

As soon as the presidential choice was known, people began jumping on the bandwagon. But it was later clear that this presidential selection had been made without even consulting the closest government functionaries, those formally assigned to "choose" the candidate: to begin with, of course, the leaders of the PRI itself and the presumed successor, Moya Palencia.

The abdication of the whole PRI leadership, its replacement by various cabinet ministers, the changes made in the cabinet, and the servile behavior of the popular "leaders" all demonstrate in a clear and grotesque fashion that even those who occupy the highest government posts have absolutely nothing to say in designating the presidential candidate. The September 24 demonstration of the CNOP, which, it had previously appeared, would serve as Moya Palencia's tribune from which to launch his candidacy, instead served to ratify the candidacy of López Portillo.

Fissures in the regime

But this capacity for maneuver on the part of the regime cannot conceal the regime's pronounced ossification, its lack of real flexibility. Reyes Heróles, outgoing president of the party, was coopted to the government; Muñoz Ledo, secretary of labor and social security, was named president of the PRI; Gómez Villanueva, secretary of the agrarian reform, was made secretary general of the PRI. The trade-union leaders stay in place; the structure remains. The top functionaries have simply been shuffled.

These changes, although they do not herald any substantial modification of the apparatus, nevertheless testify to growing fissures, friction, and internal conflicts. Thus, while the PRI no longer mobilizes the masses (and as an instrument of mass mobilization it is completely dead), it is obvious that Muñoz Ledo and Gómez Villanueva could not breathe new life into the PRI even if they wanted to, despite the enormous means at their disposal.

Further, the group that has now crystallized around Moya is not simply one more group. It represents the old layer of professional politicians, the top oligarchy of the Mexican "revolutionary family"; it represents a center of power that has only partially been supplanted by the new technocracy. This technocracy is even less linked to the masses than are the professional politicians. When it becomes necessary to resort to the old populist demagoguery, it will be necessary to call upon the old politicians, masters at mouthing off.

The PRI has shown that it is a structure totally dependent on the president, especially as concerns the question of presidential succession. Naturally, the PRI has its cliques, nuclei of power, and "caudillos" who can choose and impose their candidates for posts like deputy or senator; but the big important and substantial decisions remain in the hands of the president. The PRI has in no way attenuated the despotic and authoritarian presidentialism that dominates the Mexican regime.

Revolutionary perspectives

In 1975 the next president of Mexico was designated by a flick of the little finger of the sole and great elector. But 1975 has also seen the clear emergence of a new vanguard on a national scale. This vanguard is predominantly student in composition, but it contains a growing number of workers; it is the living evidence of the discredit and erosion of the Mexican Bonapartist apparatus. It represents the layers of the population that are moving ever farther from government policy and are seeking an independent alternative. On March 14 at the University of Mexico a part of this vanguard directly disavowed Echeverría. All signs are that his successor's fate will be no better. The twilight of Mexican Bonapartism has set in irreversibly. López Portillo will not stave off its night. ■



Prime Minister Razak

Malaysia REPRESSION AND CONFRONTATION

by PAUL PETITJEAN

In less than a year the Malayan government has taken a series of measures that amount to a new hardening of the police regime of Tun Abdel Razak: the arrest of personalities and militants for violation of the "internal security act"; direct takeover of the universities; legal establishment of the principle of collective responsibility; institutionalization of informing; creation of a special "antiterrorist" court exempt from "normal" juridical rules; systematic police operations.

The utilization of this new repressive arsenal is one of the essential elements of Razak's planned response to the gradual changes in the internal social and political atmosphere and the deep alterations in the regional relationship of forces caused by the victory of the Indonesian revolution.

The Malayan economy has not suffered an overall crisis during the past two years. Nevertheless, some of the most important sectors have been hard hit, even though Malaysia has escaped the generalized recession. The country was not affected by the increases in the price of oil. Its relatively modest oil production (90,000 barrels a day) is generally sufficient to cover domestic needs. While the world market price of rubber has temporarily dropped (after a strong increase in 1973), the price of coconut oil has held up. In spite of this, the social crisis has sharply intensified.

The average per capita yearly income is one of the highest in Southeast Asia: US\$400. But this figure conceals pronounced social disparities. The 1974-75 report of the Ministry of Finance officially admitted that 40 percent of the population live below the poverty threshold, which is a monthly family income of 140 Malaysian dollars (about US\$70), or 25 Malaysian dollars per capita (US\$12.50).(1) These social disparities have been aggravated.

The first to suffer from this have been the 500,000 small-scale rubber planters, who raise 50 percent of total rubber production. In reality, the great majority of these people live well below the poverty threshold, as

is indicated in Table 1.(2) The results of an inquiry conducted at the end of 1974 in the state of Kedah by Denzil Peiris of the Hong Kong weekly Far Eastern Economic Review testify to this.(3)

At the time, the smallholders sold latex for 25 cents a pound, which provided an average daily income of 1.20 Malaysian dollars (M\$). According to Peiris, a minimum of comfort required a daily income of M\$3; the subsistence level was M\$1.50. Such was the poverty of the smallholding families — a total of about 3 million people — a poverty that was especially serious since the rate of inflation was high (25 percent price increases in 1973-74 and 17 percent in 1974-75).

Rice became too expensive, and the peasants had to feed themselves with wild tubers; malnutrition was spreading among children, and cases of death from food poisoning were reported. It was in this context that significant movements of struggle broke out and a junction between the student movement and the peasant movement took place.

The first incident occurred in Tasek Utara, near Johore Bahru in the far south of the Malayan peninsula. Just before the elections of August 1974 some landless peasant families occupied some unused land in order to build houses on it. In September, after the victory of the "National Front" of Tun Abdel Razak, there was a test of strength with the "antiriot" police. The students of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, the National University, and the University of Sciences in Penang supported the land occupation. In September there were demonstrations in the capital, Kuala Lumpur, while other students traveled to Tasek Utara to participate in the peasant mobilizations. The police arrested a number of peasants and student leaders, among them Hishamuddin Rais, secretary general of the University of Malaya Student Union (UMSU), a representative of the Socialist Club(4), and Syed Hamid Ali, secretary general of the Partai Sosialis Rakyat Malaya (PSRM)(5). The UMSU was then suspended by the minister of education.

In spite of this first wave of university and political repression, the struggle picked up again during November and December, in Baling. On November 19 and 20 some 1,000 peasants organized a "hunger march." On November 21 about 12,000 people demonstrated. It was the first time in twenty-eight years — since the anti-British demonstrations of 1946 — that such a large mobilization occurred in that area. The government responded with tear gas. Once again, however, the students lined up on the side of the peasants. Some 10,000 students demonstrated in Kuala Lumpur on December 2; 2,000 marched in Penang and 10,000 in Ipoh. The government arrested 1,164 students. Despite the arrests, the struggle continued throughout the week; the campuses of the universities of Malaya, Kebangsaan, and Holy Malaysia were occupied until the police invaded and conducted a systematic search of rooms on December 8 and 9.(6)

This junction of the student and peasant struggles was triply dangerous for the government. First, it permitted the isolation of local struggles to be broken down and turned the "hunger march" into a national political issue. Second, it thereby exposed the social demagoguery and "liberal" facade of the regime. Third, it marked the beginning of an overcoming of the ethnic divisions that weaken the combat capacity of the workers of Malaya.

The ruling classes play on the communal opposition among Malaysians (who constitute the essential part of the peasant population), Chinese (who constitute the bulk of the urban workers and control the great majority of Malaysian economic interests), and Indians. In 1969 these communal antagonisms went so far as to take on the aspect of anti-Chinese pogroms. But the university population that mobilized in support of the Malayan peasants was markedly multinational. The composition of the December 2 demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur was approximately 70 percent Malayan and 30 percent Chinese and Indian. This means that about half the Chinese and Indian students of the university had taken to the streets. Additionally, the university student unions, like the UMSU, led by Malaysians, lent active support to the strikes launched by Chinese and Indian workers in the Kuala Lumpur region. The Socialist Club, in fact, was one of the first genuinely multiethnic political formations of Malaysia. And the Malayan Communist party, originally based almost exclusively among the Chinese community, seems to have effectively begun to recruit cadres of Malayan and Muslim origin.

Obviously, this overcoming of racial and religious antagonisms was only partial and gradual. Nevertheless, it corresponded to a deeper evolution, as was noted by the journalist Philippe Devillers: ". . . a 'new class' of bureaucrats, aristocrats, and economic cadres has emerged; it is attracted to the consumer society of the American type and, in spite of Islam, is eager to share the benefits and advantages of this society with the Chinese. Social inequality is growing rather than de-

clining, and the contrasts are just as vivid among the Chinese as among the Malaysians and Indians. The image of a society divided among poor Malaysians and rich Chinese, the latter exploiting the former, no longer actually corresponds to reality. Malaysian society, multi-racial, is in the process of dividing into social classes that cut across ethnic origins. . . ."(7)

Repression in the universities

In order to break the student mobilization, the Tun Abdul Razak regime began by utilizing the traditional repressive apparatus: police intervention and arrests under the Internal Security Act. This law, decreed in 1960 three years after independence, was a followup to the Emergency Security Act of 1948 and provides for the imprisonment of any oppositionist for a renewable term of two years without any trial at all. Among those interned were a number of professors, faculty assistants, and student leaders, including Dr. Syed Hussein Ali (brother of the secretary general of the PSRM and a professor at the University of Malaya) and Juliet Chin, general secretary of the University of Singapore Student Union (USSU). Symbolic of the broadening of the movement of struggle, also among those arrested were Lim Mah Hui, a faculty assistant who is a member of the executive committee of the World Federation of Christian Students, and Anwar Ibrahim, president of the Malaysian Youth Council and a leader of the Anghatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM — Islam Youth Forces, Malaysia), a Muslim movement.

But the government was not content simply to suspend the UMSU and utilize the Internal Security Act. In April 1975 the regime decided to amend the already very repressive Universities and Colleges Act, which was passed in 1971. According to the amendments, the Ministry of Education will henceforth have direct or indirect control of nominations to the university administrations. Students and student organizations are forbidden to affiliate in any form to any off-campus club, political party, trade union, or other organization, even legal ones. The students and their organizations are likewise forbidden to say anything that could be interpreted (1) as a demonstration of support or opposition to any trade union, party, or illegal organization. The student unions are denied the right to organize financial collections. Any student who could be reasonably suspected (1) of having violated any of these rules may be arrested without warning. Any student brought to trial is automatically suspended from the university. All previously existing student organizations were officially dissolved and required to request new legalization. The sole representative of the entire student body is the Student Representative Council.

