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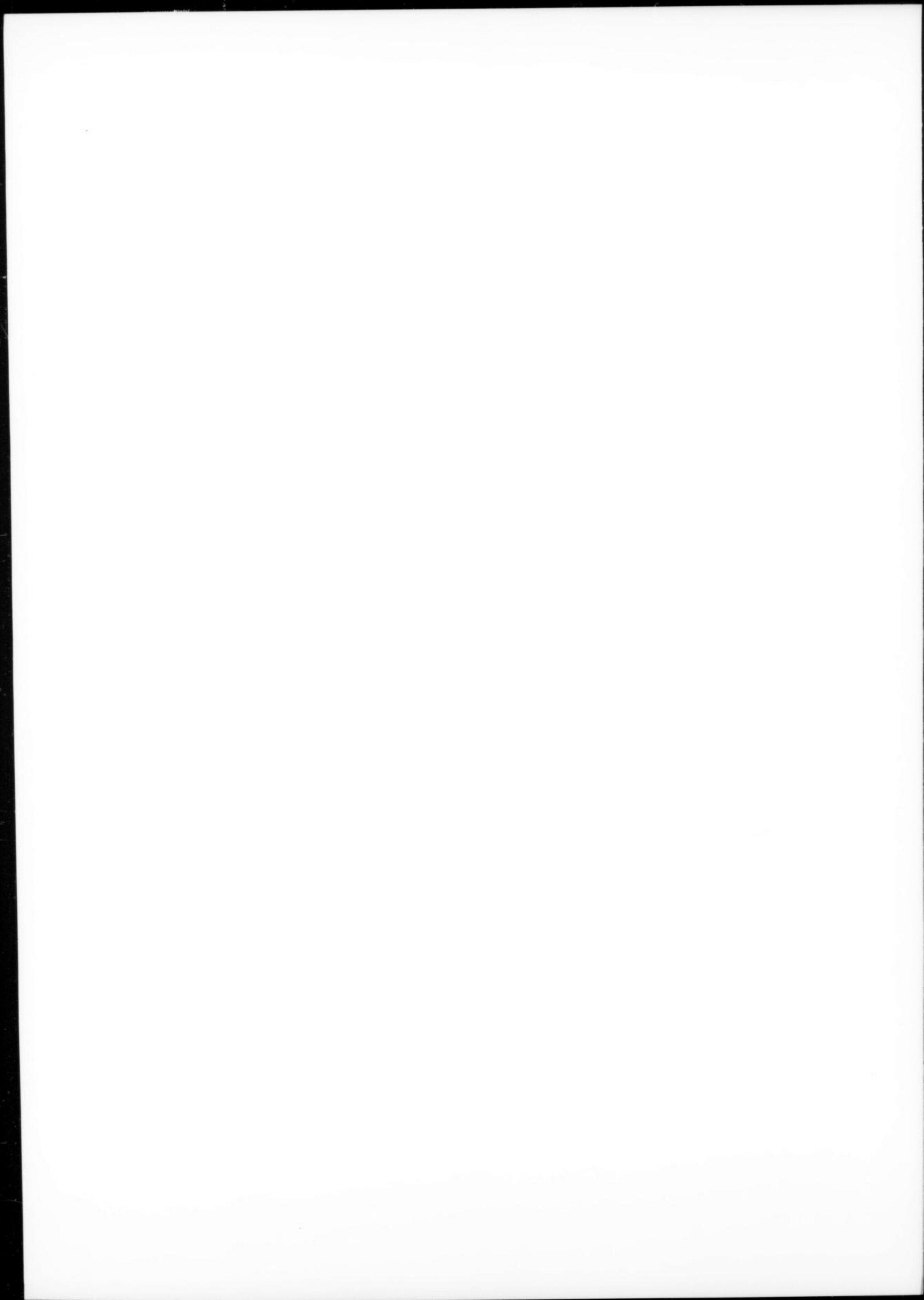
**The Planet's
Flashpoints / 77**

**Europe 1992 and
the Working Class / 59**

**USSR: 'Ethnic
Sentiment' / 68**

**Women's
Equality / 52**

Hungary / 29





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WORLD Problems of MARXIST Peace and Socialism REVIEW

Theoretical and information journal
of Communist and Workers' Parties

INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

James STEWART (Ireland). We Have Much to Say on Human Rights.....	3
Nikolai CHERVOV (USSR). Soviet-American Military Dialogue.....	7
TOWARDS ECONOMIC SECURITY. An Academic and Political Round Table.....	11
Jean ZIEGLER (Switzerland). The Socialist International and the Third World.....	16
Henry PLUMB (European Parliament). Let Us Work Together.....	20

THE SOCIALIST WAY

Vu OANH (Vietnam). New Developments in Economic Management.....	22
SOCIALIST IDEALS: A PERSONAL VIEW. Ognian PANOV (Bulgaria). Promoting Change. Marko SEMOV (Bulgaria). Do We Need Universal Equality?.....	25
Alain GÉRARD. Hungarian Problems From Various Angles.....	29
Yu BENZHENG (China). Spiritual Renaissance.....	33

THE PARTY

Trevor MUNROE (Jamaica). Humanism—The Gist of Revolution.....	34
Renzo TRIVELLI (Italy). "THE ICP's Decline Is Not Inevitable...".....	38
WMR TIES.....	40
David ARTHUR (New Zealand). For a Dialogue Without Bias.....	41
INFORMATION. In Brief.....	43
Victor DEGIOVANNI (Malta). No Probation Period for Party Membership.....	44

FORUM

FOLLOWING UP ON THE SUBJECT OF DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY. Jorge BERGSTEIN (Argentina). A Different Approach to the Matter. Elfidio CANO (Guatemala). The "Land of Perennial Dictatorships".....	45
FROM OUR MAILBAG.....	50,51

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT TODAY

Venke RÖYNE (Norway). The Morality of Equality.....	52
A FEMALE OLYMPIAN. Profile of Academician Tatiana Zaslavskaya of the Soviet Union.....	54
Barbara CURTHOYS (Australia). Feminism and the Communists.....	56
Hanan ASHRAWI (Palestine). The Fervent Wish of a Mother.....	58

COUNTRIES, EVENTS, ANALYSIS

WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT. Gerry POCKOCK (Great Britain). Common Market: What Does 1992 Promise? Jan DEBROUWERE (Belgium). Transformation, Not Negation. Serji MARI (Spain). The Pros and Cons.....	59
Mahdi HABIB (Saudi Arabia). When Contradictions Are Exacerbated.....	64
Sergei BARUZDIN (USSR). The Source of Ethnic Sentiment.....	68
Tim WHEELER, Joelle FISHMAN (USA). After Presidential Elections.....	73
THE PLANET'S FLASHPOINTS. Oscar CAMILION (UN). Working for an Acceptable Compromise. Ozker OZGUR (Cyprus). Through Joint Efforts to Settlement. Mateus JULIAO PAULO (Angola). A Landmark in Angolan History. Tawfiq TOUBI (Israel). Israeli Elections'88: Deepening Crisis.....	77
TESFAYE DINKA (Ethiopia). Forward-Looking Ethiopia.....	84
MAUNG MAUNG KYAW (Burma). Burma: The Military Again in Power.....	87

THE BOOK SCENE

Ali MALKI. A Paper Not Like the Others.....	89
Jim MORTIMER. Trade Unionism in Britain.....	91
AN AUTHOR'S VIEW. Robert TUCKER. A Trilogy About Stalin.....	92
A PUBLISHER'S INTERVIEW. Orbis Informs... ..	94
THE READER AND THE JOURNAL.....	96

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into the 21st century

Have international affairs indeed reached a turning point? Are we really entering a period of peace? If practice is the yardstick of truth, there is ample reason to answer these questions in the affirmative. This view is confirmed by the results of the Vienna Meeting of the European Countries, the United States and Canada, which ended in January 1989 after 27 months of talks.

This was a major step not only in furthering the all-European process but also in improving the international climate as a whole. The Vienna mandate proves that the Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries have the political will and the desire to start

negotiations on the future stability and security of Europe (from the Atlantic to the Urals) at lower levels of armed forces by removing the existing imbalances and the potential for surprise attack. Parallel talks are envisaged on confidence-building measures in the military field.

Another meeting similar to that in Vienna will open in Helsinki in March 1992. Meanwhile, 11 major conferences are being organised. The decision to discuss humanitarian issues in Paris, Copenhagen and Moscow exemplifies the transition from a policy of confrontation to one of mutual understanding and joint action, on one of the more acute

problems of today's world.

Symbolically, the Vienna final document was finalised on January 15, exactly three years after the Soviet Union made public its programme for creating a nuclear-free world and eliminating all other weapons of mass destruction by the year 2000. Events have demonstrated that this idea is not some wild dream but a valid assessment of real opportunities.

As we approach the 21st century, humanity has the chance to prevent its own destruction, to establish a new world of peace, security and cooperation and to keep the environment clean and healthy. We will continue our coverage of these issues.

WE HAVE MUCH TO SAY ON HUMAN RIGHTS

James STEWART,
General Secretary, Communist Party of Ireland (CPI)

Two centuries ago this year the revolutionary upheaval in France produced the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which was to exert a tremendous influence on the political development of many states. Ways of realizing the noble principles proclaimed in that document have been the focus of many debates since then. The freedom of the individual, of speech, of conscience, equality of citizens before the law, and the right to resist oppression have remained central to the battle of ideas. As then, the bourgeoisie of today claims to be the most consistent champion of the above principles and is trying to monopolise, as it were, the democratic ideas of the freedom of the individual

and to isolate the Communists, who challenge the capitalist system, from them. Since 1917, practice has repeatedly borne out the truth of Lenin's warning that the bourgeoisie would put up the slogan of freedom against us¹.

The CPI's stand on these issues is unequivocal: it would be disastrous to abandon to bourgeois politicians the huge potential of democratic tradition which belongs to humanity as a whole, to the mass of the working people.

When the First International was being established, the members of the preparatory committee insisted that its Rules stipulate a commitment to human rights. Marx,

who was drafting the Provisional Rules, agreed with them and, on behalf of the founders of the International Workingmen's Association, stated in the preamble: "They hold it the duty of a man to claim the rights of a man and a citizen, not only for himself, but for every man who does his duty."² Regrettably, simplified views of the problems in question eventually emerged. Some people claimed that the Communists' interest lay not in the individual and his or her rights but in the class, party, society and similar categories. Such simplifications are contrary to the very spirit of our ideology. When Italian Socialists asked Engels to help them choose a succinct statement that would aptly convey the essence of Marxism, he suggested the following quote from the *Communist Manifesto*: "The free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".

We consider ourselves in agreement with the lofty goals of the Declaration of Rights of Man and of the Citizen. The CPI is thus carrying on the traditions of the country's patriotic forces, which in their struggle against British colonial domination drew inspiration from the democratic ideals of the French Revolution and from Thomas Paine.³ In the 19th century the principles of human rights were known in our country as the Bible of Belfast, and it was around the slogans of liberty, equality, fraternity that the main revolutionary forces of the nation were rallying.

In 1948, after World War II, the United Nations approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which wrote into international law not just civil and political liberties but also important socioeconomic principles, such as the right to work, to health care, and to education. That document was vastly important to the broad civil rights movement launched in our country in the late 1960s and early 1970s, in which Communists were very active.

People's perceptions of human rights and their bounds and guarantees are changing along with change in the world, of course. The positions of the sides debating these issues are not hide-bound either. We still remember the time when such debates were conducted as "psychological warfare", with Western governments making ultimatums to socialist countries and provoking them into defensive action. The mass media for their part gloated in every Western demarche and presented all human rights problems as "unprofitable" and "embarrassing" to the USSR and its allies.

Today we witness the confusion of many Western politicians and political writers in the face of what the Soviet Union is doing in the context of its perestroika. The broadening of democracy in Soviet internal affairs is clearly visible. In international talks, too, Soviet negotiators are not afraid constructively and realistically

to raise and discuss all the problems involved in the exercise of human rights. They are no longer the Western "trump card" in diplomatic gambles.

As a result, the United States and Britain eventually agreed at the Vienna follow-up meeting of the Helsinki Conference to the Soviet-proposed International Conference on Humanitarian Problems in Moscow in 1991.

MANY ARE CALLED, FEW ARE CHOSEN

We Irish Communists have much to say on human rights, especially in the West. My countrymen may know little about the situation in the USSR and other East European countries and the status of the individual there, but they are not so naive as to believe what the maligners say. People in Northern Ireland, familiar with plastic bullets, strip searching and the "shoot to kill" policy, tend to smile ironically when they hear Mrs Thatcher harp on about "violations of human rights in the Soviet Union".

What guarantees can there be for the exercise by the many young Irish of the right to work, recorded in the United Nations' Universal Declaration, if they have never had a job and see very little chance of finding one? What real participation of citizens in the political process can be talked about with the "direct rule" exercised by London-appointed officers in Ulster? The Irish can only dream about the right to live since any British soldier may decide to make him or her a "suspect" and "mistakenly" "shoot to kill". Whenever Washington and West European capitals applaud the right to emigrate as almost the principal indicator of democracy in the social system, we Irish have thought bitterly that it would be a good thing to secure our countrymen's right to *live in their own country*. Indeed, every year thousands of our despairing people leave the homeland in search of happiness in New Zealand, the United States, Australia and other countries.... And the democratic forces of the Irish Republic are yet to secure the right to divorce and to family planning.

In Europe, the case of the Birmingham Six⁴ has already become a textbook example of the British approach to justice. Even Amnesty International, an organisation that can hardly be suspected of entertaining left views, condemned the cold-blooded murder of three Irish by British troops in the Gibraltar. On that occasion, moreover, Amnesty was strongly censured by the British Premier, who however has never taken issue with the organisation's accusation against the socialist countries.

Individual freedoms have remained the starting point of the bourgeois approach to human rights, while the relationship between civil and political liberties and fundamental human rights, such as the right to work, to

education and to health care, is ignored. In other words, everyone is free *de jure* to excel in any field and to find a way to success. But in practice, the biblical principle, "Many are called, few are chosen", is in effect in the society of *de facto* inequality.

We are realists and appreciate the achievements of the West European working-class and democratic movements in civil rights and freedoms. But the practice of the past few years has again shown us that the *amount of sociopolitical freedoms is not something given* us once and for all. It is a reflection of the alignment of forces in the class struggle and depends directly on the strength, organisation and activity of the working-class organisations and the democratic movement as a whole.

Human rights need to be backed up and defended continuously. Regrettably, in the past few years some people have tended to consider many democratic norms inviolable and wholly irreversible. But as soon as the organised working-class movement has shown signs of weakening and even retreating, the conservative bourgeois forces have tried immediately to take back even those gains of the working people which until recently seemed an inalienable feature of "modernised" capitalism. Who would have thought a few years previously that the right to health care, in which the British used to take pride, would be put into jeopardy under the Thatcher government? Or could anyone have imagined the introduction of the poll tax, which throws British electoral laws back to almost the pre-Charter days, when a citizen's political status depended on his or her property!

All that fortified our conviction that, in spite of all the democratic achievements and the rights and freedoms that the mass of people can enjoy, the state apparatus remains a weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie. And when the more conservative section of the ruling class emerges on top (as is the case in Britain), it uses the first opportunity available to use that weapon for a "social claw-back".

The scope, soundness and firmness of rights and freedoms under capitalism are not constant values but reflect the combative spirit of the democratic forces, primarily working-class organisations. The United States is a good example in this respect. It has a fine democratic Constitution, and many progressive laws, but since the framework of social organisation is designed to guarantee the primacy of Finance Capital, its working-class movement is among the weakest in the world.

EUROPE 1992—FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF DEMOCRACY

The struggle for trade union rights and freedoms has a special part to play because they are the most broad-based and open democratic association of the working

people and the most accessible means of putting across their aspirations and interests. As our 19th Congress (1986) noted, "attacks on trade union rights and organisation will undermine the ability of the Irish people to defend themselves against monopoly capital. Anti-trade union legislation is in fact an attack on essential democratic rights".⁵

What we are witnessing today is precisely the docking of a number of democratic rights and attacks on trade union freedoms. We are aware also of the danger of these tendencies going further as a result of the enforcement of the Single European Act. As the authority of the agencies of the European Community grows, the right of the Irish to decide the destiny of their country and to defend democratically (through elections and Parliament) their own national interests will be seriously undermined. The establishment of a "single" market by 1992 is in fact the process of removing all the obstacles to transnational capital, particularly to transnational corporations—and those obstacles include the basic rights and freedoms which workers in every country have won through their trade unions over a century and more of struggle.

One is bound to ask then: "But how can the democratic and social rights and freedoms of the working people be made irreversible in the face of the attacks of the conservative forces?" Our party believes that such a goal can be accomplished through *qualitative, fundamental, in short, revolutionary changes in the social system as a whole along socialist lines.*

We no longer think that socialism automatically resolves all the possible problems, including those of human rights. Changes in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries have given us a better insight into many things. As a result, we are progressing towards a more mature concept of socialism as a whole and therefore towards a more realistic perception of what it can and must give people. Obviously, we have to reckon with the specific circumstances in which our ideas of the real status of the individual in socialist society were shaped. During the cold war period, when the Soviet Union was exposed to fierce imperialist attacks, we naturally considered it our duty to defend it and to popularise the achievements of the socialist system rather than to criticise its shortcomings and problems. Today the USSR is unarguably stronger than at that time, and the communist movement has broader possibilities.

Soviet Communists say frankly that they do not think the level they have attained to be the ideal, and now recognise their shortcomings and mistakes. But no one can accuse the USSR of ignoring the right to work, disrespecting the right to education or health care, or discriminating against people on grounds of sex, race or nationality. The main point to us Communists in a

capitalist country is that the prevalent tendency in socialist society today is the broadening of democracy and the strengthening of human rights. A reverse process is under way in Western Europe: the democratic freedoms and social gains of the working people are being *limited and restricted* everywhere. Even those who are no sympathisers of socialist countries cannot deny the broadening of democracy there. Of course, they complain now that that process is "insufficient", now that there are no guarantees of its being irreversible; but one thing is clear: Westerners' perceptions of the socialist concept and practice of protecting human rights are changing substantially.

Naturally, misconceptions and prejudice do not go away overnight, especially since the bourgeois media have for decades purposefully pictured the socialist world as one big barracks. Therefore, it would be wrong to believe that the advantages of socialism have become clearer to all people in the capitalist world and that further discussions on human rights are pointless. But new, positive developments and new possibilities are obvious.

Communists' participation in the civil rights struggles, especially within the mass movement which unfolded in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s and early 1970s, enriched us with important lessons and conclusions, which have lost none of their relevance today.

We found out that the strength, mass base and efficiency of the civil rights movement were ensured to a large extent by the broad spectrum of the participating forces, from the Communists on the one hand to some of the Unionists on the other. The decline and weakening of the movement was caused by the sectarian and divisive actions of extremists. We thus realised that the subject of civil rights was bringing together all people opposed to injustice regardless of class, political and religious affiliations. Moreover, such a *potential of unity* can stand up to rigorous tests. For instance, last year, after the murder of three IRA members by British soldiers in the Gibraltar (and the subsequent spate of acts of violence and terrorism on religious grounds that followed), a demonstration of protest against the British government's measures that were undermining the right to health care was held in Belfast. People from both the Protestant and the Catholic community took part in it: solidarity in the struggle for social rights proved stronger than the hostility fomented by such acts of terrorism.

WHO WILL HAVE THE LAST SAY?

The current human rights campaigns are mostly centered on individual issues, such as strip searching, the use of plastic bullets and the "shoot to kill" policies. But we are pinning our hopes on the prospect of a *broad approach* to every civil, political and social right. An understanding of their relationship, and of their dependence on innermost social processes, including the system of ownership, the machinery of power, and the ideological atmosphere, enables one to progress from a mere outrage over specific injustices to general political conclusions and an active role in society.

The paramount human right is the right to live. It is for the people themselves to arrange their lives so that everyone might make use of the immense opportunities offered by progress on the threshold of the new millennium. It is around that issue that the great historical debate is revolving. What is to be decided is to which social system humanity will link its eternal striving for freedom and justice. Different forces appeal to the same principles where they offer other ways, approaches and criteria. The Communists also have their own principled stand.

In the longer term, the world confrontation over which system best guarantees human rights is likely to shift increasingly from speculation, prejudice and power play to the *concrete comparison* of not only concepts but, more importantly, real sociopolitical practices in different states. He who creates the conditions by which one and all can live free and decent lives will have the last say. When all is said and done, there will be no losers in the dispute: therefore the whole of humanity will stand to gain.

1 See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 392.

2 Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 20, p.15.

3 Thomas Paine, 1737-1809, a radical political philosopher, was born in Britain and in 1774 moved to North America. Supported the sovereignty of a people and its right to a revolutionary uprising. — *Ed.*

4 The Birmingham Six are the six Irish found guilty of exploding a bomb in a Birmingham pub. Evidence of their innocence was eventually produced, and it transpired that confessions of guilt had been obtained from them under duress. But the British court brushed aside a public outcry and turned down the appeal of the defence. — *Ed.*

5 *Documents of the 19th Congress of the Communist Party of Ireland*, 1986, p.26.

SOVIET-AMERICAN MILITARY DIALOGUE

Colonel General Nikolai CHERVOV

Department Head, General Staff of the Soviet Armed Forces

For a long time Soviet-American relations, so vital to the interests of the rest of the world, were keynoted by confrontation. In recent years, however, they have experienced a significant change for the better. Mikhail Gorbachov's discussions with Ronald Reagan and George Bush in New York in December 1988 spurred on this new relationship and underlined the importance attached by both sides to constructive continuity, stability and predictability in their relations.

Contacts and dialogue between the military establishments have a significant part to play in political discussions between the two powers, and such a dialogue was initiated at a meeting between General of the Army Dmitry Yazov, Minister of Defence of the USSR, and US Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci in Bern, Switzerland, on March 16-17, 1988. This was the first time since the war that a Soviet and an American, directly responsible for the security and defence of their countries, had met face to face.

Those talks led to a series of contacts between Soviet and American military men: Frank Carlucci paid two visits to Moscow (in May and August 1988), Secretary of the Navy Edward Aldridge travelled to the USSR in early July 1988, and a Soviet delegation, which included the chiefs-of-staff of the Soviet Land Forces, the Navy and the Air Force and which was led by Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev, visited the United States at the invitation of Admiral William Crowe, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs-of-Staff, from July 5 to 11, 1988.

One could hardly have imagined anything like that a few years ago. The Bern meeting and the followup contacts between officials of the two defence ministries were made possible by the Soviet-US summits. The top-level dialogue, the resultant changes for the better in bilateral relations, in particular the signing and enactment of the treaty to eliminate intermediate- and shorter-range missiles; the statement that a nuclear war could not be won and that the USSR and the USA should never fight either a nuclear or a conventional war; and, finally, understandings on many aspects of a projected 50% cut in strategic offensive armaments on condition that the ABM Treaty is respected in its

original 1972 reading—all made it possible to initiate a practical dialogue between the military of the two countries.

The paramount goal in those contacts was to discuss in depth military politics and technology in order to *achieve a better understanding and, if possible, trust* between the two countries in military matters, and also greater predictability and stability in military equilibrium. "The main purpose of the meeting as we perceived it was to promote better understanding on the military aspects of Soviet-American relations and a solution to the key problem of our time, that of averting a nuclear war and ending the arms race"¹, Dmitry Yazov said at a press conference in Bern.

The Soviet leadership is firmly pursuing a *policy of improving Soviet-American relations*. It does not indulge in illusions, of course, but proceeds from realities and bears in mind all the complex contradictions and problems involved. Such perceptions are the basis of the Soviet concept of removing the threat of war and building a secure world.

Soviet negotiators used concrete facts to explain Soviet military policy in detail so that their American counterparts should read it correctly and draw adequate practical conclusions. A key issue on the agenda was the *character of the military doctrines of states*, i.e., the ideological basis of military policies on which the present structures of the armed forces and their tendencies for further development rest. Those few discussions could hardly have been expected to produce recommendations on how to correct the doctrines in order to reduce military confrontation. Such an effort doubtless requires time, and a permanent mechanism for contacts between the sides' military experts.

At their meeting in Bern the defence ministers came up with an idea for such a mechanism. An agreed programme of action provides for serious bilateral discussion of and joint solutions to military-political and military-technological problems involved in disarmament and security.

The logic of Soviet military thinking was demonstrated to the Americans as being rooted in a Soviet *defensive military doctrine* that bases itself on the task of averting war and maintaining defences at the sufficiency level. It was also explained that our understanding of this principle presupposes parity, equal security, a modification of military activity and the structure and deployment of the armed forces, mandatory reductions in manpower and armaments, and strict verification.

US negotiators replied that they did not see any serious change in the military doctrine or organisation of the Soviet Armed Forces and that the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation still had an edge in conventional armaments, for which reason the Americans could not be certain about

the practical implications of our military doctrine. Neither can they derive any conclusive evidence from their analyses of Soviet military exercises, which ought to serve as indicator of the character of the military doctrine.

Responding to the concerns of the American side, Marshal Akhromeyev forcefully demonstrated during his visit to the US that the Soviet military doctrine was becoming defensive in both form and content in the course of perestroika. It has always been defensive in content but its form provided for both defensive and offensive operations. Now we are restructuring ourselves and revising our concepts so that both our doctrine and our strategy should be exclusively defensive. We have understood that the methods we use in troop training give cause for concern, especially in West European countries. Under the new doctrine we are beginning to reorganise the structure of our Armed Forces. It will take time, but the main thing is that force reductions, the lessening of tension and the full-scale implementation of a defensive doctrine can be achieved only on a reciprocal basis. That is why we should sit down at the negotiating table.

Describing to journalists his reaction to Akhromeyev's presentation of the Soviet military doctrine, Admiral Crowe said he had listened with interest to the Soviet concepts of troop deployments, the use of armed force and the reading of political and military contexts, and the needs of their services. He noted some differences and misunderstandings, but also progress in clarifying them and success in preparing the ground for further exploration. According to his account, Marshal Akhromeyev replied to his concerns and objections with the advice to wait a little and watch developments closely.

Admiral Crowe did not have long to wait: on December 7, 1988, Mikhail Gorbachov announced the Soviet Union's decision on a major unilateral reduction of its Armed Forces over two years: troop cuts of 500,000 men, and the forces deployed in the European USSR and on the territory of its European allies to be reduced by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 warplanes. Along with these sizeable cuts, the structure of the Soviet armed forces, especially those immediately facing NATO troops, will be drastically altered.

Firstly, cuts will be effected in those types of arms and military technology whose offensive potential worries the West. Secondly, six tank divisions will be withdrawn from the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and disbanded rather than deployed elsewhere. Thirdly, the divisions that are to remain on the territories of our allies for the time being will be reorganised through large tank withdrawals, and converted to a strictly defensive configuration. Since assault combat and engineering troops with their arms and

equipment will be simultaneously pulled out of those countries, the fears of West Europeans over the offensive posture of our forces there should be put to rest. A zone of lowered military capability will be created by the Warsaw Treaty Organisation where its forces directly face those of NATO: large numbers of conventional weapons considered offensive will be removed.

The restructuring of the remaining force constitutes the *practical implementation of the Soviet defence doctrine* in the organisation of the Armed Forces. The political and military-technological aspects of the doctrine have now been interwoven into a general defensive orientation.

Many US leaders have agreed that the cuts announced by the Soviet Union are practical proof of its sincerity in embracing a defence doctrine based on reasonable sufficiency. Admiral Crowe believes that the withdrawal of Soviet offensive systems will alter the military situation and have a substantial effect especially in terms of attack warning time. CIA Director William Webster has stressed that the announced measures will seriously detract from the ability of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation to launch a surprise attack on the West.

In talks with American representatives, the Soviet side tried to get a better idea of the logic and rationale of US military actions and to hear a lucid explanation of what it was about the proposals made by the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation that was unacceptable to the United States and NATO and why many of our peace proposals remained unanswered for years.

Regrettably, we did not receive substantive answers to many of our questions. The US negotiators spoke at length about their military doctrine and its defensive character, but the evidence they cited was, alas, unconvincing. For instance, speaking at the Military Academy of the General Staff in Moscow, Frank Carlucci said that the main proof of this was the nature of American democracy and the openness of American society. According to him, democracy and freedom make it impossible to pursue a policy of aggression, or to put an offensive doctrine into practice. The USSR can hardly take such generalisations as proof: what we need is facts concerning the organisation and deployment of the armed forces.

The commitment of the US armed forces to the "nuclear deterrence" concept and to the first use of nuclear weapons; their aim of winning a nuclear war; offensive concepts with regard to conventional forces, such as a "forward-based defence"; and emphasis on "low-intensity conflicts"—all show that the American military doctrine is offensive rather than defensive. The Americans clearly have a great deal yet to do to ease our anxiety.

A complex of problems related to the *talks on arms*

limitation and reduction was another important issue on the agenda of the above meetings. The task was not to replace the talks themselves or the dialogue between the two countries' foreign ministers, but to contribute towards a solution of the more urgent problems in that field.

Analysing in Bern the progress of the talks on *50% cuts in strategic offensive weapons*, the two defence ministers showed mutual understanding on methods of monitoring sea-launched nuclear cruise missiles (SLCM), and discussed a proposal for a joint experiment to verify the presence of nuclear weapons aboard warships. The experiment could help implement the agreement reached at the Washington summit to set ceilings on the sides' arsenals of nuclear SLCM's and work out efficient and mutually acceptable methods of verification.

When *conventional weapons* came up for discussion, our military people stressed the special importance of new all-European talks and the Soviet Union's readiness to examine in detail every issue, including that of removing imbalances and asymmetries on a reciprocal basis. In Bern the Soviet defence minister suggested discussing possible exchanges of data on the armed forces of NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation as a whole, and of individual member countries. Such exchanges would clarify the real correlation of forces between the two alliances and provide a good starting point for talks on troop and conventional arms reductions in Europe under the mandate drawn up by the Vienna meeting.

Our programme for *European disarmament*, aimed at drastically lowering military confrontation and reducing the military potentials of states to a purely defensive level, was presented in detail. According to the socialist countries' concept, the lowering of military confrontation in Europe should be accompanied by a complex of confidence-building measures, designed also to prevent a sudden outbreak of hostilities. These include the thinning out of the concentrations of armed forces and armaments to agreed levels in the zone of contact between the two alliances; the removal of the more dangerous offensive weapons from such a zone; and the agreed withdrawal of all nuclear weapons from the zone of contact between the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO in order to establish a nuclear-free corridor.

When these problems were discussed, we were baffled by the one-sided approach of the US defence department officials to the evaluation of the military potentials of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO: they count only the land forces, particularly tank strength in which the Warsaw Treaty Organisation has an edge, but leave aside the US and NATO navies and air forces, which are vastly superior to those of the USSR and its allies.

The need to make the sides' *naval forces* a subject of the talks was emphasised at the defence ministers' meeting. Today, the risk of armed confrontation at sea is as high as on land, and constraints on the size of navies and their activities in the seas around Europe would improve the situation on the continent. But while serious measures are being planned to lower the level of armed confrontation between the land forces, and while their activities are being monitored in accordance with the Stockholm document, naval confrontation persists, and even tends to increase.

Carlucci stated that the US would build up and improve its Navy and use it along with other armed services in order to pursue a policy of deterrence.

Meanwhile, the US naval forces and bases encircling Soviet territory pose a real threat to our country. America's 15 carrier groups are strong naval and air forces capable of striking at targets in Soviet territory. The Americans' arguments—that their naval forces are intended merely to defend US trade routes and communications—are therefore unacceptable. But if that really is their job, they should be converted from an offensive to a defensive configuration. Instead, Washington is increasing the offensive potential of its Navy.

The Soviet side also expressed concern over NATO's plans to "compensate" for the elimination of American intermediate- and shorter-range missiles. This would run counter to the spirit of the INF Treaty and dim the prospects for lowering the level of military confrontation in Europe. Soviet disquiet about those plans was stated in no uncertain terms.

Stressing our desire for an early convention on the comprehensive prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons under dependable international control, Soviet delegates pointed out inconsistencies in the US stand: whilst declaring their commitment to this, they are at the same time about to begin production of a new generation of chemical weapons, binary gases. Conversely, the Soviet Union has announced that this year it will begin destroying its chemical weapons stockpiles even before the signing of the convention.

Prevention of *dangerous incidents between the armed forces* of the two powers is very important for strengthening trust and promoting mutual understanding and stability in international affairs. The two defence ministers agreed in Bern to formulate principles and develop controls to avert such incidents. A mechanism of control would not replace or interfere with any effective Soviet-US agreements, such as the 1972 accord on preventing incidents on and over the high seas and the agreement on liaison missions.

Marshal Akhromeyev and Admiral Crowe, who discussed that problem in detail on instructions from their

defence ministers, decided to establish a joint working group to examine, under their direction, possible dangerous military activities and to work out proposals on control. The group first met in Washington in October 1988 and then in Moscow last December. The talks were intensive and aimed at producing recommendations on preventing dangerous military activities, and proposals for control machinery to support the sides' actions in the event of any such activities. By agreement, such recommendations will come into effect when Admiral Crowe pays a return visit to the USSR in summer 1989.

Advance notification of strategic exercises of the Global Shield type is also meant to promote mutual understanding in the military field. The defence ministers agreed on mutual notification of such exercises, especially those involving strategic aircraft.

During Marshal Akhromeyev's visit to the US, the sides agreed and put into effect a *plan for military contacts* until the end of 1990: the commander-in-chief of Soviet Armed Forces in Germany will meet with the commander of the US land forces in Europe; the commanders-in-chief of the Soviet air, naval and land forces will visit the US; and the chiefs-of-staff of the US Army, Navy and Air Force will travel to the Soviet Union. Soviet and American warships will exchange port calls, and there will be exchanges between athletes, military historians, medical men and military academics, and also other contacts. Agreement was reached on normalising the work of military attaches and their staff in Moscow and Washington, and on giving them more opportunities to visit the other's military facilities.

Learning at first hand about each other's armed forces has a special part to play in the establishment of contacts, and the Soviet delegation's visit to the US was very useful in this sense: they went to a Marines' base in North Carolina and saw weapons, combat technology, and airborne and land exercises. The delegation visited the *Theodore Roosevelt* attack aircraft-carrier, watched flight take-offs and landings, and saw ground force exercises at a military base in Texas. At an air force base in South Dakota they examined B-1B and B-52 bombers, modern fighter-bombers and a Minuteman-2 intercontinental ballistic missile.

Soviet delegates had interesting personal contacts with American generals, officers, sergeants and enlisted men. There were also many meetings with the press, with students and professors of Oklahoma University, and with members of the Chamber of Commerce in Texas and of

the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. The general impression was that the *absolute majority of Americans do not want war*. But they have been scared by the US propaganda machine, which has for decades portrayed the USSR as an "evil empire", and emphasised a "Soviet military threat". Americans know little about our people and their rich and complex history. The visit by Soviet military men and their meetings with Americans helped promote mutual understanding.

We reciprocated and gave the US Secretary of Defense an opportunity to gain an insight into the life and training of the Soviet Armed Forces. He visited the Taman Guards Motorised Infantry Division, saw a battalion exercise and shooting practice, learned about motorised infantry tactics, watched the dropping of an airborne task force, examined artillery pieces and other combat technology, and was told about their operational and technical characteristics. Frank Carlucci went out to an air force unit outside Moscow, saw modern military technology, went aboard a new Soviet strategic bomber, the TU-160, and other planes, watched air exercises, met Soviet pilots and praised their superb skills. In Sevastopol, he went on board the *Slava*, a modern missile cruiser.

The US Secretary of Defense noted the excellent training and competence of Soviet troops and characterised them as professionals equipped with modern weapons and materiel. The main thing, he said, is not to have to use them against anyone, and we could not agree more.

In sum, the sides were satisfied with the important results they had achieved. Most importantly, they *created a pattern of relationships in the military field* that can contribute towards a lasting peace. Exchanges of views help the sides better to understand each other's positions on military and political matters and suggest that complex military problems can be resolved through reciprocity and respect for each other's security interests.

It is to be hoped that the two defence ministries will continue their unbiassed and close examination of each other's security concerns. The dialogue between military people is not an end in itself but should become an important means of achieving accords between the two powers for equal security and stronger international stability. Realism and verification should be the basis of our relations and help us build mutual trust.

1 *Pravda*, March 18, 1988.

TOWARDS ECONOMIC SECURITY

An Academic and Political Round Table

The concept of international economic security, put forward by the Soviet Union at the 27th Congress of the CPSU, is being debated internationally, at the UN and among economists, political figures and different sections of the public. What aspects of this initiative have captured their attention? How does it differ from the doctrine of a new international economic order? What hopes and plans are connected with the ideas of convening a World Congress on International Economic Security?

WMR has sponsored an exchange of views on this subject. Taking part were Louis Carlos BRESSER PEREIRA, former Minister of Finance, Professor of the Getulio Vargas Foundation in Sao Paulo, Brazil; Stuart HOLLAND, Member of Parliament, Minister for International Economic Affairs in the shadow cabinet of the Labour Party, Great Britain; Dr Fouad MOURSI, Professor at the University of Alexandria, Political Committee Chairman of the Progressive National Unionist Party, Egypt; SHI MIN, Professor at the Institute of World Economics and Politics under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Beijing, China; Dr Louis EMMERIJ, President of the OECD Development Centre, member of the Dutch Labour Party, Netherlands; and Professor Ivan IVANOV, Deputy Chairman of the State External Economic Commission of the Council of Ministers, USSR.

An abridged record follows.

STABILITY AND PREDICTABILITY

I. IVANOV. The Soviet Union is interested in the issue of global economic security because the world has become interdependent, and we want to derive as many advantages as possible from our participation in the international division of labour and to minimise the risks involved. All nations need a change in the global economic climate that would make the world's economy and trade manageable and predictable.

Specifically, we want some sort of order to be introduced into international transactions so that fluctuations in the rates of exchange and in the prices of exported and imported goods would not have an adverse effect on the national economies, including ours. We also have a stake in an improvement of the treatment applied to the USSR in Western markets. So far, it has been discriminatory. We are seeking to attain our objective in two ways—by helping ensure international economic security as a whole and through bilateral negotiations with individual countries or groups of countries. In this connection, certain hopes are being pinned on a rapprochement with the GATT¹ and on a prospective agreement with the EEC.

Shi Min. I, too, believe in the increasing interdependence of the world, especially in the economic field. There must be normal procedures for the exchange of goods between different countries. As a developing socialist

country, China would like to have closer cooperation with the Soviet Union, the East European nations and other socialist states. At the same time, our policy is opening the nation to the world, including the West.

As we understand it, economic security is the opposite of insecurity and of everything that threatens the world's normal development. First of all, we should strengthen international political security, ensure peace and settle regional conflicts.

L. Bresser Pereira. Frankly, the term "economic security" is not yet current in Brazil. But we are living in a very unstable economic environment and we are, of course, interested in stabilising inflation and solving the debt problem. We are also in conflict with the stronger powers, particularly the United States, over the transfer of technology.

L. Emmerij. As I understand it, the concept of international economic security is not well defined yet. There are too many different definitions, running the full gamut from the New International Economic Order revised to views concentrating on specific economic issues that threaten peace. I am much closer to the latter standpoint. There are indeed aspects of the world economy that are as dangerous to world peace as military or other upheavals.

S. Holland. If the momentum of military disarmament is to be maintained we have to achieve a framework for economic security. It is, in a way, the material base, the

economic underpinning of a real detente. We should dismantle our Cold War divisions which were institutionalised in Europe 40 years ago. This should be replaced with new forms of cooperation in which, among other things, we can break through the US embargo on the transfer of technology to the Soviet Union and the East European countries.

That is as far as relations between states are concerned. But economic security has another aspect too. People need housing, food, health, education, etc. These problems should be tackled both nationally and by the world community as a whole.

THE NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER

F. Moursi. During the 1970s the developing countries had many illusions about a new international economic order. They thought it was just around the corner. But in reality it has been 15 years of speeches and slogans. Today, as we speak about economic security, we are grasping realities as they are, although the position of the Third World has deteriorated over the past few decades.

For these problems to be resolved I think the position of the socialist countries in the international division of labour has to change, particularly in their relations with the industrialised capitalist nations. Otherwise the developing countries will continue to suffer from the burden of neocolonialism. I am therefore in favour of Soviet participation in the IMF and the World Bank. Up to now we have justly regarded these as neocolonialist institutions, but once the Soviet Union and other socialist countries join them, their character may change in many respects. As to a system of global economic security, I see it based on three principles: universality (every nation finding its own place in it), democracy (every nation having the same voting power) and national sovereignty. If these principles are observed, the developing countries, which account for two-thirds of humanity, will be represented properly in the international community.

I. Ivanov. I doubt we should see the concepts of economic security and of a new international economic order as either identical or opposite. I would say that the latter concept reflects a totality of the objectives pursued by the developing countries in international economic relations, with the socialist states supporting this effort inasmuch as they share these objectives. In my view, international economic security is not an alternative to a new international economic order. Rather, the former lays the necessary groundwork for the latter.

Shi Min. That's right. The NIEO basically confronts the major imbalance between the North and the South, and reflects the demands that the North create a better climate

for economic development in the South. The capitalist countries do not like this. It seems to them that it would benefit only the Third World. But that is not so. For example, the debt problem is a serious problem for the developing countries, but it also affects Western nations, especially their banks. The debt crisis on the capitalist periphery may cause bankruptcies and financial upheavals in the West. Such are the facts of economic interdependence. I would say that the concept of economic security will attract the attention of both developing and developed capitalist countries.

L. Bresser Pereira. I think we are talking about similar concepts but, since they were formulated in different periods, they are worded differently. The new economic order concept appeared more than a decade ago. There have been many changes in the interim—the aggravation of the debt problem, the emergence of perestroika in the Soviet Union, the increased share of Japan in the world economy and the rise of the newly industrialised countries, including Brazil. These and other facts called for a new analysis. Incidentally, the idea of a new international economic order was never very much accepted in Brazil. In the 1970s our business elite was much more interested in internal development and, to a degree, in integration with its US and West European counterparts. But with the debt problem coming to the fore, they had to take a more cooperative stand allied with that of other developing countries.

S. Holland. I think the new concept absolutely must supercede the older one. In words, it was against neocolonialism, but essentially the Western attempt was made within a neoliberal framework. As the multinationals, based mostly in the top capitalist countries, gain ground in the world economy, such policies make the capitalist powers more competitive, and the debt-ridden poorer nations, more vulnerable, denying development potential to many developing areas of the world.

The concept of economic security brings us closer to reality. The question is that of countervailing the influence of the transnationals. The West has no stake in such efforts. But if some Latin American countries jointly decide they are going to impose the same controls, then the multinationals will have to adapt. What we need is not so much the approach inherent in the NIEO concept as a regional approach.

REALITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Shi Min. Not only the developing countries but also the world economy as a whole are facing serious problems. First, there are the huge twin deficits—the finan-

cial deficit and the trade deficit—in the US economy. That is not a purely domestic American problem because it affects all nations. The United States is the world's biggest importer of various goods. If the situation does not change, the opportunities for marketing goods in the United States will become increasingly limited for the exporting countries, including my own. The growing financial and trade deficit in the United States creates serious imbalances in the world economy, aggravates relations between developed capitalist countries and destabilises their trade and exchange rates. The GNP of the US, Western Europe and Japan accounts for 70% of the total world output, and their problems reverberate on a global scale and threaten world economic security. I personally believe that developments in the United States during the 1990s may cause a deep cyclical economic crisis in the capitalist world.

S. Holland. But if the United States attempts to reduce its deficit, I think this will only aggravate the problem by strengthening the hand of other capitalist countries. Meanwhile, neither the FRG nor Japan can be the locomotives capable of pulling out the whole world. A great responsibility is likely to devolve on the entire European Community, but it is yet to adopt a recovery programme.

I believe the right agenda has been outlined in the Global Challenge report² of the Socialist International—recovery of economic growth which can be led from the North. Obviously, it should also involve a redistribution of resources towards the South and a restructuring of the debt. It is estimated in the report that if the OECD countries other than the US were to add \$150 billion a year to their Third World outlays (about one-tenth of all arms spending), the developing countries' exports would increase by 4% a year. As a result, they could increase their total income by well over one-half or possibly two-thirds within 10 years. The IMF and the World Bank in fact demand less consumption in the South, and that leads to a contracting world economy. But to ensure recovery, what we need is to raise social and personal consumption and living standards in the Third World.

L. Emmerij. Still, the international debt issue is the first item one thinks of. It is a real danger to the development of whole continents. In Latin America, personal incomes have been in decline for the ninth year in a row and in Africa, for the fifteenth. The debt prevents these regions from getting back on a sustained growth path.

The second potential threat is connected with technology. More and more countries are joining the high-tech race. So far, it has been a race mostly between industrialised nations, but a number of developing countries are entering it too—the Southeast Asian states, India and

China, that is, nations with low labour costs. The implications are quite serious for the structure of international trade. There will have to be a restructuring of the older industrialised nations, including Japan. They will have to give up their traditional exports and resort to protectionism more often. There are even economic arguments to the effect that protectionism is necessary for countries to secure a good position in high-tech industrial activities within the framework of the economy of the future.

The third danger is what I would call the "two-speed economy". There is a growing gap between the nations in the high-tech mainstream and the countries of Africa and other regions which are lagging behind or drifting away from the mainstream. Clearly, that is an unacceptable solution from the standpoint of the world's welfare.

