

WORLD OUTLOOK

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By Livio Maitan

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BOLIVIA AFTER THE DOWNFALL OF PAZ ESTENSSORO

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LA PAZ, Nov. 20 -- The commentaries in the world press on the events of recent weeks in Bolivia have played up a number of contradictory themes, talking about a victory of the "gorillas" [reactionary officer caste], of "Nasserite" tendencies in the army, of con-

flicts between the miners, the students and the peasant militia, of defeats suffered by the miners, etc. As for the Bolivian press, it speaks of a "revolución restauradora" [restorative revolution] and there has been a flowering of publications, resolutions, communiqués, declarations of positions. Bolivia is undoubtedly enjoying a period of "democratic liberties" which has few precedents in the history of the country and one quickly becomes aware of the relief everybody feels at being able to go home without finding the police there, without feeling that they are being followed, or that they must think twice before voicing their opinions in public.

However, it would be a serious mistake to go by surface appearances and pass things off by drawing an analogy with other situations in Latin-American countries in the past (despite the actual existence of certain analogies). In reality the process under way is specific and new for Bolivia itself.

It is necessary first of all to cite the essential facts (all the more so since the major press services gave very partial and tendentious reports).

The erosion of the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario], headed by Victor Paz Estenssoro, had been going on for some years. Last year it reached an extreme degree with the December events [see World Outlook December 20, 1963], the split with Juan Lechín [see World Outlook February 7], and the foundation of the PRIN [Partido Revolucionario de Izquierda Nacionalista -- see World Outlook February 7, March 6, April 3, May 29]. (The MNR had already suffered a split to the right under the leadership of Walter Guevara Arze.) The elections of last May 31 were completely fraudulent and Paz was elected for the third time in face of open opposition from the miners and the urban petty-bourgeoisie and the indifference of the peasants.

His days were numbered. Paz had no popular support whatsoever, having become in reality the symbol of open acquiescence in American imperialist domination of the country. Even the peasants, to whom the MNR regime had -- partially -- given the land could not forget the very limited character of the agrarian reform and the inescapable fact that their standard of living had undergone no actual improvement.

In the final analysis, Paz based himself exclusively on the support of the American embassy and a repressive apparatus whose unbelievable extent, organization, and cruel and barbarous character were disclosed by the recent events. Given the country's constantly worsening economic conditions and the impossibility for the regime to grant any concessions, even if only to certain sectors of the population, a profound ground swell became inevitable.

Beginning with September, in fact, this surge took on concrete expression, marking, it can be said, the beginning of a new rise in

the mass movement in Bolivia. It is significant that the urban petty-bourgeoisie were the first to mobilize.

The first struggle of some scope was the teachers strike which lasted almost a month. (The teachers demanded an increase in their miserable salary which amounts to approximately \$40 [U.S.] a month.) The government took drastic measures, proclaiming a "state of siege." (The strike was accompanied by frequent demonstrations in the streets of La Paz and serious conflicts with the police.) A part of the national leadership of the unions, directed by the MNR, then decided to capitulate, signing a contract that was a sellout. Nevertheless, the strike continued in some cities.

Almost immediately after, the students in the secondary schools opened a struggle in protest against an increase in the price of notebooks. Again the streets of the country's main city became the scene of demonstrations and struggles against the repressive forces.

At the same time, the government -- which had already taken notorious measures against leaders of the political opposition, compelling them to go into exile or underground -- took another grave step by establishing censorship of the press.

This provoked another wave of protest, including protests from conservative newspapers who decided to temporarily suspend publication. At the University of La Paz, demonstrations began that were to spread to all the principal towns of the country and culminate in the setting up of barricades on the La Paz campus by students and vanguard workers; and in the brutal occupation of the university by forces made up of the police, the special militia of the MNR (including women), and contingents of the army.

Clearly something more was at the bottom of all these demonstrations than the incidental reasons cited above. In truth, the whole movement had a very clear oppositional political significance of increasingly violent nature against the Paz regime, which now came under attack not only from the left but also from the center-right and the right.

The student demonstrations at Oruro inevitably brought in the miners. Casualties in these demonstrations included dead and wounded and the repression was brutal even during the funerals that were held for the victims.

The army decided to move against "San José," the mine center in the outskirts of Oruro where the miners have a radio station. Thanks to a relation of forces in its favor, the army came out on top. But meanwhile the decisive miners' centers of Siglo Veinte, Catavi and Huanuni were drawn into the struggle. The miners' forces from these centers met a contingent of the army close to the small village of Sora-Sora. The encounter ended in the complete rout of the army and the capture of arms and even some prisoners [see inter-

view on page 8]. The miners then decided to draw back to their bases before the army could open a counteroffensive.

The significant and symptomatic occurrence at Sora-Sora, together with the progressive deterioration of the situation in La Paz, were without doubt the decisive factors that determined the attitude of the military, above all Alfredo Ovando Candia, the chief of staff, and René Barrientos Ortuno, chief of the air force and vice president of the republic. According to sources here in La Paz who are in position to know, a meeting had already been held a few days before in which representatives of the army and a representative of the American embassy met with Paz Estenssoro himself. They came to the conclusion that Paz had to go and that Guevara Arze would be the candidate to succeed him. However, events did not permit such a well-calculated operation and it was under pressure of the situation which was precipitated that Barrientos turned to open rebellion at Cochabamba. A little later, despite the fact that Barrientos' rebellion was limited to this city, the army decided to bring down Paz (probably with his agreement) and to name a military junta.

At La Paz, crowds poured into the streets and then marched toward the government palace with Juan Lechin, who came out of the underground. Shots were fired at the crowd in fear that Lechin would be installed in the palace as the new president. Upon the arrival of Barrientos from Cochabamba, it was announced that two presidents had been named, Ovando and Barrientos. But the crowd displayed its hostility to Ovando, considering him to be a military chief of the MNR, and after two hours Barrientos announced the resignation of his colleague.

* * *

Thus began the rule of the junta headed by Barrientos. To a large extent they depended for the time being on the old personnel of the MNR and named as ambassadors to New York and Paris figures of the days of the "rosca" [the tin barons].

However, the situation remained fluid and the junta resorted to a policy of balancing between the contending forces. Barrientos began touring the country, making interminable speeches. He listened to everybody, offering guarantees in all directions (promising above all to hold an "honest" election in the relatively near future), including overtures in the direction of the miners. He offered verbal assurances that he was inclined to examine the possibility of re-establishing workers' control with the right of veto -- which Paz had cancelled -- and one of his ministers went so far as to come out flatly for restoring workers' control.

In reality the junta has not followed a settled line up to now. The situation, as we said, remains fluid. The new government has no important base -- at least at this stage -- outside of the army, which also is not altogether sure (it must not be forgotten

that with the exception of a contingent the Bolivian army is not composed of mercenaries and that the soldiers are in the great majority the sons of peasants and workers). Barrientos and those with him are compelled to operate in a context characterized by the fact that all the anti-MNR currents developed a convergent action, symbolized by the establishment of the Revolutionary Committee of the People which includes all political formations from the extreme right to Lechin's PRIN (only the Trotskyist POR [Partido Obrero Revolucionario] and the Communist party being excluded).

At present, all the classes and all the social layers -- all sectors -- are utilizing the "democracy" to state their respective demands, to press their claims ; and it goes without saying that the ghosts of the old regime, the "rosca," don't want the same things as the miners or the radicalized petty-bourgeoisie and the political currents that are taking shape and announcing themselves. Even old reactionary parties, the "rosqueros," are reappearing such as the Liberal party and the PURS [Partido Unido Republicano Socialista]. Some parties are speaking up which claim to be new, calling themselves "movements" which did not exist in the past. Barrientos can only tack according to the wind and insist above all on his guarantee of a "democratic" election.

It is clear that various maneuvers are being prepared and projected of which it is difficult to foresee whether they will actually be carried out or not. However, their present meaning can be deciphered.

One of these maneuvers is the business of rightist or center-right parties talking about mobilizing under the Christian Democratic banner (particularly the Social Christian party and the Falange [Falange Socialista Boliviana]). They are trying to present the Christian Democracy as a new, revolutionary experiment, in the Chilean style, calmly forgetting the specific Bolivian context.

For his part, the former president Siles Suazo -- who was exiled by Paz Estenssoro last September -- is seeking to reorganize the MNR by cleaning out Paz and his group. He is advocating the reunification of the forces that left the MNR because of the policies of the former leadership, particularly the PRA [Partido Revolucionario Autentico] of Guevara Arze and the PRIN of Juan Lechin.