While the Razak government did not succeed in winning any student support by decreeing this law, it did manage to temporarily break the ongoing mobilization. In an interview with *New Asia News*, Hamid Ali, secretary general of the PSRM, recognized that "these measures have been outwardly effective so far." But the fact that



The state of Malaysia, or the Malaysian Federation, is composed of a continental portion (western Malaysia) and an island portion (eastern Malaysia). Singapore, which seceded from the Malayan peninsula, then called Malaya, formed an independent state in 1965.

The population of continental Malaysia includes 9,770,000 inhabitants; the area is 58,735 square miles. In the Malaysian Federation, 47% of the population is of Malayan origin, 34% is of Chinese origin, and 19% is of other origin (mostly Indian, but also the inhabitants of the island of Borneo and others). Malaysia is the world's leading producer of rubber, tin, palm oil, and tropical wood, and one of the leading producers of pepper and pineapple preserves.

no student group had requested new legalization showed, he explained, that "the repression can produce temporary silence, but no support." (8)

What direction for the struggle

In an effort to justify its repression, the Razak government denounced the grip the Malayan Communist party was supposed to have had on the student struggles through the vehicle of the Chinese Language Society of the University of Malaya. In fact, however, the real leadership of this mass movement was shared among the formations of the radical left (such as the Socialist Club) and much more traditionalist, if not right wing, Islamic currents. *Kebangsaan University* (the national university), for example, played an important role in December. It is composed of Malayan students (generally more right wing than the Chinese students), a majority of whom are of Muslim peasant origin and little awakened to class struggle but sensitive to the egalitarian traditions and political purism of Islam.

The point of convergence of these diverse currents was the affirmation of active solidarity with the poor peasants of Baling. But only the most advanced wing of the movement combined this elementary support with clearly anti-imperialist (and even anticapitalist) objectives and demanded the nationalization of foreign capital, which controls about 60 percent of the economy, as indicated in Tables 2 and 3. (9)

In any case, the Communist movement proper, which is clandestine, seems to be going through a twofold process of growth and break up. Up to now, the activity of the Malayan CP has been limited to guerrilla actions in the jungles in the Malaysian-Thai border regions. (This has been the case since the CP suffered defeat in the war with British imperialism.) Tun Abdel Razak's trip to Peking in May 1974 did not prevent the Maoist guerrillas from stepping up their actions. Since the beginning of 1975, at least forty members of the police and security forces have been killed in ambushes.

But splits in the Malayan CP have produced two additional organizations, both of which continue to claim allegiance to Maoism and armed action. Peking seems to continue to recognize the Malayan CP, which has been led by Chin Peng for the past seventeen years. On April 29, 1975, the Chinese Communist party sent greetings to the CP Central Committee on the occasion of the party's forty-fifth anniversary. The message reaffirmed the Chinese Communist party's confidence in the coming triumph of the "revolutionary armed struggle of the Malayan people" (10) which created some embarrassment in Tun Abdel Razak's entourage in Kuala Lumpur.

The first split took place in 1970, the departing group taking the name Malayan Communist party (revolutionary faction); the second, in October 1974, gave rise to the CPM (Marxist-Leninist). According to Malaysian government sources, the immediate cause of these splits

was the order for summary executions issued by the Central Committee out of fear of police infiltration.(11) But they were also said to have been based on disagreements over what strategy to follow in order to break out of the single jungle guerrilla center. The radio station of the Chin Peng Communist party has on several occasions denounced the "handful of traitors" who challenged the policy of the "march to the South," that is, the gradual encirclement of the cities from the countryside through the use of guerrilla bases located along the Malaysian-Thai border.(12)

While the terms of the differences and the exact character of the splits and orientation of the "orthodox" CP are difficult to grasp, the framework of the debate is clearer. A reexamination of a "Maoist" strategy adopted during the 1950s and 1960s was required because of the emergence of new generations of revolutionary militants, the partial modification of the social structure of the country with the concurrent strengthening of urban proletarian layers, the formation of a neo-colonialism replacing the traditional British domination, and the modification of the regional relationship of forces — even within the Asian Communist movement — brought on by the victory of the Indochinese revolution. From this standpoint, it is probably significant that the differences seem to be especially strong in the state of Selangor, where Kuala Lumpur is located.

It remains true, however, that the guerrilla actions have partially shifted toward the capital this year. At the beginning of the year an airbase near Kuala Lumpur was attacked by mortar. A leaflet signed by the People's Army for the Liberation of Malaya (PALM) and distributed in July 1975 in the city of Ipoh declared: "Be prepared for our urban civil strife, which is the result of the government's action over the years. . . . The urban guerrilla is inevitable."(13)

This liberation army is said to be linked to the former Twelfth Regiment of the Communist party's National Army of Liberation (founded in 1949) and to the new CP(M-L). Chinese policemen are beginning to become targets for attacks. On August 26, 1975, the "national monument" constructed in Kuala Lumpur in honor of the "victory" over the Communist insurrection was bombed. Finally, on September 3 grenades were launched in the capital against a barracks housing paramilitary forces assigned to carry out the antiguerrilla struggle; there were several dead and several dozen wounded.

A regime of terror

Incapable of drying up the social sources of the ongoing development of struggle in Malaysia, the Razak government is seeking to establish a real regime of terror. The "tenant regulation" of 1951 has been rounded out by the Essential Community Self-Reliance Regulation of 1975.

"Antiterrorist" courts have been established in which, contrary to the tradition of English law in effect in Ma-

laya since colonial times, the accused must prove his innocence. Informing has been institutionalized: testimony can be taken secretly or conveyed by anonymous letter. Discussions about the information take place behind closed doors. Collective responsibility is generalized: Every member of a family is held responsible for the acts of all the other family members. The same goes for the members of a community as defined in the Rukun Tetangga Scheme ("pillars of the community" scheme). On July 24 Razak called for the formation of a vigilante corps.

But Tun Abdel Razak's policy cannot be reduced to pure and simple repression. There is also a diplomatic policy. (He was one of the first to preach the creation of a "zone of peace and security" in Southeast Asia and was the first in the region to recognize the People's Republic of China.) There is also an economic policy: Razak is seeking to boost the participation of the state sector in large-scale enterprises, especially the ones that exploit the country's oil. But this profitization of the neo-colonial economy implies a growing proletarianization of the Malayan population and a social test of strength.

To succeed in his plans, Razak is trying to utilize the success of his Barisan Nasional(14) in the manipulated elections of August 1974. The Barisan Nasional got 58 percent of the vote — and 135 of the 154 seats in the federal parliament. It is not difficult to see through this parliamentary pretension of the regime. Even the Far Eastern Economic Review was compelled to admit, "The latest elections brought Malaysia, through the ballot box, almost to the edge of a one-party state." "Both the state-owned newspapers and other media and the publications in the private sector operate under controls and directives from the government."(15)

The test of strength now shaping up in Malaysia is important. In the North the Malayan revolution is organically linked to the development of struggles in southern Thailand. In the South, the profound unity of the battles waged on the peninsula and on the island of Singapore has been constantly reaffirmed. During the Tasek Utara demonstrations, for example, the student unions of the University of Singapore and of the Polytechnic Institute put out many communiqués and made gestures of solidarity. For Malayan revolutionaries, the partition of the country is only temporary. In the East the movements of North Kalimantan (Borneo) are a component of the struggles in the Indonesian archipelago.

More fundamentally, in Malaysia, as in the other countries of Southeast Asia, the third wave of the Asian revolution is now taking shape, the wave that was started by the final victory of the peoples of Indochina. Because of the wounds left by interethnic divisions, the lack of class-struggle traditions among the Malayan peasantry, the continued grip of the traditional religious chiefs, the violence of the repression being carried out by the regime, and the obvious inadequacy of the strategy previously elaborated by the Communist movement in Malaysia, the struggle is proving to be difficult at the outset. Because of its importance and its difficulties, this struggle needs and deserves international solidarity.

TABLE 1

Pattern of Land Ownership
Among Malaysian Smallholders

Taking account of all smallholders who grow various crops:

- 48% have less than 3-5 acres to cultivate
- 20% have 3-5 acres each
- 20% have 5-10 acres each
- 12% have 10-99 acres each

Source: Treasury's Economic Report, 1974-75.

Note: Official sources admit that a smallholder needs at least 6 acres of land in order to produce enough crops to maintain adequate subsistence. The same sources admit that 25% of smallholders do not own their own land: They either pay a fixed rent or share their crop with the landlord. (See footnote 2.)

TABLE 2

Foreign ownership
of capital of incorporated companies,
West Malaysia, 1970

Sector	M\$ in thousands	% of Sector
1. Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries	1,079,714	75.3
2. Mining and Quarrying	393,910	72.4
3. Commerce	384,549	63.5
4. Manufacturing	804,282	59.6
5. Banking and Insurance	332,790	52.2
6. Construction	19,937	24.1
7. Transport and Communication	9,845	12.0
8. Others	182,862	31.4
	TOTAL	AVERAGE
	3,207,889	60.7

* Source: Federation of Malaysia, Mid-term Review of the Second Malaysia Plan, 1971-75, Tables 4-7, p.83.

TABLE 3

Foreign ownership of plantation estates

Types of Estates	Total Acreage	Foreign Owned	% Foreign Owned
Rubber	1,561,000	867,000	55.5
Oil Palm	529,000	283,000	53.0
Coconut	54,000	36,000	66.7
Tea	7,000	4,000	57.1
	TOTAL	TOTAL	AVERAGE
	2,151,000	1,294,000	60.0

Source: "Berita Massal," No.1, December 30, 1974. (See footnote 1.)

FOOTNOTES:

1. Sunday Mail, March 2, 1975, quoted by Philippe Devillers, Le Monde Diplomatique, August 1975.
2. Tables 1, 2, and 3 have been reproduced from the document of the Annual Conference of the FUEMSSO of March 1975. (See address below.)
3. See Far Eastern Economic Review, January 10, 1975.
4. Hishamuddin Rais has now gone underground. The Socialist Club (Socialis Kelab) was a radical student formation leading the UMSU. An interview with a student who is a member of this organization was published in INPRECOR, No. 9, October 3, 1974.
5. The Partai Socialis Rakyat Malaya (Socialist People's party of Malaya) is the only real legal leftist opposition political party.
6. On this subject, see the call for international solidarity published in INPRECOR, No. 19, February 13, 1975. Its author, Selamat Ahmed Kamal, former president of the Student Union of the Holy University of Malaysia, had then gone underground. He has since agreed to return to his university under conditions posed by the government (cessation of all activities).
7. Le Monde Diplomatique, August 1975.
8. New Asia Review, July 18, 1975.
9. The article published in INPRECOR, No. 9, described the efforts made by the Socialist Club to make the students and the population conscious of the foreign grip on Malaysia. It also showed that the leaders of the Socialist Club knew that the majority they had obtained in the student movement of the University of Malaysia did not mean that their ideas had been completely understood and assimilated.