L. Bresser Pereira. I share your alarm. In the course of its industrialisation, Brazil became an exporter of manufactured goods, but we still need to import technology because it is very difficult to acquire or produce locally. We are fighting pitched battles over that, particularly with the United States. For example, in order to establish an informatics industry in Brazil, we restricted the manufacture of personal computers and minicomputers by foreign firms. The US retaliated by restricting the access of some of our industrial products to the US market. That created additional problems for the Brazilian economy.

F. Moursi. In recent years many Arab countries, even Saudi Arabia, have been unable to purchase new technology even though they have the money to pay for it. The transnationals sell mostly outdated technology. But we need new technology that could be adapted to our circumstances. Naturally, we seek to develop our own technological potential, but the situation on the external markets is holding us back.

Shi Min. China's economic development also depends on advances in science and technology. We need high technology. We are lagging far behind other countries—such as Japan—in this respect (and the impression is that Japan would in fact like to perpetuate this gap). But we think we should work hard to catch up with the developed capitalist countries step by step, even if it takes 50 years.

L. Bresser Pereira. The world is obviously divided into four groups—the developed capitalist countries, the socialist nations, the newly industrialised states and the poorer countries. The problem is how to integrate them into a global economic system. I hold that for that we need a more adequate economic and political network of international agencies. The UN, I think, represents one extreme: it is too democratic. At the other extreme are the

IMF and the World Bank which are controlled by the United States: they are too autocratic. And this is to the detriment of the developing countries.

Of course, it is time for the protectionist barriers in the United States, Western Europe and Japan to be removed. That is very important both for the socialist countries and for the Third World. But the poorer countries cannot do without aid, without a direct transfer of resources and technology. It is a political problem, and disarmament is basic to it. I am very glad the Soviet Union is taking the initiative in this area, and not only in negotiations but also in actually reducing armaments.

I. Ivanov. I agree that the more acute and urgent problems include the debt, the creation of a mechanism to channel the resources saved by disarmament into development and the stabilisation of international commodity prices—something in which both the socialist and the developing countries have a stake.

Among the dangers facing us I, too, would single out the confusion in international transactions, the sharp fluctuation of exchange rates, as well as protectionism. Despite all free trade declarations, the barriers in this sphere have been growing between all countries in recent years. Sometimes complaints are addressed to the Soviet Union too. But one must be quite clear what is involved here. The USSR spends all its export earnings on imports. We cannot afford to spend more than that. In my opinion, protectionism begins when you prefer to produce goods domestically at enterprises operating at a loss instead of replacing these goods with imports. I can understand the motives behind the protectionism of those countries that have recently been trying to effect structural change and to protect themselves against unfavourable external influences. But this structural change is largely over now. In many of these countries, the basic new industries have been established. In other words, one can no longer rationalise protectionism.

In the case of the Soviet Union, its industry is not yet competitive enough. However, as we restructure our external economic ties, we are also changing the mentality of our planning. Specifically, while imports were previously used above all to close gaps in supply, today we try to proceed along the lines of relative production costs: we are curtailing or refraining from the expansion of those industries which produce goods at higher costs and of poorer quality than abroad. For example, we have cut back substantially on the production of railroad passenger cars, trams and sunflower-seed oil. The objective is to improve the division of labour involving not only socialist but also capitalist countries.

THE ADVANTAGES OF DIVERSITY

S. Holland. The world is not a bipolar system, not just capitalism and socialism. It is much more complex. The European Community, for example, is trying to achieve a form of neoliberal capitalism—that is, with less public intervention in the economy. But I do not think it will withstand the competition of the highly interventionist type of state capitalism in Japan where the relationship between big business and the state is quite effective. There are also different forms of socialism: you have the Yugoslav, the Soviet, the Chinese and other models. I would say that this is to be welcomed. We need not seek to impose a uniform model on the world economy. If we can take advantage of our diversity, extensive economic cooperation will be both feasible and productive.

I think the future role of the Soviet Union in the world economy could be of first importance. Its possible entry into the IMF and the World Bank would create an opportunity for a more multipolar financial system than the current one which is dominated by the United States. The European Community, too, needs a larger role in these institutions.

F. Moursi. The realities of today's world demand that we switch from confrontation to cooperation between socialist and capitalist countries. The Soviet Union has embarked firmly on this path, and we are ready for it too. In the past, many of the West's problems were solved at the expense of the developing countries. We want the kind of cooperation that would be free from neocolonialism. This imposes certain obligations on the USSR too. In international institutions it should uphold the interests of the less developed countries, and we are confident that it will do just that.

I. Ivanov. International economic security is unthinkable without concerted action by countries with different social systems. Let us consider the problems that may arise. There is a long history of trade between them. I believe that in the area of investment collaboration, diverse transitional forms are sure to appear as a basis for joint ventures both in trade and in production.

True, these channels can be used to bring pressure to bear on the Soviet economy. In my view, there is only one effective way of countering such moves: when we grow stronger and our foreign trade is more flexible, relying mostly on the exports of manufactured goods, our dependence on the external market will cease to be one-sided and become mutual. Besides, we are revising our tools of external economic policy: they will now include customs tariffs and their regulation. In other words, we will be able to respond properly should anyone plan any hostile economic forays.

L. Emmerij. The coexistence of different systems by no means endangers world economic security. On the contrary, we see a degree of convergence, to use Jan Tinbergen's term³. I am referring to the changes under way in China, the Soviet Union and some other countries. Perhaps it would be useful to update the convergence theory and speak of co-adjustment rather than convergence. A debate is now on in Western Europe as to whether we should accept rapprochement with Eastern Europe or whether, in spite of perestroika, this would set us back because of the differences in the types of our economies, in technological development levels and the like. My impression is that, very slowly, the idea of rapprochement is gaining the upper hand.

Shi Min. China is implementing an economic reform while pursuing a policy of openness to the outside world. But those economists in the West who think that China is going to accept capitalism are making a mistake. Something different is happening. We maintain that we are at the first stage of socialist development. That means we should promote the commodity economy and raise productivity to the level of the developed countries—but remaining within the socialist framework. We do have small enterprises owned by individuals. But they are only an important complement to state-owned and collectively owned enterprises. The public sector still accounts for the basic part of our economy. So to us, economic relations with other countries are no problem.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE CONGRESS

I. Ivanov. I think it will be possible to convene a world congress on economic security when all of us can prepare for it properly and have a clear idea of what is to be discussed at it. So far, its concept is being drawn up and a report of the UN Secretary General is being drafted. After that, the opportunities for its convocation and its agenda will become more visible.

I would like to emphasise yet again that we lay no claim to any exclusive interpretation of international economic security. Any country or group of countries can make its specific contribution to its definition. Finally, it is evident that decision-making on this type of security must be by consensus; in other words, the interests of all sides should be taken into account.

Shi Min. I think the idea of such a congress is very important and the preparations that are now under way are very timely. Perhaps we will soon see the first signs of a new recession in the West. It would therefore be very helpful and useful to exchange views on how to deal with

these problems and enable the world economy to develop smoothly.

L. Bresser Pereira. The congress will be useful if the United States, Japan, the FRG, France and Great Britain participate. I hope they will not think this is just communist or Third World strategy. If the congress is held in a spirit of new thinking, it will be a success.

L. Emmerij. The first thing is to come closer together on a definition of what we mean by international economic security and arrive at a concept acceptable to all. There may be an advantage in organising, before the congress is convened, regional meetings to straighten out some preparatory details. Obviously, they must not lead to separate South-West or South-East arrangements because the objective is to jointly elaborate major projects. I am optimistic about the congress, and I hope it will enable us to make some progress in this domain during the 1990s.

F. Moursi. Indeed, before the congress is convened we should have several preparatory conferences, both regional and on specific subjects such as the debt issue, trade and the transfer of technology. These matters should be discussed not only by officials but also by the public. I would say that the involvement of working-class organisations could play a big role in popularising the ideas of international economic security and in bringing them home to the masses.

S. Holland. I strongly approve of the idea of a congress. It should be nothing short of the Bretton Woods agreements.⁴ With the socialist countries participating, it is important to lay the basis for new multilateral institutions, a new monetary system and a new international currency reserve unit. It will also be useful to enable individual groups of countries with similar economic development levels to form their own regional trading associations, but also to turn their cooperation into a factor reflecting the imperatives of global economic security.

¹ The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, an international organisation within which multilateral negotiations are held on mutual reductions of customs tariffs.—*Ed.*

² Officially approved by the congress of the Socialist International in Lima, Peru, in 1986.—*Ed.*

³ A prominent Dutch economist, Social Democrat, Nobel Prize winner and author of many books and articles on the world economy. See his article in *WMR*, No. 8, 1988.—*Ed.*

⁴ The agreements concluded at Bretton Woods, USA, in 1944, under which the IMF and the World Bank were set up and the system of fixing the exchange rates of most countries in dollars was introduced.—*Ed.*

THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE THIRD WORLD

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Every minute 153 people are born; that is 220,000 every day or 80 million every year. In 1987, the human race numbered 5 billion. There will be 7 billion of us by 2010 and 8 billion by 2022. Approximately 85% of all babies are born in Third World countries. Most of them are doomed at birth. Having turned into a reserve army for transnational capital and into suppliers of raw materials, many nations have ceased to be the makers of their own history and are fading away.

THE NEW COLONIAL ORDER

I believe that the enormous external debt of the Third World is its most terrible bane. In early 1988 it reached the astronomical sum of 1,100 billion dollars. As a result, social programmes, modest to begin with, are being cut back. Hunger, disease and mass unemployment are a fact of life. The despair of millions is growing as every day more people fall victim to the debt.

Almost all the developing countries are forced to periodically refinance their debts—to borrow more in order to service the interest and part of the principal. IMF experts descend like vultures on this or that country, forcing the debt-ridden government to accept what they euphemistically call "structural adjustments". Generally, these consist in restoring a "free" capitalist market, rolling back social programmes, freezing wages and introducing tax privileges for transnationals. After each visit by IMF representatives to Brazil, Peru, Zaire or Indonesia, the position of the poor deteriorates.

I was recently invited to a dinner given by the Swedish ambassador to the UN in Geneva. The Peruvian and Mexican representatives were present, and together they held a distinctly Kafkaesque conversation. The Peruvian said triumphantly, "I agree that we are deep in debt, but unlike you Mexicans we can show where our foreign

credits went." The Peruvian was right: the Pacific coast of his country is littered with skeletal factories rusting in the rain, abandoned tractors and decaying harbour installations—all of them abortive projects launched on borrowed money. In Mexico, most of the credits have been used to maintain an inconceivable level of current public spending, to pay the functionaries' salaries and to keep the big shots of the ruling party in clover. But in Peru and Mexico, as well as in other countries, it is the poor—not the military, the bourgeoisie, still less, the diplomats—who pay through the nose for the folly of an economic policy aimed, over the years, at catching up with and maybe even outdoing the Western sponsors.

How did this tragedy develop? From 1973 to 1981 there was a boom in the purchasing power of the oil-exporting nations. In 1973 oil prices increased sixfold—from \$2 to \$13 per barrel. In 1979, they more than doubled, reaching the \$29 mark. But the oil-exporting countries were unable to absorb all that capital. They deposited it in Western banks where huge sums accumulated. This money was used to award billions of dollars in credits to the Third World countries with chronic internal revenue shortages. But the credits were often used to finance current public spending, occasionally to develop the infrastructure, and almost never as commercially viable investment.

Then came the rude awakening. Since 1981, credits have no longer been approved. Capital is gravitating towards the United States, and the world market has suddenly shrunk. The centres of the Western economy are in crisis. For the poorer countries, this is a disaster: their astronomical debt is turning into bondage. By the end of 1987 it equaled 38% of the Third World's GNP and 140% of its export earnings. In an attempt to pay off their debts, governments close entire industries, expand exports and cut down on food production. The economies of the poorer countries are contracting in Latin America, Asia and Africa.

THE NEW FEUDAL LORDS

The owners of multinational monopoly capital can now bring much more powerful, cynical and brutal pressure to bear on others than could the Popes, emperors or kings of yore. In 1988, 20 insurance, commercial, industrial and financial transnationals controlled 18% of the world's gross product. The concentration, monopolisation and globalisation of the power wielded by the TNCs is accelerating from year to year.

True, the emergence of a new international colonial order is a complex and contradictory process. On the one

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hand, production and consumption in most of the peripheral nations is dominated by the central economies which have imposed everywhere a division of labour that is favourable to them. First and foremost, they have a monopoly on expertise. In 1987, 97% of all research was done in the leading industrial nations; 71% of the television programmes people watched in 122 Third World countries were produced in the United States and Japan. 65% of the information disseminated worldwide comes from the United States; four news agencies (two in the United States, one in Britain and one in France) control 86% of all information. On the other hand, debt servicing condemns the peripheral nations to a subordinate status that adversely affects regional economies and cultures and turns ever greater numbers of Africans, Latin Americans and Asians into second-class citizens without a culture of their own.

The debate in the West over the debt problem is highly hypocritical. The bankers, echoed passively by the "big" press, say that "if the Third World countries fail to pay their debts, the entire Western banking system will collapse. Who will be hit hardest? The holders of small and medium deposits." That is a lie. In late October and early November 1987 the finance market (the stock exchanges of London, New York, Zurich, Paris, etc.) lost, according to World Bank analysts, more than \$1,500 billion. Any consequences? None at all—aside from a small drop in the astronomical profits of several financial groups. The world of transnational capitalism keeps spinning as before.

Can the poorer nations extricate themselves from the debt trap? Fidel Castro believes that the nations of Latin America, Africa and Asia have paid their debts many times over; pillaged, squeezed dry and ravaged, they do not owe anything to the financiers, robbers, speculators and bankers of the industrialised world; rather, the reverse is true. That is a fine but, alas, impractical position. The existing balance of forces does not favour the oppressed nations. Another solution has been proposed by Argentine President Raul Alfonsín. He has suggested a freeze on debt servicing and collective negotiations between debtors and creditors. The SI supports the idea of the debtor countries forming a cartel (as mooted at the Rio de Janeiro congress in 1984).

THE FOLLY OF THE ARMS RACE

In 1987 the industrialised countries spent more than \$1,000 billion on conventional and nuclear armaments. It would be almost impossible to count the number of the deadly weapons amassed in the world. In 1985, the combined military arsenals of the nuclear countries were

enough to destroy our fragile planet 4,000 times over. Today, the United States has a "total explosive yield" equal to more than 9,000 megatons of TNT. In other words, since the end of World War II the United States has been producing a Hiroshima-yield bomb every 30 minutes. Soviet nuclear potential is about the same.

Not only have nuclear weapons (and their various delivery vehicles—ICBMs, cruise missiles, etc.) been growing steadily but so have conventional arms, including chemical weapons. From 1979 to 1983 their stockpiles increased by 4%. The explanation is rooted in US policies. US arms spending reached its peak at the height of the Vietnam war and then declined until 1975. After that, a steep rise began again, and military expenditure grew by 7% a year from 1979 to 1982.

But the American obsession with superarmament is not the only culprit. Since 1976, the arms spending of Mideast, South Asian and Far Eastern countries (except China) has been growing by 4% a year. At the same time, similar expenditures increased at lower rates (some 2% a year) in West European countries (both members and non-members of NATO), in China and in most African nations.

The arms race is governed by a profoundly irrational logic. John Kenneth Galbraith, a noted expert in these matters, says that the international competition in nuclear arms (as in all military matters) meets no need of social reproduction or national survival; it has its own logic and its own dynamics; its objective is mass destruction and the extermination of whole nations which these weapons are supposed to protect.

The progress made possible by the INF Treaty is reassuring, but it is not nearly enough. Third World countries represent a large market for the international merchants of death, although their governments often cannot afford to buy basic necessities for the people (food, medical drugs, means of production and the like). By the end of the century, many nations may starve to death—but they will die armed to the teeth.

The ruinous purchases of military hardware strengthen the grip of the neocolonial powers on the dependent nations. Professor Galbraith notes that it is the poorest of the poor who pay for these weapons. Such purchases are made at the expense of civilian investment which could boost living standards. These nations are not only prospective victims: they are already suffering from privations caused by military spending. No form of past exploitation, imperialist or otherwise, has ever been as pernicious.

Finally, the massive arms purchases the poorer countries are forced to make produce substantive chan-

ges in their social stratification and political power patterns. In many Third World countries, the military has come to dominate civilians.¹

THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL IN ACTION

To begin with, the SI has always extended financial, political and diplomatic support to the major national liberation movements in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Symbolically, the first telegram of congratulations Nelson Mandela received in prison on July 18, 1986, his 68th birthday, was sent by Willy Brandt.

We are working to help the Black population of South Africa put an end to the racist dictatorship. Our strength is considerable: the SI now comprises 36 full-fledged member parties, dozens of parties and movements with a consultative status, and many organisations acting as observers. Forty-two million men and women from Japan to Norway and Canada, from Lebanon to Australia make up an international force with highly effective, although not always visible, financial and diplomatic powers.

There was stormy debate within the SI before it took the side of the insurgent nations of Southern Africa (specifically, our support of the ANC and SWAPO). Up to its 13th Congress (Geneva, November 1976), ours was a mostly European organisation. The scope of its activities expanded perceptibly with the election of a new Bureau (Brandt as president and Mitterand, Gonzales, Palme, Soares, Brundtland and Kreisky as Vice-Presidents). A Latin American committee has been set up, enabling us to establish contacts with the resurgent democratic forces of South America and the insurrectionist movements of Central America. In the Pacific, the SI has also formed an organisation which includes both socialist parties of Japan, the democrats exiled from South Korea and the strong Labour Party of Australia. In the Middle East, the monopoly of the Israeli Labour Party has been broken: we now recognise MAPAM (Israel's United Workers' Party) and Walid Joumblatt's Socialist Progressive Party of Lebanon as full members.

Paradoxically, the Socialist International had no coherent African policy until the early 1980s. The reasons were many. First, we are represented in Africa by two parties—the Senegal Socialist Party of Leopold Senghor and Joseph Ki-Zerbo's party in Burkina Faso. The former is a ruling party accused of corruption, and this invites criticism from some of our European members, particularly in Scandinavia. The future of Ki-Zerbo's party is now uncertain.

The second reason is that under the SI statute a "single party" (the only one in its country) cannot be an SI mem-

ber. But most of the African political entities guided by socialist ideas fall within this category.

At the same time, the SI acknowledges the considerable differences existing between industrialised and developing countries. Demands for parliamentary democracy and pluralism can be made of societies with a high technological level. But this yardstick is hard to apply to nations that have emerged from the long night of colonial rule after a protracted armed struggle for liberation. At its congress in Lima, the SI endorsed Palme's policy advocating regular consultations between the SI governing bodies and certain "single parties", particularly in Africa and Latin America. As Palme often said, you cannot promote a peaceful settlement of the civil war in El Salvador or defend the Nicaraguan government without information and coordination contacts with Cuba. Nor can we extend effective support to the Black and colored people of South Africa who have risen against the racist dictatorship if we fail to coordinate SI efforts with the policies pursued by the "single parties" in Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Angola and Ethiopia.

The third reason why the SI lacked a clear-cut African policy for many years was that the French Socialists regarded French-speaking Africa as their backyard. The hands of SI leaders were therefore tied.

After the Camp David accords were concluded, the Carter Administration brought strong pressure to bear on the SI so that it would open its doors to the Arab organisations which supported the Egyptian-Israeli rapprochement. But Brandt and a large majority in the Bureau resisted this pressure. That was when Senghor and Bourguiba decided to set up a separate organisation called the "African Socialist International", comprising the Destour Socialist Party (Tunisia)², the Senegal Socialist Party, Morocco's National Union of Popular Forces, the Socialist Union of Egypt and the Socialist Union of Sudan.

A change in SI policies occurred in Arusha, Tanzania, in September 1983. It was the first SI conference in Africa, and it was attended by the five Frontline States and the major Southern African liberation movements. Thanks to Palme and Soares' efforts, a platform of struggle against the apartheid regime was adopted. An African Committee within the SI was created for this purpose under Joop van Uyl, the then leader of the Dutch Labour Party.

After Palme's assassination on February 28, 1986, Brandt alone directed the SI's African policy. In Gaborone, Botswana, he met with the leaders of the Frontline States and resistance movements. The declaration adopted there forcefully demanded the total and immediate abolition of apartheid, the legalisation of the ANC and of all Black and colored trade unions, and the immediate release of

Mandela and all political prisoners. It condemned the vacillating policies of the EEC governments, called for a complete economic and financial blockade of South Africa and urged sovereignty for Namibia. It was a courageous stand, but difficult to maintain: even Socialist-led governments in Europe are less than enthusiastic about an economic blockade. It is also opposed by many leading trade union centres of the "Atlantic world".

Can one say that the SI is in the front rank of the anti-imperialist and anticolonial struggle in Africa? The answer is not all that simple. The SI is not yet clear on many problems, and contradictions paralyse our work. For example, we have yet to formulate our position on the Western Sahara issue: the POLISARIO Front attends SI congresses and Bureau sessions as an observer, and the Moroccan UNFP, which supports the policy of King Hassan II, is also present. This prevents us from making any meaningful moves towards a just peace in the Western Sahara.

However, it would be a mistake to believe that SI activities consist merely in lending support to the insurgent people of Southern Africa. We take a composite view of the situation in Africa. Firstly, we believe that Africa should not become an arena of confrontation between the two superpowers and, secondly, that the African countries' economic, financial and commercial relations with the industrialised West should be changed so that Africa's progressive forces could gradually build democratic societies which would respect human rights and assure a worthy life for their people. The clear-cut policy launched by Brandt and approved by the latest SI congress in Lima (1986) is, in my opinion, a valuable contribution to the evolution of the peripheral countries towards democracy, economic independence and non-alignment.

COOPERATION IS AN IMPERATIVE

This issue is outside the scope of my subject, albeit directly connected. Remarkable changes are now under way in the turbulent and often conflicting relations that have long existed between Europe's social democratic and communist parties. The SI is establishing increasingly close contacts with the ruling communist parties in Eastern Europe and some Third World countries. Meanwhile, within the industrialised Western nations themselves, cooperation between Social Democrats and Communists is either absent or marked by continued conflict.

The renewed Socialist International maintains that there is a significant difference between the political regimes of Eastern Europe and the pluralistic Western democracies in which the Social Democrats operate. We regard the

one-party communist system as an obstacle to the promotion of democratic freedoms. We disagree on the political organisation of society, on basic human rights and on other issues. *But we must work together in the name of human survival.* As I said, our world is fragile, and it may blow up at any moment. Peaceful competition between different social systems is the only possible option.

The moral principles and the political strategy of the Socialist International have a direct impact on all peace-loving and progressive forces in Europe. What does this impact signify? Willy Brandt, who, as a young man, fought against fascism in Spain and then in the Norwegian underground against the Nazi invaders, constantly remembers the mistakes made by the European Left in those years. Among the factors that explained the rise of fascism in the 1930s was the infighting between Communists and Socialists in Germany and Spain. At the Madrid session of the SI Bureau in May 1988, Brandt said: "Our task is to create a movement for disarmament, a movement for the recognition of Third World rights and a front for the defence of social gains and human rights."

The contradictions between socialist and communist parties in the East and in the West remain profound. But the choice we are facing is, to me, quite simple: either *Left organisations learn to fight together* for universal disarmament, for the denuclearisation of Europe and against the militarisation of outer space, or civilisation will perish in a nuclear conflagration.

In turn, serious or stable economic development and an effective struggle against hunger, poverty and disease are impossible if the absurd sums the industrialised (and non-industrialised) countries squander on the arms race are not channelled as investment into socially productive Third World projects.

1 Since independence, military coups have taken place in 31 out of the 52 African countries. The record is held by Benin (5 coups), followed by Nigeria (4). All neocolonial putschist officers were trained at Saint-Cyr (the colonels of the French-language African countries), Sandhurst (English-speaking officers) or the School of the Americas in Panama. One can rarely come across an African leader with a military background who seeks to break radically with the neocolonial past.

2 Renamed Democratic Constitutional Association in March 1988. — Ed.

LET US WORK TOGETHER

Lord PLUMB of Coleshill

President, European Parliament

The events and developments of which we have been participants and witnesses recently rank, I think, among the most significant in the history of Europe and the European Community.

When a delegation from the USSR visited the Parliament some months ago, they invited me to visit Moscow. I said on that occasion that it was impossible for me, as President of the European Parliament, to make an official visit to Moscow until such time as the Soviet Union was prepared to establish diplomatic relations with the European Community.

Of course, a significant political gesture has since been made. The Comecon/European Community Joint Declaration last June was, I think, a most important day in our history. For me, as President of the Parliament, it was one of the most meaningful events of my Presidency. Therefore, immediately I said that once there was an agreement to establish diplomatic relations between the EC and the Soviet Union, I would visit Moscow. That I have now done. I have also been to Hungary. It is my wish to see Parliament extend its links with other CMEA countries during my time in order to establish a better relationship, and to get a better appreciation of the problems in those countries, as well as to develop a better understanding in Europe.

Part of that is the establishment of the "European house". I welcome the idea of the "European house". It is a very positive idea. It shows the recognition of our mutual link. What it means is that, in theory, the peoples of Eastern and Western Europe must join and be able to use the house, providing that they can all move freely through it and through all its rooms, and that we agree on the foundations of the house. I am extremely happy about it. And that, in this house, we bring together the peoples who, both East and West, never believed that this day would come. And now they see the prospect opening up.

Certainly, the impression that many people in the West have is that the changes in the whole area of security and defence and other areas are more important to the Eastern bloc than they are to the Western bloc. It is not true. We have to work together in this now, especially now that the USSR has said, "We are going to take unilateral action".

In the latest statement from Mr Gorbachov to the United

Nations, there was a very clear declaration of what he intends. There will be an early and considered response by the West. Yes, but that is only a very small percentage of our total security at the moment. Nevertheless, he says, "Unilaterally, we are prepared to do that". I say, *multilaterally* we have to do it, and therefore we have to try to keep the balance in the relationship between East and West. Again I think that this is a very significant step. It's one that we didn't believe was possible some years ago. But it's happening, and I believe Mr Gorbachov deserves much credit for the present Soviet approach. During my visit to the USSR last year I got a totally different look at the whole situation. We are moving in a direction where people can look forward to a reduction of international tension and an enhancement of peace and security.

As for military detente and a lower level of confrontation in Europe, already we are in the process of achieving that. Of course, we have a strong military grouping through NATO. It is there to stay and, possibly, to grow. But already during the 1980s, drastic improvements are possible in political thinking itself, in the understanding that war preparations (whether for chemical or nuclear warfare) imperil the very existence of our planet and the human race. That, surely, has been recognised by all parties now. The realisation that one person could press one button and destroy civilisation has led the East and the West to say with courage and realism, "Enough is enough. Let us now work together to avoid that possibility."

I think the relationship between all parties is now much more relaxed than it was, and I think the friendship is warm. It is now pointing in the right direction. We have to trust each other in this respect and in the belief that we mean what we say and that there is no danger of breaking the rules that we ourselves are setting.

The prospect of a Europe "from the Atlantic to the Urals" will depend a lot now on the development of our economic relations. In this sense we have to realise that there are two aspects in this: firstly, the growth and the development in the CMEA countries and the USSR in particular and, secondly, the opening up of the internal market within the European Community, looking towards 1992, and the removal of the non-tariff barriers, creating strong economic growth within the European countries. We recognise that economic growth is going to take place in the CMEA countries and in the USSR in particular. So it is a question of recognising these two elements and making sure that we don't have trade wars, that we share trade responsibilities in order to avoid a distortion of trade. And I think, as time passes, we can begin to share that growth and we can share that responsibility.

Without belittling the importance of economic cooperation, I would emphasise cooperation on humanitarian issues. It is immensely important, both in itself and as an area where misunderstanding leads to differences on other points.

When I raised in Moscow the question of human rights,

The article has been prepared on the basis of an interview granted by Sir Henry Plumb to a WMR staff member in Strasbourg.

Henry Plumb, b. 1925, a British politician. Held senior posts in influential national agencies, including the National Farmers Union and the British Agricultural Council. From 1979 to 1982 President of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers. In 1979 was elected to and in 1987 became President of the European Parliament.

I got a different appreciation there than one gets outside the USSR. That is a matter which needs to be understood better and fully explained so that we see more clearly the changing situation in the USSR. I accept that there is now a more relaxed position. It is one of great importance. I was interested to hear, during my visit to Moscow, about developments in Soviet agriculture. And I see a change here where the right of tenancy of land is now being given to people for 50 years—or a period of time, anyway. The individual is allowed to operate as an individual, probably working through a collective farm, and they are, alongside the state farms, obviously concerned with producing more of the product to avoid the imports of products. So I see a big potential for cooperation in that area, and I see a lot of opportunities in that sector for joint ventures. And I think in these joint ventures between East and West—if we tap that potential—then surely we can help each other. When I visited Hungary, I got exactly the same feeling. *Perestroika* obviously is a fascinating subject, and a very complex one. I suppose the danger in the East, as I see it from the periphery, is that once you open up through *perestroika* and promote greater individual freedoms for people, maybe many of those people will expect too much within too short a time. And that isn't easy to achieve. But the fact that it is opening up brings about, I think, a form of democracy in the Eastern bloc which perhaps marries more easily with the democracy we have grown accustomed to in Western Europe. So I think *perestroika* is a move in the right direction, a direction along which we can relate more easily than in the past.

I find that there's a lot of attention focused on the development of the European Community, and the belief that we are developing a Fortress Europe which is going to be protected and therefore prevent the natural flow of trade. I hope that isn't the case; I hope we are opening up a freer market for third countries. But inevitably, if we meet their requirements, that creates greater room for economic growth within the European Community. I can say with certainty that there will of course still be national governments in a single Europe after 1992. Every country will still need a government in order to govern. And I don't see that this really conflicts with the ideas of creating a European Community. There will be more decision-making at the centre. But for most decisions, in order to carry out the administration of the policy that has been decided at the centre, it requires a government to govern, a government to administer. It still requires a government to determine the budget of a country.

And so the thought of moving towards one central government, with each country and each region acting like a local authority is something that is perhaps an ideal in the minds of some, but it's not the reality of today's world. I don't mean to say that I'm totally opposed to a move towards a confederalist state or a form of federalism because I think that once we have an economic growth which creates a common market, when all the non-tariff barriers

are removed, I think that political unity will inevitably follow as night follows day.

But that is a long way off. Everything is really going to depend on whether we can achieve a common monetary policy with an equal-value currency right through the Community, which is the basis of the development of that free market. And it's not going to be easy to arrive at a common fiscal regime because of the different rates of the value-added tax from country to country. It's very difficult therefore to readjust, realign or procure funds for programmes which meet the interests of the population of the EEC member countries.

On environmental issues, the European Parliament has made a special effort. In January, the President of the European Commission pledged the Community to play an enhanced role in environmental matters, and the Parliament fully associates itself with this pledge and will support all the relevant resolutions as well as look for ways to broaden East-West cooperation on environmental matters. We have this common interest because, as we know, pollution does not respect national frontiers.

We talk about cohesion, which means that we come together; we try to redress the balance between moneys that are available in one area against moneys in another. But the budget is, I suppose, the main criterion because the Parliament itself has a very considerable amount of control over the budget. Because without a budget or proper use of currency in different areas the policies themselves will flounder or will become more difficult to operate.

The European Parliament is really a parliament of influence, but it's also a parliament of decision as we change the role, the responsibility and the powers, which took place in the Parliament during this last year under what we call the Single European Act.

The tasks of the European Parliament, and my own, are, first of all, to consider the policy changes that are taking place right through the Community. The fact that 1992 is very much with us—these are matters of concern to us. The 300 regulations that have to be removed, deregulated—all are a matter for the European Parliament. We've seen some quite dramatic changes during the last year or two. We saw a year ago now the proposals which came forward from the Commission to reform the Common Agricultural Policy. That we are doing, and it's changing.

It's having quite dramatic effects on our stockpile of surplus food. Furthermore, we are to double the structural funds. That will help investment in difficult areas to create employment in industry, in rural areas—through the Regional Fund, and through the Social Fund.

I think that if Mr Gorbachov does accept my invitation to visit the European Parliament, he will see and hear a great deal of interest. We also hope that the Soviet leader will address the Parliament to re-emphasise his ideas of building the "European house" and achieving disarmament and international security. I am positive, absolutely positive, that he will find a responsible and very amiable audience.



the socialist way

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN ECONOMIC MANAGEMENT

Vu OANH

CC Secretary, Communist Party of Vietnam; head of the Economic Department of the CPV CC

The Communist Party of Vietnam's 6th Congress, held in 1986, marked a strategic turning-point for the structure and management of our economy. Backed by more than a decade of practical experience in the transition to socialist construction, it takes account of the enriched theory and practice of the fraternal states, and the scientific knowledge of our time.

Our party noted the successes in the country's growth and in defence. At the same time the Congress faced the truth and revealed the errors and shortcomings in economic and social management which have further aggravated the serious difficulties of a backward economy still feeling the effects of war and natural disasters.

We were simplistic and out-of-date in our perceptions of socialism, industrialisation, the remaking of production relations, and economic management. This, combined with voluntarism, a failure to address reality and an over-hasty desire to achieve objectives quickly, with the country still at the beginning of a transition period, produced a flawed economic structure and mechanism of control.

For example, in investment policy, by trying to industrialise faster we gave too much preference to heavy industry and large projects. This was not a very effective policy and the economic imbalances diminished only slowly, even growing in some sectors.

Learning from this, the party came to appreciate Lenin's insight about the difficulties of the transition to socialism for countries with a backward economy, "in the course of which our policy will be divided into a number of even smaller stages. And the whole difficulty of the task which falls to our lot, the whole difficulty of politics and the art of politics, lies in the ability to take into account the specific tasks of each of these transitions".¹

The chief initial task in Vietnam, as we now believe, is not industrialisation on a large scale, but *stabilising the economic and social spheres* and providing a basis for intensified industrial development in the next phase. The most important thing now is to organise production to meet the vital needs of the people. We therefore need to restructure the economy, and to effect a major investment correction so as to spur food and consumer goods production (also for export). This demands priority be given to agricultural growth and light industry, including small businesses and handicrafts. The development of heavy industry and the creation of an infrastructure must serve these aims. Internal accumulation, to allow for the effective use of foreign capital, is equally essential.

This kind of reorganisation requires the release of production and creative potential, and the use of the capital, equipment and labour of all Vietnamese, at home or abroad. Practice has shown that cottage crafts, underemployment and limited state investment have hamstrung the swift removal of capitalist forms and the individual sector in favour of large-scale collective farms. An approach like this violates the law of conformity of production relations and productive forces and acts as a brake on development.

Condemning this mistaken policy, the party congress defined *multiformity*² as a specific feature of the transition-period economy, with an ever-expanding socialist sector as its linchpin. At the same time, we shall support small-scale commodity and private capitalist sec-

tors which are geared to socialist construction. This is a strategic decision taken to increase employment and encourage people to invest their savings in production and to economise on resources, not only in production but also in consumption, for the purposes of accumulation and reproduction on a national scale.

The fundamental rationalisation of the economy will not succeed unless we end bureaucratic-administrative centralism in management, which is deeply entrenched and characterised by the following: direction from above through excessively detailed and binding plan targets; a lack of responsibility or material incentives for the effective use of funds, materials and labour; pay unrelated to performance. This kind of thing has been encouraged by ill-conceived notions of socialist ownership and the functions and methods of state control, by the absolutising of plans, and by a nominal acceptance of commodity-money relations. This mechanism fettered the initiative of collectives and individuals and made them overly dependent on instructions "from above". The human factor, so decisive in our victorious national liberation war, was not fully utilised in the subsequent period of socialist construction.

The people's enthusiasm and creativity could have become a powerful motive force embodying the advantages of a socialist economy, but instead a slowdown occurred, and the expected dynamism was brought to nought by a bureaucratic apparatus which failed to give the state and cooperative sectors enough scope. Thus, in spite of favourable opportunities, we still have not achieved a higher efficiency, and this is why *renewing the mechanism of economic management is an essential prerequisite for utilising the production potential in full* and strengthening the socialist sector with the use of other structures.

It is at this stage of the transition period, with the power of the people, led by the working class, having been strengthened, that the basic means of production have become public property. But small-scale production, with manual work predominant, is deeply etched into our economy. The commodity economy is generally on a low level with some local variations. Even though the socialist sector holds the commanding heights, it has not yet shown its advantages or the leading role. The economic position is unstable and occasionally sharp imbalances appear.

The new mechanism will induce economic units and the people to work harder to expand commodity production, advance technologically and achieve higher productivity, quality and efficiency. State control is indispensable here.

Liquidating the old and creating a new mechanism includes two aspects. Firstly, a *switch from a command to a commercial economy*, based on matching the interests of society with those of collectives, workers, and entrepreneurs. The system of management is being democratised and production initiative is developing hand in hand with the self-support and self-management of economic units. At the same time we must have more efficient central control. Secondly, a *shift from barter to commodity-money relations*. Of course, the two shouldn't be counterposed, distancing the plan from the market: the latter is after all the basis and target of planning. Using commodity-production regularities and categories properly will assure an efficient economy, especially if we apply the laws of value, the relations between demand and supply, and other economic criteria. Gradually, we will fall in line with the specific laws of socialism.

Certain established views and outdated ideas on economic policy will have to change with the control mechanism's renewal. *It has been deemed expedient to phase out directive planning, and to use it only when needed, and on a limited scale, in the state sector. We have to start planning on the basis of economic agreements between enterprises.* The move from a central supply system to a wholesale trade in raw materials means that prices formerly fixed by the state are replaced by contract prices agreed between producers and consumers. In order to apply technological achievements more successfully, *profit-and-loss accounting* is being introduced: the results of scientific research become commodity products, priced according to their usefulness in the economy.

Among urgent steps is a renewal of the *financial system*, involving the best use of tax instruments and credit. There are plans to develop special credit banks and to find different forms of attracting enterprise funds. The introduction of an "open door" policy in foreign economic relations is equally important. As we join the international market, we consider it necessary to expand direct links between domestic economic organisations and foreign partners, and to encourage foreign capital investments in the SRV.

Furthermore, the new mechanism *demarcates the functions* of control over the plants' business activity and state economic management. The centre must work out a strategy which includes planning and socioeconomic development, and draft legislative proposals to stimulate and regulate economic life. Increased managerial effectiveness "at the top" will be ac-

accompanied by an increase in the responsibilities and rights of local government.

The leading role of the party is to be renewed: its organisations, by exercising political guidance, will assess performance, improve the theoretical training of personnel and enhance ideological and educational work, ensuring an advanced role for the functionaries and every Communist. *Party committees should not substitute for the bodies of power, but rather facilitate the right of the working people to be master.* This calls for a simplified organisational system of these bodies.

The new mechanism requires a drastic rejuvenation of the apparatus and a *radical change in cadre policy*. Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the CC CPV, has pointed out that only by relying upon a renewal of thinking—and working practices that would unleash the productive potential in order to increase efficiency, encourage initiative and strengthen the right of the people to be master—can one objectively assess the cadres' work. We should obviously retrain or replace the people who do not meet today's requirements. There must be an unbiased and innovative selection of cadres, and their activity must be supervised on the basis of democracy and openness. The process of renewal is closely linked with the campaign launched in 1987 to purify and raise the fighting efficiency of party organisations and the state apparatus, and to make public relations healthier.

Our party congress, having defined the main thrust towards reorganising the mechanism for economic management, noted that it was important, if difficult, to find concrete economic forms, and determine the measures and content of renewal at each stage. We have little experience, therefore we attach great significance to its study, the drawing of lessons, experimentation, and a generalisation of practical results. The chief obstacle we are trying to overcome is conservative thinking, the proponents of which are retrogressive and indecisive in the face of our problems. On the other hand, however, hastiness and oversimplification, and the desire to complete the job at all costs also contradict today's requirements.

A programme to build socialism in the SRV and a socioeconomic strategy are currently being drawn up. It is impossible to "invent" and apply a perfect mechanism at one go. Renewal is a *process* which cannot be completed in a year or two. So for a certain period we'll have management that combines new features with old. We are confident that a renewal will occur in people's way of thinking, but steps must be taken here that coincide with reality in order to avoid complications.

Imbued with the spirit of realism, the 2nd Plenum of the CC CPV (April 1987) worked out a number of specific guidelines and measures, giving priority to the partial stabilisation of market conditions and solvency, and to the creation of the proper environment for a shift to profit-and-loss accounting.

The 3rd Plenum of the CC CPV (August 1987) defined the central task as that of affirming the business autonomy of economic units, primarily in the state-sector. In our view, the collectives of socialist enterprises must *directly control and dispose of their property*. In this way they shoulder the responsibility and enjoy executive rights in organising production, without being bound to strict outside regulations. The chance to specialise combines with diversity to achieve the highest efficiency. Enterprise and employee incomes are tied to performance; interests and duties are closely united by means of contracts throughout the economy. In the various structures strong links between producers, the system of barter, and the move towards integration will be developed on the basis of voluntary association, equality and mutual benefit. To ensure the initiative of economic units, it is vital that we review the functions and overhaul the system of state control. This will encourage the enterprises to reach the goals in the state plan. If there is a widespread development of relations between economic units, then the contradictions in business activity and management stand out more clearly and can be more easily overcome.

In implementing the 3rd Plenum decisions, the Central Committee has issued several normative documents. In 1988 they were enacted for certain enterprises which had a steady supply of raw materials and marketing outlets for their products. By 1990 we plan to shift all state enterprises and the apparatus over to these progressive methods of management.

The new arrangement in agriculture (begun in 1981) involves a system of contracts under which households and individual peasants, production groups and teams in the cooperatives undertake to supply the state with a specified amount of end-products. Crop areas are leased for 15 years under contract, with delivery quotas fixed for a five-year period. Correlating production assignments with the plan is not by work days, as previously, but through quotas and contract tariffs per unit of output. Ideas for improving farm management were discussed at the National Peasants' Congress and then defined in law. Cooperatives and the peasant masses have welcomed these production-boosting measures.

Regulations have also been issued concerning family farms belonging to workers and employees, and small-

scale commodity and private capitalist sectors. Individuals and families have decided to go into business. Among them are capitalists not only in the south, but also in some places in the north. The law on foreign capital investments, passed by the National Assembly at the end of 1987, has already attracted some foreign companies to Vietnam. Along with domestic firms, they are investing in the exploration and development of gas and oil fields, the manufacture and assembly of electronic devices, the export production of consumer goods, hotel construction and the rendering of various public services.

The two years since the 6th Congress have produced a clearer awareness of the profound revolutionary significance of the renewal of the control mechanism in the economy. To defeat the old, and pave the way for the new, we shall base ourselves on theory, practical actions and actual results. We consider it essential to strengthen not only political, but also ideological and organisational guidance from the party, to stimulate the revolutionary enthusiasm of the popular masses, and to link the interests of all with each step of renewal.

We are still somewhat behind when it comes to the commodity economy and the use of market relations in planning and economic management. Therefore, we attach great importance to our study of the advances of perestroika in the Soviet Union and some other socialist states. A profound theoretical and practical mastery of such experience is essential. At the same time we are striving to take full account of the peculiarities of Vietnam in order to apply that knowhow creatively. Regrettably, both theoretically and organisationally we do not yet live up to today's requirements. This makes it difficult to avoid deficiencies and errors as we carry out specific guidelines and develop new methods of work.

However, *renewal is an irreversible tendency*, because reality demands it. It reflects the urgent needs of the economy and the ardent wish of the people, and the 6th Congress of our party has defined clear guidelines for this process. We obviously have to avoid mistakes, and discover and correct shortcomings in time. However, anyone who rejects the renewal, or pretends to be in favour and does nothing, will be making a grievous error.

1 V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 331.

2 Vietnam, apart from the socialist structure which includes a state and a cooperative sectors, also has small-scale (artisans, peasant farmers, traders, etc.), private-capitalist and state-capitalist sectors and a natural economy among some of the national minorities. —Ed.

WMR QUESTIONNAIRE

SOCIALIST IDEALS: A PERSONAL VIEW

We continue with replies to our international questionnaire launched in the January 1989 issue. The questions are:

- *What do you regard as the supreme value in the life of your nation and what do you object to?*
- *What topical issues do you think should be tackled in your country in the near future?*
- *What does the socialist status of your country mean to you personally? Do you have an opportunity for direct involvement in the assertion of common objectives and interests? What are your proposals and forecasts with regard to closer cooperation among the socialist countries?*

In this issue we present replies from Bulgaria.

PROMOTING CHANGE

Ognian PANOV

Director, Social Management Institute under the BCP Central Committee

The creation of a system of social relations in which the future is guaranteed and an assured standard of living is accessible to all is the supreme value in socialist Bulgaria's development.

Our path is connected with a flexible policy that prevents serious economic, social or political conflicts. That is the essence of the April Course¹ of the Bulgarian Communist Party, adopted in 1956, when the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union revealed the new opportunities of socialism. Naturally, the situation in certain fraternal parties, particularly during the stagnant years, affected us too: our progress was slower than we would have liked. Nevertheless, Bulgaria was recognised worldwide as one of the few countries that achieved very much within a short time, especially with no historical experience in the development of social structures, with industry and the working class previously weak and with a small intelligentsia. But we are not content with what we have accomplished. We realise we will lose ground if there is no radical change.