As for the military, their political inexperience is glaring. In addition it is probable that there are two different tendencies. If the reactionaries are, without the least doubt, predominant, certain "Nasserite" aspirations unquestionably also exist. Barrientos, in the final analysis, may seek to play the bonapartist role and, along this road, stake out his political future. At bottom, his speeches and his tours imply that he has a perspective of this kind.

In general, everybody is trying to gain time and, in the final analysis, the junta is maintaining itself because none of the

major currents are actually struggling against it, not even those holding the biggest reservations concerning it. The PRIN has a very equivocal position of waiting in relation to the junta and of collaborating to a certain degree with even rightist currents in the Revolutionary Committee of the People. Up to now Lechin has far from repulsed the advances made by Siles about a new edition of the MNR. The Communist party is divided at present into two branches. The right wing, led by Kollé, flatly pro-Soviet, is waiting for the junta to provide "democratic" elections. In the left wing, certain leaders, including Escobar of the Siglo Veinte mine, have invited Barrientos to visit the mine centers.

* * *

Behind all these groups and parties, behind all these operations, what are the real social forces involved and what are their present attitudes?

The miners came out of the recent battles with the conviction that they made an essential contribution to the downfall of the MNR. They are more resolute, more politically conscious, better armed than ever. They have withdrawn to their strongholds where the central government power does not exist and where the only authority -- even it is sometimes challenged -- is that of the unions. Siglo Veinte and Cataví justifiably consider themselves to be "free territory." The left organizations -- PRIN, the CP and the POR -- are by far the most dominant. Guevara now has a small base, particularly at Huanuni; the Falange and the Social Christians are very weak. In some of the less politically sophisticated sectors there is some expectancy that the junta might actually organize elections and some are asking if Barrientos won't take the road followed by Colonel German Bush and Major Gualberto Villaroel.

Deep unrest is apparent among the urban petty-bourgeoisie and they are struggling with great energy. There is no doubt, however, that a considerable sector -- the majority of students -- are following the Falange. This clearly implies a very grave danger in view of the character of leadership of this party and its completely reactionary components. But among the petty-bourgeoisie the support to the Falange is, by and large, of a "Peronist" nature. The students particularly seek democratic liberties and emancipation from the imperialist tutelage.

The bourgeoisie as such is extremely limited, not representing an appreciable social and political force. It is nourishing hopes in the junta and would support any possible shift offering a guarantee of success. The "landholders" -- a good part of them dispossessed of their land -- are more dynamic and aggressive. They support the Falange above all and they hope that the hour of their rescue has sounded. They can wield influence in bourgeois and petty-bourgeois sectors, particularly in certain towns.

The big unknown is the peasants. Much has been made of their allegedly siding with Paz Estenssoro in the October struggle. In reality, this occurred only in exceptional instances. At Sucre where it assumed some proportions, the evident explanation is that in this rampart of the reaction, the students are under the influence of the Falange. Elsewhere it was not the peasant militia that were involved in the battles but the mercenary militia and the MNR shock forces. The truth is that the peasants stood largely aside (minority forces helped the miners) and they are now waiting expectantly. It is true that they are aware that the landlords raised their heads and they are distrustful of the new regime. In any case they cannot be considered to be partisans of the junta. They may follow either a new MNR or become allied with the left, if it is able to develop a clear, concrete and audacious policy.

This, in sum, is the alignment of forces. It can be added that everybody is trying to exploit to the maximum the present "democratic" pause in order to organize or reorganize their respective forces. What exists at present in Bolivia is a pause, an interval, a highly transitional phase, even if it cannot be said whether it will last for weeks or months.

* * *

The first signs of the coming conflicts are already apparent. Barrientos has raised the question, evidently a major one for him, of turning over all arms to the army. When he visited the mine districts, the union representatives replied by presenting the demands of the workers and explicitly stating that the arms will not be given up. Miners at the Siglo Veinte mine told me that they would sooner give up their wives and children than their arms.

In the countryside, reactionary Falangist elements have begun to vigorously demand that the land should be returned to its former owners (in the Potosí region) and they have even gone into action in the Sud Yungas region. The heads of the department of agrarian reform have found it necessary to issue a press release declaring that the titles granted under the reform still remain in effect.

It is clear that the present situation cannot extend for a long period. Instead there will soon be new developments, new dramatic battles.

In general, the relationship of forces is quite favorable to the revolutionary sector. But an element of considerable weakness persists. If one probes the causes which made it possible, despite the rise in the mass movement, for the preventive coup d'état to succeed (it has unquestionably dammed and interrupted the process for the time being), and for the army to remain intact as a whole, to which should be added the passivity of the peasants, it is necessary without the slightest doubt to single out the absence of a centralizing leadership capable of setting a clear unifying aim.

If, for example, the struggle at the university of La Paz is considered, it is to be noted that it had no precise aim whatever except to voice vehement protest against the regime of the MNR. Even the combat at Sora-Sora, which was of such importance, had no other aim but to express solidarity with the demonstrators at Oruro.

This lack of leadership persists. Lechin is proving to be more centrist than ever. The CP has no line, and even the program advanced by the COB [Central Obrera Boliviana -- see World Outlook November 27] which reveals Trotskyist influence, has remained theoretical up to now. The POR, despite its important ties and its degree of influence in the decisive sectors, has not yet had the opportunity of proceeding as the actual direct leadership on a national scale.

It is probable that a relative prolonging of the present situation would favor the attempt to set up a new MNR -- whatever its name; that is, the rightist course of Lechin, the PRIN and the COB itself. Conservative or reactionary pressure -- for example the success of the junta's campaign for arms to be given up or a generalized attack by the landlords against the peasants -- could precipitate sharp outbursts by pushing into struggle not only the miners but the broad masses who are at present hesitant.

Bolivia can again become the central revolutionary hotbed of Latin America in the coming months. It is objectively possible that a new breach will be opened in the system of imperialist capitalism in this continent which keeps on boiling despite the gains of reaction, particularly in Brazil. More than ever the outcome will depend, in the final analysis, on the role which a revolutionary leadership of the Bolivian masses can play.

Interview with a Participant

THE BATTLE OF SORA-SORA

[During a trip to the mine centers of Catavi and Siglo Veinte, World Outlook's special correspondent interviewed V.E., a member of the Partido Obrero Revolucionario, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, and other miners who were with him at the battle of Sora-Sora. On the table of the small room where the interview took place, a machine gun, captured from the government troops at Sora-Sora, lay rather symbolically in full sight. The following is a translation of the interview.]

* * *

Question: When did the miners begin to mobilize?

Answer: They began mobilizing as soon as the news reached

Siglo Veinte-Catavi about the demonstrations in Oruro and the repressions by the police and the army. We heard that people had been killed and wounded and that fights had broken out even during the funerals for the victims. Actually the news we heard was that there were a lot of dead and wounded which explains why the miners reacted so quickly and so violently.

Q: What was their reaction concretely?

A: The evening of the twenty-eighth [of October] they began to mobilize. During the night, 150 to 200 miners left Siglo Veinte in three trucks in the direction of Huanuni-Oruro armed with dynamite and old guns. A truck left at the same time from Catavi. During the same night they reached Huanuni where there was a concentration of forces. A discussion developed between the cadres of the CP [Communist party] -- who are in the majority at Siglo Veinte -- and the Trotskyist militants [adherents of the Partido Revolucionario Obrero, Bolivian section of the Fourth International, and of the newspaper Masas, the tendency led by Guillermo Lora].

Q: What was the discussion about?

A: The partisans of the CP didn't want to proceed into combat. Their fundamental argument was: the Trotskyists are armed the best so let them go first. So a truckload of Trotskyists moved to the head of the convoy. Two other trucks followed. At Sora-Sora they separated to go by different routes.

Q: Where was the army?

A: The army was on the other side of Sora-Sora and actually the first truck made contact with them right after leaving the village. Someone shouted at the first truck to stop. But at the same time the soldiers started shooting at the truck. It was still dark. The miners jumped out immediately and tried to hide along the side of the road. But seven -- all of them Trotskyists -- were wounded.

Q: And the other trucks?

A: One went as far as Machacamarca. But later the militants of the CP returned to Huanuni.

Meanwhile the men in the first truck got a truckdriver to take the wounded. In the morning everybody returned to Huanuni and started accusing the militants of the CP for not helping the first truck when it was attacked by the army.

Q: What happened then at Catavi and Siglo Veinte?

A: The radio station at Huanuni, controlled by the miners, broadcast the news about the first encounter. The situation was confused. They talked about sixty dead. This was when other trucks left Catavi and Siglo Veinte. I was in one of these trucks. We

reached Huanuni around eleven o'clock while other people were arriving. After a quick lunch, we left the town and got to Sora-Sora around noon.

Q: And then?

A: We decided to advance on foot across the pampa [open flats], armed with dynamite and guns. We moved toward Machacamarca.