10. See the declaration in Peking Information, May 5, 1975.
11. See The Asia Magazine, May 4, 1975.
12. See J. Decornoy in Le Monde, February 20, 1975.
13. Far Eastern Economic Review, September 12, 1975, article by K. Das.
14. The Barisan Nasional (National Front) is dominated by Razak's party (the United Malay National Organization) in alliance with the bourgeois Chinese and Indian parties (Malay Chinese Association and Malaysian Indian Congress) and five other parties.
15. Far Eastern Economic Review, January 10, 1975.

Some addresses useful for following the struggles in Malaysia and Singapore:

Malaya News Service
97 Drummond St., Carlton, 3053
Melbourne, Australia

FUEMSSO News Service
Federation of United Kingdom and Eire Malaysian
and Singaporean Students Organization
c/o National Student Organisation
3 Endsleigh St., London WC 1, England

and also:

Center for Information on Asian Political Prisoners
(CIAP)
Suzuki Bild, 3F-B, 5-3 Sarugohu
1-chome, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 101,
Japan

ICELAND GENERAL STRIKE OF WOMEN

Practically everything in Iceland ground to a halt on October 24, the day of the first general strike by women in the history of the European labor movement. More than two-thirds of the women of Iceland stopped work on that day, women employed in industry and services and housewives. There were meetings and demonstrations in nearly all towns and villages. More than 20,000 people demonstrated in Reykjavik, that is, 10 percent of the population of the entire country! The strike had been called by all the country's women's organizations.

The general slogans of the demonstration were not very concrete: Greater equality between men and women; Equality now; More child-care centers. But the enor-

mously broad participation is a result of a very concrete reality. Average wages for women in Iceland are 25 percent lower than average wages for men, with the women employed in the lowest paid jobs. Inflation ran at about 50 percent last year, and the contracts signed by the trade unions provide for wage levels that are below subsistence for the lowest-paid categories, which means for women. Women constitute 43 percent of the membership of the trade unions, but there is not one woman among the fifteen national wage negotiators. For the revolutionary Marxist activists in the women's movement, the October 24 strike laid the basis for widespread work among women in the struggle against women's position under capitalism and against the capitalist system itself.



on the position of Lotta Continua
**from Chile to Portugal –
nature & implications
of Chinese international
policy**

by LIVIO MAITAN

The problem of the international policy of the Chinese leadership has once again been posed for the workers movement, and for the far left in particular, by the attitudes the Chinese leaders have taken toward the situation in Portugal, their statements on Angola, the welcome extended to a delegation of the Chilean government, and the presentation of credentials by Ambassador Li Lien-pi to the authorities of the Common Market. The imminence of the visit to Peking by a rather broad delegation of Italian industrialists and concern that this visit may be the occasion for some Chinese statements not at all useful for the workers now engaged in battles over the renegotiation of labor contracts are in all probability additional elements that induced Lotta Continua to directly deal with the question of Chinese international policy during the September meeting of the LC National Committee.

The position presented in the report published in the September 18 issue of the daily Lotta Continua was marked on the one hand by the acknowledgment of certain facts of life and by the call for explicit dissociation from some of the Chinese attitudes that are most difficult to swallow and on the other hand by an attempt at interpretation and justification that is reminiscent of the style of certain "friends of the Soviet Union" during the 1930s and 1940s, "friends" who were always able to come up with interpretations suited to satisfying the demands of the least coarse palates. In any case, we agree with Lotta Continua that the broadest discussion about its positions on the analysis of Chinese policy and the definition of a different strategy is necessary; for our part, we consider it useful to take up a series of themes that revolutionary militants should think about critically.

Two superpowers: a false theory

At the theoretical root of the Chinese positions is the theory that the USSR is an imperialist power, or more precisely, a social-imperialist power. The nonorthodox Maoists especially rely on the label "social imperialist" in order to overcome the difficulties that arise from the incontestable fact that the policy of the USSR entails motives and attitudes that are hard to identify with those of U.S. imperialism. (Lotta Continua, for example, resorts to the "social imperialist" designation when discussing the positions of the U.S. and the USSR on Angola.) Nevertheless, it remains the case that according to the Chinese leaders, there is an analogy, and even an identity, on the essential element: the class nature of the two states. Nothing in substance is changed by the fact that most of the time, particularly in current propaganda, this concept is replaced by the not at all scientific conception of "great powers" or "superpowers," countries belonging to a "first category," which is then counterposed to a second and third category, both of which are distinct from the "superpowers." For the Chinese, the identity lies in the fact that in the final analysis capitalism exists in the USSR, as it does in the United States.

This is not the place to go into this problem in an exhaustive manner. The difficulty lies in understanding the dual, contradictory nature of the ruling caste in the Soviet Union. This caste has raised itself above the worker and peasant masses, has practically destroyed Soviet democracy and imposed its own dictatorship, and, in order to safeguard its own domination and its own privileged position, has worked and still works in general for an international status quo, subordinating the interests of the world workers and revolutionary movement to this requirement. Nevertheless, the bureaucracy arose out of and continues to operate within the framework of a society of postrevolutionary transition based on the property relations and relations of production established by the October revolution; for that very reason, the bureaucracy has an interest in safeguarding these relations. Hence its struggle against tendencies toward the restoration of capitalism, above all when these tendencies begin to constitute a real threat and not merely a potential tendency. Hence also the bureaucracy's interest in opposing the expansion of imperialism and in supporting both social forces and movements in struggle against imperialism and countries in which the revolution or structurally revolutionary processes have brought down the capitalist system.

The case of Cuba eloquently illustrates this. The Soviet bureaucracy did nothing to help the revolution win; on various occasions during the period before the revolution the Cuban Communist party supported Batista, and it joined Fidel Castro's struggle and movement only during a later period. But when a workers state arose in Cuba in which both the imperialist companies and the companies of the so-called national bourgeoisie had been expropriated, the leadership of the USSR had an interest in preventing the United States from attacking Cuba in order to restore the old regime. It therefore provided vital economic and military aid. Similar considerations were at work in the case of Vietnam. The leaders of the USSR did not want the Geneva accords to break down; nor did they want the Vietnamese revolutionaries to respond with armed struggle to the new operations of the imperialists and their puppets. The Soviet leaders did everything possible to impose compromises, thus rendering the task of the Vietnamese leaders more difficult, especially at crucial moments. (This is also true of the Chinese leaders, at least beginning in 1971.) Nevertheless, the USSR stood on the side of Vietnam in the course of the conflict and furnished Vietnam consistent military aid, even if it was belated in certain respects. And for many years Vietnam was the epicenter of the world class conflict; hence, the positions that were taken had to have been determined not by tactical considerations or by conjunctural or secondary interests, but rather by the class nature of the forces at work.

As for the class nature of the socioeconomic structures (which obviously must be the starting point of the analysis), the definition of the USSR as a workers state, that is, a state in which collectivist relations of production exist and not relations of production of the bourgeois-capitalist type (in spite of the bureaucratic de-

generation), is confirmed by a fact of life whose importance cannot be overestimated. For a year and a half now the whole capitalist world has been racked by the most serious economic crisis since the great depression of the 1930s. For Marxists, it is out of the question to ascribe the fundamental cause of this crisis to conjunctural or partial factors or to the imbalances that are emphasized by the economists and politicians of the bourgeoisie. Rather, the present crisis must be seen as the result of the very functioning of the system, of its intrinsic contradictions; the breadth and depth of this crisis are linked to the overall crisis of imperialism on a world scale. This recession has not taken hold in China. This is not because the Chinese economy is more developed than the other economies of the world or because it has attained a greater degree of solidity. (In fact, in comparison with the developed capitalist countries, the opposite is true.) Rather, it is because the revolution has established qualitatively different relations of production, of a collectivist type. But the USSR has not been hit by the storm either. Should we take note of this undeniable fact and seek to understand the structural factors that account for it? Or should we wait for a Bettelheim to think up some new explanation adapted to the new circumstances?

During the 1960s, when the polemics over the alleged restoration of capitalism in the USSR were going on, the most commonly used arguments were that the USSR was integrated into the capitalist world market, that it was constantly increasing its trade with the capitalist countries, that it was having foreign capitalists construct entire industrial enterprises, that it was taking out foreign loans, and so on. At that time we explained that these features were not decisive in defining the social nature of the USSR. Now China is doing exactly the same things — and on a large scale. What do the Maoists think of this, the dogmatic ones or sophisticated ones? Do they perhaps intend to follow the road already traced out by some sects (certain ex-Maoists in the United States, for example), whose consistent application of false premises has led them to conclude that capitalism has now been restored in China?

The USSR as «main enemy»: practical implications

The first analytico-practical implication of the theses of the Chinese leaders is that the world situation should be interpreted much more as the reflection of the conflict between two "superpowers" than as the development of the crisis of the international capitalist system and the clash between opposing social forces. Class distinctions become attenuated and toned down, if not abolished. This emerges more clearly from the Chinese practical positions than from the analysis itself. It becomes especially clear to the extent that the Chinese leaders no longer place a sign of absolute identity between the USSR and the United States. In both cases,

according to the Chinese leaders, we are dealing with imperialist "superpowers"; but the USSR is explicitly denounced as the more aggressive and dangerous of the two: "While one of the two superpowers is continuing its forward push, the other is marshalling its forces and marking time" (Pékin Information, No.32, 1975, p.8). "In this fight to the death, the Soviet Union is exhibiting an offensive spirit, while the United States is rather on the defensive" (same source, p.9). "The country that preaches peace and security most vociferously is the country that flagrantly militarily threatens the peoples of the world and especially the peoples of Europe" (statement of Teng Hsiao-ping in Paris, Le Monde, May 15, 1975). From which it follows that the USSR is currently the "main enemy," to use the Maoist terminology.

Peking's attitudes toward Europe, the Common Market, NATO, and the Helsinki conference flow from that premise. "China," said Teng Hsiao-ping, "firmly supports the unity of West Europe." "Since the formation of the European Economic Community," said Chinese Minister of Foreign Trade Li Kiang when relations were established between the EEC and China, "the tendencies toward unity on the part of the West European countries have been accentuating. They have held firm in face of pressure and intervention from outside and have ceaselessly worked to safeguard their sovereignty and independence. This is a positive factor in the development of the international situation." (Pékin Information, No.20, 1975.) Shortly thereafter, the Chinese news agency Hsinhua commented favorably on the victory of the "yes"-vote in the British referendum on the Common Market and denounced Soviet hostility to the EEC: "The European Community was created for the very purpose of opposing superpower domination and expansion and to safeguard the political rights and economic interests of its member states." (Hsinhua, June 18, 1975, English-language edition.)