I am most dissatisfied with what I would call *state-monopoly socialism*. This means not just administration

by fiat but a system of social relations under which all aspects of human development are dominated by the state, with everything "coming from on high" instead of depending on the activity and the potential of the people themselves. This applies to a person's self-realisation as a worker, as the creator of spiritual values and as a consumer because the state has undertaken to perform all relevant duties connected with human existence (including wages, salaries and day-to-day requirements). We are not paying enough attention to the individual's contribution to greater output or better product quality. The same is also true of his civic stand because people's involvement in government is actually confined within a particular framework.

To sum up, although the Bulgarian citizen does enjoy a measure of social comfort, as an individual he is wholly tied to the administrative mechanics of the state which is dominant everywhere—in the economy, in politics and in the intellectual field. I think that this adversely affects our society's potential.

Therefore, if Bulgaria is to develop effectively, we need the active involvement of all our people. We cannot rely simply on carrying out assignments issued by some superior agency. In order to meet the pressing requirements of social progress, including advances in science and technology, people's *creative abilities* should be put to fuller use. I personally am happy to have a hand in the tangible changes we are effecting and to be responsible for specific results. Self-realisation should above all benefit others. On the scale of human values, to feel needed, significant and useful is the greatest good.

To achieve this, we should destroy the monopoly-type hierarchic structures. The foremost objective is to ensure free and equal interaction between the state agencies that safeguard the interests of society as a whole, of the economic organisations that reflect their workers' views, and of the nation's territorial units. Prospects for development are inherent in the interaction of these entities, not in their centralised coordination. I hope we will soon abandon the practice of imposing a certain mode of behaviour on everyone and fostering a fear of the independence and self-government of various structures.

I am particularly concerned over the fact that we are paying more attention to the *forms socialism takes than to its essence*. It is hardly worth talking about these forms if conditions do not exist for translating socialist principles into reality—for the fuller satisfaction of people's needs, a labour productivity up to world stand-

ards, and for unhampered self-realisation without any restrictions invented by the bureaucratic system or stemming from ideological myopia.

According to Lenin, socialism is the *total of mankind's greatest achievements*. Yet we still lack the inventiveness of the Japanese in technology or the efficiency of the Americans in business, although sometimes we arrogantly criticise others. I am sure that what Lenin called "communist conceit" is an idealistic, not Marxist, approach to socialist development. To me, socialist ideals are inseparable from humanitarian ones. The socialist system has to reduce to a minimum those profound contradictions which the capitalist system is unable to resolve.

It is extremely important to focus all our efforts on providing our people with all modern material benefits as soon as possible, improving economic organisation, raising labour productivity and creating a state based on the rule of law—a society in which civil liberties are granted legislatively, not by highly placed individuals.

Capitalism is developing, and I would not be surprised to see other countries reach many of our objectives faster if we fail to use the advanced expertise accumulated elsewhere to ensure the progress of socialism. This may sound harsh, but it is time we revised many of our dogmas and mistaken views.

Now about the more topical problems the Bulgarian people will have to tackle in the near future. Not only by virtue of party discipline but also from personal conviction, I support the BCP's July policy concept,² endorsed by the 1988 national party conference. Our task now is to implement its provisions.

I see the *creation of a market* as particularly topical. This is required by any society in which the producer is distinct from the consumer. We have to establish an infrastructure for economic activities that would meet the needs of the population and accumulate the necessary funds at the national level.

Frankly, we are still commercially naive. The socialist countries produce one-third of the world's industrial output, but their share in world trade is only about 4%, mostly in raw materials. We ought to begin creating a socialist market by accepting the international standards for prices, product quality, delivery and service. We have long rejected market relations in the belief that they are a capitalist invention, but the record shows they are an objective necessity. Today, the market is the only workable system and, as an achievement of human civilisation, it should be used skillfully.

Unfortunately—or perhaps fortunately—contemporary

capitalism differs from that which existed when Marx was alive. The efficiency of production has reached a level at which many social needs can be met. The more developed countries accommodate the interests of a wide range of people, although in a highly differentiated manner. That is why I believe that different levels of development will increasingly emerge as an obstacle to peaceful coexistence. We need a different world economic order.

Aside from the exceptionally important steps taken on the basis of new political thinking, we in Bulgaria should move faster to promote *new economic thinking*. Drawing on internationally accumulated experience, we are looking for distinct ways of developing economic relations under socialism. For example, in Bulgaria public property is handed over to worker collectives. They are its sole and sovereign owners and can manage it in the interests of society, of the collective and of every worker. Self-government and ownership of the means of production signify independence and full accountability for one's work. In order to secure professional economic management at the basic level, we are switching to company-based organisation of production and trade.

It is also important to create the necessary conditions for the training of managers who are to ensure vigorous operation of worker collectives in international markets—hopefully, including an integrated socialist market. There is also the task of changing the *political structures* so that they no longer hamper the activities of economic organisations or assume the responsibility for their economic results, as it has been until now.

Social development has a tremendous inertia, and I think our restructuring in Bulgaria will take until the end of the century. Acceleration is possible only on the basis of joint and radical change throughout the CMEA because change in Bulgaria is closely linked with change in other socialist countries. None of us can really hope to resolve the new socioeconomic problems by tackling them on our own. The losses will be enormous if each of us goes it alone. Rapid progress can only be assured by close cooperation.

I think the radically new relations within the CMEA will take different forms—the free flow of goods, credits and people, managers working at their partners' enterprises, the creation of socialist transnational corporations, and the establishment of joint ventures between our own and capitalist companies. Economic contacts and direct ties between enterprises and territories will also enable us to improve relations and

make them less formal, thus producing greater practical results and a better understanding of each other's interests. This understanding will create new values for the modern world.

DO WE NEED UNIVERSAL EQUALITY?

Professor Marko SEMOV
D.Sc.(Ling.)

In my opinion, our society's effort to ensure social equality is of particular value. Socialism exists to enhance the status of man. This commitment, formulated theoretically but not yet put sufficiently into practice, will enable each of us to grasp life's true values.

In my younger days I was convinced that with the help of collectivism one could translate all forms of justice into reality. Nowadays, I am not so sure. I think everyone's independence and freedom is the highest value. In this respect, my view of socialism has changed. Man will never be completely independent if he does not exist as an individual, no matter what the circumstances. So far, we often exist merely as a function of the socioeconomic mechanism and are under the sway of factors beyond our control.

Many may disagree, but I believe that under capitalism, an able and hard-working person is more independent of society. But in our case, a person possessing such qualities may be ordered about by his superiors even though he may stand head and shoulders above them. That is why I still regard freedom and social justice as an ideal to be attained.

History tells us that where the individual is absent, so is the collective. A collective can be effective only if it is made up of *personalities*. Naturally, not everyone can be a personality. It is not necessary to ensure a uniform standard of benefits for all: let those who shine have advantages over others. It may sound unpleasant, but we have often put a premium on mediocrity, while outstanding people have found the going tougher—although I must say the restructuring drive both in my country and in the USSR is quite reassuring.

To be a human being is not easy, and to be a *worthy* person is much more difficult, but it is essential to building a character. The future is not all roses. We will change, reappraise many things, abandon principles we used to regard as sacred, and give up outdated

ideological patterns. It will be difficult for all of us and for our society as a whole.

To respect man means to protect his dignity and meet his needs. Again, I am not speaking of crude egalitarianism, and much will have to be changed in this respect. Justice is what we need. If there is justice, we will believe that the restructuring drive is developing as it should; otherwise new decisions will have to be taken in a few years.

To this day, we have not developed any reliable criteria for assessing the *contribution of individuals to our society's development*. The existing yardstick is subjective, and it depends in many ways on the relevant hierarchies, considerations of kinship, past merits and the like. Naturally, even though many years have elapsed, we should treat veterans of the liberation struggle and of the revolution with due respect. But we should not view them as a special "caste": this would mean that they fought merely to have a better life for themselves while in fact happiness for the people was their overriding objective. In my opinion, finding clear-cut and more reliable criteria for assessing a person's value is the biggest challenge socialism is facing. So far we have seen man "in general" and our attention to his work has been minimal. As a result, the worker has become alienated from the means of production and from socialist property. Too many people in Bulgaria have ceased to believe that one's work is what one's prosperity depends on. This I regard as a fundamentally important issue. If society fails to appreciate those who work hard and well for the common good, everything will remain subjective. One's work and its quality is the only measure of one's status.

This is a sphere where the advantages of socialism over capitalism can be stressed. The socialist state must extend special assistance to those who, for various reasons, cannot work effectively. It must be humane and fair in its treatment of unprotected senior citizens, children or the disabled. Capitalism will never do it to an adequate degree.

We will remain stuck where we are if we do not enable capable, intelligent, enterprising and flexible people to assert their potential fully. For too long we expected some sort of equality and stability to materialise and socialism to automatically ensure prosperity for all. That is a major illusion we have long believed.

The richness of socialism lies in the diversity of the courses followed by every sister nation. In this connection I accord considerable importance to openness and democracy. Can they be restricted or does democracy imply freedom only in the philosophical sense? My reply

is that democracy can only be full and complete. All the rest is demagoguery. We have already tried this kind of "democracy".

No one doubts the achievements of Bulgaria as a socialist country. But at the current stage in the restructuring effort it is clear that *national interests* remain very important. I believe internationalism signifies effective socialist development in any given country, with full respect for the other socialist nations and their interests and without attempts to impose any models on them.

In my recent visits to sister nations I have encountered a certain scale of values that determines our mutual relations. This would seem to be inevitable: the CMEA comprises both the powerful Soviet Union with its population of over 280 million and countries with a considerably smaller potential. It is time for us to pay closer attention to our countries' different development levels and to disabuse ourselves of the mistaken notion that we are equal in all respects.

I am absolutely sure that the Bulgarian people treat the Soviet Union as a brother. But I think brothers should tell *only the truth* to each other, whatever this truth may be. So far, our unity has been more effective in the community of our ideology and humanistic principles than in economic cooperation. Meanwhile, capitalist countries have adopted a certain kind of partnership whose value we must now reassess. West European integration is advancing, and I think it has outstripped us. It would therefore be useful to admit that relations between the CMEA member countries are not all that ideal or flawless, and that contradictions do naturally emerge. They should also be discussed openly if we are to resolve them. That is the only way to reappraise things and develop a new way of thinking.

Our ties within the socialist community will continue to develop along the lines of *internationalism* but also of openness and greater frankness. If mutual trust and respect are central to these ties (something that underlies the foreign policy the socialist countries pursue), this is sure to promote internationalist attitudes. So my forecasts are optimistic.

1 The April 1956 plenary meeting of the BCP Central Committee mapped out the party's overall policy. — *Ed.*

2 "Main Aspects of the Concept Underlying Further Socialist Construction in Bulgaria", a document approved at the July 1987 plenary meeting of the BCP Central Committee. — *Ed.*

HUNGARIAN PROBLEMS FROM VARIOUS ANGLES

Seven Meetings in Budapest

Ever since the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party decided to give up the "Stalin model" in 1956 and formulated its own conception of socialist construction based on a rejection of voluntarism in politics and total centralism in economics, many views on the reforms in Hungary have been expressed both in the East and in the West. Some of them, directly opposed, are presented below. But, however they may differ, one has to accept that by the 1970s Hungary had outstripped most of the other socialist countries in living standards. Visitors to the country still recall the well-stocked shops in Budapest as one of its highlights. However, the Hungarians themselves have long since discerned behind these shop windows some unfavourable trends affecting the prices of these goods. Experts take a broader view and describe the situation in the country not only in terms of higher prices, but also of a growing external debt, declining real wages and emerging structural unemployment.

Hungarian economists believe that this turn of events is rooted in the period the country consumed more than it produced. The fact that party and state leaders underestimated the impact of changes in the world economy on the socialist economy has added considerably to the current difficulties. There was also the lack of a coherent concept of renewal, and this led to a conservation of the system of political institutions and their inability to cope with new challenges.

One of the questions most often asked in Hungary nowadays is: where do we go from here? There is, of course, a wide range of answers, but we think that the best thing to do is to hear the opinions of members of the country's ruling party, i.e., those who have a duty to speak frankly, to discuss and to seek the best ways of solving the problems, as the Hungarian daily *Népszabadság* put it.

IF NOT NOW, WHEN?

"I and many of my colleagues anticipated the present situation and warned the government of the republic and the HSWP leadership about it," Academician *Mihaly Simai* told me a month after the Hungarian party conference¹ had admitted the HSWP CC's responsibility for the state

of affairs in the country. Simai is the Director of the Institute of International Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and he has been involved in formulating state economic policy for many years now. He does not deny that the fault for the present difficulties also lies with the scientists, but only to the extent to which their advice and recommendations were accepted or rejected by the leadership of the country.

However that may be, he goes on, the final decisions did not always reflect the influence on the Hungarian economy of economic changes in the world, which is why the reforms of the last few decades have been half-hearted and chequered. The state apparatus, Simai believes, was prevented from acting with greater resolve and consistency by caution, an urge to avoid conflict, and by somewhat exaggerated misgivings about the national unity of the Hungarians.

Nevertheless, it failed to avoid complications. National unity did not suffer, says Simai, but most people decided to adopt a wait-and-see attitude. Now they are taking a close look at the new leaders, and the government can expect to have the society's support and involvement in implementing the stabilisation programme only if things go right.

Hungarians are still extremely disillusioned with the old policy. There is also some fear in society of changes that may upset the old habits and way of life, says *Népszabadság*. On the other hand, people do want change, but they expect more, and much sooner than can be achieved in the present circumstances.

This man, who calls himself an optimist and who has been analysing world economic problems for fifteen years, is not afraid to paint so gloomy a picture because he is firmly convinced that sooner or later socialism in Hungary will leave its difficulties behind it. "If the present wave of economic and political reforms, which are aimed to produce an efficient and flexible economy and a more democratic system, does not produce the expected results, they will be achieved in the course of subsequent transformations, which are simply inevitable," he says.

Politicians believe that the foundations of future successes can be laid either now or never, but Simai does not accept that as an argument. For the time being, he notes with satisfaction that the government has been working along the right lines, and that its choice, far from being an amorphous product of unanimous voting by thoughtless extras, is in fact the result of a clash of various opinions. Simai, who has been a member of the party for 42 years, points out that original and independent-minded people are playing an increasingly prominent role in the HSWP, and its leadership, and this reinforces his hope

that the party's present efforts to invigorate society are bound to succeed eventually.

IS IT EASY TO BE A COMMUNIST?

Thirty-four-year old *Csaba Banfalvi* is fairly sceptical about things soon coming right. I met him at the Social Sciences Institute of the HSWP CC, where he studies the labour resources market in a group researching relationships between economics and society. He lectured on political economy at a higher school for several years, and it is obvious to him that this science, in its present form and with its still unchanged content, has compromised itself in the eyes of society it is designed to serve and is no more than an apologia for certain political views that are, in addition, not always correct.

One feels a challenge in those words, if not to Academician Simai, then, at any rate, to some of his contemporaries. Banfalvi hints that many things would have been different today if scientists of the older generation, who were formulating the theory of the political economy of socialism, had started from the real history of economics and society generally, and based themselves on the forms of social relations developed in practice by mankind over the centuries.

Banfalvi, who joined the HSWP in 1982, can hardly be called a typical representative of the young generation of Hungarian Communists, if only for the simple reason that such a type is unlikely to exist. He does not believe that his party membership is any kind of asset to his curriculum vitae, and he joined simply because that was in line with his convictions.

It looks as though Banfalvi is one of the new men in the HSWP, of whom *Népszabadság* once said that they were single-minded but did not all agree on how the problems were to be solved. I was also left with the impression that he is much of a pragmatist. Indeed, he does not believe that intelligent people—a group to which he obviously feels he belongs—can ever be content with a given set of circumstances.

A contemporary of his, *Mihály Helenbai*, a political worker on the Budapest City Committee of the HSWP, is also known for his common sense. He told me that it is not easy being a Communist in Hungary nowadays, if only because the party's erstwhile authority has declined significantly and will be difficult to restore.

Things have come to such a pass that 40,796 members of the HSWP would not or could not find the courage to go on carrying, with the other Communists, the heavy burden of responsibility both for the past and the future:

they handed in their party cards when these were being renewed in early 1988. All sorts of people are party members, Helenbai said. Some of them are quick to say "Long live..." and "On this auspicious occasion..." at the drop of a hat, and make skilful use of their social status to climb the ladder and line their pockets. The documents of the party conference reveal that some HSWP members receive unearned income, engage in speculation, make wasteful use of social property and seek undue privileges. Helenbai is convinced that there are many more careerists and time-servers in the party than the 1,340 members who were advised to hand in their party cards when the time came to renew them.

How valuable an asset for the HSWP does he consider himself to be? His view on this score was less straightforward, but it showed a more honest urge to face the real world than one would expect in a simple "yes" or "no" answer. He is one of 6,000 party functionaries and, while he does not believe that he is in any way superior, he is sure that he is quite capable of living up to the leadership's requirements. He finds it much harder to meet the demands made on him as a representative of the city committee by rank-and-file Communists, who want him to visit them at the enterprises more often and always to side with the workers in controversial situations.

Helenbai is sure about the importance of the job he is doing. He believes that his main task is to help the party organisations to get rid of the "reflex" response to external stimuli, i.e., to teach them to work without promptings from above. He believes that Communists must give up the conformist approach to relations with industrial management. It may be expedient, but in the present conditions it is altogether unacceptable. He is convinced that the party's mobility, competence and authority can be swiftly restored only by improving and altering the work of primary party organisations.

This was *Albert Oros's* line of thought as well. He is secretary of the party organisation at the Lang Engineering Works. However, he believes that it will take much longer than first thought for the party to confirm its right to high social status. He backs up his argument with facts based on his experience. Until 1985, between 10 and 15 persons joined the party at the works every year; today, the figure is down by almost half.

That is a significant fact, but considering that some 250 Lang workers (roughly 25% of the total) are already HSWP members, the drop in the annual number of new recruits does not seem to be all that dramatic. Oros thinks that it is, in a sense, retribution for the percentage drive in the past.

The party secretary does not appear to be a man inclined to futile discussion, and he shares the view of *Laszlo Boda*, the director of the enterprise, that Hungarians have had their fill of discussing difficulties. The time has come for resolute action. It is true that Oros does not agree with Boda that the opportunity for achieving success has passed.

WHEN CAN A DIRECTOR BE SACKED?

Boda is one of the few executives who, during present democratic processes, was appointed rather than elected to his post by the work collective. He takes a businesslike view of the situation, and he must be a good businessman if he is the ministry's choice. Boda came to the engineering works in 1954, and was its general designer by the time he was appointed director. He also believes that he has done a job that no one else could have. He tries to look at things objectively, and adds that the condition of the works, whose economic indicators 3 years ago made it one of the first candidates for bankruptcy in socialist Hungary, still leaves a lot to be desired. It has a debt of 48 million forints, which is why out of every 100 forints profit the work collective is now learning anew to make, it is left with 10.

The works is still in a bad way. The director believes that improvements can be speeded up if exports are increased and the staff is reduced.

The first part seems self-evident in a country 60% of whose national income derives from foreign trade, but it will take considerable effort in view of the fact that product and technology standards in Hungarian industry, according to Minister Frigyes Berecz, are generally years behind the top standards, and sometimes one or two decades behind. So far Lang is more or less competitive on the world market.

Maintaining the status quo is hard enough, never mind moving forward. Funds are needed, and these have to be got from internal reserves, the main drain on which, Boda believes, is the inflated administrative staff. He wants to lay off not only this group, which comprises one-third of the personnel, but also some of the workers because he is dissatisfied with their skills, although he is afraid he will be unable to find replacements for them. Highly skilled labour prefer to work in cooperatives and at private and mixed enterprises, the numbers of which have been growing. The pay there is better and there is a chance to earn foreign currency. But money is not the only consideration. They are not too happy with the prospect of earning their daily bread by running a 1908 forging press, for instance, which Lang has in one of its shops.

Boda claims that this is the state of affairs at most Hungarian engineering enterprises, "redundant labour" having left the industry some 10 years ago.

It seems that the director sees the employment problem from a somewhat different angle than that taken by those Hungarians who feel that finding work is becoming increasingly difficult. However, he does not deny that the problem is an acute one, insofar as the structural modernisation of industry does call for some sacrifice. Still, he says, people tend to switch jobs mostly of their own accord.

Information provided in the weekly *Heti Világgazdaság* bears this out. Workers laid off by the management, for various reasons, including breaches of discipline, make up only 10%-12%. Indeed, only about 1% of the personnel have been affected by the staff cuts and organisational regrouping of labour since 1985.

Nevertheless, he says, it is human beings that are involved, and the loss of a job, for whatever reason—even for 1 or 2 months, and even with the payment of average wages (a requirement when anyone is laid off by the management)—is a serious personal tragedy for any honest worker. That being so, it is time to stop the futile debates about whether unemployment does or does not exist in the country, and to find a way to solve the problem itself, since it threatens to affect something like 100,000 people in the near future.

Boda points out that he does not believe himself to be insured against this kind of trouble. His own position will eventually be decided by the enterprise council, an elective body consisting of representatives of the management and the workers. He is sure to lose the trust of his men if, after a certain period, the works is still in a difficult position. Even in the event of success, the price—a drop in the pay or worse housing conditions for instance—may be too high for workers. Then again the council might just sack the director.

Boda considers that the setting up of enterprise councils and the definition of their functions have not been sufficiently thought out. For one thing, such a council is not really necessary in the present situation. It lacks the competence, and the time, to take correct long-term decisions. It is also highly probable that in a critical situation the work collective might look for immediate benefits at the expense of long-term interests. "The entire responsibility for the future of the enterprise now falls mainly on myself, and that is, on the whole, quite right. And I do not want to find myself judged on my performance by those who are now unable and, in fact, unwilling to share this responsibility," he says.

THE STRIKE AS A MEANS OF ARGUMENT

Lajos Müller, who heads the economic department of the Central Council of Hungarian Trade Unions, agrees that the decision to set up enterprise councils was somewhat hasty. This problem, he feels, can be settled in another way when the country rises to a higher level of political and economic development, but in the meantime it is impossible to make the enterprises more efficient through the further democratisation of management. The situation calls for managers who know their business and can act with resolve. They must be able to take decisions if the long-term interests of the work collective demand them, no matter how unpopular they are at the time.

Even under normal conditions, Müller believes, the councils do not quite fit into the structure of management. They tend simply to destabilise it. The press has reported from time to time on work collectives refusing to elect directors for a second term although they have achieved excellent results. The reason for such decisions, which may appear to be illogical to an observer, may lie both in a personal dislike among some members of the council for an exacting manager, and in the existence of particular group interests. Another thing Müller does not like is any unwarranted increase in a director's salary by the councils. One is left with the impression that in this way other executives who are members of the council try to create a precedent for increasing their own salaries in the future.

The notion of "bureaucracy" no longer fits into the classical framework, he believes. It is a disease that has gone deep into the worker body, and it is time to give serious thought to the causes behind this depressing phenomenon. He says that the "traditional" type of bureaucrat is unfit for tackling modern problems. He adds that if there is an element of paper make-work in his own activity, it is entirely the result of instructions, decrees and normative acts flooding in for coordination from the state institutions.

The economic department of the Central Council of Hungarian Trade Unions is firmly opposed to such practices, and to such a view of the tasks and objectives of trade union bodies. They should confine themselves to representing and defending the interests of the working people, and should not be involved in problems like investment or foreign trade. The fact that this is not yet so leaves Müller less than satisfied with the results of the activity of his department. The gist of the criticism addressed to the Council from below is that the trade unions take their cue from the government, which is trying to solve, at the expense of the working people's interests, the problems it has itself created.

Forty-two-years old Sandor Nagy, Secretary-General of

the Central Council of Hungarian Trade Union, agrees that this was the case until recently, but maintains that such views no longer hold true. The relations between the government and the trade unions have been far from smooth. Only appropriate legislation, regulating the rights and duties of the parties, can help to resolve the existing and imminent contradictions. There should be a rapid formulation and adoption of such an act, because the party and the government have never been more in need of trade union support than they are today, says Nagy.

He stresses the need for the movement he heads to be loyal to the country's leadership, but says that the trade unions must be prepared for a more serious clash of views in the course of negotiations with state and economic agencies. He considers it natural for working people to have the right to strike when necessary, an argument that has historically justified itself. This kind of dialogue cannot, of course, be an end in itself, although it can accelerate the processes of renewal already under way in society.

Nagy belongs to a generation which is aware of the full gravity of the situation. He has enough political experience, gained over the last ten years, and reckons he will be active for at least another twenty years. Many in Hungary regard him as a reformer yearning for change. He believes, for instance, that the sectoral principle of trade union organisation should give way to the craft principle, because in its present form the apparatus is mainly concerned with the interests of the industry it is directly involved in running.

Not everyone on the central bodies of the Council holds the same view as Nagy. Many still refuse to see that commodity-money relations are characteristic of socialist society as well, and that they imply a definite political and economic structure. These people, Nagy says, always see the interests of the workers and of the state as identical, but this is not in fact the case. For that reason, even under socialism, working people's interests must be represented by strong and authoritative trade unions vested with the appropriate rights.

Other leaders of Hungarian society appear to be just as confident in themselves and in the country's future. But today, says HSWP General Secretary Karoly Grosz, when the mass movement can no longer be directed from above, this does not yet guarantee success: if socialism is to be renewed, the Hungarian people must be fully committed to shaping its own future.

Alain Gérard
WMR staff member

1 Held in May 1988. —Ed.

SPIRITUAL RENAISSANCE

Art invariably reflects, in different ways, the processes under way in society. This trend has been especially conspicuous in China in recent years, now that the country has entered a period of reform and development. Below is an interview YU BENZHENG, a member of the Executive Committee of China's film-makers' association, granted to a WMR staff member.

- *When China is discussed nowadays, the question of reforms often arises. Change has spread to all spheres of society. This would seem to include the film industry as well.*

Cinema is not only art, but also an intricate production process. The reform has strongly involved the organisational and economic structure of the Chinese film industry and almost all the country's studios are now self-supporting, i.e., they themselves determine production, decide what films to shoot, and carry the costs in the event of failure.

The results of the reform are there for all to see. Interest in Chinese films abroad has soared, not least in countries with a well-developed film industry. Our film directors have won several prizes at prestigious international festivals and, no less importantly, we no longer show films to half-empty houses.

- *The reform not only affects the economy but has also introduced changes in political life. In this context, what are relations like between the Communist Party and the film-makers?*

Petty tutelage, which determined who filmed what and how, is a thing of the past. While offering overall ideological guidance to the intelligentsia, the party organisations do not interfere with the creative process or the artist's freedom of self-expression. My own example bears this out. I am free to choose the theme which I believe is the most important to me now. Every director at our studios in Shanghai enjoys this right. And this freedom of choice naturally expands the artist's creativity, particularly as far as his style and manner are concerned.

I would like to add that the relations between the party and the creative professions are in no small measure determined by the fact that we have one objective in common, and that is ensuring the success of the reform.

- *This presumably determines the content of the pictures, which are devoted to present-day problems confronting China?*

Most of the films made at our studios are about contemporary life. Through the means available to it cinema art attempts to reveal spiritual changes within society, and sometimes to prompt people to do their best in the present conditions. Take the film *Yamaha, the Fishmonger* as a case in point. The main character wants a fish shop of his own, to get married, run his own affairs and prosper. All the vicissitudes of life he encounters, such as the designs of a rival woman fishmonger, the corrupt inspector and disagreement among a group of new traders are shown in great detail with a fine knowledge of the subject matter. In many respects, this film is in line with the essence of the reform since the

spectators see that human enterprise and industry help to make life better.

- *How do the films devoted to topical problems relate to films on historical subjects? Are there any films in China on the "cultural revolution"?*

Not many, but there are some. *Hibiscus Town* by Xie Jin, which won the top prize at the 1988 Karlovy Vary Film Festival, is the most successful of these. Film directors tended to use the "cultural revolution" in order to focus the viewers' attention on the "physical" realities of that period, portraying scenes of mass psychosis, or the persecution of this or that person. The makers of this film, however, addressed the problem in a different way: they sought to explore the past as a spiritual drama—a story of people drawn into the vortex of the "cultural revolution". The heroine's ruined life symbolises millions of similar tragedies.

Many people still clearly recall what had happened, which is why cinema audiences become emotionally involved in the events on the screen. Relating the sad story of two residents in a provincial town, the film conveys well the gloomy atmosphere of that period. This picture is autobiographical in many respects: its director was among those who were sent to be "re-educated through manual labour". In 1976, the party and the people unequivocally condemned the "cultural revolution" as the greatest evil in our history. Xie Jin's work may well be called a film of warning: the past must never be repeated.

Chinese film-makers are sure to return to this tragic subject time and again. The truth about that benighted period must be revealed, not least because millions of innocent people suffered in those years. Many true Communists lost their lives.

- *The film sounds very much like the well-known Soviet picture Repentance. Though very different in content and style, they seem to be about the same thing, namely, the need to clean up society.*

I'm not inclined to draw direct parallels here. Our two peoples have their own history and we will have to comprehend it, each in our own way. Having rehabilitated all those who had been victims of the "cultural revolution", having healed the wounds inflicted by it, People's China is steadily advancing along the road of reform. I'm aware of the fact that the process of reassessing the past is also under way in the Soviet Union. But I wouldn't want to liken this process to that which is occurring in China, since we have different points of departure, so to speak, with regard to certain events and personalities.

- *You said that during the "cultural revolution" many cultural personalities were victimised. Are they working again now?*

Despite their experiences during the "cultural revolution", the older-generation artists have not become embittered or retreated into their shells. The years of extreme hardship have led them to a better understanding of the strength of human character and its sources. I would like to lay special emphasis on the fact that thanks to these film directors China's cinematography has turned towards the human being, to his inner life. The practice during the "cultural revolution" of emphasising the insignificance of man in films became something of a habit. Thus, the intellectual renaissance of our cinema is an event of great significance for art and society, and for its socialist advancement.



the party

HUMANISM—THE GIST OF REVOLUTION

Trevor MUNROE

General Secretary, Workers' Party of Jamaica

Obviously, we as revolutionaries cannot be content with the exposure of the immorality and the amorality of the US administration. We have to recognise from our own experiences in our own mass movements that the progressive and revolutionary movements cannot reap the fruits of this isolation of American imperialism without us ourselves putting our own houses in order.

The intellectual, worker, the peasant, the unemployed youth in the ghetto often say: "Trevor, what you say about American imperialism is true, but didn't you people kill Maurice Bishop—even if you didn't do it, didn't you approve of it?" The progressive masses ask us from time to time: "Doesn't your philosophy say that you can get rid of people when they don't agree with you in the name of the class struggle?" The people ask us: "We know what you say about the reactionaries is true. We can see with our own two eyes. But what happens if we put you in the government, if we elect you, will we ever be able to vote you out?" "Aren't your philosophy, and the type of party it is trying to build, from somewhere else outside of Jamaica? What does this party have to do with black people? Isn't this an alien business you are dealing with that can't work in the Caribbean?"

Each of these questions—and there are others—indi-

cates a reservation, indicates a real concern of genuine Caribbean people at the very same time as they are becoming much clearer on the nature of imperialism and what it means for suppressing their forward movement.

We can treat these questions, as Caribbean revolutionaries, in one of two ways: we can dismiss such questions as a result of "imperialist indoctrination" and "imperialist brainwashing". There is no question at all that the role of the media controlled by the imperialists is of importance in implanting these reservations in the minds of progressive Caribbean people, but any such dismissal of these concerns is to ignore issues that go beyond the distortions of American ruling circles. We could take a second attitude—what I call a technical response. We could say—as we do say and as we genuinely believe—that our dear comrade and brother, Maurice, was not murdered by any order of any Central Committee nor any individual in the Central Committee. We can point out with absolute truth and historical accuracy that we in Jamaica did not know of the extent or depth of the crisis. Certainly we were not aware that it had reached the stage of armed conflict. These and other answers would no doubt be absolutely correct from a technical point of view. But then, the people ask us still: "O.K., what you say is true. But is it not so that if someone disagrees with you, that makes him into a class enemy? And does not your philosophy say that you have to get rid of the class enemy?"

We in Jamaica have tried and continue to try to avoid

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both the abstract and the technical response to genuine concerns of our people—to avoid a response of simply dismissing issues as imperialist propaganda, to avoid a response which is technical in its correctness but does not get sufficiently deeply to the substance of the issue which is being raised. Hence, in our party and more broadly in the left movement in Jamaica, there has been taking place a process of fairly *profound rethinking* which seeks to uncover not only the root of errors in a tactical sense, but also seeks to uncover shortcomings in our concepts which are at a different level from tactics. We seek to uncover errors in tactics and weaknesses in concepts not in order to abandon the revolutionary process, not in order to become reformists, but in order to *make our revolutionary activity more effective*, more mature, more humanist and, ultimately, more supported by the masses.

And, hence, in the full and frank dialogue which is necessary our party thinks that it would be helpful to share some of our thoughts as we seek to come to grips with our achievements as well as the changes that are needed. This is the time when we need to think out and to make necessary changes because there is no popular upsurge on the agenda. When the upsurge does come—at that point there is not going to be any time to make the changes that are possible and that are necessary in order to give proper guidance and leadership to our people.

THE NEED FOR HUMANISM

In relation, therefore, to that first question: How do you Marxists see the people? We believe that *in any genuinely revolutionary idea, any genuine revolutionary movement or process, we as revolutionaries have to appreciate that the masses of the people are not only means of struggle and instruments of struggle. We need to appreciate more that the masses of the people are also the end of our struggle.* They are the means of their own emancipation, as well as the objective of our revolutionary struggle. By and large, if we understand this, then how we deal with one another in the course of the struggle; how we deal with people who are not in our party and not in our movement; how we deal with individual rights in our party, rights of our people; how we deal with individual wishes, interests, individual sensitivities, individual concerns, should reflect more and exemplify the new humanity which it is our aim to build.

The aim of the revolutionary, paradoxically, is not revolution. Revolution is the means to our ultimate goal which is the emancipation of humanity—materially, spiritually, culturally and otherwise. We have to manifest in our dealings with one another, as far as the situation allows, the very goals that we say we have. Those goals

cannot be put off to the future while we treat one another, treat our people here and now, with disrespect, with lack of consideration. We may do that if we wish, but let us understand that *this would be wrong on principle, and the masses will see this. They will judge us not only on the basis of our future goals but of our present conduct.*

It is not easy to practise this. It is very, very difficult because revolutionary struggle always involves more than usual sacrifice of individual interest. The normal things which one very often wishes to do and one likes to do—things that have to do with our families, our careers—these things often are legitimately sacrificed in the course of revolutionary activity. But we should be clear: Such a sacrifice of individual interests cannot be in a form or to an extent which contradicts our love and respect for one another and which contradicts our love and respect for the people. For example, disagreements between revolutionaries do not automatically mean that one view is that of a class enemy nor that the other view is petty bourgeois and so on. We have to understand that within our revolutionary movement “respect is due”—as the saying goes amongst the brethren in Jamaica. Respect is due also to those outside of our revolutionary movements who may have different conceptions from us. Rarely is any one position totally true for all places, at all times. Invariably, truth itself benefits from reasoned debate with half-truth or even full falsehood.

We would conclude that *any revolutionary process—Marxist-Leninist or otherwise—must recognise the necessity of “struggle” and of “humanism”.* They both go hand in hand. If we only see the struggle but not the human being, then our concept is lacking and there are not many masses that are going to follow us for too long. If we only see the human being and do not see the struggle, then obviously we are not going to get far either in changing structures of oppression. We have to see the distinction as well as the dialectical relationship between struggle and humanism. By and large, I would say that in our movement we have been very, very much appreciative of the aspect of struggle. We have, however, been insufficiently appreciative of the humanism which needs to manifest itself in the very course of revolutionary struggle.

THE REVOLUTIONARY CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

The second concern which the people raise with us is this issue: “When we put you in the government, can we get you out?” The masses raise this question because of some appreciation of the inadequacies of the existing bourgeois democracy and of the existing politicians. Such a question is an advanced one in the context of our Caribbean situation. The Caribbean Left

and the progressive movement have been very, very strong and correctly so, on the negatives of parliamentary Westminster democracy. We have been very strong and very clear and correctly so, that this form keeps real power away from the people, that it keeps real power in the hands of the big business minority and, in our context, very importantly, racial minorities. We have also been very strong that the Westminster system in our region divides the working people against themselves, and praises the division as two-party democracy. It opens the people to all kinds of bribery and to all sorts of corruption in the course of the kinds of elections that we have held in the region. It also breeds "tribal" violence of the sort that has been very, very typical of Jamaica in the last ten years. So we are not taking back one inch of our criticisms that Westminster democracy is a democracy primarily for the minorities and not for the masses of the people.

At the same time, we have insufficiently recognised that this democracy was a gain in relation to what was there before. Secondly, that these gains were made by the struggles of the people, not by the gift of the British colonialists and that the people themselves recognise this fact. The right to vote was not there before and came only as a result of their rising up; the right to form or to join an organisation with which the government disagrees was not there before and only came as a result of their rising up. The right to express views with which the government disagrees was not there before and, ultimately, the right to change the ruling party was not given by any ruling class, though used by them. They are gains won by the people which are valuable despite being limited.

When therefore a progressive worker or peasant asks us, "Am I going to be able to vote you out if you get in?"—it would be very unwise of us to dismiss that as some concoction of bourgeois propaganda. What he is in fact saying is that I and my forefathers have fought for certain rights which have been *partially won*, despite being hemmed around by all kinds of laws and regulations. The essence of the question is: "Is your democracy, Brother Trevor, better than the present democracy that we have? Does it include the rights which I have now and extend them to be more than what they are at present?"

Up until recently, in the Caribbean Left, our concept of democracy has been inadequate and therefore our answer to this question unsatisfying. We feel quite strongly that *our concept of democracy in and after revolution, our concept of democracy in and as part of government of which we are working to be a part, is a concept that needs to explicitly incorporate the gains that the people have made in one form or another.* That concept and our

practice must seek to strengthen those gains. At the same time, it must seek to get rid of the built-in, unavoidable biases against the masses and their interests, inherent in capitalist democracy. Our democracy must also seek to ensure that revolutionary gains on behalf of the people are consolidated and guaranteed.

The challenge before us is how to preserve the new order and at the same time recognise democratic rights within, even against it. From time to time, and we say this clearly to the people, there are legitimate limitations in applying our concept of democracy. These limitations are inevitable, particularly following any revolution, because after the seizure of power the process of a new order has to be consolidated. In the course of consolidation, whether it is the American Revolution or the Russian Revolution or the Nicaraguan Revolution or the Grenadian Revolution, there is a time during the course of which normal rights cannot be expressed in an abnormal situation. *But these limitations have to be as a result of specific circumstances rather than as a general rule, and these limitations must be removed as soon as possible in the course of institutionalising the revolutionary process.*

Thereafter, the working class and the masses must protect their system learning from the way the capitalists and the imperialists protect theirs. We must protect it in normal times as distinct from emergencies by the rule of law clearly oriented to the masses; by education, culture and media with similar majoritarian bias; by recognising the fact that the interests of the masses can be expressed in more than one political party in much the same way that different parties express—at least in part—the interests of the capitalists in each of the Caribbean territories. Once the masses attain hegemony in the manner of the capitalists in bourgeois society, *our concept of democracy needs to recognise the right of parties opposed to our system to exist and to take part in elections.*

Such elections must be more, not less, democratic than those of the bourgeoisie. They must remove the power of money, of bureaucracy, etc. which makes it impossible for capitalist elections to really manifest "government of the people, for the people, by the people", and allows capitalist politicians to be beyond the control of the masses. Our democracy must institutionalise structures, in a way that democracy under capitalism cannot, which facilitate effective decision-making participation, not just consultative participation, of the masses in governmental functions and in holding state officials to account. *Our democracy must be revolutionary, socialist and pluralistic first and foremost on principle; secondarily on tactical grounds because of the strength of liberal democratic traditions in the Caribbean.*

CARIBBEANISING MARXISM

The final of the many concerns that I want to raise with you, which we have to face, is the general one: Doesn't Grenada prove that what you defend, that the Marxism-Leninism that you propose is alien? that it cannot work? that a vanguard party is an alien import?

Our answer is that *Marxism-Leninism was not imported into the Caribbean by anybody*. It grew in the minds and out of the experiences of Caribbean people in the course of testing whatever serious philosophies and ideologies were available. Nobody came from Moscow or from Havana with gold to recruit agents. There is not a Marxist-Leninist in the Caribbean who was not previously and who often still may to some extent remain a Christian, a nationalist, a Rastafarian¹ or a social democrat. So that this Marxism-Leninism grows out of our experience in the region.

Secondly, Marxism-Leninism, its ideas, approaches and concepts worked in the Caribbean to the extent that it guided a section of our people—the Grenadian people, for example—to remove a tyrannical dictatorship, the tyrannical dictatorship of Eric Gairy. No other set of ideas was able to guide any of our people to accomplish a similar end either in Grenada in January, 1974, when there was a prolonged revolutionary situation², or in any other territory for that matter.

Let us also not forget that fact of our history. Equally, let us not forget that in the four and a half years of the People's Revolutionary Government in Grenada, led and guided by Maurice Bishop and the New Jewel Movement, the application of Marxist concepts in ways appropriate to Grenadian and Caribbean reality contributed immensely to building a new life where one set of Caribbean people could be more genuinely sovereign, could be more genuinely masters in their own house; where social justice and self-respect was growing and being cultivated amongst our women, our youth and the other sections. We do not believe that alien ideas could have helped accomplish such.

However, at the same time, let us be also clear that *Marxism-Leninism as an idea always fails sooner or later to the extent that we do not sufficiently recognise that at the very heart of Marxism-Leninism is not only struggle, not only humanism, but also revolutionary flexibility or dialectics*. Struggle, humanism and dialectics are the core of Marxism-Leninism. *Dogma is alien to Marxism-Leninism*. Unfortunately from time to time and still today, we in the Caribbean revolutionary movement suffer from a dogmatic, un-Marxist approach.

For example, the concept of the vanguard party seeks to ensure that the working people and in particular the working class is not disarmed, weak, and ineffective in a context where popular revolutionary possibilities are there

to be realised and subsequently to be consolidated. It elaborates principles which, when applied in practice, ensure that the necessary forces will be assembled to deal with, to fulfil and to realise revolutionary possibilities.

Hence the principles of selectivity, the principles of ensuring links with the masses, of democratic centralism. However, if we apply this concept in a dogmatic way, then it is bound, sooner or later, to lead to severe problems. Moreover, in making a revolution, in accomplishing a revolutionary seizure of power on behalf of and with the masses of the people as was done in March of 1979 in Grenada, a certain degree of tightness of discipline—one can even say a command and military approach combined with mass support—was the requirement of that moment to remove a tyranny. In contrast, in the course of contesting Westminster elections, any vanguard party will have to significantly modify the application of these principles.

Similarly, in running a revolutionary state, in governing a country—we can speak authoritatively of no other—is it not a mistake to seek to maintain an identical approach in applying the principles to that required by a revolutionary uprising? In our view this is so. The party needs to be much broader. The party needs to open up itself at the appropriate levels to all the masses who are supportive, to one degree or another, of the revolutionary process. Otherwise, the party becomes more divorced from the people, and the people, more importantly, lose their connection with the party.

In conclusion, the *interests of the Caribbean people and the interest—in fact the core—of Marxism-Leninism as a revolutionary doctrine require that we caribbeanise—indeed, we “blacken”—Marxism-Leninism to link with our people and for our people to link with it more*. That has all kinds of implications which all of us Caribbean people have a duty to think through: caribbeanise it in its attitude to race and to black people; caribbeanise it in its relation, its attitude to religion—that very important aspect of our reality; caribbeanise it in its attitude to culture. Doing so, however, requires open, radical rethinking of our tactics as well as of our concepts—not to make them more acceptable to reformism, but to make them more revolutionary.

1 A Jamaican religion dating from the 1930s. It holds that God has black skin and, consequently, that blacks are his chosen people. —Ed.

2 The author means the proclamation of Grenadian independence on February 7, 1974. —Ed.

"THE ICP'S DECLINE IS NOT INEVITABLE..."

Renzo TRIVELLI

deputy chairman, Central Control Commission,
Italian Communist Party, CC member, ICP, deputy
to the European Parliament

- *The 18th Congress of the Italian Communist Party will convene in March. It is a regular congress but, judging by the Italian press, including communist publications, the situation in the party and the character of eve-of-congress documents indicate that it will be an extraordinary event in party life. Is this because the Communists' electoral setbacks are still fresh in memory, because the membership is dwindling and because the press comments on the party's steep and even "inevitable" decline?*

Let us tackle this pointed question without beating about the bush. There are many reasons for the present situation. Two factors have been in play for at least 10 years now: inconsistent election returns and a decrease in the party's numerical strength. Naturally, we cannot help but be worried by the chronic character of these phenomena. The party's eve-of-congress document says, in particular, that the ICP's analysis of today's reality has been "qualitatively backward". The numerous deep-seated causes of this situation are now being studied.

One of them is, to my mind, a protracted "identity crisis" of the party. It goes back to the beginning of the long historical phase introduced by the 20th CPSU Congress and consists of a series of diverse crises in many socialist countries, from Yugoslavia to Vietnam. In international relations, things have gone so far as armed clashes between some of the socialist countries. Those, just like economic and political failures, have proved shocking to Italian Communists. Corresponding perceptions of the new society have been accumulating, slowly but persistently taking hold of the mentality of Communists. Ralf Dahrendorf,¹ a well-known theoretician of neoliberalism, has commented that the experience of socialist society has made the very use of the term ambiguous. In fact, the models of the various socialist countries have adversely affected the very sources of the ICP's influence, that is, the belief of millions in the "final objective", that is in "socialist society".