After feeding those who hadn't eaten at Huanuni, a meeting was held in which almost 200 miners participated. We had reached a crossroad.

Q: How did the meeting turn out?

A: Ordoñez, who is the leader of the CP at Siglo Veinte and at the same time the main trade-union leader, proposed we shouldn't go any further and about a hundred men, more or less, answered by getting into their trucks. The others, the Trotskyists and the miners who liked their attitude decided to go ahead. Later the partisans of the CP followed in turn.

Meanwhile a lot of other miners showed up. [The total number of miners involved was around 3,000. Some contingents of peasants joined them, according to reports. They went across the pampa, occupying the surrounding hills.] The CP people switched back and forth a little, going back and then moving ahead again.

Q: And the army?

A: The encounter took place quite rapidly. The miners started attacking with dynamite, moving against a hill where a military contingent was entrenched and they defeated them. One soldier dropped, killed. The other soldiers began to run in a disorganized way, dropping their arms. They didn't want to fight. Some of them fired, but in the air, without hurting the miners. The miners captured some prisoners and a lot of arms.

Q: Did the miners try to advance towards Oruro?

A: No. There the army had really moved in a much bigger force, and brought up artillery. At the same time, it began to blow very hard and there were such clouds of dust that you couldn't see anything. The miners decided by a majority vote to return to their bases despite an opposing opinion held by some.

On its side, the army decided to stay in its positions and not to come to Huanuni, not to speak of Siglo Veinte and Catavi.

Q: Did the miners return to Catavi-Siglo Veinte?

A: Yes, they returned and the population was waiting for

them, worried because there had been talk of a massacre.

Later a meeting was held to draw up a balance sheet. Ordoñez, the secretary of the union and a member of the CP, wasn't able to speak. They shouted at him: "Nurse. Servant girl." [He drove an ambulance during the struggle.] The report was made by a Trotskyist.

Well, those are the main facts. The miners now feel stronger and more confident than ever.

BOLIVIAN TEACHERS ELECT ELSA CLODERA

LA PAZ, Nov. 19 -- Since the downfall of Paz Estenssoro, the Bolivian trade-union organizations have been busy dismantling the bureaucratic apparatus set up by the MNR [Movimiento Nacionalista Revolucionario] and electing new leaderships.

The teachers have just held a Special Congress. The first measures taken by the Congress were to remove the old leadership, headed by Daniel Salamanca and Jaime Bravo Burzoa who served ex-president Paz Estenssoro, and to pass a request for an increase in the salaries that were reduced by the former government.

New leaders were then elected with a National Executive Committee composed of Elsa Clodera, the widow of the late Fernando Bravo James, leader of the POR [Partido Obrero Revolucionario], Sustovo Avila, a member of the FSB [Falange Socialista Boliviana] and René Higuera, of general leftist persuasion. The Congress also paid homage to Fernando Bravo on the second anniversary of his death.

A delegation of the POR, a delegate of the Fourth International, and a leader of the Argentine section of the Fourth International called on Elsa Clodera to convey greetings from the world Trotskyist movement, to congratulate her for her election as Executive Secretary of the Bolivian teachers organization and to express their appreciation for the way in which she is carrying on the work of her husband as a leader of the POR, Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

Elsa Clodera participated in the defense of the University of La Paz against the armed attack of government forces at the end of October, and, as a result, was jailed for some days.

PROTESTS FLARE IN BELGIUM

By Fernand Charlier

BRUSSELS, Nov. 27 -- On Tuesday November 24 the American and Belgian imperialists and their ignoble Social Democratic valets launched their parachute operation on Stanleyville, an operation that was long prepared, as Paul-Henri Spaak, the head Social Democrat, himself admitted in a press conference the same day.

The sacred union of the bourgeoisie and their servants was sealed in a parliament where only three Socialist deputies did not rise in a standing ovation to "their" government, and where the Communist deputies were the only ones to register a formal protest through the head of their group, Gaston Moulin.

Caught in the trap of their own policy of moderation, the Communist party group found it difficult to protest, as is revealed by the minutes of the parliamentary session, which were published in the party's official organ Le Drapeau Rouge November 25. This is indicated by the following extracts:

"Our friend Gaston Moulin participated in his turn in the debate.

"We want to do this," he said by way of opening, 'calmly and without passion. We would like to join in expressing the emotion with which all of us were stricken upon the announcement of the number of civilian victims -- fifty up to this afternoon. We too bow our heads over the soldiers who fell in this operation.'

"P.-H. Spaak -- 'I would like to know if you approve the taking of hostages in principle.'

"Gaston Moulin -- 'Absolutely not.'

"P.-H. Spaak -- 'That's the whole problem.'

"Gaston Moulin -- 'It was you who provoked the situation of today.' (Protests among the tripartite benches.)

"A peaceful road was possible -- to reply to the proposals of the OAU [Organization of African Unity] and Kenyatta.'"

But a popular reaction has occurred in Belgium despite the falsified news, despite the self-imposed censorship which virtually the entire press applied. Among the daily papers, only Le Drapeau Rouge and La Wallonie (left syndicalist) have not joined in the "parade" of chauvinist hysteria which has been skillfully whipped up.

In order to stir up the most sickening sentimentality, the Belgians got off the plane from Stanleyville in tropical clothes and

are photographed in sandals and shorts at the Brussels airport. Yet at the stopover in Léopoldville a service has been set up to receive them. Don't its organizers even know that Belgium, after all, is not a hot country in November?

The complete hypocrisy of the government was similarly displayed in all the newspapers when alongside an announcement about the return of the paratroopers another one was printed, explaining how their families could write to them in the Congo!

Despite the blackout on news and the "brakes" on the main sectors of the workers movement, the taking of positions in the good sense of the term began before the attack on Stanleyville.

On November 22, for instance, the Sunday papers published a release issued by the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes which ran as follows:

"The National Bureau of the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes, who held an emergency meeting Saturday following the official confirmation of the presence of a battalion of Belgian paratroopers in the British island of Ascension, stated in a communiqué 'that only the Congolese people can work out the problems posed by the civil war in the country. Young Belgian soldiers can in no case join forces with the bloody dictator Tshombe.'"

After the open aggression, rank-and-file reactions broke out. At Gand, sectors of the city and school workers who belong to the union of public services, affiliated to the FGTB [Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique], opposed the imperialist aggression.

At Antwerp, November 25, a demonstration of some fifty persons was banned and dispersed by the police.

On the same day at Liège, a strike flared at Cockerill, Belgium's biggest plant. The workers of two shifts in a sector of the plant stopped work in order to hold a meeting and pass a resolution against the colonialist intervention.

At Gand, a demonstration of Communist and Socialist students (other organizations who at first joined in did not follow through) stuck tough for an hour despite a government ban and the cops.

At Brussels, a united action front was immediately formed among all the workers youth organizations despite the divisions among their respective parties. The youth organizations broadcast a joint leaflet bearing for the first time the signatures of both the pro-Peking and pro-Moscow Communist youth tendencies. [See page 14 for full text.]

(In reporting this action, Le Drapeau Rouge avoided listing all the signatures on the leaflet, but La Voix du Peuple, the weekly

published by the Maoist Communists, printed the whole text, including the signatures.)

A demonstration called for in the leaflet was banned by the government. But the police tolerated a fascist "counter demonstration" which chanted, "Ben Bella, Murderer," in front of the Algerian embassy. [Ben Bella vigorously denounced the paratrooper operation.]

Finally, some new declarations of opposition to the government appeared today. These include resolutions of the teachers' union in Brussels, the Liège federations of Communist and Socialist students, and the Comité d'Action Contre le Néo-colonialisme et le Fascisme.

Resolutions were also passed in another sector of Cockerill Ougrée as well as at A.C.E.C., the big Charleroi plant.

A meeting has been projected at Liège by the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes, the Jeunesses Communistes and the Cadets [lads] of the FGTB (young syndicalists).

In addition, among the student organizations, a solidarity action is under way, with the participation of union students, to support the Congolese students here who are threatened with expulsion from the country because they organized a press conference on the events in their country. [For text of the declaration by the Congolese students see page 17.]

BELGIAN YOUTH OPPOSE THE PARATROOPER OPERATION

[The following leaflet, printed in French on one side and Flemish on the other, was distributed by students throughout Belgium, the day following the paratrooper operation in the Congo. It carries the title, "Stop the massacres in the Congo. Stop the aggression of the Belgium Government." Among other things, the leaflet is noteworthy because it bears the signatures of both the pro-Moscow and pro-Peking Communist youth organizations.]

* * *

The Belgian paratroopers have been launched on Stanleyville. This extremely grave fact culminates the process of direct military intervention organized by Spaak and his American masters against the freedom forces in the Congo.