Thus, for the Chinese leaders the EEC is not an expression of the tendency toward the concentration of capital, nor is it an association of imperialists (the European powers, while they are not "superpowers," remain imperialist!); rather, it is a sort of instrument for the legitimate defense of states whose class nature has simply been swept aside. An analogous reasoning is applied to NATO, the possible weakening of which the Chinese leaders openly regret (Pékin Information, No.33, 1975), going to far as to suggest that the strengthening of European unity should not necessarily imply the withdrawal of American troops from Europe. (See the discussions between Teng Hsiao-ping and French President Giscard d'Estaing.)

The Helsinki conference offered an especially interesting test, beyond its intrinsic importance. In fact, never has it emerged so clearly that the Chinese critique of Soviet policy is not based on the fact that the Soviet leaders have made a compromise with American imperialism. (We leave aside Lotta Continua's fantastic assertion that in certain respects "Chinese policy appears to be motivated by the determination to fight against a 'historic compromise' on a world scale.") On the con-

trary, the USSR is denounced because, according to the Chinese leaders, behind the mask of détente and pacifist statements, the USSR is carrying out an aggressive policy against Europe, preparing for war. (See, for instance, Hsinhua, August 13, 1975, English-language edition.) It is not astonishing that in order to marshal support for such a thesis the Chinese news agency does not hesitate to utilize reports from conservative newspapers throughout Europe, from the *Neuer Zürcher Zeitung* to *De Telegraaf*, to *The Guardian*. Nor is it astonishing that on several occasions Peking should grant audiences (including affectionate handshakes from the great helmsman himself) to a tool of reaction like Franz-Josef Strauss. After all, he can obviously be counted on to denounce the Moscow "superpower" and all its nefarious maneuvers without showing any signs of weakness.

Such are the logical practical implications of the theory of social imperialism and the "main enemy." There is no point knocking oneself out in a search for justification. Lotta Continua claims that China used the invitations to people like Strauss in order to "make provocations and exert pressure." In any case, the pressure (on Social Democratic, center-left, or center governments) was exerted from a right-wing standpoint, while the "provocation," if such it was, was directed not against the European or American imperialists but rather, at least in the case of Strauss, against the working class and revolutionaries of West Germany, who saw Peking grant full honors to a man they correctly consider one of their most dangerous enemies.

To the extent that it exerts real political influence (and we have seen to what extent that is), the theory of the USSR as the "main enemy" leads to giving priority to one of the two "superimperialisms," to concentrating the attack against Moscow, and to labeling some of the most conservative representatives of the European bourgeoisie as defenders of national independence. It may be said in passing that this latter attitude also originates from the radically false conceptions about the "anti-imperialist" role of the so-called national bourgeoisie, conceptions that have had and still have even more serious implications in the colonial and semicolonial countries.

The Chinese leaders and the struggle in West Europe

Concentration on the theme of the struggle between the two superpowers leads to reducing the emphasis on the structural contradictions (both social and political) that are now making themselves felt in an especially acute manner in West Europe. Of course, from time to time Chinese publications carry analyses (summary ones for the most part) on the economic crisis and unemployment, as well as news about strikes in various countries. But the emphasis is placed on the struggle between the two superpowers, in Portugal, for example.

Nothing is changed by the fact that frequent quotations appear in the Chinese press taken from obscure newspapers put out by equally obscure "national" Maoist groups, for the aim is always to bolster Peking's own theses with the loyal testimony of devoted followers.

But there is another aspect to the problem. For about fifteen years now the Chinese leaders have been making an enormous propaganda effort, distributing weekly and daily bulletins in many languages. Possibly the most widely distributed bulletin is *Pékin Information* (the English-language edition is called *Peking Review*), whose aim is to popularize the Chinese positions on all theoretical and political problems, on China itself and on other countries as well. So, during the current year (up through No. 37, September 15) there has been just one article on Spain; it dealt with a series of strikes and made no mention of the general political situation in the country. In the case of another key country, Italy, there have been a total of three reports, only one of which can really be considered as such (on the strike of February 23); the others consisted of the announcement of a visit to Peking by a delegation from the *Organizzazione dei Comunisti/marxisti-leninisti d'Italia* (Organization of Marxist-Leninist Communists of Italy, led by Osvaldo Pesce) and a reprint of an article published in *Nuova Unità* under the title, "The USSR, Main Danger to Peace in Europe." Neither *Pékin Information* nor the English-language edition of the daily *Hsinhua* bulletin (the largest of all the editions) published a single line on the elections of June 15 (the elections that resulted in large gains for the CP, which came close to overturning the Christian Democracy's position as the country's largest political party and actually became the largest party in nearly every major Italian city). Apparently Peking considers it more important to do some advertising for Osvaldo Pesce's little sect than to analyze the fact that the Italian Communist party polled more than 11 million votes!

Since March, Portugal has undoubtedly been the main epicenter of workers and revolutionary struggles in Europe. In China they seem not to have noticed. Neither does the Chinese press speak of the various Portuguese workers organizations, with the exception of the pathetic Portuguese Communist party/Marxist-Leninist; instead the floor is given to a newspaper produced by Swiss Maoists, called *Octobre*, from which we learn that "the most important danger facing Portugal is the offensive of Soviet social imperialism." (*Hsinhua*, August 18). This when the moderate counteroffensive was at its height, when reactionaries and fascists were attacking the headquarters of the Communist party! Little more than ten innocuous lines were published about the Portuguese events of March 11; there was a short piece on the April 1975 elections, which did not mention the CP or the far left. As for the events of May 1, about which the entire international press commented in one way or another, there was also not a word. The London-based *Hsinhua* bulletin, however, did find space for a report of the demonstration organized by the Communist party of Great Britain (Marxist-Leninist).

The predominant theme in the short reports that do appear about Portugal is constant denunciation of the dangers of penetration by Soviet "social-imperialism," in regard to which the Chinese press agencies do not hesitate to use the same arguments as those used by reactionary Western rags, including the generic accusation taken from police vocabulary that the Soviet Union is "fishing in troubled waters." (Hsinhua, June 16.) At the present time, we do not have sufficient information to judge to what extent the USSR has sought to increase its own influence, either directly or through the medium of the Portuguese CP, which has up to now received unreserved official ideological and propagandistic support. The most probable hypothesis is that the Soviet leaders were taken by surprise by April 25 and particularly by the succeeding events and that while waiting for the situation to become clearer, they fell back on the traditional policy of aiding and strengthening a Communist party that in any case had already given repeated proof of its rigorous orthodoxy. At the same time, they sought to make use of Cunhal's greater "orthodoxy" in polemics against parties like the Italian and Spanish CPs, which are considered "too independent" of Moscow. Up to now at least, it does not appear that the USSR has intervened in Portuguese internal developments in any other way; the USSR has not had any consistent influence. In any case, if it turns out that the Soviet Union is able to take advantage of the weakening of the imperialist camp and of NATO that has been caused by the Portuguese crisis, we see no reason why the working class and revolutionaries should have any regrets, as the Peking leaders seem to have, even if they do not say so explicitly.

On the other hand, it is a fact that American imperialism, and European imperialism perhaps even more so on the political level, have been and still are maneuvering desperately in Portugal, intervening with threats, blackmail, pressure, and actions of various other types (including terrorist acts) with the fundamental aim of blocking and stifling the revolutionary struggle. To keep quiet about this and to direct the attack against the USSR means concretely to favor reaction and to deal a blow against the Portuguese revolution.

The Maoists in Portugal, taking advantage of the bureaucratic and opportunistic degeneration of the Communist party of the Soviet Union and the Portuguese CP, have succeeded in doing what Maoists have not done in other European countries which have been racked by prerevolutionary and revolutionary crises: create rather substantial organizations that are in position not simply to reproduce Chinese documents or variations on Chinese documents, but also to put a given orientation into practice. Hence, an analysis of the policy of certain Portuguese organizations constitutes an important test.

The organizations that have applied the theory of the two superimperialisms with the most orthodox adherence to the Chinese leaders themselves have wound up supporting Soares's demonstrations, blocking with the Portuguese Socialist party in many trade unions, and dubbing as revolutionary the reactionary mobilizations in

the North, sometimes going so far as to participate in attacks on CP headquarters. Aberrations of people who are only "Maoists" (between quotation marks) or "so-called" Maoists? No, they are Maoists consistently applying the theory with which many others have toyed without having the courage to think the theory through scientifically and still less to draw all the practical conclusions. If the USSR is an imperialist power, if it is the main enemy, and if the Portuguese CP is nothing but an agent of the USSR, and if the strategic axis of the strug-



gle during the current phase is the fight for national independence against the two superpowers, then it is logical to flirt with and reach agreements with the SP, which is the agent of the "secondary enemy" and perhaps even an expression of the national bourgeoisie which is inclined to fight for independence against social imperialism. It then becomes perfectly legitimate to do all the things that some of the Portuguese Maoist organizations have done, and the problem cannot be swept under the rug by claiming that these groups are crazy or by resorting to scathing epithets.

If they want to draw all the consequences of the theory that they continue to defend and if they want to be consistent with the general theoretical and analytical premises of this theory, then the comrades of Lotta Continua, like all those who accept the theses of the Chinese Communist party, will have to place the Italian Communist party and the Christian Democracy on the same footing, since both are allegedly bourgeois parties linked to an imperialist superpower; or, applying the logic of the "main enemy" thesis, they would have to concentrate their fire against the CP, thus favoring the Christian Democracy, at least objectively. We know very well that the militants of Lotta Continua would decisively reject such an orientation. But in that case, why not reflect on the substance of a conception and analysis that has such aberrant practical implications? Why not seek to theoretically examine the scientific consistency of certain concepts in relation to problems whose solution is fundamental in working out the organization's

own position within the framework and dynamic of the struggle of the international workers movement?

Holden Roberto and Pinochet

Chinese policy is no less deleterious with regard to the colonial and neocolonial countries, which represent the major center of interest for the Peking leaders. There has been no lack of striking examples, especially since the turn marked by Nixon's visit to Peking. It is sufficient to recall Peking's support to the Pakistani military dictatorship, which was practicing a sort of genocide in Bangladesh; the expressions of friendship for Nimeiry just when he was executing Sudanese trade unionists and Communists; worse yet, the support and applause to the Sirimavo Bandaranaike government when it was massacring a revolutionary movement of young peasants, students, and intellectuals, throwing about 20,000 militants and suspected militants into concentration camps without trial (this support being expressed in a scandalous letter from Chou En-lai published in the Colombo daily press and never denied by the Chinese leaders). But with the above-mentioned visit to Peking by a delegation sent by the butcher Pinochet (on the second anniversary of the September 11, 1973, military coup), the Peking leaders have recorded yet another black page; they do not even stop at maintaining good relations with the most bloody dictatorship in the history of Latin America, which sets them off not only from the Soviet leaders, but even from various bourgeois governments that are concerned about not discrediting themselves in the eyes of public opinion in their own countries.