In a sense, the concepts of the market, private initiative, democracy, pluralism and glasnost, rediscovered by the present Soviet leadership, indicate the need to reassess the traditions of social democracy and highlight the crisis in those of the Third International. Such processes inevitably have an effect, especially on a broad-based political force in which elements of culture, morality and ideology play an important role. It seems that all the West European communist parties are in the grip of a crisis; some of them have never been a substantial or influential factor in their countries, while others have lost or risk losing their influence.

It is practical reality itself that has dealt a blow to our "ideological substance". Excuse the somewhat abstract character of these discourses but I would like to go farther than an interview and rise to the level of research, of an essay. To my mind, one cannot discuss anything with absolute certainty today, including the capitalist social system (especially from the historian's viewpoint); I personally feel that the very definition is somewhat insufficient. Indeed, current processes in Italy and many other Western societies have not led either to the impoverishment of the working class or to the polarisation and simplification of the social structure.

We have to face two facts; first, the position of the working class has changed both in relation to the means of production and in terms of material conditions, attitudes and culture; and second, production and a service industry have been developing rapidly without the application of wage labour, millions of small-scale entrepreneurs have emerged, and new occupations have appeared. The scientific and technological revolution has already changed the mode of labour and social roles: small-scale entrepreneurship, which has become widespread in Italy's industry, agriculture and services, is making use of this new potential.

The social security system (a discussion on the significance of Keynesianism and the future of the social state is currently afoot) has a vital role to play in the life of the people. The phenomena of the "new poor" and marginalisation, though important, do not contribute towards the creation of an "alternative force" to the existing system, but pose a serious problem to the social solidarity of the working people and to new societal development trends.

The ICP has not taken those changes into account in time, and herein lies another cause of our difficulties. Its interests, culture, methods of action and political work and Communist terminology did not match changes in society. There was a break, although not a total one, between the party and society. Hence the conclusion: *decline is not inevitable, but only on condition that the ICP reconstructs a modern moral and cultural identity and reestablishes profound contact with the new realities in our country.* It is a formidable job and its accomplishment is anything but a foregone conclusion.

- *Is the weakening of the ICP's positions having an effect on the situation in the country?*

I wouldn't like to give a—how should I put it—"propagandistic" answer to this question. I think that the decline of our influence involves some risk of a "democracy void", i.e., a weakening of resistance not so much to the threat of authoritarianism as to the negative trends arising from the major realities of our time, such as the scientific and technological revolution or the omnipotence of the mass media, which are capable of generating new forms of alienation in production and social life. There are other negative tendencies, such as the lack of social cohesion, the protection of group interests, the decline of social and political solidarity, and the loss of the vision of general interests. These negative processes have long been discussed in the ICP, but the means of countering adverse tendencies are still a problem.

- *Achille Occhetto noted at the plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the ICP in July 1988 that the role of the party as an opposition force had been "partially neutralised". Isn't one of the reasons for this situation the Italians' new perception of the Communist Party? Although having failed to become a ruling party, it is said to have lost its former standing as an opposition force with some of the voters. Is that why the task of evolving "a new line for a new ICP" has been formulated in the runup to the congress? What will be the difference between this and the course taken over the last few years?*

A declining "opposition role" is not a purely Italian problem, nor does it apply only to communist parties. The West German Social Democrats and the British Labour Party seem to be facing similar difficulties. The latest defeat of the US Democratic Party in the presidential elections, in spite of America's specific economic and political situation, is also an example of what awaits democratic and left forces which have been out of government for a long time.

The reason is, I think, that moderate, and even conservative authorities still enjoy effective support of the mass of people, including the middle classes, thanks to economic growth over the past few years and, to some extent, to the crisis of "etatism". It is a very serious problem, which should be examined more thoroughly and discussed more openly, particularly because the Left has failed to find a solution to it.

Various attempts have been made from the "radical", "leftist" approach to the "centrist". Some theories assert that a party should place itself in the "centre" of the political spectrum to win power. Britain's Labour Party failed with the former approach and Michael Dukakis in the US with the latter. But Francois Mitterrand won by pursuing a balanced policy and appealing to "all the French".

The need to form a majority alternative to the present

government faces Italian Communists with an especially difficult political task. At the moment not a single party allied with the Christian Democrats (from the Socialists to the Liberals) has an interest in the emergence of such a ruling majority. They motivate their restraint not by ideological prejudice but by a lack of such common ground in policies and programmes as could serve the basis of a parliamentary and governmental coalition. But the need to overcome the "state of blocked democracy", in which the Christian Democrats have been the focal point of successive governments for over 40 years now, is commonly recognised.

Giulio Andreotti's² aphorism, "Power is a burden to those who don't hold it", is well known in Italy, and there is a grain of truth in it. We nevertheless had, and still have, some power, namely, our parliamentary influence and our participation in provincial and local bodies of government and in the direction of many other democratic institutions in the country. We also have a part to play in the trade unions and in a wide network of associations, although they jealously guard their autonomy.

What does the elaboration of a "new course" amount to in the present-day situation? The eve-of-congress documents opened a discussion on "the perspective of a democratic alternative". It should gradually mature in the phase of opposition, and a strategic realignment of forces is necessary for its materialisation. The process is going to be a long and difficult one.

The point is to pursue a tough opposition course, which should not, however, provoke a political break with the ruling parties, especially the Socialists: such relations are essential to the implementation of the alternative because no one believes that the ICP—or any other single party for that matter—can secure a majority vote. Hence, it is important to work in such a way that the other forces which make up the present ruling majority develop political positions favouring the creation of a ruling alliance with us. Naturally, that perspective depends on the Communists' electoral performance.

Obviously, we have to take into account the attitude of ecological, women's, youth, pacifist and other civic movements to our party in the sense that they can contribute towards the creation of a "climate" favouring change. But, as is often the case, those movements are not represented in parliament, and Italian governments are formed on the basis of parliamentary forces.

Apart from that, the formulation of a "new course" in the eve-of-congress documents includes a proposal for a reform of the political system. It demands a drastic revision of the legislation on parliamentary elections in order to give voters the chance not just to support some specific party but also to choose a "governmental majority". Much attention is given to the Catholic com-

munity, and a discussion has been initiated on the political unity of Catholics.

All those positions, it should be noted, rest on the assumption (which is being debated as well) that the old political phase (variously defined as the phase of "alliances", of "imperfect bipartisanship", etc.) in Italy is over. Its hallmark is considered to be a sort of tacit agreement between the ruling parties and the ICP as the opposition force not to push their confrontation to the extreme but, conversely, to look for ways of bridging their differences, primarily on pressing socioeconomic problems and on internal and external political issues of common interest, with the participation of all the forces which helped build the foundations of the republic.

The eve-of-congress document qualifies as a "past stage" the experience of the "historical compromise" and the governments of "national solidarity", in which we participated in the frame of a parliamentary majority, but not in the executive branch. It also hypothesises, albeit implicitly, the Italian political system evolving towards the emergence of two opposite groupings, one progressive and the other conservative, which will vie for the right to govern the country and alternate at the helm. It should also be remembered that in its documents the ICP comes down firmly on the side of a political alliance in Europe, the controlled formation of a single European market, the establishment of new relations with the CMEA countries, a new Third World policy, etc.

- *An overdue "reform of the party" is often discussed in the ICP today. What does it mean in practice?*

There are three factors to bear in mind. First, a discussion has opened on our "lag" in perceiving new realities arising in Italian society. Second, there is a certain evolution of democratic centralism in the sense that

Communists' divergent political positions have to be taken into account as we form governing bodies and delegations to congresses. Furthermore, we have accepted the principle that women should constitute at least one-third of such bodies and delegations. Finally, various options for a reform of the party are being considered. For instance, along with territorial subdivisions, it is proposed to have organisations structured "vertically", or "by interests". It would be a more complex structure, but also more "mobile" and in a way more "lightweight". Discussions also touch upon new, more open relations between the ICP and the voters, non-party people and society as a whole.

An abstract plan for an organisational structure means little, of course: making it work takes that special industry, dedication, inquisitiveness and striving for the ideal without which any blueprint risks becoming inert and vacuous.

I think it extremely important that the party get a grip on modern realities, produce concepts that would meet the challenges of our time, and breathe new life into Marxist culture as it interacts with the other two great European cultural traditions, Christianity and Enlightenment. This is where we should be looking to to forge links and discover our interdependence.

1 Ralf Dahrendorf, b. 1929, is a West German sociologist; according to his concept of "social conflict", set in opposition to Marxism, the chief distinguishing feature of a class is not its relation to property but general relations of dominance and subordination, which presumably are found in any society and which are bound to engender conflict.—Ed.

2 Giulio Andreotti, b. 1919, is a well-known Italian Christian Democrat who has held many cabinet posts, including that of Prime Minister. At present he is Italy's Foreign Minister.—Ed.

WMR TIES

- > Seifuddin Ahmed Manik, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, visited the WMR offices and addressed the Editorial Council. He talked about the situation in his country, the alignment of political forces and the role of the party in the struggle for democracy.

- > A WMR delegation took part in the deliberations of the 9th Congress of the German Communist Party in Frankfurt-am-Main.
- > A WMR delegation was present at the Unification Congress of Spain's Communists in Madrid.

FOR A DIALOGUE WITHOUT BIAS

David ARTHUR

CC member, Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand
(SUPNZ)

Our previous issue carried articles by leaders of the communist parties of India and Jordan in which they shared their thoughts and experience concerning the character and causes of splits in the communist movement of their countries and ways of healing them. We continue the subject with a summary of replies given to our questions by our New Zealand comrade.

In 1986, our party put out an illustrated pamphlet *Communism in New Zealand* to mark the 65 anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of New Zealand and the 20th anniversary of the Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand. Even those two dates will tell the discerning reader that the road of the communist movement in the country was anything but easy. It was a history of the Communists' intense efforts to absorb and think through Marxism-Leninism and to apply it creatively in specific national circumstances.

The New Zealand working class is relatively young and has little experience of ideological and theoretical struggles and especially of international affairs. In the 1930s, our movement had to grapple with serious internal differences over the character of the party, and primarily over the key question of attitude to social democracy. The party throughout its history has suffered from both left-wing sectarianism and the penetration of petty bourgeois ideology.

The situation was especially difficult in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The Khrushchev speech at the 20th CPSU Congress and Soviet support for socialism in Hungary exacerbated long-standing ideological divisions. By 1957, factionalism had become at least as important as the problem of how to work under a newly-elected Labour Government. In the same year the first traces of Maoism appeared at the Moscow meeting of world Communists.

In 1959, the party published *New Zealand at the Crossroads*, an updated programme based on the principles of a united antimonopoly front. Already some elements of the national leadership were planning to put aside those principles in the hope of quick results from opportunism and anti-Sovietism. At the 1960 international conference in Moscow, the international communist movement was suddenly split, with the Chinese, Albanians and New Zealanders opposing the rest of the world.

On his way home from the meeting Vic Wilcox, the then party leader and head of the delegation, attacked the Soviet

Union in a speech in Peking and, back home, he and others launched a tendentious discussion to win support for their position. They would not enter discussion with those who held views differing from theirs and demanded unquestionable obedience. It was in such an atmosphere that the 1963 National Conference (Congress) was being prepared. The Maoists in the leadership made sure that delegates who supported their line were selected. The breakdown continued: irregularities and departures from communist methods became the rule. Membership had declined to about 400.

In January 1966, six leading Communists issued *A Political Statement for Socialist Unity*, which read, inter alia: "We resign, after a combined aggregate of nearly 120 years of active party membership, not to abandon the struggle for socialism in New Zealand, nor to take up safe posts in the present structure of society, but to undertake with new vigour the formulation and application of real Marxist-Leninist policies". For 45 years the champion of the New Zealand working class and the proving ground for its finest leaders, the old party was left to continue to tread the path of disruption, and then oblivion. In October of the same year a meeting in Auckland resolved to form a Socialist Unity Party.

Rapidly winning the majority of communist trade unionists and people from other social groups, the new party became active in the anti-Vietnam War organisations and workers' activities and struggles. Recruiting continued. When the Warsaw Pact countries moved to support the Czechoslovak Communists in 1968, some, especially new, members, lacked the class understanding to grasp the political significance of those events and fell away, but the party continued to strengthen its ideological and organisational unity.

In October 1970, the party's 2nd national conference approved a programme document called *For Socialism in New Zealand*, which defined the main ways and means of the struggle and stressed the importance of the political movement of the masses for the immediate goals of the working people and for the ultimate objective of socialism. Eventually, the gradual advance of society towards fundamental socio-economic reforms and the need for the party to increase its role in mass antiwar, democratic and progressive organisations were formulated as the main tasks. In October 1988, the party's 8th national conference took the decision to draft a new party programme that would reflect present-day realities, profound shifts in the social structures and cultural and intellectual life and dramatic changes in international affairs.

Today, there is no reason to say that the New Zealand communist movement was weakened by the split 23 years ago. It is a fact, however, that the Socialist Unity Party's numerical strength and influence are short of those which a Marxist-Leninist party should have today. Fragments of

the divided Communist Party (with organisational structures and a newspaper), Trotskyites and some other groupings are active on the national scene alongside it. But most of the working people still look towards Labour, which also is divided into right- and left-wing trends. All that detracts from the efforts of the country's working-class movement to work out a democratic alternative.

The lesson of the split a quarter century ago and the subsequent development of the Socialist Unity Party shows that our mistake was, and to some extent still is, the *mechanical transplantation* of the experience of other parties, which are working in very different circumstances, onto our national soil. It is of course useful and even necessary to know the concerns of the communist movement as a whole. We cannot confine ourselves to the narrow boundaries of our islands. It is nevertheless my conviction that *new ideas and conclusions must originate and be formulated here, in New Zealand, on the basis of the country's concrete realities and current changes.*

One more lesson: differences of opinion are natural and inevitable when a party line is evolved, and there should be no attempt to push through solutions to problems by force or to "run out of town" those who disagree with the majority. We must listen closely to everyone and try to pick out valuable ideas and arguments for the whole party from his or her position, even if it is wrong. It is absolutely inadmissible to drive an erring comrade out of the party and into opposition because of our intolerance.

Here is one example: in 1984, the Central Committee took the important decision to give full-scale electoral support to the Labour Party in its clash with the Right, that is, not to nominate Communist candidates but call upon all Communists and supporters to vote Labour. It was the right choice: the country still has a government pursuing, at least internationally, a positive policy line that meets the interests of national independence and security and world peace. But at the time I'm referring to far from everyone understood the significance of the new course proposed by the leadership and there were many doubts and reservations, and even a dissenting minority in the Central Committee. Discussion was held throughout the party but regrettably, it didn't get to the essence of the principles involved.

True, deep-seated differences which lead to splits usually have objective causes, such as differing views of political realities and volatile situations. But we cannot ignore the role of *personalities* and shortcomings in the selection, training and advancement of cadres to posts of leadership, especially in small parties like ours. Leaders' ideological maturity and personal relationships sometimes have decisive influence, either favourable or adverse, on party unity.

It is my firm belief that what Communists need most today is the ability to conduct a constructive dialogue without bias, both in the party and outside it, with real and

potential allies. That is very important to us also because the Socialist Unity Party is active in the trade union movement, which in our country is not divided along partisan political lines but acts as an autonomous amalgamation of workers of different ideological persuasions.

As for political dialogue, we have tried to conduct it with organisations which consider themselves Marxist. But regrettably, no positive results have yet been achieved. We think that in our today's situation, it is far more productive to seek the unification of the working class movement through a rapprochement with that part of the left-leaning working people who support Labour.

Our position is all the more justified since, generally speaking, we do not want unity that would be directed against the Labour government—but this is precisely what some far-left groupings are preaching and trying to accomplish. We are far from happy with everything in the policies of the ruling party and its present cabinet. Communists are strongly opposed to the government's aim of resolving economic difficulties by "belt-tightening", i.e., by attacking the social gains of the New Zealand working class and all the other working people. But opposition to some aspects of the Labour policies is very different from the wholesale rejection of Labour, because the real alternative to it can be only a right-wing government. It is absolutely clear that today we cannot offer an alternative to the government either singlehanded or in alliance with other similarly weak groupings.

The question of supporting Labour has always been quite involved, of course. The time when the principle "class versus class" was very much in effect, when the slogan of routing and isolating social democracy was held up, when it was denigrated as a lapdog of imperialism and when Stalin's infamous "social-fascism" label was used in various countries is fresh in the memory of both Labourites and some veteran Communists. Not all the tangles have been unravelled in our ideological heritage. But practice calls for greater mutual understanding among all those who stand for the interests of the working people, and lead them towards joint actions, cooperation and alliance.

By demonstrating realism and openness to other progressive forces, we will convince people, including political leaders, that Communists are reliable and efficient partners in the struggle for national interests, as is shown by recognition the party has already gained in the trade unions. We would like to play a more active and substantial role also in the movement for peace, for environmental protection and other noble and urgent goals. Unity can doubtless be forged around such practical issues.

In conclusion, I would like to say anew that we have all too long posed as all but the only interpreters of Marxism and prophets of absolute truths. In so doing, we have ignored the fact that the classics of our philosophy themself-

ves created and asserted it in polemics with other forces, that Lenin, for example, while strongly criticising Plekhanov on some issues, used to say that one could not become a true Marxist without studying his works.

Today many fraternal parties, primarily the CPSU as the party of perestroika, have adopted a truly creative ap-

proach to reality and to the theoretical and practical aspects of the immediate and long-term prospects of their activities. It is a clean break with dogmatism, outdated theoretical postulates, and isolationism and sectarianism in politics, I think, that can help reunite the working-class movement both inside the country and on an international scale.

IN BRIEF

AUSTRIA Commenting on the 100th anniversary of the Socialist Party of Austria, KPO Chairman Franz Muhri said that the Communists had inherited and were promoting the best traditions of the Austrian working-class movement: the socialist, principled and militant policy of reforms. The targets contained in the first SPO statement, the Hainfeld statement of principles—politically organising the proletariat, helping it understand its position, and making it militant—remain valid to this day. Strengthening the Communist Party, securing the unity of action and alliance is a significant factor in the development and consolidation of the left forces.

BULGARIA The BCP should not simply adapt the old slogans to the new realities, but rather take stock of the present-day developments, Todor Zhivkov told a meeting of the BCP CC Political Bureau devoted to a review of progress in implementing the resolutions of the December 1988 Plenary Meeting of the BCP CC. The order of the day is to overcome workers' alienation from the means of production, to make them active in society and to step up their commitment to restructuring. To be introduced shortly are expedient changes in the work of the Central Committee, its Secretariat, CC commissions, and regional and district party committees. The CC Secretariat has been instructed to submit proposals until the end of May, 1989, on how to delimit the functions of the party and the government.

CANADA A CPC CC plenary meeting looked at how to increase the communist influence on the masses in the wake of the November 1988 parliamentary elections. The meeting was marked by frank, sometimes pointed, debates, criticism and self-criticism, and touched on some issues previously not subject to discussion, notably the party budget. It analysed the alignment of political forces in the country and spelled out what the Communists should do in order to form a broad-based democratic popular coalition

against the policies of neo-conservatives and big capital.

CHILE The Communist Party of Chile has decided to call its 15th Congress, the motto for which will be "For the Winning and Promotion of Democracy, For Popular Unity and Struggle Until Victory". Communists across the country are discussing the pre-congress theses. The congress agenda will include a Central Committee report, changes in the party Rules, elections of a new CC, and voting on resolutions. The theses say that the congress will sum up the PCC's political record and internal development over the 19 years since its last congress, map out the ways in which the party's popular uprising policy is to evolve, and size up the new realities in domestic and international life.

CUBA Each socialist country determines its policies in line with the concrete circumstances and yet all of them have the common goal of strengthening socialism both at national and international level, of promoting the advantages of socialism, and of securing peace and cooperation, said CPCz General Secretary Milos Yakes and Fidel Castro at their meeting in Havana.

INDIA According to the *People's Democracy* weekly, the mouthpiece of the Communist Party of India (M), the party has a membership of 465,000, with another 22,326 participating in various mass organisations affiliated to the CPI (M). Over the past 3 years, it has grown by 100,000. It has representatives in 12 State legislatures and holds 22 seats in the lower and 16 seats in the upper house of the Parliament. It publishes 7 dailies, 10 weeklies and 1 theoretical quarterly.

PDRY The 14th YSP CC Plenary Meeting held in the Yemeni capital discussed the party's economic, ideological and political record and its performance on defence. It noted that the party had markedly strengthened its hand both in government and in society and that there

had been an improvement in its personnel policy. Specifically, a growing number of women, industrial workers and members of farming cooperatives had been promoted to positions of importance in the party.

PRC Each party member has an obligation to assist the political reform and the policy of opening up to the world, and to work to enhance the party's prestige, said an all-China conference on party education. It indicated that most of the party was healthy and militant, yet the theoretical and cultural levels of a sizable section of the membership were not up to the present-day requirements. Priority should be given to improving the knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory among the leading cadres and to stepping up their education in the spirit of irreconcilable opposition to ideological and moral degradation.

USSR At their meeting in Moscow on December 26, 1988, Mikhail Gorbachov and DKP Chairman Herbert Mies stated that it was necessary to arrive at serious substantiated conclusions regarding the strategy of the communist movement at this turning point in world history. This requires an understanding of the new realities produced by the rapid scientific and technological advance, the changes in the structure of the working class in the industrialised countries, and global problems. Both leaders agreed that each party, the entire working-class movement and the working people needed that analysis. The communist movement is in the midst of a debate, which is only right since the Communists cannot allow their theory to fall behind the times.

VENEZUELA The Communist Party of Venezuela does not believe that the one seat it won in Congress reflects the true results of the elections held on December 4, 1988. The vote was rigged and at some polling stations the ballot papers were destroyed right after the elections. The PCV is campaigning for a national electoral reform.

NO PROBATION PERIOD FOR PARTY MEMBERSHIP

Victor Degiovanni
CC Secretary, Maltese Communist Party (MCP)

The changes that have taken place in the political life of the country following the electoral victory of the Nationalist Party in 1987 have made it necessary for the MCP to re-assess its work, primarily regarding its political effectiveness. During the working sessions of the 4th MCP Congress in July 1988, the delegates discussed, among other topics, ways and means of re-organising the party to meet the challenges of today.

The 16-year rule of the Malta Labour Party, which was terminated by a defeat at the polls, has left the workers in disarray and open to encroachment of hard-won rights by the present right-wing administration. The Social Democrats were unable to retain power due to their lack of contact with workers' realities, and perhaps this led them to mistaken policies and legislative measures. This alienated the workers and resulted in a turn to the right, as some workers were taken in by the Nationalist Party propaganda which promised a utopia.

In this new political situation, the MCP should be more effective and, given more efficiency in the organisational aspect, the MCP can increase the numerical strength of its membership. We know from past experience how hard it is to recruit new members in a country where the mass media, education and the Catholic Church do their utmost to negate the need for progressive social change. Local conditions demand that party tactics must be evaluated from time to time, and the methods used must be continually under scrutiny, in order to be changed when necessary.

Over the years, the MCP had been constantly recruiting new members, but due to the rather stringent criteria, most of the applicants were turned down and the party strength always remained low. This has prevented the party from establishing itself at the grassroots, as while at different times the party had set up cells in places of work and residential localities, these withered away as the party's organisation was unable to cater for their demands. The party succeeded in establishing itself on a national level, but because it has kept turning down prospective members, it has failed to strike root on the district and residential locality level.

In the discussion of this matter, the delegates to the 4th Congress came to the conclusion that statutory changes were required, and that the paragraphs in the party statute

dealing with party organisation and membership had to be amended to meet the present requirements.

In the party statute new members were required to undergo a probation period before being accepted as members of the party. During this period the candidate members were expected to fully participate in all the party activities, to attend the weekly seminar and contribute towards the discussion, which at times was aimed at formulating party policy. Most of the candidates, not being conversant with party ideology, found this to be rather demanding and did not participate in the discussion. Some candidates dropped out, others were turned down by the CC when their candidature period ended.

Realising that the party was turning down most of the prospective members, the delegates to the 4th Congress, in the light of the experience of the two larger political parties in Malta, which are well established, adopted these amendments. In the statute, as it now stands, the *candidature period has been done away with*, and instead the new members together with the present members will now be grouped into cells based on geographical districts, residential localities and places of work. The party will now be responsible for their organisation with regard to party policy and education in Marxist-Leninist ideology. The party is also setting up a *research and documentation centre*, which will be responsible for the political education of new members.

New members will now be required:

- to be active in the cell or branch they are assigned to;
- to be conversant with party policy; and
- to be regular in the payment of their dues.

This amendment will put the party on a sound basis and will eventually enable it to set up district committees, something which the party found itself lacking during the last electoral campaign; this will also strengthen the party rank and file through recruitment of new members in the residential localities, which should now be possible.

The paragraph dealing with party structure and organisation was also amended to meet these demands. The executive within the Central Committee was re-established. It was dropped from the statute at the 3rd Congress in May 1984 in an attempt to broaden democracy within the CC, but this led to endless discussion and the party was more involved in discussions than in activities. A new secretariat has been set up in this executive body. It includes an Organisational Secretary responsible for the setting up of cells.

It is hoped that these amendments will be instrumental in strengthening the MCP structure and organisation and in helping it to reach the workers, so increasing its numerical strength in its sustained struggle for the emancipation of the workers from capitalist exploitation.



FOLLOWING UP ON THE SUBJECT OF DEMOCRACY AND THE MILITARY

In its December 1988 issue, WMR published an article by Ornel Urriola, Central Committee member of the People's Party of Panama, entitled "A Dialogue with the Army?" Some of its provisions gave rise to objections from several representatives of Latin American communist parties on WMR. As a continuation of the discussion, we now present a different view of the role and place of the armed forces in sociopolitical processes.

A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO THE MATTER

Jorge BERGSTEIN

Central Committee member, Communist Party of Argentina (PCA)

Any revolutionary movement for national liberation and social emancipation, particularly in Latin America, would be unforgivably short-sighted if it failed to devise a flexible and consistent policy vis-à-vis the armed forces.

In his attempt to examine the problem (which is, in itself, laudable), Ornel Urriola emphasised the opportunities for cooperation with the military and in this way glossed over its true place in the Latin American system of domination. In all countries of our region (except the highly distinctive cases of Cuba, Nicaragua and Panama), the army is the prime instrument of coercion, the mainstay of the social system that ensures our nations' dependence on foreign, mostly US-based, monopolies, and a weapon used to oppress our people.

Naturally, one wonders whether the composition of the armed forces is uniform. Urriola is quite right to note that servicemen (like members of other social groups, whether they serve the oppressor classes or not) are by no means immune to the impact of contemporary ideas. He illustrates his point by quoting army officers affiliated to the Organisa-

tion of the Military for Democracy, Integration and the Liberation of Latin America and the Caribbean (OMIDELAC) and citing the examples of generals Velasco Alvarado in Peru, Rodriguez Lara in Ecuador, Juan Jose Torres in Bolivia and Omar Torrijos in Panama. Retired army officers could make this list much longer. In many countries they have set up their own organisations, and vigorously advocate national independence, democracy and human rights.

There is every reason to believe that retired officers express views acquired while on active service. No doubt, many junior and middle-level officers in Latin American armies feel they are part of the people, and their sentiments are profoundly patriotic and anti-imperialist. Historically, the countries of this region have produced individual army officers or groups who battled the oppressors. One should emphasise that this applies to the military, not to the armed forces as an institution. In his article, however, Urriola refers to a dialogue with the armed forces.

No one questions the fact that we should develop and enrich our revolutionary theory. There is ample evidence that any understanding with the armed forces does not automatically result in a reduction of the "loss of life" in the struggle for popular emancipation. The claim that this struggle has no future if we fail to win part of the army over to the side of the revolution (a view long held by the Communist Party of Argentina, among others) may undermine our commitment to the winning of power. It weakens the revolutionary forces, which should try and recruit the anti-imperialist wing of the military without regarding this as crucial to victory. On the other hand, for all the differences between

them, the Cuban and the Nicaraguan revolutions had to combat the army and the repressive institutions in general.

As to those anti-imperialist movements in which certain quarters of the Latin American military led by top-level commanders played the leading role, they have either been crushed by US interventionists and/or local reactionaries or stopped halfway in their progress. Suffice it to recall the legitimately elected governments of Jacobo Arbenz in Guatemala or of Popular Unity in Chile, both overthrown by the army.

The record shows that the victory of national and social liberation depends, firstly, on *active involvement of the masses* and the unity of the working class, poorer peasants and progressive intellectuals and, secondly, on *organisation and the readiness to use any form of struggle*.

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONTRADICTIONS

Many Latin American Marxists still talk about the dual nature of the main contradiction underlying the development of the sociopolitical struggle on our continent. They examine the so-called internal contradiction (between the liberation movement and the oppressor classes) in isolation from the external one (between their nations and imperialism). This is an obsolete view. Numerous economic and political examples show that *dependent capitalism* has emerged from the alliance between foreign monopolies (primarily financial ones) and the local big bourgeoisie. This does not rule out the possibility of certain (mostly petty) sections of the bourgeoisie coming into conflict with imperialism and emerging as potential allies of the revolutionary forces. With this in mind, we should develop a *new approach to the political currents within the army*.

The idea that the armed forces are neutral is pure invention. Citing the transition from dictatorships to constitutional governments, some argue that the armed forces, as perpetrators of terrible crimes, have suffered a defeat. In actual fact however, they have merely been *forced to retreat* in a deal that enabled the armies to remain largely unchanged. Remember that military dictatorships have lost their role in the current schemes of imperialist domination because violence and reprisals sooner or later prompt nations to respond in kind. This is why the preference is now for constitutional regimes of limited democracy, guaranteed by the army itself.

THE NATIONAL SECURITY DOCTRINE

Despite their classified status, the documents outlining the doctrine of the continent's armed forces are well known.

The Final Act of the 17th Conference of the Americas' Armies¹ proves that a supranational body exists, acting in accordance with the military policy of the United States. A typical passage says that "as the governing center of world communism, the USSR ... still seeks to oust democratic capitalism and replace it, by means of subversive political and terrorist revolutionary warfare, with a communist system of socialisation oriented on complete and undivided global leadership".

The Act offers a detailed analysis of the situation in Latin America. Paying special attention to liberation theology, its authors try to prove that "agents of the international communist movement" have infiltrated the Church and various other mass organisations—solidarity associations, human rights groups, student and working-class movements, the mass media, etc. They refer to the need to combat terrorism by "military and juridical means" and to "devise a policy of effective struggle against it within the American community of nations, draw up relevant legislation, coordinate intelligence work and raise the level of general and military strategy". The authors suggest the elaboration of "appropriate legal standards for fighting terrorism since there are no provisions for unconventional warfare against terrorism and subversion under the existing system of military law".

The section on "Modes of Action" deserves to be quoted in detail because it reveals little change in the mentality of senior army officers: "The modes of action adopted are determined by the specific situation in the target country. Cases of injustice, shortages, and racial discrimination are exploited to create areas of political influence. These practices are in line with the overall plans of the international communist movement. We hold that, as leadership in the struggle against terrorism passes from military regimes to constitutional governments, violations of human rights involving individuals are drawing to a close, at least politically. Therefore, as the object of criticism recedes into the past, the organisations of solidarity face a dilemma—either refer exclusively to the past (something with which public opinion is largely saturated) or update their message by extending the scope of human rights to social issues (wages, housing, conditions of work, etc.). This will necessarily bring them to a third stage—that of projecting these problems onto the international legal framework of relations between different countries. Misleading terms promoted by the international communist movement will be used—a New International Economic Order, the external debt and the like." The section ends with the following phrase: "All this will enable the international communist movement to use the organisations of solidarity as its channels and influence the free world."

The conference decided to "conduct various joint antishubversive operations while respecting each nation's sovereignty and right to self-determination". The member countries are to "engage in joint planning and define the concepts and the terms under which the armies will take part in antishubversive operations". "Bilateral and multilateral intelligence and operational conferences are to be called to analyse their distinct functions so as to ensure real and effective cooperation." The Final Act was signed by the army chiefs of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the United States, Uruguay and Venezuela.

As is clear from the decisions of the Mar del Plata conference, the doctrine proceeds from the assumption that the *enemy is in the midst of the people and that military action is to be aimed against organisations defending the interests of workers and of the people, advocating national liberation and a New International Economic Order and opposing the servicing of the external debt.*

In Argentina, this attitude is tantamount to an unconditional surrender to imperialism, which showed its true colors during the war of the Malvinas. The Argentine armed forces are flirting with the Pentagon again; in October 1988 they took part in joint naval exercises with the United States (it is worth remembering that the Argentinian president, Raul Alfonsín, is commander-in-chief of the armed forces). The Argentine air force and army are again receiving materiel from the United States.

Urriola recalls the 1968 generation of the Latin American military—people who, under the impact of the Cuban Revolution, assumed a national-patriotic and anti-imperialist stand. One must not forget, however, that it is not only the Communists and other revolutionaries, but also our adversaries who draw lessons from the past.

US strategists keep updating their tactics, outlined in the Santa Fe Document in the early 1980s. This updating is clear from the Ikle Plan², the "national security" doctrine, the concept of "low-intensity conflicts" and the switch from dictatorships to "safely democratic" governments. The United States' strategy is aimed at preserving its hegemony throughout the world—naturally, including Latin America. Washington has scored successes one cannot ignore: most Latin American armies have adopted the "internal enemy" concept with its emphasis on combating "subversion".

It is useful for us Communists to study the new imperialist tactics thoroughly and to reflect on the reasons why imperialism is capable of adapting to the changes in the alignment of political forces and in the sentiments of the masses. The record of the "period of transition" in Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay indicates that the mechanics of dual

(military and political) influence are used to keep dependent capitalism afloat while preserving its military cadre.

The security doctrine makes it possible to combine covert violence (of the paramilitary gangs that kidnap or assassinate Left activists of mass social movements and commit large-scale massacres—for example, in Colombia) with constitutional and closely observed governments. The "observers" are the same unpurged armed forces that used to serve the dictatorships.

At the same time, one cannot fail to note a *profound ideological crisis* brewing within the armed forces, perhaps not only in Argentina. Sometimes it manifests itself outside the barracks too. There are the mid-level and junior officers, as well as ordinary soldiers, whose patriotic feelings are insulted by the subservient way in which the top brass fawns on the imperialists. However, it is one thing to have the Left use this crisis to win part or even all of the army over to the patriotic, popular and anti-imperialist side, and quite another to believe that without participation by the armed forces in the revolution, its social price will be too high and, in the words of General Torrijos, "at the moment of victory there will be no one to lead it, because its chief leaders are dead".

Urriola goes on to say that "reality demands efforts towards consultation and agreement. Even if the key problems are not all solved at once, then at least new avenues of struggle will have been explored which do not threaten enormous loss of life, great suffering and poverty, like those to which imperialism and the oligarchy have doomed the masses by encouraging armed conflicts."

We are breaking with the dogmatic interpretation of Marxism-Leninism and doing away with many stereotypes, including the belief that outstanding personalities are infallible. I challenge Torrijos's idea about the social price of revolutions as mistaken. Revolutions stem from socioeconomic structures that are rooted in violence and cost nations a much greater loss of life than any revolution. By manipulating the mass media, the ruling quarters want the masses to believe that death by starvation is less terrible than assassination by the repressive agencies or death in the struggle for a society without poverty. The humanism of Marxist philosophy encourages us to attain our political and social ideals with the least possible loss of life. But the much-heralded democratic governments allow only the kind of pluralism and conflict of ideas that fit into the existing system.

For those who oppose dependent capitalism and fight for far-reaching revolutionary change, the "rules of the game" are quite different. Legislation, as well as official and unofficial punitive agencies are used against them. They are jailed, tortured, kidnapped and assassinated. This is com-

mon knowledge in Latin America and the Caribbean. Yet, some have willingly embraced the theoretical and political notion that in today's world, you can only seek agreement which accords priority to the search for "new" forms of struggle, not to the solution of the key issues. The advocates of these views—and these ideas are quite widespread in Latin America—preach the need to act "realistically" and try not to come into conflict with the ruling elite. Ultimately, this is *pragmatism* which helps strengthen the existing structures of power and makes the system of dependence manageable. This system permits the activities of the Left on condition that they are kept within certain bounds.

This does not mean that communist parties and the revolutionary Left should refrain from elaborating a relevant policy and reject out of hand any dialogue or agreement with governments and those political forces whose strategic objectives differ from ours. That would be absurd. History tells us that this is necessary for our advancement and rise to power. Since the struggle involves both offensives and retreats, both periods of quiet and vigorous action, we should *use any agreement or alliance* that would help bring victory closer, but on one condition: at turning points in history, the revolution's leading forces have no right to lose sight of their *strategic objectives*.

DEMOCRACY AND THE ARMED FORCES

First, to avoid misunderstanding, let me stress that we will continue to defend democracy against attempted coups or plots to curtail it further. The PCA offered tangible proof of that when coups were attempted in Argentina in April 1987 and in January 1988. In the latter case, only the Communists and others on the Left took to the streets.

However, we do not isolate democracy from its *class nature*. A representative bourgeois regime in an imperialist and dependent country differs radically from the people's revolutionary democracy in Nicaragua or socialist democracy in Cuba. But people often talk about the consolidation of bourgeois democracies in Latin America while ignoring their actual content. The *correlation between democracy and social justice* is the key here. Today's bourgeois governments in Latin America create an "image" of respect for different views and allow periodic elections. This produces a *semblance* of freedom and popular sovereignty, but election promises are not kept. When the masses, affected by the socioeconomic policies that favour a handful of big business and oligarchic interests, begin to protest, the state apparatus of coercion attacks them with all its might. If mass action acquires a certain level of consciousness and organisation which threatens the existing system, then a coup becomes more likely.

The Argentine experience is quite indicative in this regard. Of the 16 presidents that have ruled the nation over the past 50 years, 11 were army officers, 10 of them seizing power in military coups. No one can claim that this was because the nation was socially or culturally backward. Suppression of the will of the people is an integral part of the Pentagon's strategy. The coup in Chile is a particularly graphic example. It would be a grave mistake to believe that such coups are no longer possible. Although US imperialism now prefers constitutional governments, it propagates the "national security" doctrine and launches "low-intensity conflicts".

If Latin America's patriotic and anti-imperialist forces fail to block this policy, which was adjusted at the 17th Conference of the Armies of the Americas, another step will have been taken toward internationalising the repressive agencies within individual countries and integrating them in a system that would ensure imperialist domination. The Argentine armed forces have already expressed support for such schemes. Suffice it to recall the role they played in the far right 1980 coup of Garcia Meza in Bolivia, the coordination of punitive operations with the Uruguayan dictatorship, or the dispatch to Central America of experts in "dirty warfare", torture and kidnapping.

We hold that any struggle for democracy should be aimed at defeating the "national security" doctrine and involving the armed forces in the strategic effort to attain national and social liberation. In this sense, Urriola is right to call on the communist parties to pay attention to the *contradictions* arising within the armed forces.

The main thing is not to stop when signs of crisis in the army have been detected. In Argentina, the establishment of a national and social liberation front and the involvement of most of the working class and the people in it is of decisive importance. When such coalitions secure a leading role, the crisis within the armed forces will grow more acute, and perhaps then the military will produce activists ready to take the side of the masses and revive the heritage bequeathed to us by the founding fathers of our independence. That has happened many times in Latin American history.

1 Held in Mar del Plata, Argentina, in November 1987, attended by representatives of 15 countries, including the United States, as well as the Inter-American Defense Council, the US Southern Command and the School of the Americas. The Argentine government has not expressed any disagreement with the provisions of the Act adopted at the conference.—J. B.

2 Drawn up in the United States (in January 1988) by a commission charged with developing an integral long-time strategy, the plan maps out the main aspects of US international strategy for the next 20 years.—Ed.

THE "LAND OF PERENNIAL DICTATORSHIPS"

Elfidio CANO

representative of the Guatemalan Party of Labour (PGT) on WMR

The facts don't allow me to share fully Ornel Urriola's optimism with regard to the Latin American military. In Guatemala we are dealing with an army whose command is united in defence of the Establishment and the interests of the bourgeoisie, oligarchy and imperialism.

Experts in this field, and many sociopolitical circles, are involved in serious discussions as to whether the Latin American armed forces do have progressive democratic and perhaps even revolutionary potential. I think that the answer lies in the peculiarities of regional history. The military has always been instrumental in establishing any political structure.

What position have the Guatemalan armed forces occupied for the past four decades? In 1944 they supported the move against the 14-year dictatorship of General Jorge Ubico who represented the oligarchy. At that time many in the military sympathised with popular aspirations. During the 1944-1954 democratic process—the "ten-year spring in the land of perennial dictatorships"—there were several coup attempts, which failed because much of the army favoured progressive reforms. Jacobo Arbenz Guzman—later the constitutional President—distinguished himself among the pro-reform officers.

However, the sweeping changes deepened the "crisis at the top", and the conspirators were able to persuade most army members to betray the popular interest. The army backed the mercenaries who invaded the country from Honduras and, by extension, upheld the interests of imperialism. Arbenz's government fell, suffering blows from both sides.

Guatemalan history shows that *professional armed forces*, indoctrinated to defend the privileges of the bourgeoisie, oligarchy and imperialism, *cannot become a shield for the revolution*. The experience of Cuba and Nicaragua confirms that the defence of the national interest is the duty of the working people.

The Guatemalan armed forces have been learning from the country's political history, the action taken against the

established order by young officers in the 1960s¹ being a case in point.

The first attempt at guerrilla struggle six years after the Arbenz government's fall caused a deep split in the army, then seemingly closely united on the basis of a counter-insurgent ideology, devised by the Pentagon after the Cuban revolution.

Along with US advisers, the Guatemalan high command had actively worked on this long-term strategy, not just to prepare internal military conditions, but as a global response from imperialism to revolutionary Cuba's triumph. The counter-insurgent ideology of the Guatemalan army is a reaction to continuing internal armed conflict, arising from the exploitation, oppression and repression of our people. The bearers of this ideology have been moulded not only in US military schools, but also in France, Israel, South Africa, South Korea, Chile, Argentina and Taiwan.

In the 1980s Guatemala's political crisis worsened so much that military action alone could no longer maintain the bourgeoisie's rule. So they fell back on a tactic of coups, aimed mainly at combatting the insurgent movement at a time when the triumph of the Sandinist revolution had ended imperialist domination in Central America.

The cabinets of Generals Efraín Ríos Montt and Humberto Mejía Victores followed this strategy by combining urban terror (the smashing of organised resistance) with "selective" reprisals against the various mass organisations.

Ríos Montt's regime threw the army against the guerrilla fronts, and against villages suspected of being sympathetic to the insurgents. A scorched earth policy was applied in order to "deprive the fish of water", combined with "social and economic benefits" for the people affected by these operations.

"Model villages" appeared in the countryside, much like the US army's "strategic villages" during the Vietnam war. Their people were forced into so-called "civil defence committees"—paramilitary forces designed to set peasants against the guerrillas.

The government of Mejía Victores supplemented military operations with administrative measures. Inter-Institutional and Inter-Municipal Coordinating Commissions responsible for counter-insurgency programmes were formed, and in this way the strategy of the army became official policy. At the same time, the army expanded its operations against the guerrillas of Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG).

The supposed "return to democracy" through elections (November-December 1985) was part of the same strategy. Only the parties legally permitted by the regime participated

in them. The true revolutionary, democratic and progressive opposition forces were barred. Remember also that the vote had been preceded by 30 years of systematic repression, which claimed 40,000 lives. Prominent opposition leaders, such as the Social Democrats Alberto Fuentes Morh and Manuel Colom Argueta, fell victim to the repression.²

Why then have military dictatorships quit the Guatemalan political stage? Primarily because they could not defeat the revolutionary movement. After the triumph of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua, the army command and Pentagon advisers readjusted their "counter-insurgent strategy". The idea now is to hold elections and replace the traditional army dictatorships and hated ultraright governments, some of which have lost political control in their own countries under pressure from the masses. Others, as in Guatemala, have transformed themselves "from above".

The military here may have returned to the barracks, but they have not lost control over the levers of political power. The fact that they oversee Guatemalan "democracy" actually means a further streamlining of the repressive machinery.

For example, Guatemalan officers are again discussing how to defeat the guerrilla movement, and the revolutionary forces as a whole. The "hawks" among them are in favour of exclusively violent methods, while the "doves", as well as military action, also want economic and social action, urging the oligarchy to sacrifice some of their gains so that the rich-poor gap is somehow narrowed. This is essentially the current political situation in the army.

Punitive operations are continuing in the cities and villages to the accompaniment of moralising sermons. "Death squads" have stepped up their activity, and "selective" reprisals—such as village bombings to deter the Indians from supporting the guerrillas—are being increased.

At the same time, as part of a refined strategy, the present army leaders are seeking to isolate the servicemen who are exclusively for violent measures. It is the army's inability to defeat the URNG guerrillas, the rapid political discrediting of the Christian Democratic government, the socioeconomic crisis, and the rising discontent among workers and peasants that have split the military into "hawks" and "doves"³. But it is a thin dividing line, since they all want to see the insurgents defeated and only disagree on how to achieve this common aim.

To foster a "counter-insurgent mentality" in the army, the high command has set up a Centre of Strategic Studies for National Stability in order to indoctrinate officers and men. The declared intent is to "promote liberty and national security", but the real aim is to politicise the army by means of the doctrine of "low-intensity conflicts", which emerges as imperialism's global response to national conflicts south of the Rio Grande. Therefore, I share the view of Jorge Bergstein on the *inadmissibility of ignoring the National Security Doctrine*, worked out by the Pentagon for Latin America. The region's military may vary their tactics, but they continue to apply it to each country.