(1) In the first place, there was Belgian military intervention disguised in the form of technical aid. At the same time, the USA intervened more and more openly (bombers, reconnaissance planes, hiring of pilots. . .). The aim of the imperialists was clear: to

repress the freedom movement.

(2) In face of this open military intervention, the Congolese revolutionists could not guarantee the safety of Belgian and American nationals any longer. The consuls of the two countries were well aware of this, moreover, because they were asked to stop the Belgian-American intervention as a preliminary for any negotiations on the fate of the "hostages."

(3) The government organized the subsequent situation: It sent the paratroopers to Ascension allegedly to protect our nationals, an excellent pretext for participating in crushing the Congolese revolution. Yesterday, for "humanitarian reasons," the paratroopers landed in Stanleyville. The massacres at Bukavu, Uvira and Kivu demonstrated the "humanitarian concern of the interventionists."

Consequently, our organizations, on learning the news of the Belgian landing in Stanleyville:

Declare that the fate of the Belgian civilians in Stanleyville was nothing but a pretext for Belgian military intervention in the Congo. If the Belgian government had actually wanted to save the lives of its nationals, it

Would immediately end military aid to Tshombe.

Demanding, as a result, the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all the Belgian paratroopers from the Congo,

Demanding, in addition, the halting of all military aid to Tshombe,

Reaffirming their support to the Belgian people struggling for real independence; and inviting all the Belgian and Congolese youth to unite in order to struggle together against the Belgian-American aggression in the Congo; the organizations listed below appeal to all the youth to demonstrate their solidarity concretely with the Congolese people by participating in the

Demonstration of Solidarity Thursday evening

Assemble at 6:45 p.m. Flagey Plaza.

Down with the Lefèvre-Spaak government, responsible for the massacres!

Stop the Belgian-American intervention in the Congo!

Halt the war against the Congolese people!

Solidarity with the Congolese people struggling for their freedom!

. . . more

Fédération Bruxelloise des Etudiants Socialistes,

Fédération Bruxelloise des Jeunes Gardes Socialistes,

Union des Etudiants Communistes de Belgique,

Union Nationale des Etudiants Communistes,

Union des Jeunesses Communistes de Belgique,

Jeunesse Communiste de Belgique,

L'Union des Jeunes Juifs Progressistes joins with the youth organizations who are against the armed aggression of neocolonialism in the Congo.

NO APPLAUSE AMONG THESE BELGIAN WORKERS FOR CONGO OPERATION

The belt-line workers on the 2 to 10 o'clock and 7:30 to 4 o'clock shifts at Cockerill-Ougrée, Belgium's biggest plant, stopped work November 25, the day after Belgian paratroopers landed at Stanleyville, to discuss the events in the Congo.

They passed a resolution in which they:

- Opposed foreign intervention, most particularly Belgian intervention in the Congo.
- Called for the immediate withdrawal of Belgian forces from the Congo, the paratroopers and others who risk causing the death of 600 Belgian nationals still remaining in the Stanleyville region.
- Denounced the attitude of the government in levelling threats of expulsion against the leaders of the Congolese students in Belgium because they spoke out against the Belgian intervention in the Congo.
- Expressed fear that the government attitude might provoke the extension of the conflict to such proportions as to threaten peace in Africa.
- Expressed solidarity with the Congolese people in their struggle for independence.

COURAGEOUS STAND OF CONGOLESE STUDENTS IN BELGIUM

[The November 28 issue of the Belgian Socialist weekly La Gauche reports that the Belgian government has taken a scandalous measure against leaders of the Congolese student organization UGEC [Union Générale des Etudiants Congolais]. "Because they had the courage to denounce the Belgian-American military intervention in behalf of Tshombe, their scholarships have been revoked and they have been hit by expulsion from our country. Thus the government converts the demand of the Congolese Sûreté into law and, without even letting them choose a country to go to, delivers the leaders of the UGEC to the murderer Mulongo. Here again is a prominent feature of the 'humanitarian action' of the Belgian government in this business."

[The denunciation referred to by La Gauche occurred at a press conference held November 23 in the Café de l'Horloge in Brussels. Representatives of the press, radio and television crowded in. They were handed a statement. It was this that stung the "humanitarian" Spaak government. A translation of the full text of the statement follows.]

* * *

In face of the sudden deterioration of the situation in the Congo, the UGEC casts aside its reserve in order to clearly define its position and its line of conduct. The UGEC cannot maintain a shameful silence in face of the legitimate rights of the Congolese people whom the racist foreign troops are massacring.

All of Western opinion has been conditioned in the recent period to approve Belgian-American military intervention in the internal affairs of the Republic of the Congo. The Belgian UGEC must clarify the issues and enlighten international opinion, which is mistaken on the reasons for the general insecurity prevailing today in the Congo. The whites are insecure in the Congo because of an undeclared war being waged on our people by the Belgian and American governments.

It was through hypocritical propaganda and under pretext of struggling against a phantom communism, that the enemies of our people first sought to justify the bombing and machine-gunning of the peaceable Congolese people. It is these warmongers who are causing mortal anguish to thousands of innocent blacks and honest whites at this moment. Far from assuring the safety of the whites, the increasing military intervention of Belgium and America can only aggravate the insecurity of the whites in the Congo and increase the tension between blacks and whites. The Belgian and American governments who try to explain their direct intervention in the Congo today by referring to humanitarian reasons are the very ones who yesterday still justified their intrusion by referring to a so-called struggle against Lumumboist Communism.

For us, a rebellion fomented by Peking is a myth that fools those who want to be fooled. In fact a summary analysis of the social and economic situation of the Congolese people since their accession to independence shows us that the uprising of the villages and the peasants is the normal objective result of a process of pauperization that began on the morrow of the independence of our country.

Who will deny the continuous deterioration of the Congolese economy since 1960 -- dislocation of the general infrastructure; abandonment of certain basic economic units, inducing increased unemployment; decline of production; fraudulent shipments of products favored by leaders who stand to profit from it; incompetence, prevarication and corruption. . . All this is translated into an alarming separation between a privileged minority and the Congolese masses whose buying power constantly diminishes as their cost of living constantly increases. Parallel to this breaking down of the economic machine, for which the Congolese masses pay the cost, the social structures of the country have been disintegrating since 1960. The hundreds of millions of francs which were to have contributed to improving public health, to struggling against illiteracy and slums, in brief to raising the material and cultural level of the masses, have been swallowed up in the operation of a plethoric and unproductive administrative apparatus, as well as in equipping an army of bourgeois soldiers lacking any civic-mindedness.

This bare outline enables us to place the objective social and economic frame that has given rise to the movement of popular revolts in which the victims are the beneficiaries of the regime -- under the circumstances, the high functionaries and certain provincial ministers. With regard to this, we can offer the testimony of a Belgian journalist whom one can scarcely accuse of favoring Lumumbism. The witness is Mr. Philippe Toussaint, who, at a conference organized by the League for the Rights of Man on the subject, "Four Years of Independence for the Congo," declared in substance that it was practically impossible for a normal man to live in the Congolese countryside without revolting. He added, moreover, that the revolt was never due to inspiration from Peking but was the consequence of pervasive distress.

In its origin, the popular uprising thus seems to us to be the violent demonstration of a frustrated people against a bankrupt regime. Consequently what is involved is an internal problem concerning the Congolese nationals alone. To jeopardize the security of the whites was never an essential objective of the popular uprising. Completely to the contrary, the whites were never disturbed in the regions that came under control of the insurgents. Mr. Spaak himself declared on June 4, 1964, before the Senatorial Commission on Foreign Affairs: "The rebels in the East Congo have not attacked the Europeans." (See Europe-Magazine, No. 10-15, week of November 18-24, 1964, page 17.)

Likewise in an interview granted to Philippe Toussaint, an interview published in No. 2385 of Pourquoi Pas?, dated Friday, August 14, 1964, Mr. Gaston Soumialot, head of the insurgents, declared in particular: "We are not struggling against the Europeans, but against a rotted fascist regime. . . ."

What is the origin then of today's general insecurity for the lives of whites living in the regions controlled by the insurgents? The insecurity of the whites is the logical consequence of the Belgian-American military intervention in the internal problems of the Congo. The entire Belgian press on June 7, 1964, the date on which the first Belgian soldiers left for the Congo, displayed a well-founded concern over the consequences of this grave gesture. In reference to this, the November 18 issue of Europe-Magazine had the following to say: "In Belgium a veritable campaign developed in the press: If our pilots engage in operations against the rebels, won't they take vengeance on our fellow citizens living there, often in missions or remote plantations?"