The Chinese position on Angola is no less eloquent. In principle, a workers state or workers party may desire the unity of various movements fighting for independence against imperialism; in a given context, such a party or state can refuse to set down preferences in granting political and material support. But, in the first place, China has not at all maintained an attitude of neutrality among the Angolan organizations; for a long time Peking has been giving military aid to the FNLA, even when the FNLA openly revealed its neocolonial orientation. Second, the claim that the civil war was provoked by the USSR — a claim that has been repeatedly asserted in official Chinese organs (see Peking Information, Nos. 31 and 36 in 1975, for example) — is false and transparently mystifying. The logic of the Angolan class struggle has been concealed and falsified by the Chinese leaders. Once independence has been won (even if this is still a few months away), the struggle will have to grow over from the anti-imperialist field to the field of conflict between the indigenous classes. We have no intention of attributing labels to the MPLA that the organization seems not to claim for itself, but it is impossible to avoid noting that the MPLA is expressing more advanced positions and is feeling pressure from the masses, who do not want to be robbed of the fruits of their victory over colonialism by the indigenous ruling strata or by neocolonialist operations and have begun to organize on a democratic rank-and-file

basis, especially in Luanda; the FNLA, on the other hand, unites behind it the "national" owning strata (or candidates for that role) and enjoys the support of Mobutu, not to mention the favors of the United States.

The truth is that in the Indian subcontinent, in the Sudan, in Angola, and in Chile, Chinese policy, far from being characterized by episodic deviations or incomprehensible contradictions, falls within an overall logic, a logic whose effects in other parts of the world we have already enumerated. Concealing or maximally toning down qualitative distinctions based on the class criterion and substituting criteria based on real or potential conflicts of interest and consequent divergences between the two "superpowers," the Chinese leaders indiscriminately seek convergences, agreements, and alliances with the so-called national bourgeoisie and their governments, even conservative or reactionary ones. The claim that the USSR is the main enemy does the rest: against the USSR anything is legitimate, from friendly relations with the shah of Iran to applause for the repression in Sri Lanka to cordial visits from the Chilean reactionaries.

It could perhaps be thought, rather ingenuously, that at least in Latin America it is the United States that deserves the qualification "main enemy." Such is not the case, however, as is demonstrated by the example of Chile. The Allende government, while it was not a pawn of "social imperialism," certainly maintained better relations with the Soviet Union than with the United States. Precisely for this reason, Peking did not join in the international campaign to denounce the coup; on the contrary, the Peking leaders hurried to use the maneuvering room opened up by the coup in order to take advantage of the weakening of the positions of the "main enemy." Is there a single revolutionary, a single militant of the Chilean workers movement, prepared to accept or justify such a calculation and such a policy?

Drawing the general conclusions

At this point it is possible to draw some conclusions.

The theories and interpretations of the Chinese leaders, intrinsically erroneous, have harmful practical implications, which may be synthesized as follows:

*by concentrating the fire on the USSR in international politics, these theories cover up the responsibility of American imperialism and thus objectively facilitate the actions of U.S. imperialism;

*China's orientation toward conflicts in West Europe and the political-diplomatic choices that flow from that orientation favor the bourgeoisie of the countries of the Common Market as well as those outside the Common Market; the initiatives of these governments and their politicians, including reactionary ones, are often presented in a favorable light;

* the same tendencies are at work in the colonial and neocolonial countries, especially in critical situations in which precise class distinctions are an urgent necessity.

To affirm as Lotta Continua does that "the Chinese choices move on a level different and distinct from the level on which the commitment of the revolutionary forces in the class struggle in each country moves" is a pitiful euphemism, a timorous attempt at justifying the Peking policy. The Chinese positions and the actions of those who are inspired by these positions are in contradiction with the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the working class. Even apart from theoretical proof, Portugal, Chile, Angola, Sri Lanka, etc. demonstrate this incontestably.



Another meaningful element by which to judge the policy of the Chinese leaders is provided by the relations these leaders maintain with the workers movement, and particularly with the far left, in other countries. According to Lotta Continua, China "makes provocative use of European Marxist-Leninist parties which exist only when reports about their visits to Peking are printed in the Chinese press." But against whom are these "provocations" directed? Certainly not against the imperialists; they simply take no notice of such operations, for they are meaningless as far as the imperialists are concerned. Against the "social imperialists" perhaps? But the Soviet leaders have everything to gain from such buffoonery, which objectively increases their own prestige and above all the prestige of the Communist parties under their influence. In actual fact, the "provocation" affects the militants and groups who have interpreted the so-called cultural revolution favorably, who consider China as a "necessary international reference point," who have gained some credit in the countries in which they are working, and who then find out that the Peking leaders prefer grotesque personalities and groups lacking any real substance. But is all this simply a matter of buffoonery and non-profitable utilization of the resources of the Chinese state? No. There is also a logic in it. It is the logic

of those who want to establish relations of unconditional subordination, who demand the most rigid orthodoxy and automatic acceptance of all turns, whether strategic or tactical. In other words, what the Chinese leaders are establishing are eminently bureaucratic relations. Pages and pages of the Chinese press are given over to the reports of the activities of groups that do not exist, to quotations from newspapers that merely re-echo what has already been heard from Peking; nothing at all is said about the struggles of revolutionaries or communist parties in countries like Portugal, Spain, France, and Italy. All this expresses in the most paradoxical manner the criterion that lies at the root of the behavior of the Chinese bureaucracy, the same criterion that lay at the root of the behavior of the Soviet bureaucracy during the Stalin period and lies at the root of this behavior



to this day: Subordination of the needs of the struggle of the workers of the world to the needs of the bureaucracy itself.

We repeat: Only those who want to deceive others or themselves can claim that what is involved here is a matter of individual incidents or episodic deviations. A whole series of events and attitudes taken at crucial moments indicates that what is involved is an overall line. Precisely those who have applauded and supported the Chinese leaders in the hope that they would act as a revolutionary leadership offering new perspectives to the international workers movement should now feel the urgent need to do some basic thinking about the real nature of this leadership.

Rely on your own forces

The conclusions that Lotta Continua draws from its empirical remarks about Chinese policy are pessimistic, objectively at least: "The problem today — for the European revolutionary left and, more directly, for the Mediterranean revolutionary left — is to really count on our own forces and to be able to construct, both

practically and theoretically, the response to the concrete challenge contained in the positions of the Chinese comrades: Is it possible to make the revolution in this region, to free it from the tutelage of American imperialism, without falling under the control of social imperialism?"

The choice of relying only on one's own forces entails (whether this is desired or not) renunciation of the international dimension of the struggle, a renunciation for which a price is inevitably paid. The example of the Chilean MIR is instructive here. This organization was marked by a similar conception during the years of the Unidad Popular government; the MIR did not go beyond a general internationalism, a general reference to Cuba, and did not take a precise position on the cru-



cial problems of the international workers movement. Thus, in practice the militants of the MIR undervalued and maximally attenuated concrete comprehension of the fact that the struggle in Chile was an indivisible part of a world conflict in which tendencies and forces were at work that would inevitably affect the situation in Chile itself in one way or another. (This would have been even more true if the Chilean experience had continued or if a workers state had been established.) Among these forces were primarily American imperialism and the Latin American "national" bourgeoisie, but the Soviet bureaucracy was also involved, as was the Chinese bureaucracy itself (although less so), not to mention the contradictory influence exerted by the Cuban leadership.

In the present phase more than ever, a revolutionary struggle cannot be victorious if it lacks an international dimension. This is particularly the case not so much for an ill-defined "Mediterranean area," as for West Europe itself, which has now achieved a significant degree of economic, social, and political interdependence. A victorious revolution in a European country like Spain, France, or Italy would immediately find itself facing drastic economic choices, given the impossibility of an autarkic retreat into a new "socialism in one country." The economic dynamic no less than the political dynamic

would pose the alternative: extension of the revolution or its suffocation and defeat. And it will be very difficult to unravel this knot in a positive manner if this perspective is not clear from the outset, if the European and international workers movement is not able to prepare itself in advance for such a choice.

And there is more. Only political myopia or an attachment to a schema whose falsity or extremely equivocal character we have already pointed out could translate this dilemma into the formula: "either in the U.S. orbit or in the Soviet orbit." Just the opposite, it must be clearly stated that a qualitative structural transformation of the economy of Spain, France, or Italy would make it possible and realistic to envisage projects not only of collaboration but also of genuine economic in-



tegration with East Europe and with the USSR itself (obviously, this does not rule out relations with China). Those who remember the difficulty the Kremlin had in imposing its hegemony over countries like Czechoslovakia and Poland and who remember Stalin's lack of success in his attempts to subjugate a small country like Yugoslavia will understand that it would not be so easy for "social imperialism" to force countries like France or Italy into relations of subordination. Let us leave such hypotheses to the propaganda and senile fantasies of the reactionaries. For us the opposite is more likely; that is, a revolution and the beginning of socialist construction in a country with a high economic and cultural level and a solidly organized and politically mature workers movement would have very great repercussions in East Europe and the USSR itself. This could be a decisive factor in unblocking the situation of paralysis that has dragged on for years but has always contained enormous contradictions that can blow up at any time (the events in Hungary and Poland in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968, and Poland again in 1970 have proven this).

Instead of "counting on our own forces" in order to go through experiences that are cut off from the tendencies operating in other parts of the world, we have to count on our own forces, the forces of others, and the dialectic

tical interdependence of both factors within an overall perspective in which the connections are indissoluble and will tend to become increasingly close.

We do not want to bring up yet another problem, but we cannot resist mentioning an additional point: Is it not perhaps realistic to think that a revolution in a European country would have an impact on the American working class itself, thus creating an additional obstacle to imperialist action?

«Sterile polarization»?

"To develop the initiative and debate on this crucial point (that is, revolutionary perspectives in Europe — INPRECOR) is an especially important task for the revolutionary left in Italy — which is most solidly linked to reality and to the lessons of the class struggle — in relation to a European revolutionary left within which a sterile polarization between a 'Marxist-Leninist' current and a 'Trotskyist' current is tending to crystallize." Thus Lotta Continua.

In fact, it is quite important to pursue the debate on all points that are raised in the Lotta Continua document. Other points could be added to those already mentioned. There is scarcely any need to recall all the burning problems that have been raised by the Portuguese experience: the overall problem of the motor forces of the socialist revolution and its instruments, the means by which to take power.