In August 1987 a conference of businessmen and officers sponsored by the "moderates"-controlled high com-

FROM OUR MAILBAG

IN SEARCH OF TRUTH

The WMR has been receiving more letters from people who are not content simply to respond to an article, but who also want to express their own, often diametrically opposed views on the "burning" issues of the communist movement. We publish here two such letters: one from a member of the Communist Party of Austria of 4 years' standing, and the other from a Communist veteran in Barcelona, Spain.

CAPITALISM HAS NO RIGHT TO EXIST

I have been a regular reader of the journal for the last few years and I have to say that some articles suggest that certain comrades in the socialist countries are living in a dream-world, talking as they do about world governments and world communities. CPUSA National Chairman Gus Hall criticised several Soviet authors for harbouring such illusions in his article "The World We Preserve Must Be Livable" (*WMR*, No. 5, 1988). Indeed, a Communist, if he is still a revolutionary,

cannot accept the right of capitalism to exist. Only someone far removed and safe from capitalist exploitation could be so misguided. How can one speculate about "world government" with those who, like Churchill, would have gladly strangled the young Soviet Republic in its cradle?!

I have often read, in the *WMR* and elsewhere, that nowadays some Marxist scholars are preoccupied with the question of whether monopoly capital can do without militarism, renounce the war business and help the countries of socialism in their development effort. Of course, in the 1920s the USSR succeeded

in taking advantage of such aid, but the enemy is wiser now, and if he failed to strangle the infant in its cradle, he will now attempt to kill his grave-diggers with kindness. It would be a mistake to delude ourselves into thinking that the monopolies will turn from voracious profiteers into trustworthy business partners of the socialist states. I continue to share the view that the state system of capitalism can only be changed in working people's interests by violence. This is my conviction.

There is another burning, but controversial topic—Stalin. I have the impression that people in the Soviet Union today hang all the negative labels on him, without mentioning his services (in fighting Trotskyism and the rich peasants, in creating a strong socialist state which held out in the struggle against Nazism, etc.). As the leader of the party and country, he could not but contribute significantly to achieving these victories. And the thesis "Whoever is not with us is against us,

mand, concluded that the armed conflict between the revolutionaries and the pro-Establishment forces was fuelled by the extreme poverty of the Guatemalan masses, or, as they put it, "the unequal distribution of wealth".

This new tone stems from the army's conclusion that it is necessary to use an "integral" form of operations against the guerrillas which takes account of the specific conditions in Guatemala. The army has also decided that the bourgeoisie and oligarchy should contribute financially to sustaining the war.

The foreign policy of the Guatemalan regime rests on the assumption that the enemy is not outside, but *inside* the country. Ideologically, its policy of "neutrality" dates from the dictatorship of Efraín Ríos Montt. The present Christian Democratic government has only added the adjective "active" to it, and is implementing this policy within the framework of current Central American negotiations, which began after the Esquipulas II accords were signed by all the presidents of the area on August 7, 1987.

Guatemala's progressive forces are not advocating the creation of a revolutionary army to defeat the reactionary, counter-insurgent armed forces. The crisis in our country has become so deep that all social sections, including the military, are feeling its impact. We do not deny the possible existence of officers who abhor the social and human effects of counter-insurgency.

The Guatemalan people want a *fair political settlement* of the internal armed conflict, and the establishment of a democracy guaranteeing civil freedoms and respect for human rights. Progressive circles of the country favour negotiations and are putting forward concrete proposals for a broad national dialogue. But the Christian Democratic government and the army have so far torpedoed these proposals as they continue to look for a military solution.

- 1 On November 13, 1960, a group of officers staged an armed uprising to overthrow the government and restore democratic freedoms. Some of them later struck a deal with the authorities or emigrated. Others established contacts with the Guatemalan Party of Labour, which lent them moral and military support. For example, Luis Augusto Turcios Lima became the Comandante of the Insurgent Armed Forces, created by the revolutionary Left in December 1962.
- 2 The following figures show the results of counter-insurgency: there are 200,000 orphans in the country, and about 40,000 widows with children eking out a miserable existence in military-action areas. Many Indian villages have been wiped off the face of the earth; thousands of hectares of farm crops, which fed the Guatemalan peasants, have been destroyed; forests, rivers and water supplies have been contaminated by chemical agents.
- 3 Their disagreements are sometimes so sharp that the real threat of a military coup arises. This is evidenced by the events of May 11, 1988, when ultraright circles of the ground forces attempted to seize power. Their action resulted in President Vinicio Cerezo's government making even greater concessions to the reactionary military and business circles of the country.

against socialism" was born in specific historical conditions. This should not be forgotten either.

Günter HIERZENBERGER
St Pölten, Austria

A HARD ROAD AHEAD

As a Communist veteran I have lived through different stages, taken part in armed struggle, and always tried to learn from victory and defeat. I think that this is characteristic of the communist movement as a whole. The revolutionary processes in different parts of the world that we have witnessed have shown us that in each country the struggle has been conducted differently, but we have always gained experience, both positive and negative.

It has been very important for us in Spain to read honest reports, previously kept quiet, about the serious difficulties

many socialist countries have encountered. Talk about successes alone will hardly lead to the truth.

I appreciate the efforts made by parties in trying to overcome dogmatism and revisionism, caused in large part by the ideological and political practice of Stalinism, and, for this reason, I was impressed with the article by Narciso Isa Conde, General Secretary of the Dominican CP, "More Marxism, More Creative Effort" (*WMR*, No. 9, 1988). I know the road ahead is thorny and contradictory but we must follow it.

Dogmatism and sectarianism have never considered the realities. We can't advance unless we react promptly to the changes wrought by scientific and technological progress, unless we develop a conscious understanding of the complex processes of our time. This is essential for every country where Communists operate, whether they hold power or not.

Only by ridding ourselves of dog-

matism will we be able to win young people (a sacred duty for Communists) over to Marxism-Leninism.

I am inspired by the current worldwide revolutionary process whereby the principles for new thinking are elaborated collectively. Having considered the changed alignment of forces the Communists are becoming more flexible and many parties are talking to democratic, anti-imperialist, religious, pacifist, ecological and other social movements.

More and more people are seeking an answer to the complex processes of our epoch. It would be deplorable if the Communists failed to take advantage of this to achieve a world of peace, democracy and social progress.

Manuel PAC VIVAS
Barcelona, Spain



the women's movement today

THE MORALITY OF EQUALITY

Venke RÖYNE

Vice-President, Union of Norwegian Women (UNW)

● *What do you think distinguishes your organisation?*

First of all, its age. The UNW was born long before many present women's organisations—back in the 1920s. It emerged as a small-scale housewives' association. But after World War II anti-fascist, democratic forces joined in, its platform changed, and specific demands were reinforced by concrete gains. The UNW became more and more a national women's organisation and began to actively participate in the peace movement. This evolution constitutes its second characteristic. The third feature, which many foreign friends find unusual, is our practice of collective leadership. We have a 12-member board in Oslo, to which I belong, coordinating the work of 15 local organisations.

● *How did you become vice-president?*

This was decided by delegates to the union's highest forum. My public career started with the youth movement, then I became a peace supporter and began to get involved in campaigns of solidarity with the developing countries. Anticipating your next question: no, I am not a Communist, but I do have progressive views.

In the organisation I primarily feel responsibility for the success of our common cause and defend the interests of many of my women compatriots. Financially, I have nothing to fear from losing my post because, like other board members, I have an independent source of income: I work as a designer for a small private firm near Oslo, where I live with my husband and three children.

● *Allow me nevertheless to return to the theme of collective leadership...*

I know people are not used to this method yet: it's easy for anyone who is ambitious or career-minded to dismiss it as ineffective since it requires a certain degree of political culture, trust and competence.

● *In that case were there any special conditions for female emancipation in Norway?*

Regarding women's rights, I think that we have achieved a great deal. I would consider Norway and Sweden as the countries that have achieved most in this respect. When I look at other European women I feel that we have more equality in every way. Historically, this stems from the fact that Norway was never a feudal country, and the women, the peasant women, were equal to men. They were responsible for work to be done in the fields, for farm and community management, and for this they were respected. This has been taken into industrial society... There is also our success in education; young women are now the majority among university students and after graduation they are not prepared to forego their share in creation and management.

● *A relevant issue—viewed by many as the yardstick by which democracy is measured—is women's participation in decision-making and government. Is it formal or real? Quite often in a heated discussion one side will name well-known women leaders, while the other will say: "We're after this too", or "Is this the main thing? The main thing is what can be done for the people as a whole"...*

Whether it's the main thing or not, I'm not able to judge. It's hardly an infringement of human rights, or any kind of discrimination against women when they, notably in the Nordic countries, hold the presidency or premiership, or become the heads of communist and social-democratic parties; many have been elected members and speakers of parliament and become active in society. In Norway, apart from Gro Harlem Brundtland (the premier and chair of the ruling Labour Party.—Ed.), women run a third of all the ministries. We don't consider this a major success story or a blow at male superiority, but a natural result of promoting the most capable.

● *Judging by the experience of your country, women do not lose their femininity as they climb the ladder of power...*

First of all, a woman in office will not forget that she is a woman and will not let those around her forget it. She will not let herself lose touch with working women and housewives. In this way she will not disappear into the system, or become 'depersonalised' within the bureaucracy.

For a number of reasons women will express similar opinions to men on a lot of things, because they are after the same things as their husbands and fathers, for instance. But why do some people insist that intelligence, efficiency and attentiveness are purely male attributes? They are just as much our characteristics. But on the whole we are trying

to retain what we call soft values, concentrating on how to do our work, rather than on the prestige and benefit that may be gained from it, as men tend to do.

● *What do Norwegian women expect of Norwegian men?*

Our basic position is that the *man does not help the woman, but shares with her* all the cares and difficulties. We are trying to assert the traditions of equality in several ways. First, we want guaranteed employment extended to what are generally considered male jobs. We now have women carpenters, lorry drivers, fitters, divers, and oil platform operators, and we have already proved that we can work successfully at these jobs. A special organisation, Women in the Male Professions, has even been set up...

● *Aren't these jobs hazardous to women's health?*

We have legislation on this similar to that in the socialist countries. For example, pregnant women are not allowed to work on off-shore rigs after the first three months and have to be given jobs on shore. There are certain things which women are not allowed to do: become fighter pilots or army officers, for instance.

Second, we're campaigning for equal pay. Overall, women here earn more now than in the early 1980s; yet this progress has not come about easily. In some branches the pay is equal, in others there are still gaps. We are also fighting for equal pensions.

Third, thanks to our efforts the public accepts men in formerly female occupations, working as nurses, in daycare centres and at schools, and this in turn helps in the fight for higher wages in these areas.

● *Traditionally, women are expected to look after children. What has Norway done to help mothers find the time to work, advance themselves and generally take part in society?*

I have already gone some way to answering this question. Ten years ago a law on equality was passed, and there is a special "equal rights programme". We now also have a government representative (only ever a woman) whose job it is to ensure that there is no discrimination in education, in employment, at work or anywhere else, either against women or against men. At the municipal level, special elected committees voluntarily discharge a similar function.

Household gadgets have improved things, as have computers, fast food, transport facilities and communications. And important changes are occurring within the family. Young married men are sharing much of the responsibility for the care of a child with their wives now. Instead of just taking the child out for a walk now and again, they are going so far as to take leave themselves when the child is born, or when it is sick, in order to look after it. They are also more likely to take the children to daycare centres or to the doctor.

● *What demands are now being put forward by your organisation?*

We are still fighting to have the law on equality fully implemented. For example, in Norway you get a pension at

67, or 65 in some branches, but women draw much lower pensions than men, because they usually cannot work as many years. We're also the first to be made redundant in times of economic crisis, having to look to our husbands for support. From the point of view of financial independence or moral integrity our demands for equal rights to employment and pay are justified.

Ours is moral stand against many of the humiliating "traditional" attitudes to women. We stand, if you like, for an ecology of morality.

We also demand a clean environment for present and future generations. We are against all forms of pollution, toxic detergents for example, and against food products containing harmful chemicals. Out of the same considerations we look to alternative sources of energy (to replace thermal and nuclear power), and a wider network of public transport.

● *How are you able to put the UNW proposals and demands into practice? What do you think their impact will be on women's consciousness and on real policy?*

Norway has parliamentary elections next autumn, and municipal elections two years later. The UNW is already examining proposals, vital for voters like young couples, mothers and the elderly, to increase the number of kindergartens and raise social spending. We are looking to a non-traditional alliance—the "women's list"—which would be open to any woman who supports our platform from whatever party: Conservative, Liberal, Social Democrat, Communist, or non-party people. Who knows, we may again be able to set an example by highlighting areas of general concern and going beyond ideologies and partisan biases?

● *What would you say about Communists and the socialist states with regard to the women's question?*

Regrettably, men in the communist movement have been much more conservative towards women than men in other bodies. I haven't made out just why that is so yet, though I think Marx did not pay much attention to women's needs.

The salient feature of women's equality under socialism is Holy Motherhood, by which I mean that they have to be mothers and earners, they have to look after the family and play a part in society at the same time.

Soviet men seem to have a double standard for Soviet women. On the one hand, they realise that their wives must take part in changing society, in the campaign for perestroika, while on the other, they want them at home. I mean that women can contribute to society only at work; at home they have to look after husband and children with little or no time to develop themselves for society's benefit. I think Communists and their parties have a lot to do to eradicate these attitudes.

A FEMALE OLYMPIAN

Profile of Academician Tatiana ZASLAVSKAYA of the Soviet Union

Being an academician is tough, and doubly so for a woman," Tatiana Zaslavskaya, at that time still a department chief at the Novosibirsk Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences, confessed in an interview about a year ago. She is now in charge of the Moscow-based National Public Opinion Research Centre, set up to monitor the feedback in the relationship between government departments and the population.

Of course, the job of a director leaves little time for creative academic pursuits. This is a drawback for a "pure" researcher, but it offers certain advantages to a manager of science. These will be seized by Zaslavskaya who has long been trying to make the "powers that be" realise that you cannot run the country efficiently without paying attention to what ordinary people want. The agency, she says, will "serve perestroika". Research results are to be handed over to the media. Besides, the director is planning to launch monthly bulletins and a quarterly tentatively named *Mneniya* (Opinions). The surveys will be conducted by the Centre's 25 branches being set up in all constituent republic capitals and several major industrial cities.

Nevertheless, the promotion and the vistas it has opened have failed to improve her state of health or her frame of mind. In recent years, they have largely been affected by the position Zaslavskaya acquired among Soviet researchers and civic activists after her election to the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1981, as well as by the perestroika-generated opportunity to freely express, through the mass media, her views on the nation's socioeconomic problems.

Zaslavskaya is now a hero in some quarters, anathema in others; in both cases it is almost a knee-jerk reaction. Her calls for depriving high-level bureaucrats of the right to manage public property as they see fit or to decide anything at all without the knowledge of their not so powerful countrymen have made her a lot of bitter enemies among the former, and numerous enthusiastic supporters among the latter. At the same time, voices are heard in both categories hailing her demand for the division of functions between party, government and economic executives, but opposed resolutely to her proposal on raising meat and dairy prices.

As head of a whole discipline halfway between sociology and economics, Zaslavskaya is sure of her conclusions and

forecasts, and she defends them at all levels. However, she is not invariably supported. At the plenary session of the National Central Council of Trade Unions held in Moscow in January 1989, the delegates challenged her position on food prices and voted against her nomination as a trade union candidate to a seat on the USSR Supreme Soviet. She was nominated instead by academic societies and associations.

So how is Academician Zaslavskaya feeling today?

"Physically and intellectually, I feel terribly tired," she told me. She had barely managed to allot me 30 minutes, which stretched to 45 and brought her tight schedule to bursting point.

"Had I known what the election to the Academy would mean, I think I would have refused to run," Zaslavskaya complained.

Even if this was an affectation, it was not a woman fishing for compliments. Forced to choose sometimes between judiciously applying cosmetics and looking through the text of a statement she is about to deliver, Academician Zaslavskaya opts for the latter. There were times when, in similar situations, it was not the academic or the civic activist who made the decision. To this day, she is very acutely aware of the discrepancy between reality and the worldly ideal her mother fostered in her.

"I like being a woman," she says. "I value and revere motherhood. I have two daughters, and I even enjoy doing household chores. But, apart from my family, few people appreciate them, myself included—at least on Saturdays, when I leave my folks to attend a conference called by the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, for example."

Tatiana Zaslavskaya explains her attitude (so different from satisfaction) to her own fate (which she would not wish on any of her friends or relatives) as stemming from an awareness of the highly unusual nature of her presence in spheres where, as some believe, women are "out of place". She knows that of the more than 260 full members of the Academy of Sciences, only four are women, and she believes that the present level of political culture in the USSR, and the consequent level of social consciousness, reserve practically no niche for the "weaker vessel" at the top of the administrative and political pyramid. She is convinced that the women who did climb to the top were allowed to get there merely to demonstrate the democratic nature of the system. Their rights do not exceed the responsibilities that go with the role assigned to them.

It is, she believes, not so much the fault as the ill luck of these "fortunate few". She concedes that many of them did indeed have outstanding creative and professional qualities and were real personalities. But mass consciousness is not yet ready to take a remarkable female career

for granted. It remains for the fair sex to join the game society offers them. In the final analysis, its tough rules shape the thinking and behaviour of those who, at first, were serious about competing with men in the executive sphere.

Zaslavskaya cites her past contacts with some women who were secretaries of regional party committees. The impression, she says, was that they showed no clear-cut preference for independent decision-making. At the same time she notes that when instructions from a superior authority pose a challenge, these women often display good organisational skills.

"A new generation of women is entering the party apparatus," Tatiana Zaslavskaya continues. "But even though they may have breathed fresh air through the 'windows perestroika has thrown open', they have not yet really spread their wings. They haven't yet thrown off the yoke of patriarchal prejudice."

While generally sympathising with the lot of women, Academician Zaslavskaya is not unduly concerned about the fact that today they usually advance to about the middle level in their careers only. Much more serious are the problems generated by the nation's extensive economic development during the stagnant years. In Zaslavskaya's opinion, the tremendous overinvolvement of women in the work force in the 1970s has produced a situation where, torn between their jobs and their household chores, many women have approached a limit beyond which major nervous stress is inevitable.

"Men have their own problems too," she adds. "Despite the obvious advantages as far as promotion is concerned, I doubt that, until recently, they had reason to be really happy. Their efficiency, readiness to take rational risks and creative abilities were largely frustrated."

The situation is changing now. The value of enterprising and competent people is rising. But this has done nothing to make the women's question any less acute. It can only be solved if women are given a real choice, and those who opt for devoting their lives wholly to their families should not encounter any financial difficulties or feel socially inferior.

In sharing these reflections, Tatiana Zaslavskaya refuses to take seriously the arguments that "women make up one-third of the USSR Supreme Soviet" or that "they account for more than 40% of all researchers." She holds that more attention should be given to a different kind of statistics—for example, that over half the gainfully employed women are forced to rely on brawn instead of on labour-saving equipment.

Zaslavskaya views her career as the result of a peculiar coincidence of circumstances. One can understand the attitude of this woman who is apparently not quite at ease

among her male and overconfident fellow Olympians. But one cannot in all fairness agree that Zaslavskaya's emergence at the epicentre of events decisive for the nation's future is explained merely by a favourable turn of domestic political developments. Although criticised at the 19th Party Conference, the existing system of shaping the administrative apparatus has been changed only marginally so far. As Zaslavskaya herself says, there are still many people in the higher echelons of power whose ideological views and style of leadership were formed during the stagnant period. While officially paying lip service to perestroika, they are, she maintains, doing all they can to hamper democratisation. Therefore, society's great demand for radical intellectuals cannot yet be sufficient for their rapid promotion to positions of key social importance.

Indeed, destroying the bastions of dogmatism is not an easy task. During our talk, Tatiana Zaslavskaya said—inadvertently, I think—that she would not be surprised if she suffered a second coronary.

The first one was connected with the campaign she led in December 1987: a group of progressive researchers opposed the election to the Academy of Sciences of Mikhail Rutkevich, former director of the Institute of Sociological Studies. The campaign culminated in Zaslavskaya's speech at a general meeting of the USSR Academy of Sciences.

"During the stagnant years," she told me, "that man did all he could to kill sociology as a science in the Soviet Union. Its future actually hinged on whether we succeeded in stopping him."

They did—in spite of the fact that Zaslavskaya's doctor confined her to bed for several weeks. But she believes that the crucial battles are still ahead: a society's revolutionary overhaul cannot be effected without a pitched struggle, without acute conflicts between groups and individuals.

But then what about Zaslavskaya's attitude to the "unusual" nature of her academic, civic and political status which many regard as quite prominent? I do not think we should take her words literally in this case.

"Tatiana Ivanovna, are you a courageous person?"

"Yes and no. I would say that I become courageous by overcoming fear."

Assuming that she learned to do that when she graduated from the Economics Department of Moscow University in 1950 and was not recommended for a postgraduate course for being "not quite politically reliable", the first part of her answer seems to be closer to the truth.

This is also borne out by another phrase she let drop:

"I sometimes hear or read that I draw attention to things everyone knows about but is afraid to admit. It looks like this really is the case with me."

Her habit of speaking out about obvious things is so strong that it has repeatedly brought her into conflict with the official academic establishment. One of these occurred as far back as 1960 when Zaslavskaya, still an ordinary researcher, concluded that labour productivity in Soviet agriculture was 4.5 times lower than in the United States. This clashed with the official figure supplied by the USSR Statistical Board—a 1:3 ratio. Her paper remained unpublished, although a special commission failed to spot any flaws in her methodology.

The dressing down the "pillars of science" gave the 33-year-old researcher failed to make her toe the line: as she obstinately sought her own path in science she did not deem it necessary to avoid such clashes in the future. The decision must have been hard to take but having taken it, Zaslavskaya was free to be guided only by her own convictions and principles—something certain fellow members of the party she joined in 1954 cannot afford even today. In those years, the truth and the luxury of being at peace with one's conscience often exacted a price from many people. Until recently, the publishers meticulously deleted from her works everything they thought "discredited" Soviet reality. Still, the part that got past them did reflect facts—naturally, as seen by Zaslavskaya.

Many things have changed now, and she says openly in print that "the party's concept of perestroika as a social revolution has yet to be implemented." Today's events, she believes, will become radical only if power, rights, freedoms and the national wealth are redistributed between different groups and strata so as to motivate society as a whole to seek socialist renewal. Tatiana Zaslavskaya believes that even the changes and the glasnost in the media (at which some are elated and others shocked) can only be called radical by stretching a point. It is obvious to her that "public affairs must be completely open", that there should be access to different types of information, and that we must "discuss acute problems collectively" and "reveal all the administrative 'secrets' of interest to the people". As to modernising the mechanics of economic management and renewing the political system, the changes, she maintains, are largely based on compromise and are not fully consonant with the ideas that motivated them in the first place.

Zaslavskaya, according to her own classification, belongs to the category of perestroika's ideologues and pioneers, whom, she describes as the "yeast" which enables the "social dough" to rise.

Vladimir GANIN,
WMR staff member

COMMENTS

FEMINISM AND THE COMMUNISTS

Barbara CURTHOYS
Australian Communist

Elean Thomas' challenging article "We Are Half the World"¹ raises issues dealing with the feminist movement with which the communist movement has largely failed to come to terms. This statement, re-affirming the *class basis* of women's emancipation yet querying the communist analysis of the *relations between the sexes*, reminded me of a discussion held recently with women active in the Soviet Women's Committee and in the Women's Councils.

There was agreement that equality for women was guaranteed as part of the Soviet Constitution, that the pre-conditions for full equality—participation by women in the work-force on a large scale—was a major social achievement and that the foundation upon which equality between the sexes was based was secure.

On the other hand, the issues of equal partnership within the family, raising male consciousness about women's equal role and of women's acceptance of sexism were still seen as problems of some magnitude.

In her article Elean Thomas asks:

"Are Communists capable of changing their attitude to the women's question?" If one looks at the difficulties that still exist for women in socialist countries and the fact that communist women largely (though not entirely) were left behind in the feminist upsurge of the 70's, then it is important to find the answers to this question. In Australia, many communist women who were swept up in the feminist movement often forsook their historical materialist outlook as to the source of women's exploitation and dropped their Marxist class approach in favour of feminist theories. Those who kept a Marxist-Leninist analysis often found themselves in fierce arguments with the more extreme sections of the feminist movement and became bewildered by the attacks on the trade-unions, trade-union leaders and the socialist countries which were declared to be sexist and patriarchal.

Some of these statements were sincere criticism of male chauvinism, others were anti-communist bias. Where the debate was genuine there were wrongs and rights on both sides. The honest critics were seeing real weaknesses in the unions and in the socialist countries but losing sight of class unity, while Marxists were failing to examine weak-

nesses in their approach to the source of women's exploitation.

Where theories of women's emancipation are concerned, Communists have tended to ignore the dynamic relationship between the economic base and the superstructure. The theory adopted has tended to be narrow and determinist in approach, as if by fighting for and achieving economic independence and equality before the law, changes in male consciousness and the development of the socialist family would necessarily follow.

Unfortunately, communist theory has failed to recognise the depth of sexist attitudes within the family and has not yet succeeded even under socialism in overcoming the double burden of home and work borne by women, despite the wide-spread state assistance in the form of networks of child-care and communal dining rooms and so on. It still remains that female consciousness, i.e., women's ideas about their own situation, their understanding of what equal relationships between men and women mean, have not been fully incorporated into the mainstream of the communist outlook.

Lenin, Clara Zetkin and others did advance such ideas and these have stood the test of time, but in later decades there was little theoretical development on this question by Communists. In recent history, communist theory has not dealt adequately with the notion of equal human relationships and has not elevated this theory into socialist consciousness and practice.

It took the dramatic development of feminism some 20 years ago to deal more profoundly with such issues as:

- the relationship between differences in biology and women's exploitation;
- the involvement of men in equal parenting and equal sharing of housework;
- open discussions on sexual relationships, both heterosexual and homosexual.

I believe *Communists can change their attitudes if they study these questions and once again incorporate them into theories which guide the programs they adopt for women and integrate their findings into communist practice.*

The comparative failure of Communists to come to grips with the contradictions that exist in the relations between the sexes and to advance their theory on the monogamous family may have been a weakness. But insistence on the class basis of women's exploitation has been their strength. For that reason I think it necessary for communist parties to analyse and debate different trends. Elean Thomas considers that we divided "the diverse forces within the women's movement as being either good or bad". For me, analysis and debate will achieve clarity of ideas and

development of theory if this is done in the spirit of advancing the women's movement.

For example, the debate on patriarchy is still important in the women's movement in Australia and other countries and is related to the question of whether or not socialism can solve the issue of patriarchal relations.

The concept of patriarchy as put forward by Kate Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* was enthusiastically supported by radical feminists because they regard men as oppressors and the family as patriarchal. Many socialist feminists adopt a theory of patriarchy though there is much debate about the concept. *The common thread is that patriarchal relations are separate from class relations and have a separate history.*

So Communists need to analyse what is being said and point out that if the patriarchal family originated with the development of private property and class society then the way is open to overcome it with the overthrow of private ownership of the means of production. However, as stated above, Communists need also to analyse more profoundly why patriarchal attitudes still exist and incorporate the analysis into their theory.

Another question which has been debated much in the women's movement is why some occupations and industries are either predominately male or female. Connected with this division is the fact that in Australia and other capitalist countries, the average rate of pay in industries which are predominately male is higher than the rate in those predominately female.

One feminist argument has been that it is because men try to keep women from the better paid jobs. But an all-sided view is that *the sexual division of labour can be seen as arising not only from the capitalist relations of production but also from the type of family engendered under capitalism* where the family was traditionally dependent upon the male bread-winner. Other members in the family have been either completely dependent on the bread-winner or their wages have been supplementary.

Child-care was, and despite some advances, still is carried out within the household in Australia mainly by women's unpaid labour. This has changed in recent years but the gains made in quantity and quality of child-care are constantly under threat. Therefore child-care is still the responsibility of women, the result being that women are still withdrawn from the labour force if child-care is unavailable.

Because periods in the work-force were often intermittent, women were less unionised and unable to achieve the conditions and rates of pay won by the predominately male industries. Working-class men and women both opposed

the lowering of the wage level of the main bread-winner because it would lower the standard of living of the family.

In recent decades in Australia, with the growing employment of women and strong demands for child-care, job segregation on the basis of sex is breaking down. However, as Elean Thomas states, the fundamental contradiction still to be solved is "the continuation of this type of household structure and capitalist relations of production."

Under socialism, with the entry of women into the workforce in a wide range of occupations, much of the sexual division of labour has been removed. However, recent dis-

cussions in the Soviet Union have shown that unskilled women workers tend towards the lower paid and sometimes more arduous jobs and in the highly qualified occupations insufficient women reach the higher wage brackets.

Contradictions of a non-antagonist sort exist between socialist relations of production and the family structure. It is to the solution of these contradictions that communist theory must pay a great deal of attention if it is to influence the women's movement towards a socialist outlook.

1 See: *WMR*, 1988, No. 3.—*Ed.*

FROM OUR MAILBAG

THE FERVENT WISH OF A MOTHER

Professor Hanan ASHRAWI
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Bir-Zeit University¹

I would like to touch upon the humanitarian aspect of the Mideast crisis, even though as a Palestinian I may be assessing things too personally, guided by my own attitude to moral values.

"Mother, do you always tell the truth?" my 11-year-old daughter once asked me. "Yes I do," I replied, "but

truth is not enough to make you free. Freedom requires a great deal. You must have a lot of courage to formulate a principled view of developments in each separate case, to assess the situation as it really is." My second daughter (she is 7) hates to see me leave when I set off for conferences that may advance our cause, the cause of Palestinian freedom and independence. But she understands that I simply must go and she says, "Go on, Mother, you've got to be there."

As a woman, as a mother I am particularly aware of the irreparable damage the Israeli occupation does to the hearts of our children. It maims the souls of our people, who are forced to live in fear and terror for long years and to see our basic rights and freedoms trampled underfoot. But the women of Palestine refuse to give up. There are

now up to 200 women's committees in the occupied territories. Together with the association of medical assistance committees, they organise study circles, training people in the treatment of injuries that result from beatings, rubber bullets and tear gas and helping prisoners and their families.

As a mother and a person dedicated to humanitarian ideals, I want peace for our long-suffering country with all my heart. The decisive stage has begun in the struggle to end the occupation and bring concord to the region, so that we may no longer be concerned over the fate of our loved ones, and so that our children may grow up in peace.

1 Bir Zeit University is located on the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Professor Ashrawi is not affiliated to any political party.—*Ed.*



countries, events, analysis

WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

Communists and other left and democratic forces in Western Europe are focussing increasingly on various aspects of the planned establishment of a single EEC market. WMR continues its coverage of the problem.¹ Below are answers to a WMR mail-in questionnaire from Gerry Pocock (Britain), and contributions from Belgium and Spain.

COMMON MARKET: WHAT DOES 1992 PROMISE?

Gerry POCOCK

Political Committee member, Executive Committee, Communist Party of Great Britain

- *The EEC countries which signed the 1986 Single European Act intend to have a community-wide "free movement" of goods, capital and labour from 1992. What do you think of such a prospect from the point of view of working people's interests?*

The European Commission's White Paper on the single market (June 1985) makes clear that the main objective is to help West European capital compete with its rivals. The three-fold objective is: merging 12 separate markets into one; expansion; flexibility "so that resources both of people and materials, and of capital and investment, flow into the areas of greatest economic advantage". A report prepared by the British TUC (September 1988) observed: "Another factor leading to uneven development is that although capital and labour will both be free to move post 1992 to anywhere within the EC, capital is in reality far more mobile than labour."

A report prepared for the Scottish TUC (September 1988) reminds us that intra-EEC regional disparities have widened in the period since Britain joined. We are likely to see an increased tendency for investment to flow to the "golden triangle" (the more industrialised areas in the south of Britain—Ed.).

A respected economics writer on *The Financial Times* remarks: "Some of the national government propaganda about 1992 is too rose-tinted by half. The gains only arise if the less efficient, or merely less well-placed firms are squeezed and their workers move to more productive employment elsewhere."²

The European TUC denounced the "one-sided approach" to the internal market, which entailed, they said, "serious dangers for workers" (February 1988).

In Britain scepticism about the EEC in general and the claims for 1992 in particular is strengthened because of the actual experience of membership. The lavish claims made in 1972 that investment and jobs would result from membership have proved to be the reverse: unemployment has increased, the outflow of investment has intensified. The balance of trade with the EEC has changed from a 4 million pounds surplus in 1970 to a 12 million pounds deficit in 1987.³

- *In February The Economist published a series of articles on the EEC prospects. One of them is subtitled "What 1992 Should*

Mean for John Europe, His Wife and Children". It describes a number of advantages which will accrue to the inhabitants of a "united (Western) Europe": "They should be able to go to college, or work, or retire in whichever European country they choose; travel around without having to show passports everywhere; or save their money in one of those strong currencies. An EEC without frontiers should mean all those things, and more, for its 323 million citizens."⁴ Will those changes have a marked effect on the living standards and conditions of significant groups of the West European population?

Many changes will flow from successful implementation of the 1992 plans. The removal of many bureaucratic barriers to travel, standardised qualifications, etc., will be beneficial. The revolution in information technology, satellite TV etc., will draw the countries of the EC closer together even without 1992. However, the picture painted is an idyllic one. Free movement of labour means more to a highly skilled professional worker, say, than to unskilled or semi-skilled low paid workers. We could well see this "mobility of labour" being used as a mobile and nomadic reserve of labour that undermines gains already made. Workers in one area will find themselves competing against workers in an area of lower pay and inferior conditions.

This may seem pessimistic, but it should be borne in mind that while proposals on removing commercial barriers can be made on majority vote, those relating to labour mobility require unanimity. The whole emphasis of 1992, outside the rhetoric, is pro-business interests. Jacques Delors has sought to convey the impression that there is a social dimension to counter reliance on market forces, and the ETUC itself refers to pay bargaining etc., at an EC level. But the reality was spelt out with brutal frankness by *The Financial Times* in an editorial headed "Social Gloss on 1992": Europe-wide collective bargaining will "fly in the face of the logic of the single market: 1992 is not about extending West German wage levels in exchange for British productivity". The aim is for workers to compete for jobs.

- *The above article claims that "more competition at all levels of the single market should bring a greater choice of attractively priced goods and services". Do you think such a forecast is correct? What will be the impact of the further integration of the EEC countries on employment?*

There is much speculation about greater choice, lower prices, etc. The Cecchini report⁵ claims there will be a 4.5% increase in GDP and an additional 1.8 million jobs. If further measures were taken to expand demand then 5.7 million jobs could be created. 1992 is largely a leap in the dark. There are already fears being expressed

that the main beneficiary of 1992 will be Japanese big business. Already there is controversy about the tendency to "fortress Europe", i.e., new protectionist barriers to benefit West Europe.

As already noted, regional disparities have intensified in the EEC, there is a widening gap in many countries not only between the main owners of wealth and the rest but within the working class, particularly in relation to the unemployed. There are 16 million unemployed, over 3 million of whom are under 25; 30% of the unemployed have been so for more than two years. A recent report in Britain estimates that the Common Agricultural Policy costs 9 pounds a week per EEC family of four to maintain.

- *What do you think of the possible impact of the further integration of the West European states on the working-class movement there? How will an enhanced "supranationality" tell on their sovereignty?*

Without doubt, there is an imperative need for greater cohesion and unity of the working-class movements of the EEC. The ETUC has made proposals in respect to trade unions, the resolution adopted unanimously by the TUC spelt out many proposals, including a European Workers Rights Charter. In the discussion strong emphasis was placed on the need to end the politically motivated barriers that keep important trade union centres in France, Portugal and Spain outside of the ETUC. Concerning political parties of the working class the situation is more complex. There are serious and deepseated differences about the European Community, including on the transfer of sovereignty, the powers of the European Parliament. These differences also exist among Communist Parties. There is clearly scope for a new level of cooperation between Communists, Socialists and other democratic forces, on particular issues in the European Parliament, etc., and these need to be developed to the maximum even while there are differences over other issues.

In Britain it is now largely accepted that the demand for withdrawal is not a campaigning priority and attention is focussing on what to do about actual EC developments. There is great concern about sovereignty—and not only in Britain. The experience of sovereignty varies even among West European countries. In Britain attitudes are shaped by our history as an island that has not been invaded for 1,000 years, where the supremacy of parliament was an early historic achievement, and by our record as a major imperialist and colonial power. Popular consciousness of sovereignty and independence cannot be ignored. It is possibly different in

Britain compared to, say, Italy or Luxembourg. Mrs Thatcher of course exploits this tradition.

More to the point, the national arena is still the main arena for political change. Transfer of sovereignty to Brussels makes decisions more remote, and places immense difficulties in the way of policies related to the specific needs of the country. The so-called social dimension of 1992 is not only an afterthought, it is posited as acceptance of the main aim of the single market.

However, this leads me on to a question that has not been asked by *WMR*, that is the more closely integrated EC's relations with the rest of the world. In my view, the fact that the main thrust of 1992 is towards creating a West European rival to the US and Japan carries many dangers, even if there are some marginal benefits for the populations of the EC. First, it can serve to perpetuate the division of Europe. Second, EC propagandists constantly harp on the need for interdependence but restrict it to Western Europe. In his speech to the TUC Jacques Delors put repeated emphasis on European revival, seeking to engage the working-class movement in a joint endeavour to preserve European values. But interdependence can only be global, all the more so for Western Europe given its record of colonialism.

The Lome convention governing relations between the EEC and certain African, Caribbean and Pacific states has failed in its stated aim. The Secretary General of the Commonwealth reports that "lack of progress in penetrating the EEC market (the relative share of the ACP in the imports of the EEC has declined over the year)" and that "the failure to expand manufactured exports to the EEC (the share of manufactured goods in the exports of the ACP to the EEC has, in fact, declined)." And there is the effect of Common Agricultural Policy on Third World food exports.

In short, the working-class movements in the EC must not allow themselves to be drawn into a West European nationalism. The imperatives of today are related to overcoming the global problems facing humanity and a true global interdependence.

1 See Bernard Marx, "What 1992 Has in Store for Europe", *WMR*, No. 1, 1989.

2 *The Financial Times*, May 12, 1988.

3 Labour Common Market Safeguards Committee, July 1988.

4 *The Economist*, February 13-19, 1988, p. 44.

5 A report prepared for the Commission of the European Communities by a team of specialists under the Italian economist Paolo Cecchini and released in April 1988. — *Ed.*

TRANSFORMATION, NOT NEGATION

Jan DEBROUWERE

Political Bureau member, CC, Communist Party of Belgium

We deem it not realistic to think of the European Community as just another provisional contraption—to be abolished in due time.

In my country, not a single social or political body—be it on the left or on the right—advocates a withdrawal from, or a non-cooperative attitude towards the Community and its elected institutions. On the contrary. This may be regretted, but has nothing to do with the fact that Belgium is host to most of the European bodies. Not only the EEC, but NATO as well, have their addresses in Brussels, and NATO is definitely very unpopular with most of my countrymen.

In the perennial strife between the Belgian national community, in which the whole political scale happily participates—Europeanisation is expected, by some, to bring about the final solution by dealing, once and for all, with Belgium.

Now here is a point of view that we do not share. Together—unfortunately—with the two liberal parties situated on the far right of the Belgian political scene and the leftovers of the Maoists. We, they, and nobody else, speak out for the continuation of a Belgian national and sovereign state, be it for very different reasons. So much for Belgium.

Taking a scrutinising look at the European Community, it seems evident to me that its negative aspects are mainly to be put at the doorsteps of the Commission and the Council of Ministers. They are repeatedly instrumental in—at the very least they never dispute—any serious resistance against the undertakings of big capital and international finance. The main obstacles on the road towards a social Europe are to be found there.

On the whole, and without being good, the record of the *European Parliament* is, however, better in more than one respect than that of the above-mentioned institutions, and even many West European Parliaments. Its shortcomings are largely due to its lack of authority over the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

It hasn't even the relevant means to see through the enforcement of its own advice. Nor could it, as an example, guarantee an effective follow-up of the 1986 Vredeling Directive. This was meant to bind

entrepreneurs to publish information or accept official negotiation whenever their enterprises landed in difficulties.¹

This Directive, limited in scope but useful in itself, was frozen by the European Ministers of Social Affairs in July 1986. A few weeks later—out of the blue—in August of the same year, Michelin of Clarmont Ferrand decided to close down its Belgian plant, putting 2,000 skilled and highly specialised Belgian workers out of a job.

The same fate befell the Directive on group dismissals, rendered impractical by decision of the European Ministers. It was the same story all over again with the Directive on industrial mergers and safeguarding workers rights. More examples of the same nature could be mentioned here, such as the famous Article 119 on equal remuneration for men and women, and its calvary through national legislations.

This brings me to the conclusion that it is necessary to *enlarge the rights, competence and prerogatives of the European Parliament*—not to the detriment of national Parliaments and Governments—but in the first place, over the Commission and the Council of Ministers.

In such a struggle, allies could be found in the Socialist parties, the Ecologists, a number of Christian Democrats. Such alliances can play a considerable part in strengthening the hand of the progressive elements for a *Social Europe*.

And there is more: workers immigration, freedom of the press and information. How to stop Murdoch and his takeovers among the European media recently? How to block financial raiders who, for instance, transferred the 'Generale', Belgium's principal holding, to the French Suez Group? Or what about environmental protection? And last but not least, the struggle for disarmament and, under the cloak of a revitalised West European Union, the plans for transforming Western Europe into a military superpower in its own right, concentrating on conventional weaponry.

All this calls for concerted action and cooperation between all progressive forces.

On this we all agree, of course.

But isn't this all the more reason for putting to better use the European Parliament and its manifold potentialities, to advocate the enlargement of its rights and prerogatives—where they are useful and democratically feasible?

Here is a battle that can be won, be it a strenuous one—a battle that puts us Communists alongside important progressive forces against a European Community of Capital and Thatcherism on a continental scale and for a *Social Europe*.

I fully agree with what Gerry Pocock said last July at a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain: "Just imagine what a power for good an elected European Parliament could be—covering all Europe and acting as a forum—but without the smothering of national differences that the present European Community entails."

But the present limited Community is indeed there. It is a reality—to be changed—not to be run away from.

The goal must be the democratic transformation of the European Community, not its negation.

¹ The document was designed to mitigate the implications of "sudden" mass layoffs through advance warning of possible job cuts.—Ed.

THE PROS AND CONS

Serji MARI

economist, member of the Commission of the United Socialist Party of Catalonia¹ for Studies of EC policies

Seeking to bolster arguments in favour of "European construction", the Commission of the European Communities put a team of specialists to drafting an appropriate document, which was made public in spring 1988. It came to be known as a report on "the costs of a non-Europe"; that purely journalistic coinage is meant to focus attention on those advantages which will accrue to the EEC countries if they continue on the road of economic integration by setting up a single internal market.

According to the report, the speedier development of the national economies thanks to a more profound division of labour and higher labour productivity would save 170 billion ECUs (European Currency Units), increase GDP by 4.5% a year, reduce consumer prices by 6.1% and create 1.8 million jobs. But if the Common Market remains as it is, the report warns, the costs of such a "non-Europe" will be dear because all the planned advantages will not materialise.

But any attempt at expressing those advantages in figures will be methodologically questionable, and emphasis should be laid on "how" rather than on "how much". The desirable savings of resources and cash could result from the establishment within the EEC of territorial, institutional, political and economic structures

to take account of the growing scale and complexity of capitalist production. At this point it would be wrong to disregard historical experience, which shows that the development of capitalism is anything but harmonious and balanced. It always entails immense social and geographic discrepancies and the result depends not so much on the potentialities of capitalism as on the regulation of relations, including conflicts, between the social classes. In other words, elementary logic shows us that the official EEC view of "the costs of a non-Europe" cannot be taken at face value. This far from accurate expression is used to define a contraption that is yet to be put together. The very project of a single internal market is based on an idealistic comparison of the present economic reality with a sort of future world which would meet the political ambitions of the proponents of European integration.

Generally speaking, one could come up with many versions of "the costs of a non-Europe". Moreover, one is tempted here to suggest "the costs of non-socialism" as the subject of a hypothetical study; they are likely to be much higher than those calculated in the report of the Brussels Commission. Without going into the comparison of diverse "Europes", we should nevertheless reflect on whether a single internal market will not bring about very different practical results than those expected because of the clash of different political aspirations of the contending social forces and economic groups.

Is it realistic to hope for a substantial general economic growth within such a market? It would seem so. Facing stiffer competition, manufacturers will be obliged to make goods of a better quality and at prices that will be more affordable to consumers, whose numbers will grow and who will be indifferent as to where those goods have been produced. Commodity exchanges will expand and prices go down. This will give rise to "economies of scale", i.e., new monopolistic amalgamations that will operate independently of their national origin and derive profit from reduced production costs, a larger volume of production, easier access to capital, etc. The capitalist restructuring of the market will thus raise the efficiency of equipment in production and services, which will be a great stride towards the monopolies' goal of maximising their profits.

The planned horizontal economic integration within the EEC has long been paralleled by the process of a profound vertical integration of transnational and national companies, which have assembled a complicated network of financial and production ties and are adjusting their structures and dimensions to operations on a ter-

ritory which far exceeds that of the average European country.