Far from taking into account this proper worry, the Belgian and American governments did the contrary. They increased their military aid to the disputed Léopoldville government, sending war matériel to the Congo and troops to support the Congolese National Army. In the ranks of these troops are to be found men like Colonel Logiest, head of the Belgian military mission to the Congo, who gained a dismal reputation in the repressive operations in the Ruanda, and Colonel Vandewalde, whose name is connected with the Katanga secession and the acts of genocide committed in the North Katanga.

Even worse, the influx into the Congo of racist mercenaries from South Africa, Rhodesia and Portugal, whose hate for the black man is universally known, could only increase the tension between Congolese and whites.

And yet a reasonable solution, the resolutions of the OAU [Organization of African Unity] could open a way for a negotiated peaceful solution. But the American government objected to accepting this well-considered African solution, refusing to accept the ad hoc commission set up by the OAU.

As for the Congolese government, advised by the Belgians, it never wanted the ad hoc commission of the OAU to come to Léopoldville. Still worse, it rejected the Addis Ababa resolutions, resolutions which were solemnly subscribed to by Mr. Tshombe. In discarding the OAU resolutions, the Congolese government falsified the facts of the problem and opted for a military solution of an essentially political problem. This irresponsible decision was the cause of the calamities that have befallen our people today.

The American government bears heavy responsibility for the hecatomb of the Congolese population. Through its growing military

intervention, it encouraged the Congolese government to refuse any negotiated and peaceful solution. It furnished BK-26 bombers, T-28 planes, helicopters, heavy matériel and well-trained troops. It bears responsibility for the resumption of bombings, massacres, and cleaning-up operations, operations which signified death for thousands of peaceable citizens handed over to the vengeful fury of the mercenary racists.

The main victims of these massacres are often poor children less than fifteen whom the mercenaries view as potential rebels.

The summary executions of prisoners or of citizens simply regarded as suspects as was the case at Bukavu will not soon re-establish political stability and peace in the Congo. All the exactions of the mercenaries, the whole Belgian-American intervention, will only increase the tension between blacks and whites in the Congo -- something that is not wished by either the peace-loving Congolese or the honest whites.

In addition, we should like to express our surprise over certain ambiguous attitudes. At the present moment, the military intervention is spoken of as above all due to humanitarian reasons. The equivocal silence, even indifference adopted by the International Red Cross, the UN, the League for the Rights of Man and Western public opinion in face of the massacres of thousands of Congolese leaves us perplexed. Yet these massacres are perpetrated thanks to the arms and troops made available mainly by the Belgian and American governments.

The latest is 1,500 paratroops transported in American planes to a British base located on Ascension Island on the way to intervention in the Congo. This unilateral intervention in the internal problems of the Congo, far from saving human lives, will aggravate the general insecurity and lengthen the already long list of innocent victims, above all among the blacks.

That is why we, Congolese students in Belgium, organized in the UGEC, conscious of our duties in regard to our people, lift our voices to protest and to declare that the solution of the problems of our country are not to be found in either the American bombers or in the racist foreign troops. We tell Western and international public opinion that the only ones responsible for the despair being aroused in the Congo are the governments that follow a policy of military interference in the internal affairs of the Congo. Responsibility for the death of thousands of innocent Congolese and whites is borne by those who send war matériel to the Congo and who violate the right of self-determination of the Congolese people.

The Belgian UGEC rejects all the barbarous military solutions of an essentially political problem. It also rejects all the miracle solutions worked out in Washington and Brussels, solutions in contradiction with the aspirations of our people.

Drawing inspiration from its motto, from its principles, and taking into account the constructive resolutions of the OAU, the Belgian UGEC opts for a Congolese solution of the Congolese problems. Conscious of its vanguard role, it demands:

(1) An immediate halt to the bombings and extermination of peaceable and innocent populations;

(2) The immediate expulsion of the mercenaries and all the foreign political advisers of the Congolese government;

(3) The withdrawal of all the Belgian and American troops and their war matériel;

(4) The immediate cessation of all American and Belgian military aid to the Congo;

(5) Respect by foreign powers of the right of the Congolese people to self-determination.

The UGEC remains convinced that immediate cessation of Belgian-American military intervention in the Congo constitutes the sole genuine basis for the re-establishment of general security. Left to themselves, the Congolese people will be able, we are convinced, to solve their problems.

The UGEC appeals to international opinion and all peace-loving peoples to use their influence with the Belgian and American governments to get them to immediately cease interfering in the internal affairs of the Congo.

In addition, the UGEC wishes to assure the Congolese people that it supports them completely and without reservation. The UGEC will always stand on the side of the Congolese people in their just struggle for genuine independence and peace.

For the Supreme Council:

The Permanent Secretary: Théo Tango.

For the Central Committee of the
Belgian UGEC:

The Chairman: Oswald Ndeshyo.

The Secretary of Information and
Political Affairs:

Serge-Pontien Tshilenge.

The Secretary of the Interior:

François Beltchika.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE "HUMANITARIAN REASONS"

The immediate world-wide outburst of anger and indignation over the murderous military intervention mounted in the Congo by imperialist Belgium, Britain and the United States for "humanitarian reasons," has given the criminals pause.

The Spaak government decided to withdraw 600 paratroopers for the time being and defenders of the Johnson administration are busy trying to explain away the blood that spattered the White House.

A striking instance of the contradictions in the imperialist propaganda was provided by the November 30 issue of the New York Times [international edition]. On page 7 in the section called "The News of the Week in Review," we are told the following:

"Week before last, the U.S., Belgian and British Governments took the first step in a hurriedly conceived 'contingency plan.' U.S. Air Force transports airlifted a battalion of Belgian paratroopers to Ascension Island, a British possession in the South Atlantic, for a possible rescue operation.

"Premier Tshombe consented. At the same time the U.S. agreed to meet with a Congolese rebel emissary in Nairobi, Kenya, to negotiate for the safety of the white hostages. The stage was set for the events of last week."

These two paragraphs were written in accordance with the official Belgian-American line that what was involved was a sudden, emergency situation, requiring a "hurriedly conceived" rescue operation for "humanitarian reasons." Still it should be noted that at least one lie is inadvertently exposed. The initiative in all this did not come from Tshombe. He "consented," a decision in strict accordance with his puppet role.

But now turn to page 4 and read the column by Arthur Krock, who for decades has been known for his pipe lines to the State Department and the White House. He complains about the enormous publicity given to the operation in hope of lessening the political repercussions that might be touched off on an international scale. He argues that the operation should have been organized secretly and sprung as a lightning blow, taking everyone by surprise. In the process he offers most convincing proof that there was no sudden emergency, the military intervention having been planned over a considerable length of time with the most cold-blooded calculation. Here is what he says:

"The chronology of events leading up to the action at Stanleyville begins at Brussels in the week of Aug. 10, 1964. The subject of conversations between Under Secretary of State Harriman and Foreign Minister Spaak was that 'technical assistance' might be given to Premier Tshombe to cope with the rise in rebel activity in the Congo

that the Communist nations especially mainland China, were promoting by various means. At a news conference on Aug. 19, Assistant Secretary of State Williams disclosed that the United States Government had offered to help pay for military operations to restore law and order in the Congo.

"By Nov. 10 the necessity for repression of rebel activity prompted Spaak to visit Washington for discussions of the situation with Secretary of State Rusk and other high United States officials. Eight days later, accompanied by a gust of newspaper headlines and dispatches derived from official sources, 600 Belgian [sic] were flown in United States aircraft to Ascension Island, a British possession, with prior permission from London.

"On Nov. 23 the Belgian paratroopers landed at Kamina in the Congo, preparatory to landing at Stanleyville, in another widely publicized action.

"On Nov. 24 the United States-Belgian decision to fly the paratroopers into Stanleyville was made at last, a day before it was officially announced by Spaak at Brussels. This was the only action-before-the-fact in the entire procedure, but it was too long delayed to avert whatever possibility there may have been of preventing the atrocities inflicted on the hostages by the Congolese rebel forces."

Krock's theme, based on his own "humanitarian" outlook, is that the operation was botched through all this lengthy publicity and thus failure occurred in achieving the "humanitarian" purpose of the operation, while the aim of softening the international political repercussions likewise apparently failed.

Note what is revealed in passing by this Washington columnist. Tshombe, whose "request" for the use of paratroopers was designed to give a cover of "legality" for the military intervention is scarcely mentioned. Everything was decided in conversations between top officials in Brussels and Washington.

Note, too, the themes of these conversations: How "to cope with the rise in rebel activity. . . ." The alleged "necessity for repression of rebel activity. . . ." A U.S. offer "to help pay for military operations to restore law and order in the Congo."