It is a fact that for a whole crucial period (although slightly less so now) the Italian far left re-echoed the illusions prevalent among the Portuguese left about the role of "guarantor" of the revolutionary process allegedly being played by the MFA (Armed Forces Movement); these "guarantors" were particularly some of the MFA's most outspoken representatives, who gave very "advanced" interviews that in turn received very enthusiastic responses. This was not a matter of a simple error in analysis, but a radical error in conceptions. What was envisaged was granting the title of motor force of the revolution and guiding instrument of the revolutionary struggle to a force other than the proletariat, a force that could not be a revolutionary party. Experience has quickly demonstrated (unfortunately at the price of a serious halt in the revolution) that although the varieties of a revolutionary process can be unpredictable and the modes and pace of the construction of a leadership can vary to the utmost, the task of revolutionaries is always to grasp the substantial elements of the process that lie behind conjunctural forms and misleading appearances; further, "peculiar" roads, exceptions, shortcuts, and "originality" are not possible either with respect to the function of leading motor force, which can be fulfilled only by the working class, or with respect to the necessity for organizing the working class itself into a revolutionary party of the Leninist type. Not to understand this would mean not to have reflected sufficiently on the Chilean tragedy or on the Portuguese events, the outcome of which remains open.



The debate, we repeat, is necessary. It must be real, nonexclusive, and on time. There is no use at all in falling back on exorcistic formulas like the "sterile polarization" that supposedly afflicts the European revolutionary left. If there is a phobia about initials and labels, let's leave them aside and discuss the real problems and the conceptions that correspond to these problems, conceptions that lie at the roots of the political and organizational differences.

The "Marxist-Leninist" (or rather, Maoist) positions are a reality that will not be easily eradicated, both because these positions have historical precedents that tend to be revitalized under certain conditions (dogmatism, sectarianism, adventurism, etc.) and because, even more important, these positions are fueled directly or indirectly by the force represented by the leadership of the Chinese state with all the prestige it commands. The Trotskyist positions are another reality which no one can deny and which Lotta Continua, like others, must learn to analyze and judge on the basis of their intrinsic importance, for what they actually say, without misleading tactical considerations and without weighing the words of various speakers according to the influence that those speakers currently command. There is scarcely any need to add that the positions of the Communist parties, which continue to represent an international current in the workers movement, cannot be dismissed off-handedly, but must be refuted theoretically and strategically and their practical implications must be denounced.

Lotta Continua seems to suggest an initiative for the Italian revolutionary left that could counter the tendency toward "sterile polarization." As far as we are concerned, there is no doubt that the Italian far left has the strength to make its voice heard or that it has undergone experiences that militants in other countries, probably adherents of all tendencies, have not sufficiently reflected upon. This experience can aid in the deeper and more concrete understanding of a whole series of problems, but not necessarily by providing "new" or peculiar solutions. Lotta Continua's assertion, however, seems to contain a note of particularism, if not of na-



tional messianism, which, regardless of the intentions of the comrades who subscribe to this view, is linked to a tradition that can be considered only partially positive.

At various times the Italian workers movement has had features that distinguished it from the workers movement of other countries in West Europe. During the first two decades of this century, the Italian Socialist party held a special place in the Second International, as did its successor with respect to European Social Democracy after the fall of fascism. The Italian Communist party can also lay claim, not without foundation, to its own "national" physiognomy, which distinguishes it from other Communist parties. Even the phenomenon of the PSIUP during the 1960s (Partito Socialista Italiano di Unità Proletaria — Italian Socialist party of Proletarian Unity) probably had no real equivalent in any other country. During the first world war these peculiarities acted in such a way as to save the Italian workers movement from a capitulation as shameful as that which took hold among the great majority of the workers movement in many other countries; they also prevented Italian Social Democracy from joining with the rest of European Social Democracy in reactionary operations during the time of the so-called cold war. Similarly, the peculiarities of the Italian Communist party permitted both the reduction of the impact and duration of the most classical Stalinist damages and the overcoming at a certain point of the most debilitating forms of pressure from the Soviet bureaucracy. Nevertheless, the other side of these tendencies has been the development and consolidation of intermediary, eclectic, and centrist positions of various types, at various levels, and at various times. This has facilitated equivocation, ambiguity, and illusions (think of the Italian Socialist party, which joined the Third International immediately after the first world

war and voted in a congress for the dictatorship of the proletariat), has retarded the necessary clarification and development of the consciousness of vanguard militants, and has therefore represented an obstacle to the building of a Leninist revolutionary party. The very process of critical rethinking initiated by the Italian CP beginning in 1956 (in its own way and in advance of all the other Communist parties of the capitalist countries) was laden with negative consequences that continue to assert their weight today, twenty years later. With the concurrent adoption of an increasingly "constitutionalist" and "gradualist" line, this has fueled a strong current that criticizes Stalinism from the right, a current that now holds a large majority among the cadres of the party. At the same time, exactly because of the accentuated regression, exactly because of this tendency toward Social Democratization, many of those who refused to accept a reformist perspective have been driven toward orthodox Stalinism, neo-Stalinism, and Maoism.

The Italian far left must therefore ask itself whether its own peculiar features actually make it superior to the rest of the European far left simply because they result from experiences that unfolded during the most protracted social and political crisis of all capitalist Europe. These peculiar features must be examined critically in the light of the past history of the Italian workers movement; and the ambiguities and contradictions of these features must be grasped. The Italian far left must develop a more internationalist outlook, which also means taking account of all the international tendencies and defining its position on the great problems of the workers movement throughout the world. This is an ineluctable theoretical necessity and a concrete political exigency.

September 20, 1975

THE CRISIS OF SOVIET AGRICULTURE

by ETTORE SALVINI

The news coming out of the Soviet Union about this year's grain harvest gets more pessimistic every day. In any event, it is already clear that agricultural production this year will fall far short not only of the objectives of the economic plan but also of last year's production levels. (The total harvest will probably be equal to or even less than the disastrous harvest of 1972.)

Agricultural production accounts for more than 20% of Soviet national income⁽¹⁾, but three-quarters of all consumer goods originate in agriculture. The importance of the agricultural situation in the growth of the national income is thus obvious.

Agriculture has always been the Achilles heel of the Soviet economy. From the 1921 famine in the Volga region (during which cases of cannibalism were reported), to the mass hunger in the Ukraine in 1931-32, to the agricultural crises of the early 1950s, and later, in more recent years, to the most important cases of bad harvests (1963-64 and 1972) agricultural crises have punctuated the history of Soviet society and the Soviet economy.

Relations with the peasants have been (and, as we shall see, still are) a crucial unresolved problem for the leaders of Soviet society. The process of industrialization changed the face of the Soviet republic, but although the specific weight of agricultural production and of the peasants in the life of the country was reduced, the industrialization did not succeed in solving the problem of agriculture; nor could it, because of the means by which the industrialization was carried out.

The ferociously repressive and barbarically despotic manner in which the Soviet bureaucracy effected the collectivization of agriculture during the years 1929-32 certainly constitutes the central nub of the problems of Soviet agriculture. It almost seems as though the forcibly expropriated peasants, in part deported and completely shunted to the sidelines in the life of the country, are still taking their revenge for what happened forty-five years ago.

In reality, however, things are not that simple. The policy of the bureaucracy in conflicts with the peasants has been marked by continual oscillations revolving around the question of individual plots of land. In fact, collectivization gave rise to a dualistic structure in the Soviet countryside: On the one side were the collective farms owned by the state (*sovkhozi*) and the cooperatives (*kolkhozi*), whose production was centrally planned and whose products were consigned to state stockpiles; on the other side were the individual peasant plots, whose production remained the property of the peasants. Formally the individual plots (which today account for about 3% of total cultivated land area) are supposed to serve exclusively for the consumption of the peasant families themselves. In reality, however, even today 9% of total agricultural production (34% of potato production) intended for sale and 15% of livestock production (19% of meat) intended for sale come from these minuscule plots of land, which are cultivated intensively but without any technical aid from the state.

Before the second world war, these percentages were even more unfavorable to the collectivized sector (53% of commercial agricultural production and 54% of commercial livestock production came from the private sector). This meant (and means) extremely low productivity in the collective sector — in which nearly all machinery and investment is concentrated — and an extremely high concentration of effort in the private fields, which are cultivated only manually. The oscillations of the bureaucracy generally unfold according to the following schema: limitation of the use (and area) of private plots; fall in overall agricultural production; concessions on the use of private plots; upturn in agricultural production; development of the private sector; first difficulties in the collectivized sector; limitations on the private plots, and so on. In the meantime, agricultural production remains substantially stagnant.

Economically, the vicious circle was based on ridiculously low agricultural investments; politically, it was

based on an absolutely authoritarian management of both the sovkhozi and the kolkhozi.

The Khrushchevite policy was not substantially removed from the classical Stalinist model, the essential features of which we have outlined above. It is true that the concessions were more extensive and systematic than ever before; but the circle was closed again with the new limitations introduced at the beginning of the 1960s and with the disastrous harvest of 1963.(2)

Brezhnev's agricultural policy

The group of leaders that replaced Khrushchev began its work by abandoning the limitations on private plots that had been introduced by Khrushchev and by making a series of concessions to the peasants in the realm of the prices of agricultural products (which were increased); exemptions were introduced on the delivery of goods to state stockpiles. Thus, a very moderate policy produced good results during the second half of the 1960s.

But the new element in Brezhnev's policy consisted in the fact that the reaction to the bad harvest of 1969 and the even worse one of 1972 was not the traditional response of resorting to limitations on the private sector in the countryside; instead, there was a redistribution of investments in favor of agriculture.

This represented an important change in Soviet economic policy, which has always considered agriculture as a poor relation to be exploited in a colonial fashion. Thus, productive investment in the agricultural sector rose from an average of 15.4% of total investment in 1961-65 to 16.9% in 1966-73; it attained 20.3% in 1972 and should average 21% during the ninth five-year plan, 1971-75.(3) Such a policy had in fact already been imposed by Khrushchev, who had raised the quota of agricultural investments, which had been virtually nonexistent during the Stalin period (11.7% in 1946-50).

Nevertheless, it was Brezhnev who systematized this policy and followed it through to the end. In addition, the notable decline in the agricultural population made it necessary to intensify investment if an increase in the availability of consumer goods was desired. Concurrently, the standard of living of the peasants was significantly raised and, more important, the increase was more rapid than it was in the city. In addition, various social gains were introduced in the countryside for the first time, like a guaranteed monthly income and pensions for the kolkhozi workers. In this manner, the basis was laid for putting an end to the traditional marginalization of the peasant class.

Nevertheless, the results of this year, even more than those of 1972, demonstrate the inadequacy of all the efforts that have been made.