State economic regulation is a salient feature of today's capitalist system. Many developed countries have vast public sectors alongside the private ones. Monopolies are constantly pestering the authorities for various political and economic measures that would open favourable opportunities, such as the subordination of the public sector to the interests of private capital. As the capitalist economies grew more and more interdependent and integrated, their need for economic regulation at an inter-state level increased.

Coal and steel production quotas in the 1950s and agricultural policy in the 1960s were the first experiences of economic coordination by the EEC at such a level. They were followed up with measures on currencies, finances, regional policies, etc. A single internal market means a far greater degree of real integration and will require a *common economic course*.

The task is, in our view, rationally to redistribute responsibilities between EEC institutions, in particular to broaden the powers of the European Parliament and the executive mandate of the Commission of the European Communities. One cause for such a step is the inadequacy of the European currency system. If currency policies remain the domain of national governments rather than a common body, the free movement of capital will jiggle exchange rates, cause instability and unhinge the entire single market of goods and services.

Likewise, EEC bodies should play a significant role in the regional policies of the community. In 1958, the per capita income in the EEC's richest area, Hamburg (West Germany), and that in its poorest region, Calabria (Italy), stood in the ratio of 6 to 1. The gap had not narrowed by 1980, when Greece, Spain and Portugal joined the community; rather, for some of those areas it is 12 to 1.

A glance at the economic map of Europe will tell you that the farther the periphery from the centre, the lower its development level. There are industrialised peripheral regions as well, but their industries, such as steel-making, shipbuilding and textiles, are declining. That is why the "centre-periphery" formula well illustrates the concentration of economic activity and wealth in a few highly industrialised regions, which have achieved high-level integration and developed a broad and capacious market. That alone guarantees manufacturers there savings and a competitive edge over rivals in the periphery even if those are not inferior technologically. Today's EEC regional policy, I think, could help even

out the development levels of individual regions in a state, but it has no influence on the discrepancy between the centre and the periphery of the community.

The present integration processes not only perpetuate the differences between individual regions. More, the political, economic and social bases of a single internal market doom to unemployment 16 million West European workers, mostly young people. The economic and geographic disparities will thus be aggravated by severe social contradictions. The Single European Act announces that the entire complex of such contradictions will be cleared away in the course of the greater "economic and social consolidation" of Europe. The efforts made to achieve consolidation, however, are a far cry from those put into the establishment of a single market. At present the structural fund of the community, which could be used to create new jobs, constitutes 19% of the budget, which for its part amounts to roughly 1% of the EEC countries' GDP.

The social and political Left, all the working people of Western Europe are in a position to fight for a *revision of regional policy*. It must be given priority over Capital's short-sighted aims. But so far, the drive of the trade unions and left parties and movements for public control over the process of economic integration pales beside the strong pressure of the entrepreneurial world for a single market. All the European Left must unite in order effectively to counter that pressure and to prevent the aggravation of social and regional disparities.

1 An autonomous organisation of the Communist Party of Spain. — Ed.

WHEN CONTRADICTIONS ARE EXACERBATED

Mahdi HABIB

General Secretary, CC, Communist Party of Saudi Arabia (CPSA)

The Saudi ruling circles are making every effort to present the country as an "oasis of tranquility and stability" in a world swept by the rising winds of change. The laws of social development don't apply to us, then? Such an image does not stand up in the real world. Within our society various contradictory tendencies are brewing, as evidenced by the hitherto unprecedented clash of mutually exclusive ideas on and approaches to the present situation, the nature of the ruling regime, etc.

The polemics and the range of forces involved in them are growing from day to day. The authorities are hard put to control the situation with their usual violent methods. Professional and public organisations, once banned or "suspect", are growing more active, including engineers' committees in different industries, leagues and associations, sports clubs, and various literary and artistic groups.

TWO CAMPS OF IDEOLOGICAL CONFRONTATION

But where passes the watershed between participants in the ideological battle going on in Saudi Arabia? There appear to be two camps. Firstly, those in favour of change: a motley assortment of people from diverse class backgrounds and with different ideological and political convictions, with bourgeois liberals at one end, Marxists at the other, and a mass of people who reject the present order of things in between. The patriotic opposition forces, both secular (including our party) and religious, have a special part to play because they have a clearcut political programme and work in an organised manner.

The other camp is made up of conservative forces, among them the traditionalists (historically allied with the ruling regime) and fundamentalist movements. The former are strongly opposed to any change. Their influence is rooted in their kinship with the governing elite, their religious heritage (Wahhabism), and the prestige they enjoy among certain social circles, primarily

Bedouin tribes and clans. The fundamentalists call for a return to the time of the "righteous ancestors" and attack the regime from the right because they see it as drifting farther away from its "Islamic roots".

This ideological conflict is undoubtedly objective: the country's mixed, heterogeneous socioeconomic base involves coexistence between different classes and social groups, many of which pursue opposing interests. Now they are all trying to define their positions and motivate their demands.

The reasons behind the clash lie in the antithetical nature of the immense changes in Saudi society over the past 20 years: its embourgeoisement and the *immobility of the political system*. New domestic developments—the economic crisis and stepped-up repression of dissent—have also contributed.

The effects of external factors cannot be discounted either. Our region has been swept by a wave of dramatic developments—the Iranian revolution; the terrible Iran-Iraq war that followed in its wake; the presence of a US naval armada in the Gulf; the heroic uprising of the Palestinian people; and other manifestations of the intensifying fight between imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction on the one hand, and the national liberation movements on the other. At the same time Saudi Arabia has opened up to the outside world. We have learned more about it from tourism, study trips abroad, etc., as a result of which the authorities can no longer keep the country in isolation.

NATIONAL BOURGEOISIE ARTICULATES DEMANDS

The scope and depth of the conflict mentioned above will be clear if we consider one of its key elements, the "*modernisation*", or *reform of the Saudi political regime* through the abolition of absolute monarchy. This democratic demand used to be the prerogative only of the patriotic opposition and its followers, including the mass of people, some intellectuals and the oppressed religious minorities, such as the Shi'ites and the Zaidites, but in the 1980s it has gained increasing support from new forces which play an important part in the socioeconomic life of the kingdom.

Numerous statements made by Prince Talal ibn Abdul Aziz,¹ one of the leaders of the regime, to foreign reporters testify to this. Worried by developments, he describes the country as being in the grip of a severe crisis, and criticises official policy and the government's "absolute" loyalty to the West. He also insists on greater

democracy and freedom of opinion, as do several other members of the royal family.

The Saudi bourgeoisie (the middle and part of the big bourgeoisie, involved predominantly in goods production) has begun to air its problems more openly and formulate its own demands through the Chamber of Commerce and the Administrative Council (officially recognised bodies which speak for the bourgeoisie and direct its activities), and biennial business conferences. Since the first such congress (Dammam, 1983), which coincided with the beginning of a period of national economic stagnation, businessmen have articulated a number of demands, including a revision of the regulations governing the operations of the private sector, a greater role for the Chamber of Commerce in drafting socioeconomic development plans, and the preferential granting of governmental contracts to national companies. There were other initiatives, such as priority investment in domestic projects, and a policy of long-term investment in industry (especially petrochemicals), mining and agriculture.

The third and latest congress, held in Abha in 1987, and attended by some 500 businessmen and numerous officials, discussed the country's urgent problems sharply and freely. The representatives of the Saudi bourgeoisie suggested a sort of programme, some aspects of which provide alternatives, or at least corrections to the government's development plan. Although the plan attempted to overcome the stalemate caused by stagnation, it was in many ways at odds with the interests of national capital. The businessmen noted economic stagnation and observed that "there is every indication that the economic recession continues"². Openly critical of official economic policy (as our party is in its documents and resolutions) they presented the following basic demands:

- resumption of governmental aid to the private sector;
- legal reform;
- restructuring of the banking system and enactment of bankruptcy legislation;
- guarantees of effective settlement of commercial disputes;
- improvement of legislation protecting national industries, reorganisation of industrial management structures and infusion of trained personnel;
- customs policies to control foreign dumping on the Saudi market;
- state support for exports;
- aid to developing countries conditional on purchases of Saudi products.

The Communist Party expressed its satisfaction with these demands, and declared: "There is every indication that in the immediate future the regime will have to respond to many demands made by the bourgeoisie because of the aggravation of the crisis and the extreme need for support from influential public forces. However, its reaction will be selective and reserved, and it will not meet the more radical demands"³. The Communist Party itself called for "the working class and all working people to be given the opportunity to present their demands and make their concerns known".

Clearly, the stand of the bourgeoisie, which carries much weight in the kingdom, affects not just the economic policy of the Saudi regime, but to a large extent its very nature and foundations, including its religious legal base and its close links with the world capitalist system. Despite the fact that the programme follows bourgeois class interests in attempting to resolve the crisis, its demands have taken on a largely *national character*, and many of them meet the interests of the entire people. This confirms that the Communist Party's National Programme is correct in saying that influential detachments of the national bourgeoisie should participate alongside workers, peasants, Bedouins and revolutionary intellectuals in completing national liberation and the national democratic revolution.⁴

MASS DEMOCRATIC AWARENESS GROWS

The economic crisis has had a tremendous impact on the *regime's social base*, with many social forces, including the national bourgeoisie, now opposing an economic policy which, until recently, they considered beneficial. But the political activities of those forces, and the fact that they have thrown in their lot with the opponents of absolute monarchy and vestigial feudalism, i.e., joined the camp of those seeking to establish national democratic power, depends for the most part on the *movement of the mass of people*, on their political maturity and organisation. It is also worth noting that the parasitic, bureaucratic and compradore strata of the national bourgeoisie have always been faithful allies of the regime, firmly attached as they are to monopolistic financial groups and international capital and, along with the traditionalists and the clerical circles, remain a bulwark of absolutism.

The mass of people, primarily the working class, are now bearing the brunt of the economic crisis. The state budget deficit is covered at their expense: wages are decreasing, services growing costlier, prices for basic necessities rising (roughly by half since the beginning

of 1988), and state spending on social programmes shrinking. Unemployment has reached alarming proportions in the past few years. Although public assembly is banned, crowds of unemployed gather outside labour bureaux, and security troops use brute force to disperse them.

This has led *working people to step up their struggle for better living conditions*. Blue- and white-collar workers write individual and collective letters of protest and refuse to sign "new" work contracts which violate their rights. Industrial action is growing in both the public and the private sector, and there are frequent solidarity strikes which bring whole industries to a standstill.

The *democratic awareness of the mass of people* is growing in the course of the struggle. Widespread campaigns of solidarity with political prisoners are being launched as the public demands an end to torture in prisons and the immediate release of prisoners, and sends deputations to hand petitions of protest to senior officials. Despite the difficulties of working underground, the patriotic forces, including our party, the trade unions and other democratic organisations are playing an important role in organising worker protests and in formulating and expounding slogans.

The position of the *intelligentsia* deserves special mention since they have so much influence on society. The rapid growth of capitalist relations in the 1970s and 1980s necessitated a rise in educational standards and the number of university-trained specialists increased several-fold (more than 10,000 graduate from universities every year). These people, whose perceptions of the world had changed appreciably, began to attain positions of prominence in society. Thousands of Saudis also studied abroad, mostly at US and West European universities, and returned home with a fresh outlook. The new, educated generation are not prepared to accept traditional lifestyles and the archaic political system.

Economic stagnation has tangibly affected the living standards of that part of the population and narrowed their employment opportunities. In September 1988 *Al-Riyadh* reported that between 1985 and 1990 the number of new university graduates will exceed 55,000, but that only 4,300 jobs will be available to them.

Conversely, progress in education, the rapidly changing social and political realities, and the opening up of the country to the outside world are contributing towards a general growth in cultural levels and creating the conditions for our party and other patriotic forces to promote and shape a new mass consciousness more actively. All these factors have given rise to a *broad cultural movement*, generally ideological and literary, consisting

of different and sometimes opposing trends, of which the two most important are the fundamentalist—led by veteran doctrinaires and traditionalist writers with especially close links with the regime—and what we call the "modernist" trend. The latter, in turn, comprises two major currents: the "realistic", progressive and democratic, represented by a number of Saudi writers, critics and thinkers; and the "structural", defined as liberal bourgeois.

REGIME MANOEUVRES AND HITS OUT AT OPPOSITION

While the various social forces are growing more active the policy of the regime is to accommodate the bourgeoisie, allowing it to organise and operate, listening to its demands and occasionally meeting some of them. On the eve of the businessmen's third congress, for instance, the private sector was exempted from social security payments to pension funds for immigrant workers, while customs tariffs on goods similar to those produced domestically were raised. Insolvency cases were taken out of the hands of the Sharia courts, which go by the Islamic laws that forbid usury, including the exaction of interest, and transferred to the royal Complaints Office.

At the same time, the notorious religious circles led by Sheikh Abdel Aziz ben Baz,⁵ known for his unbelievably outdated views, have been given a free hand. The authorities cleverly (and of course unofficially) encourage them to respond to actions taken by the bourgeoisie, and to denigrate and terrorise advocates of modernisation by accusing them of "violating Islamic precepts", especially when they demand changes in the legal and judicial system. In this way people are urged to believe that reforms are delayed because of resistance from Islamic die-hards rather than the authorities' unwillingness to introduce change.

The same tactics are used in culture and with regard to democratic intellectuals, against whom the regime employs even more ruthless and arbitrary methods. On the one hand, influential members of the royal family often meet liberal and democratic men of letters as part of a "bridge-building" policy, with the latter "free" to air their views (within limits, of course). On the other, the authorities are forever trying to control and restrict these people through the fundamentalists, who organise campaigns of intimidation and harassment against them.

Anyone with a spark of creativity or an inclination towards unorthodox thinking is in for a hard time. The book *Contemporaneity in the Scales of Islam* by Awad

el-Karni, with an introduction by the above-mentioned Sheikh Abdel Aziz ben Baz, issued recently by Hadjr Publishers, exemplifies this policy, combining as it does a remarkable obscurantism with blind hatred for everything bright and honest in Arab and world culture. The authorities have right away tried to distance themselves from the book, but this has not prevented that manifesto of the dark forces from being published.

The regime pretends to stand above the struggle in society without supporting either side, and to be listening impartially to the different viewpoints. In reality, however, the government merely manoeuvres to defuse the sociopolitical tensions by promising to institute an Advisory Council, to meet regularly with notable Saudi figures and community elders, etc.

At the same time a wave of terror and repression has been unleashed against the people and the democratic forces. The persecution and arrests of patriots have continued unabated over the years. A dangerous precedent was set on September 30, 1988 when four Saudis were beheaded without trial after being accused of "sabotage and blowing up economic installations". The ground for this shameful act had been prepared in advance when, a month earlier, the Council of the Ulemas issued a *fatwa*⁶ prescribing capital punishment for anyone "engaged in sabotage and sowing evil in the world". This was immediately explained by an "official government source" as meaning anyone who spreads alien ideas, beliefs or principles, or who attempts to establish organisations.

It is a clear demonstration of just what kind of policies the government intends to pursue against the patriotic forces and all those who oppose absolutism. The regime still does not shrink from brutal violence (such as beheading, maiming, and stoning of women), and suppresses elementary democratic rights.

Our party has condemned the shameful manipulation of Islamic laws and exposed the tactics of the authorities, who are increasing their repression on the pretext of "present difficulties", the very ones they have created with their own policies. With one hand the regime is throwing the fundamentalists a sacrificial lamb in order to suppress opposition and terrorise the people, while with the other it directs various manoeuvres in an attempt to defuse dangerous sociopolitical tensions and mitigate the effects of the economic crisis. This is designed to *preserve the present system of government intact*, stonewall any change in its absolutist nature, and further the closest possible ties with imperialism, primarily US imperialism.

The Communist Party of Saudi Arabia has made its

position on these and other problems clear in its programme documents and periodicals. The party lays the blame for the crisis squarely on the regime, whose reckless antinational economic policy, which merely serves the selfish interests of a handful of local fat cats and foreign monopolies, continues to make things worse. It is a policy that has perpetuated economic imbalances and led to the squandering of huge sums on large military projects, to the growth of the police machinery and to conspiracies against other peoples in the region. Repression is the only kind of "dialogue" with any opposition forces in the country that the authorities understand.

The diagnosis made by the Communists is now shared by a growing range of forces. There is increasing support for the slogan of *drastic democratic change in every sphere of public life*. Our party has been fighting over the years and making huge sacrifices for that goal, and there still is a long way to go.

1 Prince Talal ibn Abdul Aziz, the King's brother, cooperated with the patriotic movement while living abroad in the 1960s, led the opposition grouping of "free emirs", held communications and finance portfolios in King Saud's government, and now chairs the Council for Childhood and Development in the Arab countries.

2 These and other quotations are from the documents of the Congress as published in the Saudi newspaper *Al-Riyadh* of March 17, 1987.

3 *Tariq al-Kadhiin* (central newspaper of the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia), No. 35, April 1987.

4 The Programme and Rules of the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia (amended by the 2nd party congress in August 1984), pp. 9-10.

5 Abdel Aziz be Baz is an arch-conservative clerical leader who advocates a ban on female employment, music, singing, including the performance of the royal anthem, and stubbornly rejects obvious scientific facts, such as the rotation of the Earth around the Sun.

6 A *fatwa* is an official judgement passed on a legal or cultural issue by a mufti or some other religious authority. —Ed.

THE SOURCE OF ETHNIC SENTIMENT

A Talk with Sergei BARUZDIN, Editor-in-Chief of the *Druzhba narodov* (Friendship of the Peoples) monthly, Secretary of the Board of the USSR Writers' Union

Victor GUSHCHIN (WMR staff member). What happened in Armenia in December 1988 was not only an earthquake, not simply a tragedy that claimed tens of thousands of lives. It also shook human thought and conscience. Again, we felt acutely how fragile our existence was. Again, we realised that we were all our brothers' keepers, whether in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Belgium, the United States or Australia. Millions of people throughout the world responded to the tragedy: grief knows no bounds, whether geographic or any other. But why do we remember this only when disaster strikes? Why do we often forget that we may fall victim to a universal calamity? I would say that today, the lack of a sense of belonging to the entire human race is felt with particular sharpness. Are we really destined to go on proving the old adage that a friend in need is a friend indeed?

Sergei BARUZDIN. Indeed, adversity and grief do unite people. That's the way it has always been and always will be, whether misfortune befalls a nation, several nations or an individual. It is true that grief knows no bounds, whether political, national, religious, geographic or class-based. Compassion was what moved A. Cherkas, a woman living in Leningrad, to send 12 roubles from her modest old-age pension to Armenia and Armand Hammer of the United States to fly to Yerevan in his own jet with a cheque for \$1 million and the latest medical equipment.

But I object to attempts to make people believe that they should rally together in the expectation of an imminent catastrophe. I am profoundly convinced that there is no unifying potential in this "eleventh-hour philosophy". There was even a sect in ancient Alexandria preaching such an attitude, but it never achieved anything. Moreover, it degenerated into an assemblage of indifferent and morally corrupt types.

It's obvious that we should not overlook the possibility that tragedies such as those in Armenia, Bhopal, Mexico City or Chernobyl may recur. We are likely to encounter more disasters, both natural and man-made. But does that mean that, like Cassandra, we should merely utter dire prophecies and tell people to unite lest they perish? No, I don't believe in the unifying force of fear. We must learn

to live together for the sake of life, for the sake of its unique beauty. We should look for new forms of solidarity dictated by the imperatives of life, not by the fear of possible extinction. The tragedies I have lived through have convinced me of it. My hope is that the boundless grief of the Armenian people will help foster this conviction, particularly in those who doubt whether human beings can live as friends and brothers.

V.G. One can no longer talk about interethnic relations in our country without regard to the lessons of the Armenian tragedy. Before the earthquake, too, we felt uneasy about what was happening in and around Nagorny Karabakh. It was becoming clear that perestroika and the unity of our society were in danger of fragmentation. I would say that the quake accentuates rather than removes the urgent need to understand how ethnic strife could re-emerge and where its roots lie.

S.B. Before tackling the situation in the Soviet Union, I would say that in order to grasp the essence of ethnic or national problems, we should examine them in a broader context. Nationalism is on the rise all over the world. In some cases we welcome it—say, when this applies to regions newly liberated from colonial rule. There, nationalism reflects the aspirations of progressive forces. Anyway, the fact remains that nationalist activities are surging and closer attention is being paid to these problems in different regions—whether in the Middle East, Latin America, or Southeast Asia.

I think that in the Soviet Union, too, there are both objective and subjective factors behind the aggravation of interethnic relations. For a long time we overlooked this important thread in the social fabric. We somehow believed that having destroyed the system of exploitation and oppression, our revolution had resolved ethnic problems at one stroke and that socialism had automatically removed them from the agenda.

V.G. I believe a great deal can be traced to the fact that we used to gloss over acute issues and simply engaged in self-deception. This dangerous habit is still with us. For decades we kept saying that friendship between our ethnic groups had long triumphed and that we were living in a big, happy family. But reality has proved to be much more complex than the speculative, albeit well-meaning, views of it. The law of historical retribution Marx mentioned inevitably punishes us for high-sounding nonsense.

S.B. I would not hold all of our history accountable for today's dramatic situation. In the early stages of the revolution and of socialist development, a great deal was done to ensure ethnic equality. Ours was the first state to institutionalise this equality under the law and to grant all ethnic groups equal rights to education, the solution of many

social problems, etc. Moreover, since the October Revolution those on the periphery of the former Russian Empire have been even better off than people in some ethnically Russian areas. A major contribution was made to the development of the backward outlying areas: enormous efforts and resources were channeled into those regions. A lot was done to benefit them in the years that followed, too. Otherwise our country would never have survived the Nazi invasion, or healed the wounds of war, or emerged as a developed world power, or blazed the trail to outer space. All these are tangible accomplishments we cannot ignore.

But, as the Russian saying goes, a whole barrel of honey is ruined by a single spoonful of tar. Unfortunately, in many cases we practically ladled in the tar. Furthermore, for many years we did not really study interethnic relations, content with the slogan that they were no longer an issue in the Soviet Union. We were obviously remiss in dealing with the theory and history of these relations. Not only in propaganda but also in theoretical research, a truly Marxist approach to ethnic problems was ousted by dogmatism and by a selectively biased attitude.

In fact, the subject features only modestly in Marxism. In some works of Marx and Engels, there are references to "good" and "bad" nations: the authors were studying social relations in an age when the prospects for the solution of ethnic problems on a new basis were still unclear. The issue was treated as fully dependent on the deliverance of workers from exploitation and social oppression, on the elimination of capitalist relations of production. The development of different ethnic groups on equitable and good-neighbourly principles was therefore seen as directly connected with future revolutionary change.

Lenin's contribution to this sphere was much greater. He put forward very important ideas that opened the way to a completely new, socialist type of ethnic development. But he acknowledged that a great deal still remained to be done. Take "The Question of Nationalities or 'Autonomisation'", one of his last works. Lenin began by apologising to the workers of Russia for not having intervened energetically enough in the events which led to distortions in tackling ethnic problems back in the early 1920s. Shortly before his death he asked his secretary to note this subject as an urgent matter to be studied in depth. Unfortunately, Lenin died before he could take it up.

V.G. The task was therefore to follow up on Lenin's plans, study interethnic relations in the Soviet Union comprehensively and, on that basis, devise a policy that could indeed be described as Leninist and socialist. However, this failed to materialise. To this day, there is not a single research institute within the USSR Academy of Sciences that specialises in interethnic relations. Our very concept of

a nation still rests on the dubious distinctions made by Stalin in his time. However, in this field (as in other social spheres) Stalin and his followers in fact pursued a policy of administration by fiat.

S.B. Many adverse phenomena in interethnic relations are rooted in the grave distortion of socialist objectives, whereby, instead of having ideas serve nations, nations were turned into a means of implementing ideas, that is, treated as something like firewood. Stalin violated Leninist principles, specifically those relating to national autonomy, to say nothing of the fact that on the eve of and during the war, he made several brutal and criminal moves by deporting whole peoples from their indigenous areas.

Although Nikita Khrushchev was courageous enough to expose Stalin's personality cult, he aggravated many ethnic problems: among other things, he launched an accelerated drive for so-called Russification in the non-Russian constituent republics. We were also too hasty in promoting the idea that a single Soviet people had emerged. I think this notion can still be accepted as a political concept which defines our nationality (in the sense that all of us are citizens of the USSR) and the goal we are striving to attain.

The present ethnic upsurge has been brought about by processes which began to germinate long ago but, for decades, were not given the attention they deserved. Administration by fiat with its centralised concentration of power and with all matters decided in the capital played a fateful role. But this does not absolve local party and government leaders from their responsibility in the matter. After all, one can treat any directive in three ways—creatively, if one wants to; by following it to the letter; or by displaying unwarranted zeal and aggravating the problem. I must say that for many years and in many constituent republics, unacceptable methods were used to deal with ethnic issues, whether in the field of social policy, education, culture or related spheres.

For example, local leaders—apparently fearing accusations of catering to nationalist sentiments—cut back each year on education in the indigenous languages. In the non-Russian republics, bilingualism was often reduced to monolingualism. In Minsk, capital of Byelorussia, there is only one school left where the students are taught in the Byelorussian language. In many cities of Bashkiria or Chuvashia, you won't see any shop or office signs in the native language: everything is in Russian, even plaques with the names of streets. Or take an example of the other extreme. When Khrushchev made a "gift" of the Crimea to the Ukraine, an intensive Ukrainisation campaign began in the peninsula—shop signs, newspapers, radio and

television broadcasts were all in Ukrainian, although Ukrainians were a minority in the multinational Crimea.

V.G. I am working in Czechoslovakia now, and they have their own ethnic problems there, but you can always feel the care with which they treat their native languages—perhaps because throughout their history, the Czechs and the Slovaks have had to fight to uphold their national identity. The bitter experience of the past has taught them a valuable lesson: as long as the language is alive, so is the nation. Every nation has its own history and its own tradition and wisdom—as well as its own delusions and mistakes.

S.B. Of course. In every constituent republic of the Soviet Union there are distinctive factors behind the aggravation of interethnic relations. Some relate to the Baltic republics, others to Central Asia, still others to the Caucasus, and completely different ones to the autonomous republics along the Volga. There can be no universal solution to all ethnic problems. Tactfulness, consideration and caution are particularly needed here. One should always remember that ethnic questions are highly sensitive and that they are linked with morals, ethics and the spiritual aspect of people's lives.

Certain Western reports on the events in Nagorny Karabakh and in the Baltic republics, and on the problem of the Crimean Tatars, have claimed that the exacerbation of ethnic tensions in our country reflects a degree of resistance to perestroika. Questions are raised about the way the position of the central authority relates to that of local party and government leaders. It is worth noting that the non-Russian regions—the sense organs of the entire nervous system in the body politic—are the first to respond to new stimuli, and their response is sometimes quite acute. Therefore, the processes generated by the restructuring of our entire social fabric are particularly turbulent there.

This does not mean that the non-Russian republics have turned into some sort of anti-perestroika bastion. There are opponents of perestroika both in Russia proper, among ethnic Russians, and in the non-Russian republics. The negative processes that have surfaced in these republics did not just spring up of their own accord. They are not purely peripheral. They are a reflection of the stagnant trends we witnessed across the country.

V.G. You mentioned the relationship between the central authority and local executives, and I thought of Leonid Brezhnev's trip to Azerbaijan. Later, it was described ironically as an "antedeluvian visit": two weeks of "popular celebrations" during harvesttime, with hundreds of thousands of people ordered away from their workplaces to stage demonstrations and gala performances. But then a storm broke, and torrential rain destroyed the crops un-

harvested because of the festivities. The loss of property was enormous. But the worst thing is that the Brezhnev regime deformed the relations between the centre and the non-Russian republics and aggravated ethnic problems.

S.B. As to Brezhnev, his style of work had taken shape long before he became General Secretary—back during his tenure in Kazakhstan and Moldavia. The distortions of the social fabric for which Dinmohammed Kunayev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, was dismissed and which later led to nationalist rioting, can be traced back to the period when Brezhnev had been party chief there. Anxious to cater to the Kazakhs, particularly those at the top, he closed his eyes to deviations from party discipline and sometimes even connived at offenses against the law.

V.G. I am baffled by the desire to ascribe the aggravation of ethnic tensions to some criminal elements allegedly masterminding the unrest. The disturbances we are witnessing stem primarily from our own mistakes. First come the mistakes, and only then the malicious effort to capitalise on them.

S.B. The criminal elements should, of course, be punished for the outrages they commit. Above all, however, the leaders guilty of blunders should be held responsible, the way it was done in Azerbaijan and Armenia. They let the problems pile up there for decades. It was high-level functionaries, not ordinary office workers, who incited the Armenians of Nagorny Karabakh to press in one way or another for reunification with Armenia. Meanwhile, Azerbaijani leaders sought to remove the problem by blocking Armenia's influence on the population of the Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Area. Passions are running high, not least because the mass media have often confined themselves to half-truths about the developments. But in ethnic relations, the whole truth is particularly crucial.¹

V.G. Let us digress temporarily from what is happening in these republics and try and see what lessons we should draw from the overall situation as far as ethnic relations in our country are concerned. What would you begin with?

S.B. I would begin with history. Every ethnic issue has its own history which often goes quite far back, to pre-revolutionary times. But that is a subject for a different discussion. Still, if we go beyond the strictly historical considerations, I would first and foremost examine social problems. For many years we neglected the people. It was of secondary importance where or how people lived and worked, how much they earned, what sort of recreation was available to them, what medical care they could count on or how broad their access to cultural values was. Our primary concern was with economic production, as though that was an end in itself.

I do not deny that much has been accomplished in the USSR in the social sphere, but we have failed to achieve our primary objective of shaping our life so that it would embody social justice as the highest principle of socialism. Social justice does not mean that everything should be divided equally among us all. That's crude egalitarianism, not justice. Justice is when you are aware that your work and your personal qualities are recognised for what they actually are and that your own view of your worth is in keeping with the prevalent criteria of social usefulness. In other words, we must be aware and confident of the fact that in all spheres of activity and on all rungs of the social ladder the underlying principle—from each according to his abilities, to each according to his work—is observed unerringly. That is what social justice is all about.

V.G. One often hears that alienation was growing in Soviet society during the stagnant years: peasants were alienated from land, industrial workers from the means of production and citizens from government. But if one extends this chain, it would be natural to ask whether all this led to man's alienation from his country. We remember Mayakovsky saying that "the Soviet people have their own pride: they look down on the bourgeoisie". Obviously, the poet referred not to philistine complacency but to the sense of dignity born of the awareness that they were citizens of the world's first socialist state.

After the revolution, we Soviets were, on the whole, less educated, but had confidence in the cause of the revolution, of socialism. I regret to say that now some of us produce a different impression. Abroad, I have often seen Soviets, both tourists and members of official delegations, lose their composure or clam up when faced with unfriendly or loaded questions. One could see that their civic and human dignity was stunted, that they were afraid to defend the honour of their country. Do you agree or do you think I exaggerate?

S.B. No, I don't think you exaggerate. I have traveled extensively, visiting more than 70 countries, and I have often come across this too. It is also confirmed by cases of a thoughtless, careless attitude to our country's riches and to our national traditions. Suffice it to recall the vast scale on which we used to mistreat our historical and cultural heritage, the way we have been squandering our natural and mineral resources, or the way we have been destroying our sense of belonging to a family of nations with a history of its own.

But I am convinced that if we purge our society of its bureaucratic accretions and of administration-by-fiat methods, if we really prove that everything we do is aimed at benefiting our people, this will surely revive our dignity

and our civic pride in our socialist country. Such changes are already in evidence.

V.G. As a Soviet poet once said, "It's easy to love the entire human race. But try loving your neighbour." A highly topical idea, I believe.

S.B. Indeed, for many years we treated the concept of internationalism as just another slogan on a banner. But a mere banner designed for show soon suffers from sun, wind and rain, and begins to rot. The slogan of internationalism, vibrantly meaningful during the first years of our multinational state, later turned into something vague and abstract. I think it was during the 1920s, when we were really fighting for the economic and social advancement of what used to be the periphery of tsarist Russia, that the Russian people displayed a sense of internationalism in the finest sense of the word.

But then there came a time when different trends began to emerge, and this is something we should discuss openly too. Previously, Russians moved to the non-Russian areas prompted by selfless reasons. Then material gain began to appear as a motivating factor. True, everyone is entitled to seek better wages. But we failed to understand that in the non-Russian republics, Russians were seen as people to whom financial success was not the overriding consideration. That is why the difference between those who came in the wake of the revolution and those who arrived in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s was noticed at once. The comparison did not favour the latter category.

In-depth social, political and cultural processes do play a crucial role in interethnic relations. But these processes are also reflected in the behaviour of individuals. Meanwhile, we often overlook this fact and forget that any outrage committed by an individual can do a great deal of harm. Let me tell you a story. Before the war two white swans and two black swans used to live in Tallinn's city park. During the Nazi occupation they swam in the lake, and no one touched them. But after Tallinn was liberated, some drunk, a Russian, killed the birds. So today I am not surprised when I feel I am treated with animosity in Estonia. I did not kill those swans, but my kinsman did it. Interethnic relations are so sensitive that the least thing affects them.

In itself, the idea of internationalism is not abstract. Internationalism implies an organic combination of national factors and national identities in the collective profile of humanity. Only indifferent people treat internationalism as an abstraction. Internationalism requires all nations to retain their distinctive identities. It requires all nations and all individuals to be equally trustful, selfless and courageous because internationalism is a quality typical of truly courageous people. In order to be an internationalist, one must abandon self-interest, and that calls for courage.

If you seek a better life for others, no matter what their ethnic background, then you are an internationalist.

V.G. As a man who joined the Communist Party the year Nazism was defeated, what do you regard as the most important element in our party's approach to the problems of interethnic relations?

S.B. First, following the lead of the party, we have broken the silence over the existing problems. One cannot expect things that have been building up for years and decades to be corrected overnight. The party took a hard look at the situation. Glasnost now applies to interethnic relations too. That, I am sure, is essential to finding positive answers to every specific issue.

Second, we should use science to underpin our efforts to tackle ethnic issues. We need a general theory and real work to put serious research results into practice.

Third and most importantly, the party is restoring its credibility with the people, proving tangibly that there will be no return to the past. People see that it is resolved to carry social renewal through so that socialism would regain its appeal.

V.G. Current developments remind us constantly that we must be able to draw relevant conclusions from any event, even a tragic one. Unfortunately, we are learning this lesson slowly. Still, the tragedy of Armenia has given food for thought to millions at home and abroad.

Let me cite an example—the way CBS Television reported on the earthquake in Armenia in mid-December 1988. The footage received from Armenia, CBS said, reflects not only a human tragedy but also a new spirit of human relations. Physicians from Denver have left for Armenia, and so have firefighters from the suburbs of Washington, D.C. A construction worker in Maryland is raising money to buy prefabricated houses for Armenia. All these Americans are helping the "evil Reds". We have changed, CBS said. The West has changed—because they have changed. In 1948, under Stalin, an earthquake in Ashhabad killed more than 100,000 people, and that was kept secret. Even in 1986 the Soviets suppressed information about the Chernobyl disaster during the first few days. This time, everything was different. They showed their grief to us and let us share in it. In the past, we felt threatened not only by their tanks but also by their secrecy. Now that they are abandoning secrecy, our feeling of being threatened is receding too. In New York, Gorbachov called on the human race to tackle its problems jointly, and the time to do it has come. Peace will not arise overnight from the ruins of Armenia. But we have seen their pain and tried to respond to their appeal. Any powers of darkness will be hard put to divide us after that.

That was the immediate reaction of those we regarded

as our "adversaries" not too long ago. But what conclusions are we ourselves to draw?

S.B. Our "adversaries" are right—although I personally have never considered people living in other, even capitalist countries as "adversaries". I visited the United States for the first time in 1961, and I wrote a series of essays entitled "America: Faraway and Close". They were published in *Literaturnaya gazeta*. It was a really unbiased look at America and the Americans. But when I took all these essays to Sovetskaya Rossiya Publishers, I was told, "How can America be close to us?" They did publish the book, but under an inane title—"A Trip to the United States". Today this would be impossible.

Thank God our mass media are getting rid of preconceived notions about other nations. But they are sometimes go to the other extreme, refusing to notice anything negative in the West, focussing exclusively on whatever is positive there, and shifting all their critical zeal onto domestic problems. I would say that we sometimes do this ineptly and even irresponsibly. Our criticisms are sharp, but we fail to draw specific conclusions from them or work for tangible change, as though we have simply set out to prove to ourselves and the world how bad we are.

And now about the lessons we should learn from the Armenian tragedy and all problems we have been discussing. There is a lot of debate now about interethnic relations, and I take part quite often. Frequently, I hear the following view expressed: "We seem to have exposed all the ills in this sphere, but how do we go about changing the situation radically for the better?" I have a specific proposal, although it belongs to the realm of theory. We Marxists have always said that freedom is recognised necessity, emphasising *necessity*. This had an impact on our policies, including those in the field of interethnic relations. We have always told each other and the Soviet people as a whole that we must live together. But we forgot that necessity must be *recognised* and that we must work to ensure this recognition. It is time we remembered this aspect and acted accordingly. But that is a practical matter and will be discussed at the CPSU Central Committee plenary meeting devoted to interethnic relations to be held in the summer.

¹ A Special Administration Committee was temporarily established in the Nagorny Karabakh Autonomous Area as of January 20, 1989. The committee reports directly to the supreme government bodies of the USSR, while Nagorny Karabakh retains the status of an autonomous area with the Azerbaijani Soviet Socialist Republic. —Ed.

AFTER PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

Tim WHEELER

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Republican George Bush has been elected the 41st President of the United States. It was an election marked by rumblings of discontent at the refusal of the candidates to squarely face the issues. Bush, and his ultra-right running mate, Indiana Senator Danforth Quayle III, ran the dirtiest campaign since Richard Nixon's Watergate election of 1972, resorting to racist incitements, slanders and baiting. The most dramatic result was a spontaneous boycott of the election by disgusted voters. An estimated 91,000,000 persons—half the eligible voters—stayed home. It is the lowest turnout since 1924.

Voters split their tickets, returning even larger Democratic majorities to the House and Senate than in the 1984 election. Bush's coattails were so short he is the first presidential winner since 1960 to actually lose House and Senate seats for his party.

No contest exemplified this ticket-splitting more clearly than Democratic Senator Howard Metzenbaum's reelection in Ohio. A leader of both the Senate Judiciary and Labor committees, Metzenbaum is a wise political infighter who enraged the Reagan White House by exposing Attorney General Edwin Meese III, one of 250 Reagan appointees forced out because of kickbacks and other grand larceny. Metzenbaum pushed through a law to force LTV Corporation to restore pension benefits it stole from its Youngstown steelworkers when it fraudulently declared bankruptcy. Bush carried the state of Ohio by a 450,000 vote margin. But Metzenbaum won by a 57% margin. His victory was remarkable because his opponent was Cleveland Mayor George Voinovich, a skilled rightwing politician who enjoyed unlimited GOP finances. Metzenbaum's victory is a bitter pill for the GOP and the ultra-right. How do hundreds of thousands of voters in the Buckeye State rationalize casting their ballots for both Bush and Metzenbaum—politicians who are bitter enemies at opposite ends of the political spectrum? Yet that was a pattern not only in Ohio but across the nation. Some analysts argue that Democratic nominee Michael Dukakis could have defeated

Bush if, from the beginning, he had adopted Metzenbaum's hardhitting anti-Big Business campaign strategy.

Gov. Dukakis had accepted the advice of Big Business top circles that the key to victory lay in winning back the "Reagan Democrats" who had bolted the party in 1980 and 1984. These elements argue that the Democratic Party is perceived as the "party of Blacks, women, and other special interests". To accept such a proposition, obviously, is a capitulation to racism. Yet to a fatal degree, that is exactly what Dukakis did. Dukakis selected a conservative Texas Democrat, Senator Lloyd Bentsen, out of deference to this advice. The Rev. Jesse Jackson who registered millions of new voters and garnered 7 million votes in his own presidential bid, was kept at arms' length. So was Jackson's grassroots movement, the Rainbow Coalition. Part of the conservative Democratic strategy was to reject Jackson's plea for an all-out drive to register the tens of millions of usually poor, often minority people who are not registered and do not vote. The Democratic machine, fearing an influx of people beyond their control, preferred to battle Bush for a smaller pool of more affluent voters.

Dukakis's mistakes were more than tactical campaign blunders. Gus Hall, Chairman of the Communist Party, USA, blamed the defeat on the Democratic Party's class allegiance to Big Business. Dukakis, he said, flatly refused to run on the basis of a clear appeal to the class interests of workers, farmers, and other victims of monopoly exploitation and oppression. When a speechwriter included a line branding Bush as the favorite of the "country club" set, Dukakis red-pencilled the line and reprimanded the writer. When Donna Brazile, second ranking Afro-American in Dukakis's campaign, accused Bush of running a "racist" campaign—transparently true—Brazile was asked to resign. It took Dukakis months to offer a defiant answer to Bush's "L-word" taunt that he is a "liberal". The last minute surge in Dukakis's campaign dates from the moment he said, "Yes. I'm a liberal—in the mold of Franklin Roosevelt." Alas, if only it were true!

The Democrats were meek and mild in reacting to the forays of Bush's campaign managers. The media willingly collaborated in applying a teflon coating to the Vice President. They simply ignored the vast body of evidence implicating Bush in activities for which he might have been impeached.

Dukakis was pilloried on the very issues Bush himself was most susceptible on—patriotism, law and order and the environment. Bush diverted attention from his anti-Constitutional, even criminal role in the Iran-contra conspiracy. He was chairman of the National Border Drug Interdiction Program and during his tenure, the volume of cocaine on

US streets quadrupled to 400 tons annually. Drugs are a major cause of crime in the US.

Curtis Gans, director of the nonpartisan Committee for the Study of the American Electorate, said that the approximately 27% of the eligible vote George Bush garnered was the lowest percentage for a President elected in an essentially two-person contest in this century. "It was an awful election," he noted, "and the public responded with an appropriately awful turnout. What we are witnessing is the decay of the impulse to civic duty on the part of American citizens, not because of their dereliction, but because of the conduct of their political and institutional leaders. If allowed to continue, it will pose a serious threat to the political health of the American nation." James Steele, Political Action Director of the CPUSA, warns that Bush not only lacks a popular mandate, his avoidance of the issues means he also lacks a clear mandate on policies. "Basically," Steele said, "it is a continuation of Reagan policies despite Bush's rhetoric about a 'kinder, gentler' nation."

In the final session of the last Congress, lawmakers defied Reagan, pushing through amendments and laws terminating contra aid (though last August they approved so-called humanitarian aid) and imposing partial economic sanctions against South Africa. The Senate rejected Robert Bork, an ultra-right Supreme Court nominee. They pushed through over a Reagan veto a bill requiring employers to give workers 60 days' advance notice of a plant shutdown. The stage is now set for even sharper struggles in the 101st Congress.

Wall Street banks and corporations are already clamoring for immediate action by Bush to reduce the staggering federal budget deficits by imposing heavy new taxes on anybody but themselves. Bush has promised to push through Congress a \$40 billion tax gift for the rich by repealing the capital gains tax. The mass movements, on the other hand, citing 3 million homeless men, women and children, are demanding billions of dollars to provide affordable housing for low and middle income people. They are demanding that billions be earmarked for daycare centers for working parents. They demand enactment of a national health care system. They demand restoration of Pell Grants to enable working-class children to go to college. None of these can be won if Bush insists on spending a trillion dollars on Star Wars, and hundreds of billions more on nuclear missiles and conventional arms. The demand will therefore resound in 1989 that Congress terminate Star Wars and other Pentagon boondoggles, reach agreements on arms cuts with the USSR, and use the tax dollars saved to feed, clothe, house, employ, and educate the people.

The need for all this is felt particularly acutely against

the background of the legacy left by the Reagan Administration. The eight years of Reaganomics have sharpened the contrast between the vast wealth of the few billionaires, and the deep poverty of the many. Despite official statistics which show an increase in the number of people working, the terrible reality is that the tens of thousands who have been unemployed for years are no longer counted in unemployment statistics. In addition, most of the new jobs are part-time or minimum-wage, far less than what is required to maintain a family. Homelessness and hunger are on the rise everywhere, although not always visible. The new young generation is the first that cannot expect to do better economically, or even as well, as their parents. There are cutbacks and elimination of health, education and welfare programs; of affirmative action requirements; and of environmental, health and safety regulations. A huge influx of deadly drugs on the streets threatens the future of an entire generation.

Polls in the recent period show a large majority in favor of curbing corporate power and legislating advance notice to workers before a major layoff or plant shutdown, as well as a majority opposed to the nuclear military buildup and in favor of nuclear disarmament. Single issue polls show a majority of the US people opposed to aid to the contras in Nicaragua, opposed to complicity with apartheid South Africa, and opposed to expressions of racism.

At the 24th National Convention of the Communist Party, held in 1987, Gus Hall singled out in his report the emergence of the people's majorities, specifically the peace majority, the anti-racist and pro-democratic majority, the anti-apartheid majority, the anti-Reagan majority, the anti-monopoly majority, the anti-imperialist majority, and the anti-contras majority. These people's majorities hold in their grasp the potential to reverse the present direction of the country. The challenge for the Communist Party USA is to provide the initiative and leadership that can translate these mass sentiments into mass action and united struggle on the issues.