Thus we can gather, as we read, that the real objective of the use of paratroopers was, like the hiring of white racist foreign mercenaries, to help suppress a popular uprising of the Congolese people against a hated puppet government kept in power by foreign imperialists.

The propaganda about a sudden emergency military operation to save the lives of hostages was just propaganda and no more than that.

In fact, in the final analysis, what is implied by these admis-

sions "out of their own mouths" is that the Belgian-British-American imperialists were willing to sacrifice the lives of some hundreds of white "hostages" for the sake of a military strike against the truly Congolese government which had been established at Stanleyville.

SPAAK TURNED DOWN OFFER TO SAVE CHILDREN

BRUSSELS, Nov. 29 -- Paul-Henri Spaak, Belgium's foreign minister, could have spared the Congo the nightmare situation at Stanleyville. He turned down the possibility. This is the only possible conclusion that can be drawn from revelations made by Ernest Glinne, a left-wing Socialist member of parliament, in the November 28 issue of La Gauche.

"I personally," writes Glinne, "had official assurance from certain Pan-African sources that if Colonel Van de Walle and several other officers of the Belgian army assigned to the Congo and directing the operation against Stanleyville were recalled to Brussels for consultation, this would have sufficed to free the Belgian children held at Stanleyville, favoring a negotiated solution of the problem as a whole. Naturally I informed Spaak and others about this, at a time when it now appears that Spaak had already made his military decision. I am convinced that he would have to pay a nonmilitary price to save the Belgians and Africans from the dangers threatening them. The price was to inflict on M. Tshombe and those he represents some displeasure. For political reasons, P.-H. Spaak and the government did not want to take this road. The detailed counterproposals, made at Nairobi by a number of African governments, were not considered either. P.-H. Spaak was content to only quickly reject the bargaining proposal of a 'cease-fire' advanced by Thomas Kanza in the name of the Stanleyville authorities. . . .

"I will add that the Congolese inhabitants in other areas besides Stanleyville had excellent reasons to believe since last June that the presence of Europeans was their sole protection against bloody, blind air raids in which a large number of Congolese civilians of both sexes and all ages have lost their lives or have been mutilated." [Emphasis in original.]

The revelation made a sensation in Belgium. Spaak immediately went on the air to claim that the offer was not a "serious" one.

It is expected that Glinne will back up his revelations with fresh facts to show that Spaak had no reason whatsoever for such an irresponsible conclusion.

Meanwhile protests over the Stanleyville operation are beginning to build up.

In Ghent, some 300 students marched through the streets November 26, shouting slogans hostile to the Belgian neocolonialist aggression and expressing their solidarity with the Congolese freedom fighters. A counterdemonstration failed when only thirty fascists turned up. Police attempts to stop the one-hour demonstration also failed. Many trade-union bodies voted strong resolutions against the paratroop operation.

In Brussels and Liège new protest meetings and demonstrations have been announced.

At the regional congress of the Socialist party in Liège, yesterday, members of the Jeunes Gardes Socialistes staged a vigorous demonstration against the main reporter for the day, Spaak, because of his role in the military intervention against the Congolese freedom fighters.

LET THE CONGOLESE PEOPLE DECIDE THEIR OWN FATE!

[The United Secretariat of the Fourth International issued the following statement November 26.]

* * *

With the help of American and British imperialism, the Belgian imperialists have committed military aggression by landing paratroopers in Stanleyville, seat of the provisional government of the Congo People's Republic.

It is completely hypocritical to claim that this was done for "humanitarian" purposes. The real goal was to drive the government of the Congo People's Republic out of Stanleyville, and this was a big part of the actual operation.

The fakery of the "humanitarian" pretext is shown by the fact that the Belgian, American and British governments support Tshombe's army which is spearheaded by white racist foreign mercenaries who commit unspeakable crimes against the most elementary rules of humanity every day in the week.

The fakery of the "humanitarian" pretext is likewise shown by the fact that the Belgian government knew perfectly well that if it continued to build up military and financial support for Tshombe, white civilians would inevitably be made the target of reprisals. The Belgian government was warned emphatically about this months ago by both Belgian left-wing forces in the labor movement and by the Congo freedom fighters.

No other conclusion is possible except that the Belgian govern-

ment deliberately decided to risk the lives of white civilians in the Congo in its rabid pursuit of the aim of strengthening neocolonialism in the Congo.

The loss of Stanleyville is a blow against the Congolese revolution, but amounts to no more than a temporary defeat. Tempered still further by this latest experience with the unholy imperialist alliance and its Congo puppet, the Congolese freedom fighters will continue their struggle, resolving even more firmly never to return to slavery. Their cause is unconquerable!

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International asks workers everywhere, but especially in Belgium, Britain and the United States, to make known their feelings about this latest imperialist outrage.

No more aid to the imperialist puppet Tshombe!

The United Secretariat of the Fourth International joins with all those who are appealing to the independent governments of Africa, and to the African nationalist organizations, to end at once any kind of recognition or collaboration with the foul Tshombe clique and to give full support to the heroic fighters of the Congolese revolution.

For the sake of the African revolution, block stabilization of the Tshombe regime!

Down with imperialism, neocolonialism and its murderous stooge Tshombe!

Let the Congolese people decide their own fate!

Long live the Congolese revolution!

Long live the African revolution!

BELGIAN SOCIALISTS RESIST RIGHT-WING ATTACK

BRUSSELS, Nov. 29 -- The Bureau [daily leadership] of the Belgian Socialist party adopted a resolution November 23 stating that the party leadership intends to place a motion before the party congress, scheduled for December 12-13, declaring that participation in the leadership of the Walloon Popular Movement and any form of collaboration with the two weeklies, La Gauche and Links, is incompatible with membership in the Socialist party.

The news broke the next day in the Belgian daily papers. It was important news. The proposed ban could portend a crisis for the Socialist party.

The Walloon Popular Movement was founded by the late André Renard, the leader of the left wing of the Belgian trade unions, after the general strike of December 1960-January 1961. It is closely identified with the left wing of the unions in many industrial regions of the southern part of the country, especially Liège.

The French-language La Gauche and the Flemish-language Links are very popular among left-wing members. Their combined press run is 10,000 a week.

The decision of the reformist leadership to open up war on the left wing follows on the heels of a heavy defeat which the right wing suffered in a witch-hunting attempt to repress the left wing on a local or regional scale.

In the Charleroi region, a right-wing attempt to expel a local section with a moderately left leadership received only forty per cent of the votes at a regional party congress.

In the Nivelles region, the attempt of the right wing to discipline four members of the regional committee for oppositional activities was reduced to six weeks suspension. . . as members of the regional committee.

In Liège, a right-wing move to expel Jacques Yerna, regional secretary of the trade-union movement and legal editor of La Gauche, did not receive the necessary two-thirds majority to pass. In fact the motion got less than fifty per cent of the votes.

Following this, the right wing moved to suspend Yerna for six years. When this failed they made it four years. Then three. Next one year. Finally a motion to temporarily suspend Yerna for a few months as a member of the regional committee of the party passed.

In addition to this, the party leadership had to make a hasty retreat after an attempt to ban members of the socialist youth in September.

The right wing has now decided to disregard all these defeats and to plunge ahead in its witch-hunting campaign. The reason appears to be its fear that the left wing will score big victories in the coming primaries at the end of December. These will determine the slates to be run by the Socialist party in the general elections in 1965.

The attack has been met head on by La Gauche, Links, the Socialist Youth, the Socialist student organizations and many local sections of the Socialist party in both the Flemish and Walloon parts of the country. They are mobilizing for an all-out fight. In view of the determination they have displayed, the possibility of a split looms large unless the right wing decides at the last moment to make a retreat, a turn that does not seem likely.

NEGROES PLAY NEW ROLE IN AMERICAN ELECTORAL PROCESS

By Evelyn Sell

The 1964 election campaign focused attention on the Negro as a voter, as a candidate for public office, as one of the major issues of the campaign, and as the initiator of a new independent force in American politics.

Pre-election polls indicated that President Johnson would receive about 96% of the Negro vote. He got that -- and better in many areas. In Connecticut, for example, Johnson received 98% of the Negro vote. Some heavily Negro precincts both in the north and south cast 99% of their votes for Johnson.

Intensive voter registration drives conducted by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People [NAACP], National Urban League, Congress of Racial Equality [CORE], Southern Christian Leadership Conference, Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee [SNCC] and the Council of Federated Organizations [COFO] enrolled 700,000 new Negro voters since the beginning of the year. There were around six million Negroes who voted in the November 3 election. Ninety-five per cent and more of six million is a lot of votes.