Granted, Soviet agriculture functions under unfavorable climatic conditions much worse than those prevailing in the United States. (In this regard, see René Dumont,

Sovkhoz, kolkhoz, et la problématique du communisme, Paris, 1964, pp.17-21.) Granted, the policy of exporting grain during the tsarist period and during the years 1920-1950 was made possible only by the general lowering of the living standards of the population. Granted, investments in agriculture require years before they produce results. But in spite of all this, this year's bad harvest will constitute a genuine failure, the proportions of which will be especially serious if the most important part of the harvest, the grain harvest, turns out to be less than 168 million tons, that is, the lower limit of the current five-year plan, already reached by the miserable harvest of 1972.

The objectives of the ninth five-year plan in the realm of agriculture were rather cautious, as they were in all realms: an increase of 15% over the 1966-1970 average yearly harvest of 167 million tons was projected; that is, an average of 195 million tons during 1971-75.

This objective has already been placed in question by the bad harvest of 1972. This year's harvest will demolish it definitively. As we shall see, this implies negative consequences for the Soviet economy as a whole, consequences that in turn will probably have effects on the political field. It thus becomes important to examine the causes of the lack of success of the Brezhnev agricultural policy.

We have seen that Brezhnev sought to break out of the vicious circle afflicting Soviet agriculture by allocating a much larger share of investment to agriculture than had been allocated in the past. But nothing was done on the political level to have the peasants participate in the management of the cooperative and state agricultural enterprises. Both of these sorts of enterprises, which increasingly resemble each other, are managed substantially in just as authoritarian a manner as they were thirty or forty years ago, at the height of the Stalin era. In this situation the function of "material incentives" (to use the Soviet term) could not be decisive; just the opposite, they could produce only totally inadequate results, as we have seen.

In fact, an authoritarian structure is perfectly adequate to a market economy in which the logic of profit is sufficient to assure the maximum efficiency compatible with this type of system. When neither the market nor the logic of profit exists, as is the case with the Soviet economy, the absence of economic (and political) democracy becomes a strong brake on development; the overall advantages made possible by total planning are increasingly unable to compensate for this.

Soviet agriculture has another weak point that further aggravates the situation: the dualistic structure, or rather the schizophrenic division between the very large mechanized enterprises and the tiny private plots. Initially, this dualistic structure was necessary in order to compensate (at least partially) for the negative consequences of a collectivization that was carried out against the will of the great majority of the peasants and in the context of a virtually nonexistent level of industrializa-

tion of agriculture (lack of mechanization and chemical fertilizers). This mixture, with its feudal flavor, became a powerful factor of economic conservatism: In large part, the agricultural stagnation can be traced back to this.

Nevertheless, an "administrative" (that is, bureaucratic) abolition of the private plots could entail, if not a genuine peasant uprising, at least forms of passive resistance disastrous for agricultural harvests. The only alternative is to aim at a progressive overcoming of the peasants' desire to own their own land by increasing the income the peasants derive from the collectivized agricultural enterprises, which means by significantly increasing the productivity of these enterprises. This was the policy that Brezhnev followed — correctly — in the economic field.

But the economic measures were not sufficient; deep political changes were also necessary. And that is where Brezhnev called a halt, naturally. A political democratization could not have been limited to agriculture; therefore, in one way or another, such a change would have undermined the power of the social layer Brezhnev represents: the bureaucracy. In theory, of course, a different solution was possible: a return to generalized private property in the countryside. Obviously, the private plots could have constituted an important basis for this. A cursory examination of the present structure of the Soviet countryside is sufficient to demonstrate that this could not have opened the way to a return to capitalism. But it is hard to imagine how the approximately 6,000 hectares cultivated by each kolkhoz (or the 20,000 hectares of each sovkhoz) could be divided up, or how the thirty-four tractors, ten harvesters, and sixteen trucks would be shared, not to mention the mechanized stables, the chicken-breeding equipment, and all the other fixed investments that have been accumulated during the years of collectivization, especially during the past two decades.

Agriculture and industry

The failures of Soviet agriculture have immediate (and, of course, long term) effects on industry.

In the first place, there are direct effects on light industry, since three-quarters of the raw materials for Soviet light industry originate in agriculture. In addition, the mobilization of the whole population that is required to reduce the consequences of the bad harvest(4) obviously has effects on industrial production itself.

But the indirect consequences are even more serious. The grain deficit itself will be partially made up through the purchases abroad that are now being negotiated, especially with the United States and Canada. If we assume that 30 million tons will be purchased,(5) the expenditure in foreign exchange could amount to between \$2,000 million and \$3,000 million, depending on the sort of grain that is bought. For the most part, this grain will be purchased from advanced capitalist countries,

that is, from countries that provide the USSR with sophisticated technology essential for the development of Soviet industry.

The USSR will thus have to cut back on the purchase of machinery from the western countries, at least temporarily, in order to buy grain,(6) which will constitute 20-30% of total Soviet imports from the western countries.

In addition, the attempt to redress the agricultural situation will generate strong pressure for a further redistribution of investment in favor of agriculture. This will slow down the development of other industrial sectors. Over the longer term, account must be taken of the fact that investments in agriculture do not assure as rapid a return as investments in industry. This could have more long-term effects on the rate of economic development.

The bad harvest of 1972, like the bad harvest of 1963, statistically demonstrated that negative results in the agricultural field have immediate negative effects on industrial development. Thus, the results of the ninth five-year plan, which are already none too good, may turn out to be completely unsatisfactory. Furthermore, the new five-year plan will not only begin on a bad footing, but will also have to deal with a weighty negative heritage.

Obviously, it is not easy to quantitatively evaluate the impact of this year's results, and it is even more difficult to establish the influence these results will have in 1976.

Problems of industry

It is nonetheless useful to briefly recapitulate the situation of Soviet industry in 1974.(7)

The overall development of Soviet industry was greater than had been called for in the yearly plan, but less than the provisions of the five-year plan itself. (The five-year plan is amended by yearly plans.) There were lags in a series of important sectors. This was due to the reappearance of that endemic malady of the Soviet economy, the "dispersion of investment," and, more generally, to the failure to solve the basic problems that reemerged with unaltered intensity after the economic reforms were shelved.

As of 1974 a striking qualitative failure with respect to the objectives of the five-year plan began to take shape. These objectives called for a more rapid growth for the sector producing consumer goods (Department II) than for the sector producing means of production (Department I), although not without ambiguity. In reality, however, beginning in 1972 the proportions started to turn around once again, reverting to the "classical" model of Soviet economic development. Once again Department I was getting the top priority, and this in spite of the fact that it was already clear to the Soviet

leaders that it was politically necessary to aim at the development of consumer goods in order to hold in check the latent sociopolitical tensions that were coming to the fore with ever increasing force. But it is not easy to alter proportions that have crystallized out of decades of economic development, especially since the preservation of the "slice of power" of the most influential groups of the ruling caste (in this case the groups linked to heavy industry) depends on the maintenance of these proportions.

Moreover, the agricultural failure in 1972 slowed down the development of light industry, in a twofold manner: First, by depriving light industry of necessary raw materials; second, by diverting a part of the investments in light industry either directly toward agriculture or toward those sectors of the production of the means of production that service agriculture (tractors, fertilizer, etc.).

These tendencies will inevitably intensify in coming years. The magazine *Planovoe Khozyaistvo* (numbers 8 and 9 in 1975) has already made use of previously unpublished articles by Lenin to reconfirm, according to old dogmatic practice, the Stalinist "law" of lending priority to the development of heavy industry, a law that had been consigned to oblivion several years ago.

But a return to the past on this question — not so much on the level of theory, as on the level of concrete economic management — could be laden with political consequences. Since the accelerated development of the consumer goods industries serves to assure mass consumption (even if only passively), a return to rates of development inferior to those of the economy as a whole would sharpen and make more obvious the tensions that arise from the existing strong imbalances, which are increasingly less compensated for by possibilities of social promotion.

Brezhnev's policy

The past ten years of Soviet history have probably been the most tranquil of all Soviet history since the October Revolution. This represents the main achievement of Brezhnev and his colleagues, an achievement that has cost them a good bit of pain. The causes of this unexpected tranquility in a world that has undergone rapid and traumatic changes in both the East and the West must be sought in the substantial immobility of Soviet society, accompanied by a constant but not exceptional economic growth and a moderate increase in the standard of living of the masses.

The silently shelved economic reform; the tormenting debate on Stalinism (laden with current, but prudently quashed significance); the many, although confused, innovative initiatives of the Khrushchev period, watered down and altered in a conservation direction. Oppositionists not sufficiently well known to go abroad locked up behind the padded walls of criminal asylums. Beyond

the borders of the USSR, the invasion of Czechoslovakia (which clearly disturbed the tranquility) is both the other side and the premise of the détente with the United States. It was these conditions that enabled the Soviet bureaucracy to rediscover its unity and homogeneity, which had been seriously undermined during the decade that followed the death of Stalin. Naturally, a price had to be paid, and that price was precisely to postpone dealing with all the problems that could have created conflict, to take only those initiatives that were strictly necessary.⁽⁸⁾

But this could not be done indefinitely, especially since the consequences of a foreign policy that is rather active both economically and politically began to be felt.

At the beginning of the 1970s, as the first economic difficulties arose, the first signs of unravelling began to crop with within the leading group, which up to then had remained surprisingly compact: Mahavanadze, Shelest, Polyanski, and more recently Shelapin have been removed from the Politburo. The addition of Gromyko, Grechko (from the army), and Andropov (of the political police) was intended to make this body, which is the real holder of power in the USSR (in any case, the only body in which votes take place), more representative, and therefore more solid.

But reality does not always correspond to intentions, even the best calculated ones. As far as foreign policy is concerned, relations with the United States have not rediscovered the atmosphere of affectionate coordination that prevailed during the Nixon years. The defeats of American imperialism (in Vietnam in the first place) have not automatically become victories for the Soviet Union. The strengthening of Soviet military positions around the world (Mediterranean, Indian Ocean) have not always been accompanied by a strengthening of political influence. In Egypt, for example, exactly the opposite has occurred.

The greatest successes for the Kremlin have been registered in Europe (the German peace treaty, the Helsinki conference), but it remains to be seen whether these successes will be anything more than verbal.

The rumors about Brezhnev's illness and, more recently, about the possibility of his being replaced at the next congress of the Soviet CP (scheduled for February 1975) must be seen in this framework. In this regard it is worthwhile to note that if Brezhnev has to be replaced, the question of the state of his health would be of purely secondary importance; we have seen how difficult it was to replace Segni, who was completely paralyzed, so we can imagine the difficulty involved in replacing the first secretary of the Communist party of a country that is a bit more authoritarian than Italy was during the 1960s.

On the other hand, it seems unlikely to expect a party congress, which is but a ritual gathering that lacks decision-making power, to take any measure of political significance.

What next?