In response to the all-out monopoly assault on the working class, the trade union movement's strike struggles and battles have served as an instrument for bringing the parallel streams of the people's movements together. One example of the "fresh winds" in the labor movement is the Jobs with Justice campaign. This national coalition of labor, civil rights and community organizations is asking their members to pledge "I'll be there" when called upon for solidarity actions at least five times during the year. Historically, the Afro-American peoples' movement, inside and outside of the labor movement, has played a pivotal role in the fight for democracy and peace. Joined with labor, it is the main political driving force for progress, as dramatically

shown in the presidential election campaign of Jesse Jackson.

The vote breakdown showed that labor's rank-and-file was even more solid than in 1984 in rejecting appeals for defection to the Republicans: the antilabor onslaught by Big Business and the Reagan Administration has hurt.

No one section of the people by itself is strong enough to win. But when they have moved together, propelled by the powerful alliance of the labor movement and the Afro-American people's movement, the majorities have shown the capacity to change the balance of forces and influence policy. At the 24th National Convention, Gus Hall said: "The mutual self-interests of the peoples' majorities are creating the conditions for unity of the majorities. The changing thought patterns that reflect changing objective developments all require broader forms and concepts of unity."

The peace majority in the US, moving in concert with world opinion and moved forward by the outstanding peace and disarmament initiatives of the Soviet Union, forced the Reagan Administration to sign the INF Treaty despite opposition from sections of the ruling class. However, to win the full expression of the peace majority and achieve US government action for a 50% reduction in strategic armaments and complete disarmament by the year 2000 will take an ongoing struggle based on the unity of all the people's majorities.

In the last several years, since the horrible facts of nuclear winter became known, nearly 140 towns and municipalities have voted to become nuclear-free zones. Over 150 cities, including some of the biggest, have voted by a large margin in favor of referendums calling for a nuclear test ban. Labor's role has been decisive. On the eve of the Moscow summit, the AFL-CIO Executive Council, breaking with longstanding tradition, voted in favor of ratification of the INF Treaty and in opposition to Star Wars. Widespread pressure from union members and locals to reject a pro-corporate foreign policy stance was instrumental in bringing about this important shift.

It is significant that among the most outspoken in support of the disarmament process are the International Association of Machinists and the United Auto Workers, which represent a large section of military production workers (in the US and Canada.—Ed.) dependent on defense contracts for their jobs. In Congressional testimony on June 29, 1988, calling for economic conversion from military to peacetime production, IAM president William Winpisinger declared, "Let it be said here and now, that I've never met a worker making weapons to kill and overkill who wouldn't rather be making implements of peace and prosperity. We—taxpayers and defense workers alike—have been betrayed by a corrupt Warfare State and its pseudo-

patriotic army of 'beltway bandits', conniving consultants, and 'defense junkies'." He proposed legislation that would make the military contractors pay for retooling to socially useful production.

Anti-Sovietism has served as the major roadblock to unity of the majorities for peace. Those forces within the peace movement who persist in blaming the US and the USSR equally for the nuclear weapons buildup have become unable to organize and mobilize the broad peace majority in the country. The new thinking and the peace proposals of the Soviet Union have emerged as the universal indisputable point of reference to achieve disarmament and preserve humanity. The visits by Mikhail Gorbachov to the United States, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts, and the joint Peoples' Peace Appeal circulated in both countries have all helped to influence mass thought patterns, although in the 1988 elections, the ultra-right and corporate interests invested millions of dollars into the campaigns of their candidates with the aim of preventing the democratic will of the people's majorities from being realized.

In a dramatic way, Jesse Jackson charted the way to involve new millions in the electoral process. This was accompanied by a historic breakthrough in the vote for Communist candidates.

In deciding to not run a presidential ticket last year due to new stringent restrictive measures and prohibitive costs, the Communist Party USA focused on local offices. Twenty-seven Communists stood for election. Many ran as independents or independent-progressives, or a part of progressive slates, but in all cases their campaign literature proclaimed their membership in the Communist Party. Most of the Communist candidates were young and ran for office for the first time. In the course of the campaign, they took part in candidates' forums along with other candidates, spoke on TV and radio, issued hundreds of thousands of leaflets and brochures, talked to tens of thousands of people in their homes and on the streets and secured well over 100,000 signatures to qualify for places on the ballot.

The Communist campaign brought an average of 100 new subscribers a week for the *People's Daily World*—a total of nearly 1,000 added subscriptions. Five of our candidates were elected as independents.

Significantly, all the Communist candidates received substantially higher votes in their immediate home areas, and in most cases, received the highest vote among all independent candidates. As a result, the Communist Party emerged as a serious contender for electoral office on the city and state level. Local campaigns have contributed to the tactics of unity far beyond the boundaries of their own

election districts. They have projected advanced working-class programs to confront and cut off the power of the military-industrial complex. The scientific grounding of the Communist Party enables it to make a unique and necessary contribution in developing tactics of unity against the power of monopoly capitalism. Only a working-class analysis can successfully chart the course through the political minefield of distortions and deceptions put forward by the ruling class and meant to confuse, divide and immobilize the people's movements.

More and more, new thought patterns have brought people to look beyond capitalism for solutions to the problems of the country. The shifting balance of forces in the world, and the tremendous new developments in the socialist countries moving to a higher stage are capturing the attention and imagination of large sections of the working class and people all over the USA. Socialism, USA and what it would look like is a popular topic of conversation in the present period.

More and more, the Communist Party USA is commonly recognized as the major organization of the left in the country. Gus Hall and other party leaders are sought out for national and local television and radio talk shows on a regular basis. More and more, on the local level, Communist Party clubs are publicly recognized as playing a leading role in developing tactics of struggle that can win on the shopfloor and on the neighborhood level. More and more, Communists are getting elected to public office and to leading student government posts on university campuses.

Perhaps the most dramatic expression of the changing thought patterns is seen among the younger generation. At the 3rd National Convention of the YCL held in June 1988, several hundred high school and college students and young workers represented thousands more seeking hope for the future, and looking toward the promise of socialism.

The Communist Party is self-critical about the fact that its size is inadequate for meeting the full potential of the moment. Nevertheless, the Communist Party at the national, state and local level has played an influential part in the shift of mass thought patterns, while at the same time the shift to the left and the sharpening class struggle is influencing the Communist Party to place increasing its size and rapidly expanding the readership of its press at the top of its agenda.

THE PLANET'S FLASHPOINTS

DIALOGUE REPLACES HOSTILITY

WMR's November issue last year carried an interview with Georgios Vassiliou, President of the Republic of Cyprus, and Rauf Denktaş, leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, on the present situation on the island and the prospects for settling it.

Below, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General and the leader of the Republican Turkish Party (Northern Cyprus) share their views on the problem.

WORKING FOR AN ACCEPTABLE COMPROMISE

Oscar CAMILION

Special Representative of the Secretary-General, UNFICYP, answers WMR questions

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- *What are the internal and external factors which have made it possible for the UN Secretary-General to come out with a new initiative to bring the leaders of the two communities of the divided island to the negotiating table in their own country?*

There have been some helpful developments, both external and internal, during the last couple of years in Cyprus. Of paramount importance is, of course, the climate of understanding between the two superpowers and their will to settle their differences. Behind the regional arrangements and the solution of regional conflicts that are cropping up everywhere lies the understanding between the United States and the Soviet Union. This understanding beefed up the United Nations and it is clear that the Secretary-General has more political clout than he had before. This favourable external climate did help in dealing with the Cyprus case.

Internally, the election of Georgios Vassiliou as President of the Republic of Cyprus pushed to the political scene a new figure who was elected with one clear mandate: to solve the Cyprus problem. It can be said that a new element entered the political mood in Cyprus and, as was demonstrated a few months later, the way to start new negotiations was opened.

- *What are your hopes and what kind of concrete results do you expect in the light of these new developments? Can one expect any results in the foreseeable future and what are, in your opinion, the main obstacles to the Cyprus settlement at present?*

Both leaders have discussed for the first time in Cypriot history the main issues of the Cyprus problem. Our first goal is to clear up the real concerns of the two communities and then to see how the differences between the Greek and Turkish Cypriots can be bridged. Although this is a very complicated dispute, I think that it can be solved if both sides are able to focus on what they are going to win and not on what they will be unable to obtain.

Certainly the main obstacles are those related to the real security problems that affect the Greek Cypriots and the Turkish Cypriots as well as the perception of those problems by the two communities. Not always do perception and reality coincide in the field of security. To that must be added the external aspect; Cyprus is obviously affected by regional and international developments.

- *How do you evaluate the positions of the two parties to the present dialogue, the positions of Greece and Turkey, and a possible contribution to the settlement by the permanent members of the UN Security Council and some other countries concerned?*

Both Cypriot sides are bracing themselves for a real negotiation after many years of fruitless efforts. The so-called Davos spirit¹ was, in my opinion, a necessary condition for making negotiations in Cyprus possible. Sooner or later Greece and Turkey will be asked to make additional contributions. The permanent members of the Security Council have a global responsibility in matters of peace and nobody can doubt that Cyprus is a hot spot. Finally, very few countries have a "military density" of almost 10% of the total population. The powers can do something more than just approve, with the other members of the Security Council, the periodic renewal of the UNFICYP mandate. There are also other countries which can give good advice to the Cypriots and transmit to them the lessons of their experience on intercommunal strife.

- *Are there any realistic opportunities for the convocation of a UN conference on a Cyprus settlement in the near future?*

I do not believe that a UN conference on Cyprus is a likely prospect while the intercommunal talks are in progress.²

- *This year's Nobel Peace Prize has been awarded to the UN peace-keeping forces. We congratulate you on the occasion and will you kindly comment on the tasks and functions of the UN peace-keeping forces in Cyprus at present?*

Thank you for your kind words. When UNFICYP was set up in 1964, the Security Council gave it the following task: "In the interest of preserving international peace and security, to use its best efforts to prevent a recurrence of fighting and, as necessary, to contribute to the maintenance and restoration of law and order and a return to normal conditions." Since the hostilities of 1974, UNFICYP has worked to maintain the ceasefire in the island, supervising a United Nations buffer zone which is some 180 kilometres long and from 20 metres to 7 kilometres wide. UNFICYP facilitates normal civilian activity in the buffer zone, mainly farming, and carries out humanitarian tasks, primarily for Greek Cypriots and maronites living in the Turkish Cypriot-administered north of the island. The essential basis of the present arrangement is respect for the United Nations and the cooperation of both sides with UNFICYP. Thanks to that cooperation, there have been few incidents.

- *What should be done by public opinion, NGO's and the mass media to contribute more to a just, durable and stable settlement of the Cyprus problem?*

In Cyprus, there is a growing discrepancy between the rather static conventional wisdom concerning the Cyprus problem and rapid social change. Cypriot society on both sides, especially among young people, is not what it was in 1974. As a result, some of the old fears and enmities tend to become a bit outmoded, while the need for dialogue becomes more pressing. One of the most important contributions that public opinion and the media can make is to reflect those changes, to do away with old clichés and stereotypes that no longer apply, and to focus on what could be a very promising future. Both communities in Cyprus are proud of their past as well as recent achievements. They could be prouder still if they realized fully the potential they would have in a reunited island.

- *What is the attitude of various Cypriot political forces, parties and organisations, in particular AKEL, to the goal for which you are working?*

We keep in touch with political organisations in both parts of the island and know their leaders because we understand that substantial support from the parties is needed to resolve the problem. The President and the leader of the community cannot settle it between themselves; a sensible degree of understanding must be achieved (although in my view, in democratic society consensus does not necessarily mean total unanimity).

AKEL has publicly stated its explicit commitment to a political solution, to a compromise, and is giving effective support to President Vassiliou in his efforts towards that goal.

1 The prime ministers of Greece and Turkey met in Davos (Switzerland) in 1988. —Ed.

2 In late 1988, Georgios Vassiliou and Rauf Denktash continued their talks in New York with the mediation of Javier Perez de Cuellar, and then in Nicosia. —Ed.

THROUGH JOINT EFFORTS TO SETTLEMENT

Ozker OZGUR

Chairman, the Republican Turkish Party¹

The prime ministers of Turkey and Greece met in Davos, making it possible to overcome the confrontational approach. The two neighbouring countries stated that they would never again make war against each other but intended to settle their mutual problems through negotiations. Those events made a strong impact on Cyprus, on both communities in the divided island. As everyone knows, it was because of friction between Turkey and Greece and a hypocritical imperialist policy that the Turkish and Greek Cypriots, who had formalised their desire to reunite within a federal state in the 1977 and 1979 agreements, failed to work out a platform for such reunification.

International detente, better understanding between the two neighbouring countries and the striving of all the Cypriots for peace have created fresh possibilities for dialogue. The leaders of the two communities began their negotiations on August 24, 1988; their resumption after a long interval is extremely important to the future of the country.

The federal framework for the settlement of the Cyprus problem was outlined in the above-mentioned agreements, and a rough blueprint for a federal constitution was drawn up. Now the sides are to consider how and to what extent the freedom to travel, to choose residence and to acquire property will be exercised under a new state system. Their realisation would undoubtedly contribute towards trust between the two communities.²

So far, there is no such trust—but mistrust is an imported commodity. Neither the Greek nor the Turkish Cypriots themselves have ever advocated either *enosis* (accession to Greece) or double *enosis* (i.e., the division of the island between Greece and Turkey—Ed.). Imperialism has made the most of those slogans in pursuit of its own ends. As in other places, the "divide and rule" policy was effectively applied on Cyprus. Throughout the period of intercommunal confrontation, which began in 1963, the imperialist forces have been freely using military bases and listening stations on the island. The two communities have to achieve peace between themselves as soon as possible in order to rid Cyprus of the imperialist presence and ensure the genuine independence of the republic. The development of intercommunal relations and the restoration of tranquility and trust will depend also on the degree of respect which Turkey and Greece show for our country's non-aligned status.

We think that when the intercommunal talks produce the decision to form a federation, the UN Security Council should bring the parties concerned together to determine the international status of a new state and create a system

of guarantees, in which Turkey should participate in view of the Turkish Cypriots' concern for their safety.

We have sent our proposals for intercommunal rapprochement to the administration in the north. It is our firm belief that no obstacles should be raised to meetings between politicians, unionists and businessmen of the two sides to discuss the country's future. It would be good to establish a single university on the island where young people could be educated side by side and taught to love their common home.

1 The mass party of Turkish Cypriot workers. —Ed.

2 The negotiations are to deal also with the demilitarisation of Cyprus and the return of workers brought from Turkey. —Ed.

A LANDMARK IN ANGOLAN HISTORY

Mateus JULIAO PAULO

Political Bureau member, Central Committee, MPLA—Party of Labour (Angola)

Since independence was proclaimed in November 1975, Angola has not been at peace a single day: there was the armed intervention of the South African racists, and their troops, together with the UNITA gangs, have razed hundreds of villages and towns.

Resolute action by the Angolan armed forces supported by Cuban internationalists forced Pretoria to come to the negotiating table. The talks lasted for almost a year culminating, in December 1988, in accords on a peaceful settlement in Southwestern Africa signed by Cuba, Angola and South Africa in New York. These agreements provide for the simultaneous implementation of several integrated programmes—an immediate general ceasefire; the pullback of the Cuban troops north from the Namibian border as of April 1, 1989 and their complete withdrawal from Angola by June 30, 1991; the withdrawal of the South African troops from Namibia by the end of 1989; and the creation of a mechanism for UN-monitored elections in Namibia to result in the establishment of an independent state.

Here, a leading MPLA—PT official discusses the background and the significance of this major event for Angola and the region with a WMR staff member.

- *What made it possible to launch the political settlement process?*

First and foremost, it was Angola's victory in the confrontation with the South African invaders, a conflict that

lasted for many years. Secondly, political settlement was promoted by the effective struggle of the Namibian people for independence. The racist regime used delaying tactics and tried, until the talks began, to impose absolutely unacceptable terms on the People's Republic of Angola (PRA). For example, they demanded reconciliation between us and the UNITA group. We have never agreed to that, and we never will. We are firmly committed to a struggle against that puppet organisation and all its backers.

Although there had been absolutely no contacts maintained between the sides, the time came to look for a solution to the problem through diplomatic channels. I repeat that this was facilitated by our military victories, particularly in the major battle of Cuito Cuanavale and elsewhere in southern Angola. The defeats suffered by the South African army and by UNITA brought the Botha regime to the negotiating table. At the beginning of the talks, the fact that the United States acted as mediator also played its part.

The improvement in Soviet-American relations contributed to the settlement—not only within the context of our talks but also as a factor generally favouring political solutions to regional conflicts: the Soviet Union and the United States, the world's two leading powers, agreed that war should be replaced with dialogue in international relations. The resulting alleviation of global and regional tensions manifested itself in Southern Africa too.

- *Do you believe that Pretoria's increasing international isolation contributed to the talks?*

Yes, of course. It was an additional factor that prompted the apartheid regime to accept the idea of negotiations. Not only the socialist and the neutral countries, or the world's progressive forces, but also many leading capitalist nations condemn apartheid as a regime without a future which has no place in the comity of nations. Our struggle and that of the Namibian people for independence helped isolate South Africa.

- *What role did the MPLA—PT and Angolan diplomacy play in the peaceful settlement?*

We have every right to say that throughout this search for peace, Angolan diplomacy was highly active.

Our diplomatic effort was an uphill struggle: South Africa kept trying to impose its demands on us, while we had to be flexible to avoid stymieing the talks. It was our diplomats who succeeded in influencing many countries which were skeptical about the ability of the MPLA—PT to persuade South Africa and the United States to back away from their former positions that were an obstacle to agreement. We are also greatly indebted to our friends and partners from the neutral countries who have always supported the Angolans' struggle and denounced the aggression of South Africa and UNITA. These nations played a substantive role in the negotiating process. To sum up, it was not only our armed resistance to the aggression but also our active diplomacy which made it possible to arrive at a peaceful settlement of the conflict.

- *A multilateral accord is always a compromise. What kind of mutual accommodation did the sides accept to reach agreement?*

The negotiating process and the numerous meetings of US, South African, Cuban and Angolan representatives did, of course, involve many difficulties. Pretoria and Washington almost invariably opposed our compromise proposals. But we sought to display flexibility at every opportunity. That was what enabled the four delegations to meet in Brazzaville, arrive at a consensus and draw up a relevant protocol to be signed.

- *Could you cite a specific example of such an effort on the part of Angolan diplomacy?*

There was flexibility in our very first proposal addressed to South Africa and the United States. It provided for the withdrawal of the Cuban troops within 48 months of the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 435 and Namibian independence. Subsequently, as the talks progressed, we reduced that time frame to 36, 30 and, finally, 27 months. This proved to be acceptable to all sides.

In another development, the South Africans insisted that after they withdrew their troops from Angola we make a political gesture by sending 8,000 Cubans home ahead of schedule. The issue was debated heatedly. Sincerely wishing the problem to be resolved, our delegation agreed to the departure of 3,000 Cuban internationalists. In this case, too, our approach was flexible.

- *The withdrawal of the Cuban troops from Angola is a key element of the agreement. What other provisions are of major importance?*

The withdrawal of the South African troops not only from southern Angola but also from Namibia was also a fundamental provision of the agreement. It, too, was the subject of a protracted debate.

- *The People's Republic of Angola has unswervingly supported SWAPO in its struggle for Namibian independence. Was this question discussed at the talks?*

No, it did not feature on the agenda. Pretoria and Washington tried to force us to discuss recognition of UNITA and reconciliation in Angola. But we said that this was a strictly internal problem of ours and eventually we did make them see our point. Therefore, issues connected with SWAPO, the ANC and UNITA were not dealt with.

- *How can the agreement you have signed change the internal situation in Angola?*

I am sure UNITA will go on fighting the government. But we have launched a policy of *compassion and national harmony* in contrast to the so-called national reconciliation policy we are being urged to adopt. Our course is aimed at isolating Jonas Savimbi, head of UNITA, while establishing relations with the leaders and rank-and-file militants of that organisation. "Lay down your arms," we tell them. "Understand that you have been deceived. Rejoin your people who, led by the MPLA—PT, are tackling the tasks of national rehabilitation."

We are now working out the terms on which those who wish to do so could come over to our side. Like

other Angolan citizens, they will be entitled to employment without discrimination. Other constitutional rights and guarantees will apply to them too. Under a law approved by the National Assembly and now in force, an amnesty has been declared for those Angolans inside and outside the country who fought against the people.

The crossing over to our side has already begun. Many former officers, soldiers and civilian functionaries of UNITA have joined us, some of them even bringing their weapons. They will be given jobs.

- *Your friends in different countries are apprehensive about your capacity to deal with UNITA forces after the Cuban troops evacuate Angola.*

For many years now, the Cuban internationalists have not been fighting against UNITA. They are in Angola to counter the South African intervention. UNITA is being dealt with by the armed forces of our republic. If no anti-Angolan intervention is undertaken to assist UNITA, we will be quite capable of neutralising its forces.

- *What prospects does the signing of the agreements open before the Angolan people as far as national development is concerned?*

The agreements will enable the people and the government of our republic to channel more energy and greater financial resources into *national rehabilitation*, something we have been prevented from tackling for many years since independence. We must build hospitals, schools and roads and raise living standards. In other words, we should create the conditions that will enable us to carry out our socioeconomic project. We want the war to become a closed chapter in our history.

ISRAELI ELECTIONS'88: DEEPENING CRISIS

Tawfiq TOUBI

Deputy General Secretary, Communist Party of Israel

Elections to the 12th Knesset (Israeli Parliament) took place on November 1, 1988. The 120 members of the Knesset are elected through direct national proportional elections. Israel's multiparty political system has blocked the unceasing attempts to change the present electoral system. It enables political parties which attain 1% and more of the country's voters to be represented in accordance with their national weight. Out of a national electorate of under 2.9 million, slightly over 2.3 million (79.66%) cast their votes. Twenty-seven lists contested the election, but only 15 crossed the blocking percentage of one.

The elections took place after 4 years of a national coalition government based on the parity bi-party rule of the extremist-nationalist bloc of the Likud and the right social democratic Labour Alignment with a rotation of premierships¹. In spite of their squabbles during the four-year rule, they were in essence united around a policy of national consensus on Israeli-Arab relations denying the Palestinian people the right to self-determination, refusing recognition of PLO, and rejecting withdrawal to June 1967 lines. The outcome of the national unity Likud-Alignment government was blocking the road to an international conference for peace in the Middle East. The last year of the Shamir-Peres government was a year distinguished by brutal and bloody but abortive suppressive measures against the heroic Intifada (uprising) of the Palestinian people in the occupied territories which shocked Israeli society and put the Israeli government in the dock before world public opinion.

In spite of the great trumpeting by the Likud-Alignment government about healing the Israeli economy from inflation, this two-headed government has crowned its term with a most grave economic crisis. National output is at a standstill and even on the wane; 3,000 enterprises have been registered as in a difficult position. Dozens of them close down every week. The giant Histadrut industrial concern KOOR is in the throes of a severe crisis with thousands of workers to be dismissed. Nowadays over 100,000 unemployed are registered in Israel, comprising 8% of the workforce.

The Likud and the Alignment contested the elections under these conditions, with the Likud presenting a nationalist extremist platform of continued occupation under cover of the Camp David agreements, of force and oppression towards the Palestinian people with the Alignment tagging along in minor tones masked with abstract talk of peace.

During the election campaign we warned against the danger of increasing the strength of the Likud and its extreme nationalist allies. We called for cooperation among the forces of peace, democracy and equality.

However, the prolonged occupation, and the policy of oppression and force towards the Palestinian people continued to leave its negative marks on Israeli society. This process reflected itself in the further rise of the extreme nationalist racist forces. It is a fact that while the Likud and extreme nationalist allies were a small minority on the political map of Israel before the June 1967 war, since then they have been gathering strength, and in 1977 pushed the Labour Alignment to a second rank position and for the first time led the government. Since then the Labour Party has not once regained full power. The Alignment headed by it had itself prepared its defeat by adhering to the Likud-dictated idea of a "national consensus" based on non-withdrawal of troops to the prewar lines of 1967, and a nonrecognition of the PLO and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and an independent state.

The November 1988 elections reflected, in the main, the continued shift to the right.

While the Likud was the second party in the 1984 elections with 41 seats, with the Labour Alignment the first party in the Parliament with 44 seats, the Likud became first in 1988 with 40 seats, while the Labour Alignment retreated to second place with 39 seats (30%). The extremist nationalist parties returned 7 seats while the reactionary religious parties (fundamentalists and others) returned 18 seats, registering an increase of 6 seats, leaving the right-wing and religious parties with 65 seats. The parties to the left of the Labour Alignment returned 16 seats altogether. Thus a new situation appeared with the Knesset becoming more hawkish, more to the right.

Extremism is also reflected by the fact that a new list named "transfer", which calls for the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland, gained two seats. This is legitimising the most extreme racism. In this respect there is no difference between this "Transfer List" and Kahane's List, which was cancelled. It is also very serious when the President of Israel strengthens the legitimacy of the "Transfer List" by echoing their explanation that they intend to carry it through by means of a "free choice" (for the Arabs). Holders of this racist theory are now busy propagating the necessity of taking economic measures which will speed "voluntary transfer".

Alongside continued occupation—with the dark shadow it casts on Israeli society, thereby strengthening anti-democratic trends—the leadership of the Labour Alignment bears responsibility for such election results. It did not present a real political-social alternative to the policy of the Likud and actually contested the elections with the latter's policy. Both political forces defended the brutal measures employed to crush the Intifada, refused to negotiate with the PLO within the international conference for peace in the Middle East, and opposed the right of the Palestinian people to an independent state. This same policy is pushing the Labour Alignment to negotiate the formation of a "national" government with the Likud as a junior partner.

However it would be wrong to say that the people voted against peace. There is no contradiction between stating this fact and the new political map. It is not an accident that the majority of the parties claimed in their election campaign that they would bring peace. Even Shamir, the Prime Minister, demagogically promised that the Likud would bring peace; he even argued with the Labour Alignment that "when you were in government you (the Alignment) brought only wars, while we (the Likud) brought peace with Egypt". The range of Likud voters included many working people disenchanted with the Labour Party's socioeconomic policy, who thus protested against its long rule which had brought no better life. These people are more the victims of the social demagoguery of the Likud than supporters of its extremist programme.

The Communist Party of Israel contested the elections as part of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE). The Front conducted its election campaign in line

with its programme, in the centre of which stood the struggle for Israeli-Palestinian peace on the basis of "two states for the two peoples". An important issue was also mobilising Israeli public opinion for solidarity with the Palestinian Intifada and for ending the bloody repressive measures against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. The Front called for the convening of the international Mideast peace conference under the auspices of the UN with the participation of Israel, the PLO and other parties concerned, including the USSR, the USA and other permanent members of the Security Council. It urged complete Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights as a basis for peace with Syria, and total withdrawal from Lebanon and ending all intervention in Lebanese affairs. The Front presented a detailed programme of demands for democracy, in defence of the interests of the working people and of equality for the Arab population in Israel.

The Communist Party and the other components of the DFPE and non-party activists conducted a most energetic campaign, distributing printed material, canvassing tens of thousands of electors, and holding hundreds of debating circles on current political issues. The daily *Al-Ittihad* and weekly *Zo-Hadereh* (organs of the CC CPI), as well as other printed material, played an important propagandist and mobilising role in the election struggle, which lasted for over three months and put the Front and its organisations to the test of mass activity. The Front proved its healthy buildup, its important contribution to activating thousands on a wide common platform. At the same time new lessons were learnt from experience, new conclusions were drawn on how to strengthen further the cooperation, joint activity and mutual confidence between Communists and non-Communists working and struggling together within one mass organisation.

The Front faced a poisonous anti-communist campaign. Its leading position amongst the Arab population was a special target. The Israeli rulers, US imperialist circles and Arab reaction have always shown "growing concern" about the distinguished leading role of the Communist Party of Israel and the DFPE in the democratic and progressive development and struggle of 670,000 Palestinian Arab citizens in Israel.

The Arab population in Israel, part of the Palestinian people, in the process of their struggle to remain in their homeland, to live as equal citizens, have developed into an important democratic and progressive force contributing through joint struggle with the Jewish democrats and antiwar organisations to the cause of peace and social progress, and having a favourable impact on the struggle against occupation and for a just and stable Palestinian-Israeli peace.

A bitter campaign against the Front, particularly among the Arab population, was conducted by the Labour Alignment leadership. It was objectively assisted by the anti-communist nationalistic "Progressive List for Peace" and the newly-formed "Arab Democratic Party" led by an ex-Labour Party follower. A reactionary anti-communist splitting campaign was directed against the Front, contending

the leading role of the Communist Party among the Arab population, and harming the unity of this group of citizens. But these divisive actions were rebuffed. The "Progressive List" was reduced from 2 seats in the previous Knesset to one, and the "Arab Democratic Party" gained only one seat, less than its great expectations.

The DFPE conducted a wide political campaign, popularising its programme for peace, democracy, equality and progress. It increased its share of the vote by over 20% among Jewish and Arab voters. 84,032 voted for the DFPE, or 3.7% of the electorate as compared with 3.4% in 1984. However the additional votes were not enough to increase its representation, and four deputies were again elected.

An increased turnout raised the number of votes needed for one deputy from 16,786 in 1984 to 18,563 in 1988. Nevertheless, our list had 9,780 surplus votes over the full number of votes needed for 4 seats. The law governing the allocation of undistributed seats was tailored to serve the big parties. With a much lesser surplus of votes the Likud and the Labour Party got 2 additional seats each, while the surplus votes of the Front went "unused".

The Front's vote gain was an indisputable political success. We increased our voting strength among the Jewish and Arab population in every town and village. Important were the new votes, modest though they were, among the Jewish population in development townships. With 35% of the vote the DFPE remained the leading force among the Arab population, and in Nazareth and all important Arab townships it received the majority of votes. This result reflected the democratic and progressive character of the Arab population, supporting the path of united Jewish and Arab struggle represented by the Front for peace, democracy and equality.

The historic resolutions of the Palestine National Council in Algiers (November 1988), adopting officially the programme of two states—Israel and Palestine—peacefully coexisting and cooperating on the basis of UN Resolution 181, acceptance of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, condemning terrorism of all kinds, and calling for an international peace conference, have greatly embarrassed the Israeli government and unmasked its demagogic policy of pretending to desire peace while sabotaging every effort for a just and peaceful settlement. The policy of national consensus of the two major parties is also facing a crisis under the impact of the Palestinian peace initiative.

Hence the large difficulties in forming the new government, and this reflects more than the deepening crisis in Israeli society. Israel is more isolated internationally than ever, even the USA's official reaction to Israeli policies expresses signs of disapproval. The Intifada is entering its second year with Israel's total failure to subdue it by brute force revealing both the bankruptcy of the Israeli official line and the growing dissatisfaction and criticism at home and abroad.

The Likud is finding it difficult under the circumstances to rule only with the support of the small religious and

extremist nationalist parties, although it had an opportunity to enlist the right-wingers and fundamentalists in the government. This is a result of the shift to the right that occurred in such parties as the National Religious Party, which is now like the Likud, and the Shas (Religious Sefardi) whose leader calls for the outright suppression, by blood and fire, of the Intifada. That is why Shamir and other circles within the Likud show a desire to form a government with Labour-Alignment participation and support. This step, urged and accepted by Peres and Rabin, is facing strong opposition within the Labour Party. While the Bureau of the Central Committee of the Labour Party has rejected the joint Peres-Rabin proposal to negotiate with the Likud, the Central Committee of the Labour Party, hearing an appeal by Peres and Rabin, reversed the decision of the Bureau and again opened the way for a Likud-Labour coalition. This will be a suicidal step by the Labour Party itself.

This cabinet led by Shamir is more reactionary, more antidemocratic and more extremist, placing more obstacles in the path of peace settlement, than the previous coalition government.

Immediately after the elections, the DFPE issued a call for concerted action and cooperation on the parliamentary and public levels to all forces of peace, democracy, social progress and equality against the new dangers arising from the strengthening of the positions of the Likud bloc. It called on the Labour Party to learn from the experience of the last four years of acting in coalition with the Likud, and carry on with the democratic opposition a parliamentary and mass struggle for peace, democracy and equality.

In spite of the shift to the right and towards nationalist extremism on the Israeli official scene, it would be superficial to presume that Shamir and his Likud, even if joined by the Labour Party leadership, can be all-powerful or that their antipeace policy will prevail. The overwhelming majority in Israel, I repeat, cannot be considered as having voted against peace. The government is not acting in a vacuum, and future developments will be influenced by international, Middle-Eastern and internal Israeli factors militating against its irrational and adventurist policy. It will become increasingly isolated, with new forces choosing the course of life and peace instead of the road of bloodshed and war.

The new international climate, distinguished by growing Soviet-American cooperation on reaching more agreements for strengthening detente, for nuclear disarmament and the establishment of world peace, demands cooperation on eliminating dangerous regional conflicts. We are

witnessing serious efforts at defusing such regional conflicts as in Southwest Africa, in Central America and in Southeast Asia. This also includes the Geneva agreement on Afghanistan—in spite of the undermining activities threatening its application. The Middle East conflict cannot escape the calming influence of the new international situation and of Soviet-American cooperation, which will help both the Israeli and the Palestinian people bring their representatives to negotiate within the framework of an international conference for peace in the Middle East.

While continued occupation of Arab territory and the brutal suppressive policy is a breeding ground for nationalist extremism in Israel, the humane and democratic character of the Intifada and the Palestinian peace initiative launched by the Algiers PNC session are on the other hand positively influencing Israeli society, helping to increase the forces of political realism favouring negotiations with the PLO for a just peace.

While Shamir and Peres have rejected the PNC Algiers resolutions, saying that it is nothing new and merely continues the policy of liquidating Israel, such a position was a mockery of facts and truth and was criticised by important voices in the Israeli media. The public statement by the "Peace Now" movement was significant. While criticising the Israeli government for rejecting the Palestinian move for peace, for the first time it called upon the Israeli government to "talk peace now with the PLO".

The Communist Party of Israel notes with satisfaction that its programme for a peaceful settlement of the conflict on the basis of two states for the two peoples, a settlement to be achieved through the International Conference for Peace in the Middle East, is gaining more support.

Life and experience, during the last forty years of wars and bloodshed, are proving to both peoples, to the Israeli and the Palestinian Arab peoples, the correctness of the position taken consistently by the Communists all through these years. The only way out from the impasse, the only way to a stable and just peace is to accept the principle of two states for the two peoples in Palestine, one Jewish and the other Arab, proclaimed by the UNO in its historic Resolution 181 of November 29, 1947.

Ever broader Israeli public forces and the whole Palestinian national movement are now advocating this peace programme. Supported by worldwide peace-loving forces, it will become the way to Israeli-Palestinian peace.

¹ By agreement between the coalition participants, Labour Party chairman Shimon Peres was Prime Minister from September 13, 1984, to October 19, 1986, and for the subsequent 25 months this post was held by the leader of the Likud bloc, Yitzhak Shamir. —Ed.

FORWARD-LOOKING ETHIOPIA

TESFAYE DINKA

Alternate member, Political Bureau, CC, Workers' Party of Ethiopia (WPE); Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers of the PDRE

It must be remembered that we embarked on our struggle when feudalism was still all-pervasive in Ethiopian society; an emperor ruled, and landowners held sway in the economy. A bourgeoisie was just emerging. Larger towns had most of what little industry there was, and foreign firms owned over half of its plants; they did not reinvest their profits here. The peasantry, which then formed 89% of the population, bore the brunt of exploitation.

As the social and political landscape in Africa and the world was changing rapidly, we also lived in anticipation of such developments. The issue then uppermost for the advanced representatives of Ethiopian society, and progressive forces among the intellectuals and in the army, was what course our country was to take.

The takeover by the Provisional Military Administrative Council in 1974 was an historical necessity because it was the only organised force able to lead the popular uprising in a land without any political parties.

PMAC set out to create a Marxist-Leninist party. This was difficult and long drawn out as we met with desperate resistance from feudal and monarchic forces, which had strong backing from the imperialist camp. At the time we concentrated most on organising and politicising the masses, an objective the government and activists had tried to fulfil until our party was created.

In September 1984 Ethiopian revolutionaries proclaimed the country's first party of labour, naming it the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, its first task being to *overcome the difficulties facing the national-democratic revolution and lay the groundwork for a socialist society.*

A constitution was drafted, based on the experiences of the socialist and progressive newly-free states, and the objective conditions of the Ethiopian economy were analysed. As we worked on the draft, we invariably consulted with the people. Then, before adopting the constitution, we held a referendum in no fewer than

25,000 population centres, involving residents of nearly all the villages.

Establishing basic law was the cornerstone of WPE policy. Thereby we sought to remove the contradictions between government and opposition, hoping that this would ease ethnic tension and bring about national unity. Regrettably, this was not the case. The extremists, having begun an insurgent struggle 26 years ago (when the monarchy still existed), now stubbornly resist the new processes, and continue their action, since their bosses and paymasters think that military strife is the best way to prevent the Republic's development. They arm and fund the separatists in order to harass the people, halt our party's political consolidation, and thwart any move towards economic stabilisation.

Autonomy for Eritrea and Tigre, peace, and the food programme still head the agenda. Our constitution does envisage broad autonomy for the North, where people would be able to build hospitals, factories, hotels, vacation resorts and lay the lines, i.e., develop infrastructure and the economy freely. They can elect governors from among local voters, and appoint judges. The separatists have refused this, and by stepping up military actions, obviously want to tear our country apart. We believe that the revolution is solidly backed by most Ethiopians, who will make any sacrifices to protect its gains and uphold the territorial integrity of Ethiopia. The party has been thoroughly investigating any appropriate means of tackling this issue.

For all the political difficulties, we have worked hard to erect a socialist economic structure by analysing the entire set of problems objectively. We have nationalised the land, thereby destroying the basis for feudal relations, liberating the peasants from their age-old yoke, and making them the masters of the land and of the fruits of their work. We have imposed state control on major economic institutions, creating favourable conditions for drastic social and economic reforms. We have also socialised natural resources, reorganised economic management on a new footing, and taken several other steps. But the changes are not going smoothly.

In the past 5 years, the population has grown faster than the economy, aggravating the problems in production and employment. The lag in the economy is explained by a decline in farm output and by the reallocation of considerable funds for the anti-separatist struggle. These increased from 105.8 million birr¹ in 1974 to 1.5 billion in 1988. Four years ago there was a terrible drought—a constant danger throughout this cen-

ture—which claimed thousands of lives. Our foes are quick to use any situation to discredit the WPE. But the country's drought problems stem from the old feudal system of land use, backward livestock pasturing, natural economy, primitive implements, as well as from unfavourable weather conditions. It takes time and energy to resolve these problems. To rid ourselves of famine we are now taking various short-term and large-scale measures.

Food shortages most often hit people in the North. The soil is overworked and the area is overpopulated. Drought or no drought, farm output cannot support them all. We consider it necessary to move some of them from arid zones—particularly Eritrea, Tigre and Wollo—to western and southern areas which have large rivers and plenty of virgin-land expanses equal in size to the Northern territory. Resettlement is free and people are supplied with the necessary equipment on credit; naturally, they get land free of charge. If we can move at least 15-20% of the people from the North to fertile areas and help them just enough to become self-sufficient in food, this will take us a long way towards ending the hunger problem. Even if 80% of the peasants remain in the North, they will still be able to survive. Farmland and forest reclamation, the construction of dams and irrigation are also called for.

The Western media sometimes accuse us of forcibly deporting people from their native places, and of seeking to move them into areas unfit for habitation, thus condemning thousands to death. But the real story is, I repeat, that they are being provided with the most *fertile* lands. We have never broken up families, even during the famine in 1984-1985 when the entire population in the North was in peril and the government had to organise the urgent transfer of people from disaster areas.

The resettlement is now in a new phase. This is a reasonable alternative to a life of misery in the North, conditioned by the objective economic situation. No fewer than 613,700 people have already moved into virgin-land areas.

The party believes that *agriculture should be modernised*, and that new technologies should be utilised. Each peasant has to be taught how to use equipment and fertilizers. But to establish contact with each small farmer (they number 7 million) is impracticable, and therefore the government pursues a policy of concentrated settlements in which 3 or 4 villages are clustered around one service centre. We are explaining the advantages of this tactic; so long as peasants live

on scattered farms, there is little we can do to help them effectively, i.e., train them in new farming methods, supply tractors, seeds, fertiliser, and clean water, build roads to shopping centres for them, etc. The "amalgamated settlement" project has already taken in over 12 million peasants, and 1,500 hectares of virgin lands have been put to the plough.

Settlers, as they move into a new village, can start as individual farmers, but joining a cooperative offers certain advantages, such as government help in purchasing equipment, seeds, and fertiliser, and in marketing output. The political point is that they themselves decide how to live and work.

The *collective forms of economic activity* have run into difficulties, and yet cooperatives have emerged as an important sector of the Ethiopian economy. We have witnessed the birth of more than 4,000 consumers' cooperative societies, with a capital of over 200 million birr, since 1975. They have penetrated the agricultural sector in a big way, and already use 3,000 grain elevators and about 2,000 flour mills. Dozens of schools and medical stations have also been built. They boast about 1,500 supply centres in Keffa province alone, which offer peasants household items, agricultural implements, and other goods.

Because farming accounts for 80% of GNP, much emphasis has also been laid on *state farms*. They had fewer than 5,000 workers during the first years after the 1974 revolution, and now they employ up to 200,000, who work thousands of hectares of land. As a result, local supplies already meet 80% of the textile industry's needs. WPE will continue to give priority to this field.

During the last two years, we have taken a long look at our *system of price formation*, and its effect on the economy. We believe that this is another major lever for solving the food problem. Groups of specialists were sent to the socialist countries to gain experience. We have found that to encourage the peasants to grow more we need to raise farm prices by 7%. When we nationalised the land, this also meant the end of ground rent.

We are targetting *self-support* for the coming years. The Ethiopian peasants are subsistence farmers. Out of the total grain output of 6 to 7 million tons a year, no more than 1.2 million tons reach the market.

The government purchases only 70% of the grain surplus, while the farmers themselves dispose of the rest at their discretion. Some people proposed that all such

trade should be between the peasants and a government corporation. But the country's leaders believe that a uniform system of state purchase is needed, permitting grain sales on a free market only after the state order has been fulfilled. The authorities have refused grain sale licences in some areas for the last 3 or 4 years for just this reason, and were once again the object of fierce attacks in the Western press and from internal foes. The facts reveal, however, that *most Ethiopians are cooperating with us.*

To develop the economy we need credit, much of which comes from the West. But we avoid any financial or political dependence, act very prudently and do not borrow unless we are sure that we can repay the loan and use it with profit.

Fifteen years ago, when our revolution was accomplished, only 2% of credit was from socialist countries. The figure is now 40%. As an agrarian country, we focus mainly on the creation of agricultural processing capabilities, but we are also paying attention to heavy industry. Stocks of gold, iron ore, tantalum, coal, soda ash, potash and platinum have been discovered, and the country is looking for funds with which to begin large-scale mineral extraction. The government has secured foreign credits worth \$80 million for the purchase of modern equipment. Together with the Soviet Union we have embarked on oil prospecting and big gas fields have been discovered. These are encouraging results.

A long-term programme for economic cooperation between Ethiopia and the USSR has been in place for 10 years now. The links have a systematic character. Our friends provide significant technical assistance in agriculture, industry, power development and education. This particularly applies to the design and implementation of projects which are vital to the economic and social development of the country.

The Soviet Union is helping, specifically, in the development of the Baro and Akobo river basins in Gambela (Illubabor province). A system for the irrigation of thousands of hectares is envisaged and work is under way on the comprehensive use and development of the land and water resources in this area. The USSR

has supplied the Ethiopian agribusiness with equipment for 5 machine and tractor stations and farm machinery repair workshops.

Last November's 9th Plenary Meeting of the WPE Central Committee adopted new decisions aimed at further strengthening our revolutionary gains, assuring the unity of the country, and providing a material-technical and cultural infrastructure for the construction of a socialist society in Ethiopia.

Basic Five-Year Plan guidelines for 1989-1993 have been approved. Swift economic growth, self-sufficiency in food, a stronger export potential, a service sector expansion, and a partial solution to the problem of unemployment are the aims set. Imbalances in the productive forces and production relations will gradually be removed. The CC has decided to analyse wages policy with a view to linking income to productivity, and enhancing the importance of piece payment in industry, naturally where this is expedient. Expansion of the private sector has been recommended, as well as the creation of a legal footing for persons having capital who want to join big farm projects and manufacturing and service-sector ventures on an individual, collective, concessional basis, or in partnership with the state. Legislation on joint ventures with foreign capital, etc. is also going to be reviewed.

We regard the further promotion of socialist production relations in town and country as the basis for the achievement of the set goals. We shall go on creating amalgamated villages and various peasant cooperatives, offering increasing government assistance.

The CC Plenary meeting has also decided to send party members to the countryside to become personally involved in the implementation of the food programme and the improvement of the peasants' living standards.

It is only in peace that the aims of our revolution can be achieved, and that is why the decisions of the CC meeting stress the need to put an end to the bloodshed in the northern areas of Ethiopia and to step up efforts to realise the peaceful aspirations of our people.

¹ The birr is the currency of Ethiopia. One US dollar is equivalent to 2.07 birr.—Ed.

BURMA: THE MILITARY AGAIN IN POWER

MAUNG MAUNG KYAW

Chairman, International Friendship Society Party (IFS)

Freed from British rule, our people chose to develop independently. But the autocratic rule of Ne Win's Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), which lasted more than a quarter of a century, has led the country to political and economic ruin.