Surveys show that the Negro vote emerged as a potent force in a number of Southern and border states even though Senator Barry Goldwater succeeded in capturing five deep south states: Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina. In Georgia, Tennessee, Kentucky and Texas the Negro vote was decisive or very important in winning Democratic victories in congressional contests. The same was true in some Northern races. In Cincinnati, Ohio, the heavy Negro vote for John Gilligan helped unseat the incumbent Republican congressman, Carl Rich, who had never been defeated in his entire political career and was considered to be unbeatable.

A number of new Negro office holders were elected by the November 3 vote. Negroes won seats in four state legislatures which had been lily-white; an additional Negro was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives bringing the number there up to six; Georgia, Indiana, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York and New Jersey increased the number of Negroes in their state legislatures; Savannah, Georgia, gained its first Negro city councilman in recent history; for the first time Negroes gained office as judges in Colorado and New York; four Negroes scored a dramatic breakthrough in Alabama politics when they won county offices there.

The anticipated "white backlash" failed to materialize except in the rural areas of the five deep south states carried by Goldwater. Urban centers like Birmingham, Alabama, where there are large concentrations of Negro voters, voted Democratic. It was expected that Polish and Italian voters in northern cities would support Goldwater in protest over Johnson's identification with the civil-rights bill.

These groups, however, voted solidly Democratic except for scattered districts in Baltimore, Maryland; the Indiana steel area; Ohio, Pennsylvania and Illinois. In New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Michigan and Wisconsin the trend was just the opposite -- the Democrats gained votes from Polish and East European ethnic groups.

Americans overwhelmingly showed that their concern over the issues of war, economic security and social welfare was more decisive than their anti-Negro prejudices -- which are still widely spread throughout American society.

Many Negro leaders called for a moratorium on all civil-rights demonstrations during the period of the election campaign because they feared the "white backlash" would sweep Johnson and the Democrats out of office and install the right-wing elements led by Goldwater. Their fears (and Goldwater's hopes) were not borne out by the actual voting pattern on November 3. The most obvious fact to be noted is that Goldwater lost -- by the most decisive margin ever recorded in an American election. An analysis of election returns made by the NAACP showed that a sizeable number of congressmen who voted against the 1964 civil-rights bill were defeated in this election. Many of the Republicans who survived the Democratic landslide were those who voted for the civil-rights bill. In Texas and Tennessee, Democrats who had voted for the bill retained their posts or went on to win higher offices. One of the few Republicans in Massachusetts to weather the anti-Goldwater storm was a Negro, Edward Brooke, who was re-elected attorney general.

Now that the excuse of a "white backlash" is no longer available, further moratoriums on civil-rights demonstrations are being called for in order to give President Johnson a chance to build his "Great Society." Such a moratorium can only serve to strengthen racist opposition to the Freedom Now aspirations of the Negro people. Renewed and intensified struggles are needed to strengthen opposition to reactionary forces and to gain new and greater victories.

Nationally known civil-rights leaders like Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., Whitney Young of the National Urban League and Roy Wilkins of the NAACP are hailing Johnson's victory as a triumph for the American people. These respectable leaders have been trying to curb the growing momentum of the Freedom Now struggle. They worked hard and long to register Negroes so they could vote for Johnson. They are now trying to convince Negroes that the Democrats have become dominant in the national legislature and in most states and will deliver on their campaign promises.

Their propaganda machines are effective. Most Negroes still hold illusions about the Democrats and about Johnson. Tests of these illusions will come often during the next four years. The overwhelming victory of the Democrats nationally may well be their greatest disaster. The fact is: there is nothing to stop the Democratic majority from passing and enforcing meaningful civil-rights legisla-

tion. The sham excuses that the Republicans and Dixiecrats prevent all progress, that public opinion cannot be bruised, that everything would be fine if only more Democrats could gain office -- all these excuses have vanished with the Democratic electoral triumph.

The coming four years will see many illusions broken, many hopes unfulfilled, many changes within the traditional structure of Negro leadership. Waiting in the wings will be the newly created Freedom Now party, the first all-Negro political grouping, which has come through this election campaign with its banner flying high.

The Freedom Now party [FNP] was able to get on only one state ballot this year and it did not win any offices but it did accomplish a number of important things. It brought together a group of dedicated, serious Negroes who understood the need to break with the traditional parties of racism, the Democrats and Republicans, and build an independent party fully responsive to the needs of the Negro community. It participated in the election and thus helped train its members in the arts and skills of effective campaign organization. There are still many weaknesses within the FNP (lack of programmatic clarity, mistraining in the ethics and techniques of capitalist politics, vagueness in organizational structure) and these weaknesses account in some part for the small vote recorded for the party. The major difficulties encountered by the FNP came from the external situation, however -- the tremendous drive to defeat Goldwater at all costs, the lies and harassment tactics of the Democrats, the traditional Negro habit of voting Democratic, the opposition of the respected Negro leaders and last, but certainly not least, the fact that the FNP was presenting something so different from the usual pattern that Negroes needed time to digest this daring idea.

There is still some confusion about the actual vote received by the FNP. On election night the radio broadcasts repeatedly stated that the party had received from 19,000 votes when only about three-fourths of the returns were in. Now the United Press International claims that its unofficial count gives the FNP only 4,620 votes. Even if one accepts the lowest figure, the party's candidate for governor, Rev. Albert Cleage, received about 2% of the Negro vote in Michigan. Even if one accepts the highest figure cited, the party fell far short of the 100,000 votes they set as their goal.

The members of the FNP are not discouraged by the election results, however. They have the satisfaction of knowing that they stood against the tide that swept the hypocritical Democrats into office. They are enthusiastic about building and strengthening their organization and are already making plans to participate in the Detroit city elections of 1965. By that time the Negroes who voted Democratic will have already learned some bitter lessons about the candidates they helped put into office. If the Freedom Now party can solve some of its internal problems, it can prove to be a potent force during the next election campaign it undertakes.

WILSON'S QUID PRO QUO WITH WORLD IMPERIALISM

By Ernest Germain

For the past half century it has been a general rule that Social-Democratic governments, or those led by Social Democrats, in the major countries of Western Europe are brought down sooner or later by national and international finance capital after they have completed the function they were designed for in the eyes of the bourgeoisie. This happened to the Herman Müller government in Germany in 1930 and to Ramsay MacDonald's Labour government in 1931. The downfall of the first Léon Blum ("popular front") government in 1937 was a classical example.

During mid November the pattern seemed to be repeating itself in Great Britain. The Labour cabinet of Harold Wilson appeared to be the target of a vast conspiracy mounted by the "faceless bankers of Zurich." In other words, it looked like international finance capital had decided to force down the pound. For a few hours it almost seemed that they had won and that Wilson would have to devalue and devalue heavily. (Optimists among the capitalists even added that he would have to form a coalition with the Liberal party.)

Then a strange thing happened. Whereas private international finance capital had been gnawing away at the pound and the Wilson cabinet, "public" international finance capital rushed to the aid of the beleaguered Wilson and the British pound. Within a few hours, the governors and board of directors of the U.S. Federal Reserve System, the German Bundesbank, the Banque de France, the Italian, Swiss, Dutch, Belgian and Swedish national banks poured hundreds of millions of dollars into the British treasury. All told, Wilson was handed a purse of \$3,000,000,000 -- and the pound was saved.

Why this strange behavior, which doesn't seem to correspond at all to the rules of international capital? Have the international bankers suddenly become reconciled with socialism, if it is "introduced at a snail's pace" in accordance with the credo of the British Labour party bureaucrats? Or does the dramatic operation prove that in the eyes of the international bourgeoisie Wilson is really "a better servant of capitalism than the Tories," as a few fossilized ultralefts in Britain maintain, and therefore worthy of a really big gold medal?

Despite the attractive simplicity, neither line of reasoning is satisfactory. The international central banks are neither going socialist nor rewarding Wilson for being more capitalist than the Tories.

In the first place, the international monetary system governing the capitalist world economy today is a very delicate and vulnerable structure. Under the gold exchange standard the currencies of all capitalist countries (except the United States) are covered by

gold and U.S. dollars. Through this system the "creeping inflation" characteristic of contemporary capitalism in countries like the U.S. and Britain is spread over the whole world system. This is the price capitalism had to pay for the possibility of slowing down the rate of crises due to overproduction and transforming big crises into "smaller" recessions. As a result of this permanent inflationary trend, all currencies today are both highly vulnerable and tightly inter-linked.

The New York, Frankfurt and Paris central bankers feared -- and rightly so -- that devaluation of the pound would be rapidly followed by a general breakdown of the present exchange rates of all currencies and by contraction of international trade which, under the present conditions of slow down of economic expansion in Western Europe (with a recession in Italy and near stagnation in France), could precipitate a full-scale economic crisis. In rushing to the defense of the pound, they didn't act out of love for Harold Wilson. They had their own interests in mind.