But the problem is not to make predictions about the possible date of Brezhnev's fall or about who will succeed him. The important thing is to note, as we have sought to do here, that a period of Soviet history — a period that for convenience's sake may be defined as the "Brezhnev era" — is coming to an end. This does not necessarily mean that it will end during the next few months, but simply that the elements that characterized this era are now eroding.

In seeking to understand what will happen after the end of this era, it is useful to recall the problems that Brezhnev has to confront and that his successor will have to confront as well:

Agriculture: Whether or not to increase investment still further; whether to continue (and possibly deepen) the liberalization policy toward the private individual plots or to return to the traditional policy of retreating at difficult moments; whether to prepare reforms in the agricultural structure aiming at a partial decentralization or whether to maintain the traditional structure.

Consumer goods: Whether or not to rapidly increase production in this sphere; if it is decided to do so, at the expense of what sectors (armaments, heavy industry, or agriculture); if not, how to deal with the inevitable discontent.

Foreign trade: Whether or not to continue the present policy of expanding trade with the western countries (or, on the other hand, to trade mainly with the countries of the Comecon, the Third World, or even to slow down the expansion of foreign trade).

General policy: "Restoration of discipline" domestically, and thereby greater authoritarianism, or cautious liberalization? Similar questions in the realm of foreign policy: continuation of cooperation with the United States or "hardening" of positions (a line that seems to have prevailed during the past few months)? There is no inviolable link between the foreign options and the domestic ones; a strong discrepancy, however, (for example, an extremely authoritarian policy internally and complete détente externally) could provoke contradictions in the medium term.

It is obviously difficult if not impossible to predict which choices will actually be made or to nail down the interrelationships among the choices in various sectors, which is what defines a policy in the final analysis.

But the options we have outlined above are those that are possible within the limits of the present balance of political and social forces in the Soviet Union. Within these overall limits the victorious line over the long term is a moderate liberalization both internally and externally. This does not exclude, but even presupposes, the possibility of "hard" turns for periods whose duration may be longer or shorter, but will always be limited.

But this does not at all mean that the present balance of forces will remain the same indefinitely. Just the opposite, the first signs of a shift in this equilibrium are beginning to appear — a shift toward a return to the historical scene of a protagonist that has been absent for many decades now: the working class and, more generally, the popular masses.

It is clear that this reentry, probably sudden, will inevitably be spectacular and will change all the terms of the problems that we have tried to examine here.

This is a perspective that will not come to pass immediately, but neither is it something that will happen only after the present generation has passed from the scene.

October 13, 1975

FOOTNOTES:

1. The real share is actually higher: The prices of agricultural products are underrated compared to those of industrial products. See, for example, T.S. Khachaturov, *Sovetskaya Ekonomika na Sovremennom Etape*, Moscow, 1975, p.273.

2. We will not deal here with the opening up of the virgin lands, a central element of Khrushchev's agricultural policy, the partial failure of which contributed to the fall of agricultural production in 1963. But my intention here is not to write a history of Khrushchev's agrarian policies; the point is rather to highlight the structural elements similar to those of the preceding periods.

3. Data cited by Khachaturov, *op.cit.*, p.273, in *Gosudarstvennyi Pyatiletnii Plan Razvitiya Narodnogo Khozyaystva SSSR na 1971-1975, gody*, Moscow, 1972, p.180. The data were compiled by various criteria, but the resulting increments are analogous.

4. For example, according to western travelers, at the end of August the entire active population of the Kostroma region was engaged in an agricultural campaign at least one day a week (Saturday).

5. That is, the increment necessary to cover the difference between a harvest equivalent to that of 1972 (168 million tons) and the average harvest called for in the plan (195 million tons).

6. The cutback will not be that large, of course. The USSR will resort to sales of gold and will borrow on financial markets. The main cuts will be made in the import of goods considered nonessential.

7. For a more detailed analysis, see INPRECOR, No. 26, May 22, 1975.

8. This is the case domestically. Soviet foreign policy, on the other hand, seems more active, and to a certain extent it is. But if Soviet foreign policy were really analyzed (which is not within the scope of this article), it would be seen that even here there are not many really new elements; it is more a matter of the development and rationalization of the Khrushchevite options.

FRANCE



150,000 at fête rouge

There is a long and well established tradition in the French left and far left: For many years there have been regular fêtes of a political, cultural, and fund-raising character, organized on a mass scale. The oldest and largest of these is the Fête de l'Humanité, sponsored by the daily newspaper of the Communist party, which is held in early September each year and attracts several hundred thousand people.

With the emergence of revolutionary currents, of a weekly and daily press of the revolutionary far left, there have been more and more fêtes — of uneven success and quality. These fêtes are both political assemblies and demonstrations of a cultural character.

The fête rouge fell within this general tradition, but it was by no means identical to all the others. It was held well into autumn (October 18-19), a handicap that was overcome by the more than 50,000 people who came from all over France and Europe. For thirty-six hours there were nonstop political debates, music programs, songs, rock music, and restaurants, all of which functioned smoothly.

The object of the fête rouge was clear: To hold the largest possible mass demonstration in order to financially and politically aid the launching of the daily Rouge, newspaper of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International, which will begin appearing early in 1976. Thus, this fête had a character of its own, which offered an initial glimpse of what the character of the future daily Rouge will be. Stands and displays were set up around various themes and areas of revolutionary activity: workers struggles, women's movement, press and publishing, the Fourth International, the regions of France, youth, the army. These reflected the revolutionary developments taking place in all these sectors, grouping together the various currents of the far left, all expressing their own conceptions. The dominant feature of these packed hours of the fête rouge was the militant, offensive, and antisecular tone that was set.

The major political debates held at the fête dealt with some of the central questions of the revolutionary struggles now taking shape in Europe:

— The press and the mass media, with the Portuguese comrades of República and Radio Renascença, Rossana Rossanda of the Italian far-left daily Il Manifesto, a

French television producer, Jean Daniel of the Nouvel Observateur, Daniel Bensaid of Rouge, and Ernest Mandel. The subject was the concept of the freedom of the press from the standpoint of workers and revolutionaries in the light of the Portuguese experience and the various strikes in the printing industry.

— The situation in Portugal, with representatives of the organizations of the Frente de Unidade Revolucionária (FUR — Front of Revolutionary Unity), including the Liga Comunista Internacionalista, sympathizing section of the Fourth International, comrades of the SUV (Soldados Unidos Vencerão — Soldiers United Will Win), the ADFA (Association of Wounded Armed Forces Veterans), Radio Renascença, and República.

— The Union de la Gauche and revolutionaries, with representatives of the organizations of the French far left.

— Marxism today, dealing with the current conditions, during the post-Stalin period, of the development of revolutionary Marxism and the struggle against bureaucratic influences on Marxist thought, which have distorted the meaning of the conception of the revolutionary party.

A central meeting held the afternoon of Sunday, October 19, was attended by more than 15,000 people. Ernest Mandel, banned from France since May 1968, made a speech on the rise of revolutionary struggles in Europe. Comrades spoke from the SUV and the French Front des Soldats, Marins, et Aviateurs Révolutionnaires (FSMAR — Front of Revolutionary Soldiers, Sailors, and Airmen). The entire rally broke into cheers and sang the Internationale when the comrades of the SUV and the FSMAR, clenched fists raised, embraced and affirmed the unity of their struggle for the proletarian revolution.

The daily and weekly press in France, including the bourgeois press, recognized the political importance and success of the fête rouge. The breadth of the response, the considerable organizational achievement, the combination of diversity and unity, and the richness and vitality of the debates and presentations make the launching of the daily Rouge a political event that is already going beyond the framework of the LCR itself and addresses itself to the masses of workers and youth of all categories in open struggle against capitalism.



NO to 'Francoism Without Franco'

The fatal illness of the dictator has provoked a new aggravation of the death agony of Francoism. The isolation of the dictatorship from Spanish and international big capital, strikingly revealed at the time of the execution of the five Spanish and Basque militants on September 27, has been further accentuated. The desire for an "opening" through the "Juan Carlos succession operation" has sharply come to the fore. As soon as Franco's death agony became known for certain, the big bourgeoisie tried to force an immediate and definitive passage of power to Juan Carlos.

At the same time, the direct beneficiaries of the dictatorship confirmed, just as they did during the days before and after September 27, that they would act in an increasingly autonomous manner, independent of the overall class designs of the bourgeoisie. Their resistance to passing power to Juan Carlos mounted. Some of them (there was talk of the chief of the Guardia Civil and of Franco's son-in-law) even tried to challenge the Juan Carlos succession. Under the pretext of insisting that it was necessary to wait for Franco to die before moving to implement the succession, they tried to prepare a different succession, to the grandson of the dictator.

These attempts scarcely had any chance of success. They ran up against the opposition of virtually the entire army, which wants to maintain both its own unity and the "constitutional legitimacy" of the political regime, two imperatives that would immediately be broken if the Juan Carlos succession were abandoned. But there was fear that the dictatorship would break apart and that the masses themselves would suddenly burst onto the political scene; there was hesitancy to directly confront the "hard-line" Francoists out of fear of weakening the repressive apparatus. And all this prevented the advocates of the "Juan Carlos opening" from acting with determination, which in turn created the incredible situation of a "strong" state with no chief of state for more than a week, a whole state hanging on the death rattle of the old executioner and recording the last tremors of his dying heart, incapable of formalizing his obvious inability to govern.

The major objective of the Juan Carlos operation, of the "reform of Francoism," remains what it always was: to avert the outbreak of a prerevolutionary crisis following a qualitative broadening of the mass movement that would force the fall of the dictatorship. But the reform cannot go so far as to foster the rise of the political mass movement instead of slowing it down: such is the limit of the maneuvering room left to Juan Carlos. The relative autonomy of the fascist repressive apparatus, indicated by the arrest of Socialist leaders in Madrid at the very moment that Juan Carlos was trying to extend his consultations in the direction of Social Democratic milieus, limits this maneuvering room even further.

Thus, the facts confirm the diagnosis made by revolutionaries: It is only when the masses defeat all the plans to maintain the regime while reforming it, when a prerevolutionary situation becomes a reality, that the big bourgeoisie will openly proclaim its break with "Francoism without Franco" and accept the legality of the workers movement and its organizations as the only available alternative to the possibility of a direct confrontation of the masses with the bourgeois state to destroy that state. All the plans of the "reformist opposition," the plans of the Socialist party and the Communist party, tend to create political structures that would push the mass movement back into channels compatible with the maintenance of the bourgeois state and the capitalist economy. This is what Juan Carlos's plans for alternative bourgeois solutions to "Francoism without Franco" are all about. But the mass movement and the dynamic of decomposition of the regime will go beyond these plans in Spain, just as they brought down similar projects in Portugal.