Secondly, the Wilson Labour government has hardly fulfilled the task which capitalism has designated for it, a task inherent in the Labour program of accepting the capitalist state as the limiting frame for projected reforms. The job laid out for the Labour government is to get the British working class to accept what the Tories have notoriously been unable to impose; namely, wage restraints.

To topple Wilson through a conspiracy of finance capital before the unions have been inveigled into accepting a restrictive "incomes' policy" would most certainly provoke sharp radicalization of the British Labour movement. Wall Street, Frankfurt and Paris are not that stupid. They try to estimate the relationship of class forces in Britain in a realistic way.

Thirdly -- and this should be noted most carefully -- the \$3,000,000,000 windfall for Wilson was not one-sided. It was a quid pro quo. In return for a strengthened financial hand, Wilson betrayed some of his most emphatic promises in the field of foreign policy.

In the very same week in which the world's central banks came to his rescue with a big purse, Wilson made three momentous decisions in complete contradiction to the avowed foreign policy of the Labour party.

(1) He decided, after all, to carry out the Tory agreement to sell Buccaneer planes to South Africa's fascist-like Prime Minister Verwoerd, thereby strengthening the apartheid regime. How scandalous this decision was can be judged from the fact that the conservative-liberal weekly The Economist favored cancelling the contract for moral reasons!

(2) He extended the facilities of Ascension Island to the

U.S. and Belgian governments for their counterrevolutionary para-trooper operation against the Stanleyville government, thereby becoming an accomplice in the imperialist aggression against the Congolese revolution. He even went so far as to publicly approve this infamous move.

(3) He suddenly reversed his stand on MLF (NATO's multilateral nuclear force) and the Nassau agreement, agreeing to continue construction of three submarines to be armed with Polaris missiles equipped with nuclear war heads, agreeing to consider setting up a special NATO fleet equipped with nuclear weapons (to which his government would eventually add the three submarines under construction on condition that veto rights are maintained on use of the nuclear weapons), and agreeing even to integrate the West German Bundeswehr, with its Nazi-trained and Nazi-inspired high command, in the proposed NATO nuclear force!

The proposals in which Wilson has now acquiesced constitute direct military threats against the Soviet Union and the East European workers states.

The three betrayals are sizeable. They provide help for the international bourgeoisie in some very difficult situations. They cast additional revealing light on the alacrity with which \$3,000,000,000 was rounded up for the Bank of England.

Revolutionary Marxists in Britain and elsewhere are duty bound to denounce and oppose these betrayals. But in doing so they should not descend to mere name calling or make the gross error of considering a Labour government and a Tory government as equivalents.

Lenin long ago pointed out in his treatise on the infantile disorder of ultraleftism that the overwhelming majority of the British working class consider the Labour party to be their party and a Labour government to be their government, as is indeed the case since the Labour movement is based on the trade unions. This reality cannot be disregarded by any British Marxist seeking to win mass influence. The penalty for brushing it aside is political isolation.

Wilson's course must be carefully analyzed into its components so that his actual betrayals stand out clearly. In the current instance, Wilson's betrayals involve the foreign policy which the British workers were led to believe would be followed if Labour were elected. His departures from this policy must be denounced.

What the Labour government requires, if it is to win re-election by a thumping majority, is a foreign policy that will arouse enthusiasm and hope among the workers and their allies not only in Britain but throughout the world.

It must be demanded that the Labour government initiate a

genuine socialist policy. In the instances before us, this would include an effective boycott of Verwoerd's apartheid regime, sincere moves toward an alliance with the African revolution, and energetic moves towards unilateral nuclear disarmament.

If these demands are put in a reasoned way, with careful emphasis on the basic difference between a Labour government and a Tory government, the vanguard of the British workers will understand and begin the process of mobilizing appropriate action to rectify matters.

November 30, 1964.

A CHANGE IN MOOD AMONG THE FRENCH WORKERS?

By Pierre Frank

The season of labor demands in France began this year rather late, with the approach of winter instead of early fall, the usual period. Once again it is the workers bound by government statutes (public services, municipal employees. . .) and government functionaries as well as teachers who are raising their voices. A demonstration has been scheduled for December 2 and a 24-hour strike for Friday, December 11.

The workers in the public and nationalized sectors have not caught up on wage levels, and the government, since putting into effect its "stabilization" plan in September 1963, has blocked any rise. This is the explanation for the continuous discontent of these workers, who constitute a third of the wage-workers in France, and the demands they are now making.

But there are other elements in the present situation. During the past year prices continued to rise although at a slower rate than in the past. Recently they took another jump. In addition, in comparison with the private sector, wages have not tended to mount primarily because of a shift in the labor market.

In addition, a possibility can be discerned this time for associated or common action among all the workers whether they belong to the public or private sectors. The perspective is of great interest, since one of the elements that has favored the game of the Gaullist regime, as a consequence of the relatively good economic conjuncture, was the presentation of the demands of the different categories of workers in a scattered way. This still holds, but the elements for overcoming it are beginning to appear.

This is the background to the activities of the various trade-union organizations, their reciprocal relations and also -- although

this is neither direct nor conscious -- the political problems in France, particularly the 1965 presidential elections.

The trade-union situation changed in October when the Christian CFTC [Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens] voted by a big majority to give up designating itself "Christian," changing its name to the Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail [CFDT]. This decision resulted from the action of several currents. On the left in the CFTC a current has been genuinely in favor of socialism, in a confused way certainly, mixing Marxism with idealist philosophies. Through this change they sought to break with the past. For the leadership and the majority, the change is primarily a maneuver -- a rupture is involved only with the integrationist wing of the Church -- the aim being to adapt the organization to the modern world. (The move is within the line adopted by the Council in Rome but as applied to the French labor movement.)

Through this decision, the new federation aims for the first time to open an offensive against the two other federations, the CGT [Confédération Générale du Travail], which is under Communist influence, and the FO [Force Ouvrière], which is not so militant and which displays rigidity in its relations with the other federations. The FO is the more immediately threatened inasmuch as the big battalions of workers will not soon forget that the CFDT was formerly named the CFTC.

In any case, the change in name will not fail to stir up competition among the trade-union federations which can be carried over into activity in the field of demands.

If the preponderance of the CGT is considerable in the private sector, with the exception of the white-collar categories, the relationship is quite different in the public services, the nationalized industries and among the government functionaries. The CFDT has influential minorities among various categories of workers, above all the white-collar categories. The main bastions of the FO are among postal and railway workers as well as government functionaries.

Formally, the FO organizations are barred from having relations with CGT affiliates. But this holds only at the top level. On the lower levels of unions, locals and departments, fruitful contacts often exist. However, it takes time and negotiations involving much diplomacy to reach common action. The agreement this time, for the workers in the public and nationalized sectors, exists in the demonstration set for December 2 and the strike scheduled for December 11.

For December 2 the trade unions at first projected a big street demonstration in the center of Paris. The police banned the demonstration, but after negotiations authorized a gathering at the Bourse du Travail. This means practically that a street demonstration will take place but will be held in a less central location than was originally envisaged. Indications are that this demonstration will be a success

and that the December 11 strike will get a big response. But what next?

For the leaderships of the federations the main question is to combine the demands of the workers coming under government regulations with those in the private sector. Threatened, as we indicated above, by the formation of the CFDT, the generally timorous and passive leadership of the FO suddenly launched the idea of a nation-wide, 24-hour strike and proposed that the date be December 11. Such a demand from this leadership is both demagogic and symptomatic -- demagogic because it is not a firm decision, the FO having neither the weight nor the following to assure wide response to such a decision; symptomatic because the FO leaders, linked primarily with the most backward layers, could not have launched such an idea purely out of demagogy. They are aware of something ripening among the layers where they have influence.

This proposal, addressed to no one in particular, not even being placed formally before the other leaderships, brought no response from the CFTD. The CGT, through its main leader Frachon, had no trouble pointing to the incapacity of the FO to carry out a single letter of such a slogan and condemning the refusal of the FO to meet with the CGT to organize common action.

But at the same time, Frachon took an ambiguous position on the essence of the problem. Without rejecting the idea of such a general demonstration of the working class, he sought to make much of the difficulties it offered and on the fact, according to him, that it should be the culmination of a number of partial actions.

Truth to tell, the trade unions face difficulties in their tactical problems because of the assortment of existing situations. Some industries are still prosperous, others are suffering stagnation, still others are dying. For the time being the bosses hold the initiative, and certain attacks have to be met without waiting for the entire working class to show its readiness for action.

But the deepest cause of the embarrassment of the CGT leadership lies in the absence of perspectives and political line among the leaders of the French Communist party. We will take up this question in another article dealing with the presidential elections in 1965.

November 29, 1964.