Caught in a vicious circle since the early 1980s, Burma has endured more than 40 years of civil war. According to the 1974 Constitution, the ethnic minorities in Burma gained equal rights. They had voluntarily joined the Union of Burma in 1947, having been promised the protection of their rights, traditions, autonomy etc. But they received nothing.

General Ne Win's government attempted to end the conflict in 1963, and again in 1980-1981, but the parties failed to come to terms and anti-government activity continued intermittently. Military operations against the insurgent forces of Shan, Karen, Kachin and Mon nationalists were a drain on the treasury and hindered the development of resource-rich areas. However, this is not the only reason this ancient land of "golden-topped pagodas" is on the edge of a precipice.

Statistics for the early 1980s show a stagnant economy: the rise in national income barely kept pace with the growth of population. The country's living standards were on a steady decline. By the middle of this decade all the indicators of economic development had fallen behind population growth. And this in a nation of 38 million, potentially one of Asia's richest countries when Ne Win seized power in 1962. Burma has enormous mineral resources: gold, silver, platinum, nickel, copper, precious stones (rubies, emeralds), oil. It is also rich in rare kinds of timber.

But Burma never disposed of this wealth properly. Our people are suffering an acute shortage of many essential goods: medicines, textiles, household appliances etc. For a long time these have been smuggled in for rice, precious stones and teak. The annual volume of contraband, according to World Bank data, amounts to \$3 billion.

The country's leadership failed to boost exports. Even worse, they sharply decreased from 918.9m kyats¹ in 1983-84 fiscal year to only 765.3m in 1986-87. Burma stopped importing raw materials and equipment. This caused irregularities in its manufacturing output.

Rice is the staple of our economy. In 1962 the Burmese peasant not only fed the population, but also supplied up to 2m tons of export rice. Now this has all but ceased. Yet

Burma remains the world's largest supplier of teak (25% of its exchange earnings). It also monopolises the international trade in rubies, but this income is obviously not enough to sustain the economy.

Burma tried a foreign-loan option but unsuccessfully. The debt soon grew to \$4bn. In fiscal 1986-1987 debt service payments claimed 48% of all Burma's export earnings. A policy of isolationism—the country had left the Non-Aligned Movement—fuelled the crisis further. Dreading foreign economic intervention, the authorities fell back on numerous customs barriers.

In 1987 UN statistics officially placed Burma among the world's ten poorest states. Many blame the regime's economic incompetence, as well as managerial over-centralisation: the BSPP usually had former army officers in leading civilian positions. Its programme "Burmese Way to Socialism", combining the principles of Marxism, Buddhism and nationalism, proved a flop. Despite the noble intentions, this eclecticism prevented Ne Win making any significant economic or social changes. In August 1987 he openly admitted for the first time that there were flaws in his brand of "non-Marxist and non-aligned" socialism.

Apart from the economic troubles, other circumstances have shaped our country's present drama. Its political mechanism failing, the BSPP bungled the Burmese Road to Socialism programme. Until 1974 the country was run by the Revolutionary Council, which represented the army. Adopting the Constitution altered nothing—the same people held power, only now in civilian clothes. Party leaders and the top officials enjoyed numerous perks—special rations, imported goods at low prices, etc.—and knew none of the hardships endured by the employees, teachers, students, middle and petty traders, artisans, workers and peasants.

Ne Win's rule had brought staggering price rises—20-fold for cooking oil, 30-fold for fish, 40-fold for gasoline, etc.—while ordinary working people's wages had increased by only 26% in almost 30 years. The government measures of 1987, replacing the food tax with food surplus requisitioning, and removing from circulation, without any compensation, 25- and 35-kyat bills (it was in such banknotes that the average Burmese had kept his savings), also aggravated the situation. Though the requisitioning was later abolished, the land under cultivation had already been reduced. The peasant was not interested in selling his rice at prices below the cost of production. And for the first time in centuries, a real threat of famine now hung over the country. Driven to despair and without any democratic rights, the people rose in revolt.

In September 1987 student unrest broke out but was put down at once. The authorities were not alarmed by this, nor by the student disturbances of March and June 1988. They treated the students (the most dynamic part of Burmese society) with disdain: the rioting was bound to peter out, especially as their initial demands were mostly confined to campus.

The government felt confident enough to prepare major economic reforms. A drastic overhaul of economic and political life featured in the programme worked on for a whole year and suggested to the BSPP congress in July 1988. The

Maung Maung Kyaw, b. 1926, is a veteran of the struggle against British colonialism and holds a doctorate in law. In 1963-1965 he was the General Secretary of the Society for Burmese-Soviet Friendship. He has been IFS Chairman since October 1988.

development of cooperative and private enterprises on a large scale, denationalisation, and attracting foreign capital were its major planks. But the state would retain control over such areas as banking, transport and communications, and the petrochemicals industry.

Implementing the generally realistic scheme could have ended the crisis. The congress, however, rejected the idea of political reforms. As to the economic programme it adopted, very few ordinary Burmese thought this feasible under a cruel and repressive regime.

Soon after the congress, demonstrations swept through Burma, organised, as before, by students. This time political slogans, including the demand for a real democratic election, came first. The Buddhist monks, who wield enormous influence, joined the students, along with the workers, employees, and the marginal strata. Factories, plants and state offices were closed, transport ground to a halt, and the supply of food to the cities was discontinued. Millions of Burmese took to the streets. After several days of fighting, the regime was forced to replace the President and make some concessions. Demonstrations, however, did not cease until mid-September. There were increasing demands for an interim transitional government which would include opposition leaders, an election, and the recognition of human rights.

The government could no longer stop the democratic movement. In early September 1988, it lost control over a considerable part of national territory. People's councils or strike committees took over in some large cities.

Continuous demonstrations and the actual lack of central government control led Burma to anarchy and disorder. Looting and mugging increased as the dispossessed and starving masses joined the thousands of released criminals.

Power was very soon an issue. A political crisis had developed: the leadership was no longer on top of the situation, whilst the opposition turned out to have neither the unity, nor the resolve to create a new government. The army alone was still a real force, and it staged a coup on September 18, 1988.

However, the military regime is not yet fully in charge, though it has got city food supplies and transport going again and is restoring business activity. The paradox is that, in spite of martial law (including a curfew and a ban on any assembly of more than 5 people), democratisation is expanding. This is reflected in the emergence of so many opposition parties, which already number close to 200. Most of them may only exist on paper (the so-called "petrol parties"—each registered party gets a state-price fuel quota, vital in conditions of an acute shortage), but there are also strong parties like the National League for Democracy (one of whose leaders is the national hero Aung San's daughter Aung San Suu Kyi), the Democratic Front for National Reconstruction, headed by Thakin Chit Maung, an outstanding nationalist figure, and the Democracy and Peace Party, amongst others.

These parties have fairly contradictory programmes: for example, a thesis about the inadmissibility of exploitation rubs shoulders with a demand that private capital be given

absolute freedom. They all agree, however, that major economic reforms, the promotion not only of state, but also of cooperative and private enterprises, and the wide enlistment of foreign capital in economic rehabilitation are indispensable. Here, significantly, the opposition is at one with the BSPP and its successor, the National Unity Party (NUP), and with the military administration. The dispute is mainly about a future political system.

Democratic circles want the broadest parliamentary democracy. The situation in Burma urgently demands an intensified campaign for democracy and human rights. For almost three decades our people languished under the bureaucratic semi-military regime of the BSPP. When the opportunity presented itself, the Burmese naturally rose against this regime. As a result of the powerful democratic movement three Presidents succeeded one another in less than two months, and by no means voluntarily. The authorities were forced to *accept the people's demands to hold democratic elections on a multiparty basis*. The new military regime has acknowledged this.

I think that the authorities are caught between a rock and a hard place: on the one side they face legally established and registered parties, and on the other, clandestine armed and insurgent formations. I believe that somehow or other, the military themselves will either have to hand over power to an interim coalition government of civilians, or hold a general election.

Our party unites ethnic groups of the Burmese and members of the other nationalities inhabiting our country. We have set ourselves three principal objectives: to further the democratic process, extend friendly relations to all races and nationalities in Burma, and establish friendly ties with other countries. To do this we are contacting many national parties, exchanging opinions, coordinating joint actions, etc. We are also planning to create sections, each of which would promote Burmese relations with certain groups of states; for example, a separate section for our neighbours, India, China, Vietnam, another for South America, still another for the socialist countries of Europe, etc.

At present there are varying degrees of coordination between the parties with similar aims. The largest student unions have created an umbrella alliance for all political organisations. Steps are being taken to include a number of parties in the creation of a united front to work for an end to the repression, for the observance of human rights, an amnesty for political prisoners and the formation of an interim government which would incorporate, along with outstanding opposition figures, people recommended by the leadership of the Buddhist Sangha,² and representatives of the military administration.

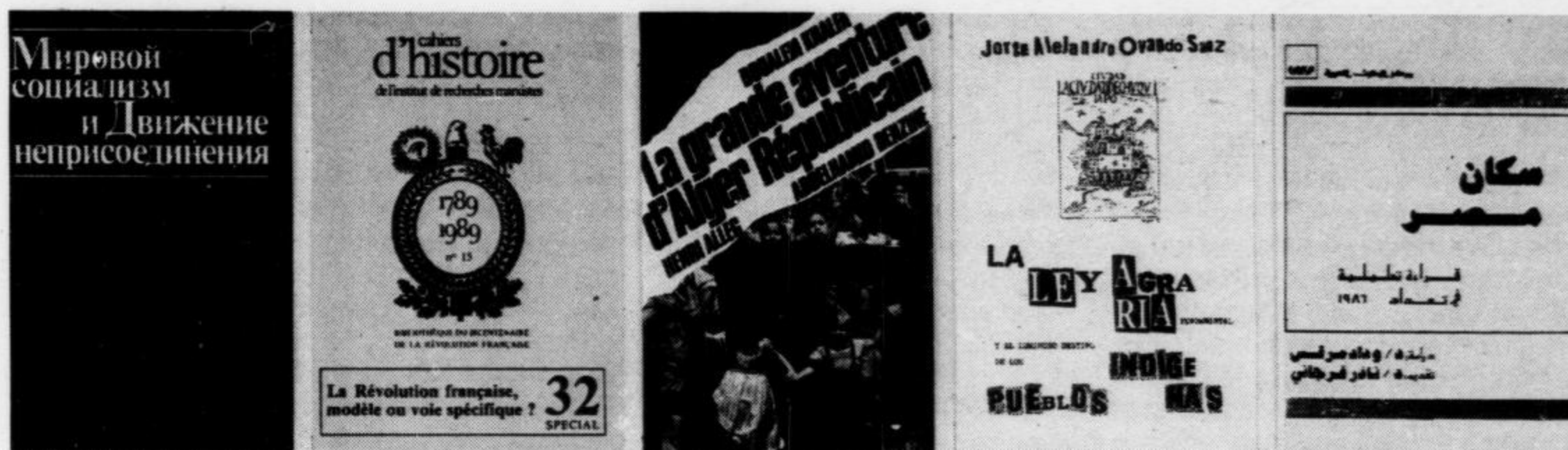
A victory for the democratic forces would mean an end to insurgency, as the demands for real autonomy coincide with the aims of many legal political parties. Time will soon tell where Burma goes.

1 The kyat is the currency of Burma. US \$1 - 6.5 kyats. —Ed.

2 The Sangha is the religious council of the Buddhist monks. —Ed.



the book scene



A PAPER NOT LIKE THE OTHERS

Boualem Khalfa, Henri Alleg, Abdelhamid Benzine,
LA GRANDE AVENTURE D'ALGER RÉPUBLICAIN
(The Great Adventure of Alger *républicain*),
Messidor, Paris, 1987, 264 pp.

In the history of the Algerian press, one newspaper—*Alger républicain*—holds a special place, and this book, by the paper's most recent directors Boualem Khalfa and Henri Alleg, and its editor-in-chief Abdelhamid Benzine, tells its story.

The exclusive place *AR* occupies is due primarily to the fact that it was the only daily that did not depend, either directly or indirectly, on the big colonial bourgeoisie who financed the rest of the press. This alone made it unique.

The book traces three distinct periods.

The first ran from the founding of the newspaper in October 1938 to its closure on September 15, 1939 by the French government of Edouard Daladier, which at the end of the same month also banned the Algerian Communist Party (PCA) and the nationalist Party of the Algerian People (PPA). At that time *AR*, led by the Socialists, acted in the spirit of the Popular Front, created in France. In domestic policy the newspaper favoured assimilating the indigenous population, but at the same time became more and more open to representatives of the national patriotic forces of Algeria. *AR* exposed political provocations aimed at splitting the unity achieved within the Muslim Congress between the

Association of Ulema, the PCA and the Federation of Algerian Deputies, and spoke in defence of the national-patriotic organisations.

During this first and short period of its existence, *AR*, in spite of its shortcomings, succeeded in becoming the voice of the working people of indigenous and European origin, of the victims of institutionalised racism and colonial exploitation, and of the fighters for freedom and progress. It formed a bridge between the progressive forces in Algeria and those in the rest of the world, and existed as a forum for all people of good will, regardless of their race, creed or politics.

The newspaper reappeared on February 24, 1943. It gradually shifted to more radical anti-colonialist and internationalist positions, although this was not an easy process, as the tragic events in the Constantine department on May 8, 1945 prove. On that day, the day Nazism was finally defeated, the Algerian patriotic movement was provoked and then brutally suppressed. The colonialists staged a bloodbath lasting several days: thousands of people were massacred, some thrown into lime kilns, and a number of villages were wiped off the face of the earth. Thousands of patriots were arrested and tried, and many were executed. *AR* carried out an investigation and discovered the horrific truth, but was unable to publish anything because of censorship.

In 1946 the situation changed, with a powerful upsurge in the national liberation movement. In July the PCA leadership put forward a slogan calling for the creation of a broad Algerian national democratic front for freedom, land and bread. More radical elements, including Communists,

joined the *AR* editorial staff. The staff members of Arab-Berber and European origin formed a new collective united by feelings of brotherhood and shared ideals.

Under the Communists' influence *AR* became a mouthpiece for the anticolonial forces, among them the nationalists, the aim being to rally all the patriots supporting Algerian independence.

Although the men in charge were Communists (director Henri Alleg and editor-in-chief Boualem Khalfa held responsible posts in the Algerian Communist Party), *AR* did not claim to be an exclusively communist newspaper. Its pages were open to representatives of all the parties and movements in Algeria, giving them a better chance to express their own points of view. As much information as possible was published about the activity of the patriotic organisations and about national culture.

While pursuing the national-patriotic line, which ensured the newspaper a wide audience among the Algerians, the editors maintained a strong internationalist position. *AR* supported the peoples' struggle against colonialism and imperialism and for freedom and social progress, and joined world opinion in calling for peace and the prohibition of atomic weapons. It also provided an overall picture of life in the Soviet Union and other socialist states.

For this reason the authorities and the big colonial bourgeoisie hated and feared it. Administrative sanctions against the newspaper, seizures of its issues, lawsuits, and fines became more frequent.

When an insurrection was launched by the National Liberation Front (soon to become a broad patriotic union) on November 1, 1954, *AR* did not conceal, despite the merciless censorship of the colonial authorities, where its sympathies lay, and became known as the "newspaper of the fellahin".

"In a sense this insulting label," the book says, "corresponded well to a certain reality. The guerrillas sent to the villages for this newspaper in order to read it later, or have it read and commented on. Despite the censorship, they found in it, apart from words of support for their struggle, valuable political and military information that was absent in the other newspapers" (p. 190).

Using stylistic precautions to avoid censors' objections, *AR* managed to inform the people about the armed struggle, justifying and supporting it by concentrating its critical fire on French colonial policy and the cruel repression. The sequestrations continued, sometimes four a day. In order to explain to its readers what it could say, and what might cause it to be closed down, the newspaper came out with the epigraph: "*Alger républicain* tells the truth, nothing but the truth, but cannot tell the whole truth" (ibid.).

Nevertheless, on the night of September 12-13, 1955, the authorities closed down *AR*, having banned the Algerian Communist Party and all "its branches". Legally, the newspaper could not possibly be accused of being a "branch" of the PCA, but the colonial regime had decided otherwise.

Thus ended the second period of *Alger républicain's* biography. A wall of silence grew up around it, "broken only occasionally during the seven years of war by several brief notices in the colonialists' press about the arrests, sentences, or deaths in action of former *AR* staff members whom

it was pleased to label rebels, terrorists, and bandits" (p. 194).

The *Alger républicain* journalists loved their people and fought for their interests, displaying devotion, generosity of spirit, simplicity and modesty, and a readiness to sacrifice themselves. Many of them later gained international recognition: the writers Kateb Yacine and Mohamed Dib, for example. A great feeling of brotherhood united all the *AR* staff members—Communists and non-Communists alike, Arabs, Berbers, Jews and Europeans.

They never betrayed the cause, the staff continuing the struggle after the shutdown of the newspaper either in the National Liberation Army (ALN) or with the Liberation Combatants organised by the PCA (until their integration into the ALN). They were all to suffer torture, prison, concentration camps and exile and many who joined the guerrillas died as heroes, like Abdelkader Choukhal, Henri Maillot, Abdelkader Benamara, Abderrahmane Benzine, Mourad Ait-Saada, Georges Rafini, Amar Khallouf and Mohamed Belkacem. Not a few were assassinated by the OAS, the fascist-type organisation that stood for a "French Algeria".

The book's authors depict their colleagues with great warmth and expression, showing not without humour some of their "special traits". Even under such difficult circumstances there were moments of light relief.

After the proclamation of Algerian independence in 1962, *AR* staff members were released from prison and concentration camps and rekindled the torch of struggle, now in the new conditions and for still loftier aims. A group was formed of veterans and young newcomers, a fusion that proved successful. Everyone worked with the same enthusiasm, dedication and confidence as before, though some of the "prewar" staff members were nostalgic for the "old collective" (p. 224).

AR soon became Algeria's leading newspaper in circulation and influence, even though it had none of the facilities available to other national publications.

The authorities soon began to bring pressure to bear on the newspaper. In November 1962 the Communist Party was banned. *AR* protested that this was an encroachment upon democracy and would weaken the government and the National Liberation Front itself, a stand which brought it into further conflict with the authorities, despite the fact that the newspaper had lent great support to many government measures. Anti-communism was rife among the FLN circles, who were attempting to get rid of *AR*.

Trying to salvage what they could, the heads of the newspaper agreed at an FLN congress in April 1964 to become one of its organs, and the following year merged *AR* with the newspaper *Le Peuple* to form a new publication—*El-Moudjahid*, with a first issue planned for July 5, 1965. Nothing came of the idea.

"Three weeks before that Ahmed Ben Bella had been deposed, and from then on it was Colonel Houari Boumediene who would preside over the destinies of independent Algeria. ... On the night of June 18-19, 1965, the last issue was seized on the presses. The building was occupied by soldiers, and *Alger républicain* ceased to exist—for the third time in its heroic history" (p. 250).

The book is a captivating read, the story of the newspaper reflecting the main periods of the struggle of the

Algerian people, in which AR took a direct part. At the same time this publication is a tribute to the memory of those forgotten journalists who sacrificed everything for their people. This book revives their names and deeds not only for the present, but also for future generations.

Ali MALKI

* * *

TRADE UNIONISM IN BRITAIN

John Kelly, *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*, Verso, London, 1988, 333 pp.

John Kelly, the author of *Trade Unions and Socialist Politics*, is a lecturer at the London School of Economics, one of Britain's foremost academic institutions for the study of the social sciences. Unlike many academic writers on trade unionism in Britain, he acknowledges the strong influence of Marxism in his thinking.

His book is an attempt to consider trade unionism in the light of the work of Marx, Engels and Lenin, and also Bernstein, Kautsky, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky, Gramsci and a number of contemporary British writers. It is this which gives his book special interest. It is a task which, as far as I am aware, has not previously been attempted in such a systematic fashion by a British writer. Such an exercise is to be welcomed. It is to be hoped that it will be followed by similar scholarly studies.

John Kelly suggests that there are two major questions concerning trade unionism which are central for Marxists who want to change the world towards socialism. First, what kind of trade union strategy would be most likely to develop political class consciousness among workers. Secondly, what role will such a strategy play in the transition to socialism.

One of the strengths of the book is that it demonstrates how Marxism, as fashioned by Marx and Engels, was not a set dogma. They developed and modified their views on trade unionism as a result of experience. Engels in particular, drawing his conclusions from British practice, noted how in conditions of capitalist expansion important sections of the trade union leadership accommodated themselves to the capitalist system. They reflected a view widely held among skilled workers. Their attitude was that, despite occasional setbacks and periods of widespread unemployment, life was steadily improving for the working class and would continue to do so.

John Kelly's own views are sympathetic to those of Rosa Luxemburg. Class consciousness and the movement towards socialism is advanced, he suggests, when large numbers of workers participate in a strike wave. Such a movement evokes a response from employers and the state which exposes the nature of class rule in capitalist society. Thus, according to John Kelly, the focal point of Rosa Luxemburg's theory is that it is the scale of mobilisation of

the working class and the reaction of the ruling class which determine the impact of strikes on political consciousness.

Though I believe that John Kelly's book is important for the study of trade unionism and political action in Britain I have, nevertheless, some reservations about it. In the first place trade unions in capitalist society are not primarily the instruments of socialist transformation, though their activities may in certain circumstances assist the process. Trade unions are the instruments through which workers combine to advance their interests in relation to the employers and to persuade and put pressure on governments to introduce legislation for workers' rights and for the amelioration of social problems, particularly affecting workers' interests. The struggle for socialism requires more than trade union consciousness. It requires independent political organisation and the input of socialist ideas. John Kelly is aware of the distinction but I felt that he sometimes does not give it the distinction it deserves.

Secondly, I differ from John Kelly in some of his judgments. He is rightly critical of Trotskyist views about trade union strategy but he tends to exaggerate Trotskyist influence in British trade unionism. On page 40 he suggests that Trotsky's ideas have directly or indirectly "exerted an enormous influence in the unions". This is to mistake the trade union movement for a variety of fringe "ultra-left" groups which have flourished in recent years. Again, on page 168 he suggests that in the mid-1970s none of the leftish unions in Britain, with the exception of the largest civil service union, where one of the Trotskyist groups had influence, had "significant rank and file or Broad Left groups whose pressure could explain the militant stance of their leaders". This is wrong. The unions in mining, engineering, transport, including railways, and construction have had organised left-wing influence from below for many years.

On page 295 John Kelly states: "Thus whilst it is wrong to argue that almost any strike can radicalise workers, it is equally wrong to follow Lenin's claim of 1902 that economic militancy can have no impact on political class consciousness". This seems to me to be a misunderstanding of Lenin's view¹. Trade unionism can stimulate class consciousness and can stimulate trade union politics. By this is meant efforts by political action to secure changes favourable to workers' interests but changes, nevertheless, which do not challenge the domination of capital. Socialist consciousness, however, is a different matter. The ideas of socialism are brought to the workers' movement, sometimes by intellectuals and sometimes by workers themselves who have read and studied socialist literature. Workers who are class conscious as a result of trade union struggles are more likely to respond to socialist ideas.

When considering trade unionism in Britain it has to be borne in mind that the aim, as seen by most workers, is to secure changes within the existing system and this is usually done by negotiations, backed by organisation, and by agreements. Agreements are far more frequent than strikes. Most workers have never participated in a strike wave. These experiences reflect themselves in the politics of the labour movement.

An explanation has then to be offered as to why from about the mid-1960s the firm grip of right-wing domination of the British trade union movement was significantly

loosened, though not ended. This, however, goes beyond the scope of this review.

John Kelly's book ends on an optimistic note. He sees the continuing strength of trade unionism and its great potential for the future. He says that the unions must work in tandem with a mass socialist political party. He adds that this is something that Britain conspicuously lacks.

Jim MORTIMER,
former General Secretary,
the Labour Party

1 In his book *What Is To Be Done?* (1902) Lenin wrote that economic exposures serve "as a starting-point for the awakening of class-consciousness, for the beginning of a trade-union struggle, and for the spread of socialism" (*Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 399). But he immediately stressed: "...Not only must Social-Democrats not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must take up actively the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness" (*Ibid.*, p. 400). —Ed.

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AN AUTHOR'S VIEW

A TRILOGY ABOUT STALIN

Professor Robert TUCKER, USA

Joseph Stalin's political biography is a subject on which many books have been written in different countries. In the United States, Robert Tucker, Professor Emeritus of history at Princeton University, is working on a trilogy about Stalin. The first volume, dealing with the period up to 1929, was published back in the mid-1970s.¹ The second, covering the 1930s, is to appear in late 1989. The author is now working on the third volume, about the war and the postwar years. A WMR staff member interviewed Professor Tucker who replied to a number of questions, setting forth his personal views.

- *Volume 1 of your trilogy is called Stalin as Revolutionary...*
Were I to publish it now, I would have called it *Stalin: The Path to Power*.
- *Does this mean that as a biographer, you are facing a choice, an alternative: was he a revolutionary or did he simply pursue power and use socialist slogans and Marxist phraseology for his personal purposes?*

I do not see this as an alternative. Rather, it seems to me that a person can be very power-hungry, but at the same time be a revolutionary and a believer, in his own way, in the revolution and in socialism. Khrushchev knew Stalin rather well and what he said about him is true, I think. I have chosen his words as one of the two epigraphs to Volume 2: "This is the whole tragedy: that he believed in what he was doing." Stalin was power-hungry, he was a master of acquiring power, but I am convinced he was also a believer in the mis-

sion of the revolution which all Bolsheviks accepted, the mission of constructing a socialist society in Soviet Russia.

Insofar as people may feel Stalin swerved from the correct path of building socialism, the assumption may be that there was some kind of a clear, direct path. But this was the subject of heated debate in the 1920s. There was considerable perplexity in the minds not only of Stalin but also of very many Bolsheviks of his time about what it would mean to go forward in the building of socialism.

Briefly, my biography of Stalin differs from others in that most of his biographers simply told the story of his life. Meanwhile, I have been interested not so much in the story of his life as in the interaction between this personality and the historical process, in the way the historical process helped shape a man who, in turn, influenced its course.

- *Volume 2 is about Stalin in the 1930s, but there are not all that many documents about that period relating directly to him.*

The concept of documents is something to be defined. True, we have very little archive material. But there is the enormously valuable speech of Khrushchev which he made in 1956, and there are many other testimonies that have come out in the form of memoirs, mostly produced in the Soviet Union. But I have a very different definition of a document. For example, I have read every single issue of *Pravda* published in the 1930s—more than 3,500 historical documents. That was when what you now call the command-economy system took over, and it made an impact on journalism too. Stalin read *Pravda* every day, and he had a controlling influence over what appeared or did not appear in *Pravda*. Therefore, I regard it as an enormously valuable source telling us what this man wanted, what he believed and what he wanted others to believe.

Although many things did not appear in the newspapers, we also have the Trotsky archives, Trotsky's biography of Stalin and the *Bulletin of the Opposition*² for the whole of the 1930s.

- *The path Stalin chose was very different from what Lenin and other Bolsheviks suggested. Stalin's path led to the command-economy system, repression and various deformations of socialism.*

You know, I have worked so many years trying to be above all a historian, not simply a biographer that I have learned a very important rule: you cannot resolve the question of history—why it went one way and not the other way—by merely enumerating the factors. History is a process that moves and flows like a river, going through bends and making turns. The only way to recreate history is to reconstruct it, to show events as they were happening. I go event by event.

I do not believe that as he launched his "revolution from above"³ in 1929, Stalin planned the massive terror, the system of repression that developed on a particularly large scale in 1934 with the murder of Kirov and went on for so long. But the strong criticism in the party of the accelerated collectivization drive led him to the decision that this was what he must do. Here is how I reconstruct it.

At the 16th Party Conference in April 1929 it was envisaged that 17% of the sown areas of the country would be collectivized by the end of the five-year period. This was much more modest than the objective Stalin decided to attain in the fall and winter of 1929—something that could only

be accomplished by terror, under the false flag of "dekulakization," even though only a tiny percentage of the peasants could be called kulaks. This forced collectivization led not only to repression but also to the famine of 1932-1934. In the party, many opposed these methods—Riutin, Eismont, Smirnov and others.

In 1929-1930 the *Partiynoye stroitelstvo* journal called collectivization a "rural October Revolution". *The Short Course of Party History*, published in 1938, went back and compared it directly to the October Revolution of 1917.

After the first October, what was the response of the Bolshevik party to Lenin? Lenin became a charismatic figure in the eyes of the Bolsheviks. He was sincerely and fervently adulated by all his fellow party members as the architect of October.

Here was "Stalin's October". He wanted to demonstrate that of all the Bolsheviks, only he could be another Lenin. But instead of being glorified (that came later), Stalin was criticized by many party members. The country had fallen into a state of distress.

If you look at the telegram sent in September 1936 from Sochi to Moscow, signed by Stalin and Zhdanov and saying that the NKVD was four years late with the reprisals,⁴ and if you go back four years to 1932, you will see it was the time of the Riutin platform.⁵

All this, I think, largely explains Stalin's actions.

- *Still, he got support from the party and from a lot of people outside the party. It was not the majority that was in opposition, not by a long shot.*

Yes, that is true. I think part of it is that in the 1930s, a lot of support came from the "newly promoted"—those who were earlier sent to school, received a technical education (many of them from the worker and peasant classes) and who thought they had Stalin to thank for their whole careers. It is very important to stress, I believe, that in the late 1920s large sections of the party consisted of younger members who joined it after the 1917 revolution and after Lenin's death. Stalin even dedicated his book *On the Fundamentals of Leninism* to these new members, as one can see from the epigraph he selected. He was very conscious of his constituency. But he also had old Bolsheviks among those who backed him. In my book on political culture and leadership⁶ I have tried to explain why.

In the mid-1920s there was a breakdown of Leninist revolutionary culture into three tendencies. One was the Leftists who put the emphasis on continuing the world revolution—Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rakovsky and others. The "rights"—Rykov, Bukharin, Tomsky and, at that time, Stalin,—believed in socialism in one country. I would describe this current as "national Bolshevism". Stalin had his own way of being a "national Bolshevik", different from Bukharin's but in 1925-1926 it was very muted. It was not until the end of 1927, after the 15th Party Congress, when the "Left" was eliminated, that Stalin adopted a different stance not only in his methods, which were based mostly on force, but also in what the interests of the nation meant to him. That was the third current.

Rykov's and Bukharin's nationalism I would call benign because it emphasized a gradual and nonviolent transition to socialism and treated the people and their traditions with

profound respect. By contrast, Stalin's nationalism was malign. While appealing to patriotism, it fostered national self-aggrandizement but reckoned little with the people's interests and traditions and was disdainful of the minorities. Lenin called such party leaders "vulgar Great-Russian bullies".⁷

Besides, I do not think one can understand the "revolution from above" without linking domestic policy with foreign policy, with Stalin's interpretation of the "hostile capitalist encirclement."

- *In 1927, as international tensions aggravated dramatically, Britain broke off diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union.*

Western historians call it the "war scare". Stalin blew it out of all proportion, and it helped him justify the domestic "emergency" measures. When Chicherin returned to Moscow from Germany that year, he said there was no danger of war breaking out. But his friends replied, "Sh-sh! We know that, but we need it against Trotsky." In this Bukharin and Rykov supported Stalin, but in a way that was ruinous for their own cause.

- *Do you devote any part of your book to Stalin's policy toward the Comintern?*

His Comintern policy must be seen in the context of his larger foreign policy orientation. As a Great-Russian chauvinist, Stalin had a conception of a continuing international revolution that would be amalgamated with the aggrandizement of the Soviet Union. He maintained that socialist revolutions would first occur in the neighboring countries, not in the more developed capitalist nations such as Germany, France or Great Britain. Those Comintern leaders who were committed Marxist-Leninists and desired revolution in their countries (such as Palmiro Togliatti) did not appeal to Stalin. He was only interested in Comintern figures who would be reliably subject to his authoritarian command-edict system.

But at that time the Comintern was not his Comintern because it did not accept Stalin's view of foreign policy. In the final analysis, this led to the Comintern purge that occurred mostly after 1935 but began in fact in the late 1920s.

- *I believe you are familiar with the arguments marshaled by Nina Andreyeva⁸ and others to the effect that Stalin was respected as a statesman by his Western counterparts, as a national leader who brought his country to victory in the war. How would you assess this argument?*

I would refrain from talking about Stalin's relations with Churchill and Roosevelt during World War II because it is a period I am only starting to research. He was an important historical figure, no question about it. But in assessing him one must go back and ask ourselves what would have happened had the nation been led by someone else, say by Sergei Kirov. He was a genuine antifascist, a proponent of collective security. That is my most interesting hypothetical example. I believe that history would have developed differently in many respects after 1934 if the delegates of the 17th Party Congress had made a determined effort and replaced Stalin with the leader backed by a majority.

There is no question in my mind that your country would have been infinitely stronger without Stalin, particularly in morale. Look at the cadres who would have gone on, look

at the army you would have had in 1938. My God, these were the most brilliant military commanders in the whole world. After he was arrested, Tukhachevsky wrote a book in prison predicting a German invasion in the summer of 1941. The USSR would have had a different future, and other countries would have responded differently to a Soviet Union without Stalin.

No, I do not agree with Nina Andreyevna. Such people link the greatness of their country with its military power, with its control and domination of other countries. This is not my idea of greatness. I believe that the strength of a country is in the stability and decency of its institutions and in the commitment of the people to those institutions and to their country.

Stalin hurt his country in a thousand ways, and the degree of the damage is so great that it is difficult to measure exactly. I hope my readers will find additional arguments bearing out this conclusion in Volumes 2 and 3 of my trilogy.

- 1 Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin as Revolutionary. 1879-1929. A Study in History and Personality*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1974.
- 2 A journal Trotsky published in exile abroad. —Ed.
- 3 Stalin referred to the blanket collectivization campaign as a "revolution from above supported from below." —Ed.
- 4 Soon after the telegram was sent, the NKVD leadership was replaced, Yezhov was put in charge and the repression intensified dramatically. —Ed.
- 5 The message "To All Party Members" from a group of prominent Communists led by Riutin in which they denounced Stalin's policies and demanded his demotion from the leadership. —Ed.
- 6 Robert C. Tucker, *Political Culture and Leadership in Soviet Russia. From Lenin to Gorbachev*, W.W. Norton, New York, 1987.
- 7 See V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 36, p. 608.
- 8 In March 1988 *Sovietskaya Rossiya* published an article signed by Nina Andreyeva, objecting to a principled assessment of Stalin's role and to the exposure of his crimes. The article was widely debated in the Soviet Union and was described in *Pravda*, newspaper of the CPSU Central Committee, as a platform of the anti-reform forces. —Ed.

A PUBLISHER'S INTERVIEW

ORBIS INFORMS...

Sequence follows sequence on the TV screen. Anyone who has visited Prague at least once will immediately recognise one of the busiest streets in the Czechoslovak capital. The camera finally zooms in on a reporter asking somewhat bewildered young passers-by—pupils, students and workers:

"What does the October Revolution mean to you?"

The replies vary.

"Lenin... The first victorious proletarian revolution... People's government, world peace..."

"Which person do you most wish success?"

A stylishly dressed young man pauses, and then answers confidently:

"Mikhail Gorbachov, of course."

"Why?"

"In a very short time he has won the sympathies of many in this country by his policy and the ability to communicate with people..."

This sequence is taken from *The Word of the Revolution*, a videofilm made by the Czechoslovak Orbis Press Agency's youngest audiovisual communication department. Created in 1987, it immediately joined in the agency's main task of informing audiences abroad about the progress being made by socialist Czechoslovakia and its position on key foreign-policy issues.

In addition to its videoprogrammes, Orbis publishes and distributes magazines, books, pamphlets and other printed matter in many languages, arranges exhibitions abroad and offers articles and photographs to the foreign media.

"Orbis is a non-governmental organisation, sponsored by the Czechoslovak Society for International Relations," says Vladimir Vipler, the agency's director since its founding in 1977. "We want people abroad to know more about our country and we aim to help the foreign press cover Czechoslovakia's life more objectively by providing the necessary information. This is particularly important now that the economic system here is being overhauled, a restructuring of the political system is beginning and broad democratisation is under way. We have established close contacts with the press of communist and workers' parties, the trade union press and newspapers and magazines of progressive organisations, along with a number of other mass media of the capitalist and developing world. Tens of thousands of Orbis materials appear abroad annually in the press. We are paying ever greater attention to the dissemination of information in the developing countries..."

- But why should Orbis, designed to provide information about Czechoslovakia, devote one of its videofilms to the October Revolution in Russia?

The October Revolution is a perennial theme, and everyone is interested in it. It's a factor in our history too. Using video techniques, we attempted to show its impact on political developments in our country, underscore the historical background to today's problems, and highlight the major areas of Czechoslovak-Soviet cooperation. Judging by foreign and domestic audiences' reactions, the film has proved a success.

- Could you tell us about some other videofilms?

Major political and economic reforms are being carried out in Czechoslovakia. Our economy is being put on a profit and loss accounting and self-financing basis. Hence the issue of unprofitable plants. One of them near Prague has recently been shut down. The film *New Initiatives* looks at this event. We tried to reveal the closure's social consequences, the impact on the people who worked at the plant, i.e., how socialism solves this problem by large-scale state employment and retraining schemes.

The film *Time of Hope* is devoted to an important world issue. Based on the new political thinking, and keen to share in the drive for a 'common European home', our country has proposed a zone of trust, cooperation and good-neighbourliness on the line of contact between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty in Europe. It was certainly not easy to explore this theme in video images, but comment from abroad shows that we've made another successful film; it did help the West understand better the gist of our initiative.

● *Please say a few words about traditional Orbis output.*

Each year we publish 30 to 40 book titles and ten magazines, most appearing in five languages—English, Spanish, German, Russian and French—and some even in 16. Among the books of 1988, to continue international themes, I can mention: *Munich Warns; Czechoslovakia and Africa; Czechoslovak Physicians Against War; CMEA—A New Type of International Relations; and Zionism*. We also published a number of historical studies, including *The Birth of Czechoslovakia* (marking the Republic's 70th anniversary), *Czechoslovakia and the International Olympic Movement* and the epic book *The Slavs*—about the contribution of the Slavs to European culture. But it is books about the country's present-day problems—the successes and difficulties of socialism and the current reforms—that occupy the chief position. We are striving for maximum candour. The authors of some publications are foreigners who have visited Czechoslovakia and shared their impressions. The British publicist Denver Walker's reportage *Czechoslovakia—Believe It Or Not* is a case in point.

Of the periodicals I would like to mention *Czechoslovak Life*. It's an illustrated magazine issued in English, Spanish, Italian, German and French editions. The weekly *Neue Prager Presse* covers relations between Czechoslovakia, Austria and the FRG. Targeted mainly at tourists, it has many subscribers and is also sold at border railway stations and tourist centres.

Soviet and GDR readers are already familiar with the monthly *Socialist Czechoslovakia*, which is published in Russian and German. Apart from individuals, this magazine has many group subscribers, in particular, schools, enterprises and institutions maintaining friendly relations with their partners in our country.

Each quarter we bring out a colourful review, *Welcome to Czechoslovakia*, in English, Russian, German and French. The magazine *Revue Fotografie* is also very popular.

A special place among such publications is held by *The Czechoslovak World*, a magazine designed for our compatriots abroad. They number about 3.5 million—Czechs and Slovaks—some already fourth- or fifth-generation emigrants living in Canada, the USA, Europe and South America. The copies are mainly sold by subscription. Readers write that they have come to love this magazine and, when arriving in our country, many of them become its guests.

The central Orbis department for articles and commentaries gathers reports about domestic and international events. We prepare these materials as commissioned by foreign press agencies and other partners. They are

reprinted, newspapers and magazines refer to them, and individual correspondents and Czechoslovak agencies use them. *Via Pacis* (The Road of Peace) also serves the same aims. It was founded recently to report on major disarmament initiatives and peace actions in various parts of the world. A group of specialists gather photomaterials for our foreign partners.

● *You have mentioned exhibitions as part of the agency's work. What do you mean exactly?*

Our photoinformation is used widely in organising various exhibitions abroad. Orbis stands are demonstrated at international book fairs and communist press festivals. In 1988 we attended nine such festivals—putting up stands, showing videoprogrammes, handing out printed matter and so on—in Barcelona, Copenhagen, Vienna, Florence, Paris, Lisbon, Brussels, Madrid and Valencia.

● *I would like to return to video. What prompted the agency to create an audiovisual department?*

Above all, an awareness of the growing significance and effectiveness of audiovisuals. In 1986, for example, the United States gave away tens of thousands of free video cassettes in Western Europe for propaganda purposes, in addition to various concert programmes, shows and films. Other capitalist states are also active in this area. This new type of communication has also made its mark in the socialist world. For several years now video has existed in Bulgaria, Poland and the Soviet Union, whereas we have been rather behind. We have to work hard to catch up. At present Orbis has all the necessary specialists and equipment for shooting, editing and reproducing videofilms. We want our programmes to be shown at youth and trade union clubs, libraries, festivals, wherever people get together, and to reach people not only in socialist, but also in developing and industrialised capitalist countries.

In 1988 we released over 30 films, including videocassettes on the open session of the World Peace Council in Prague, the withdrawal of Soviet medium-range missiles from Czechoslovak territory, and the CMEA's biggest joint project—the Krivoi Rog Ore Mining and Processing Enterprise.

● *Have you received any complaints, from tourists for example?*

Western visitors often ask why we emphasise "socialist Czechoslovakia" and "the socialist state", and tell us to write more simply! These people do not always agree with our arguments, our ideological approach displeases them. However, we think that the character of Czechoslovak society and the sources of our people's achievement should be formulated accurately and objectively. We explain our point of view to these people, offer additional literature, and exchange opinions. Naturally, we learn from these meetings too, and try to improve the work of Orbis. But we always proceed from the fact that the Czechoslovak people have firmly chosen the socialist road for themselves and are true to the ideals of socialism.

**The interview was by
WMR staff member
Svetlana GLUSHKO**

THE READER AND THE JOURNAL

THOSE WHO DEVELOP WEAPONS DO NOT DESERVE PRIZES

The arms race continues—despite efforts by leading political figures in many countries. Any settlement of this issue would seem to require not only the efforts of politicians—to my mind scientists also need to be more active in working to achieve this goal. Ultimately, it is they and not the politicians who are developing ever more sophisticated types of weapons of mass destruction.

One out of every four scientists in the world is now involved with the military. But a true scientist is not only a specialist in his particular field, above all he must be a thinker, and only then a physicist, virologist, chemist, etc. No philosophical concept can justify work to develop weapons which can lead to a global disaster. Researchers may seek justification by saying that what they are doing strengthens their country's defences. It is now clear, however, that despite superior armaments, there can be no winner in a nuclear war for the simple reason that several nuclear devices detonated in any part of the world would play havoc with the atmosphere's ozone layer, destroying all life on our planet.

That is why I think that a researcher engaged in developing new types of weapons loses the right to be called a scientist, for that would be an insult to the memory of Koch, Pasteur, and an insult to the thousands of others who have worked for the benefit of humanity.

In my opinion, it would be wrong to confer scientific degrees and titles for military research and development or to award scientific and other prizes for accomplishments in this field.

Ya. SULAKVELIDZE
Assistant Professor,
Tbilisi State University,
USSR

HISTORY TEACHES US

I have been reading *WMR* for several years now and I have found it very useful. The journal helps me to get a better idea

of the situation, and find my way through the mountains of lies and falsifications that have piled up in the Western World. The analysis of the Teheran Conference in last year's 12th issue was particularly interesting. It is a valuable contribution to a correct understanding of the course of history, the motives and motive forces behind it.

I found confirmation of the conference's significance in other sources too. For example, in Jean Laloy's book on the "discussion" between Stalin and de Gaulle on December 10, 1944. Despite its anticommunist ideas, the book contains interesting statements which would appeal to earnest historians. We see from Laloy's writings that de Gaulle recognised Poland (albeit unofficially) on December 10, 1944, while the British and Americans took this step only after the Yalta Conference of 1945. Why? I feel certain it had a lot to do with the Teheran Conference held from November 28 to December 1, 1943.

Hans ROSNER
the Netherlands

"I PRAY FOR PERESTROIKA"

Believers, like all people, crave peace and harmony in relations between nations. To achieve that goal, genuine freedom, democracy and justice must reign supreme in each and every country.

I pray that the Soviet leadership should continue unerringly along the path of perestroika and glasnost, despite all the formidable obstacles that inevitably confront such a difficult process as the spiritual renewal of society. Let there be in the Soviet Union religious freedoms, political freedoms, and freedom of travel to other countries.

I welcomed the American withdrawal from Vietnam, just as I welcome the pull-out of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan. I consider this to be a sign of perestroika, new political thinking and true glasnost. And as a believer I hope that in time the churches which had been converted into museums or closed, will reopen.

F. MORELLO
Pinerolo, Italy

IN THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE

Dear Comrade,

I want to draw your attention to the article which was published in *WMR* (No. 10, 1988) in my name. I had a talk with the representative of *WMR* who had been to Katmandu. But I did not hand over an article to him for publication. The article should have been published as a commentary on Nepal based on the talks with me. The references concerning the royal family in the above mentioned article do not have any concurrence with the view expressed by me. I referred to high officials of His Majesty's government of Nepal who have been indulging in black-marketing and corruption and not to His Majesty's family.

In these circumstances, I request you to publish this letter in your magazine so that concerned matters may be understood in the proper perspective mentioned above.

Thank you,

Yours comradely,

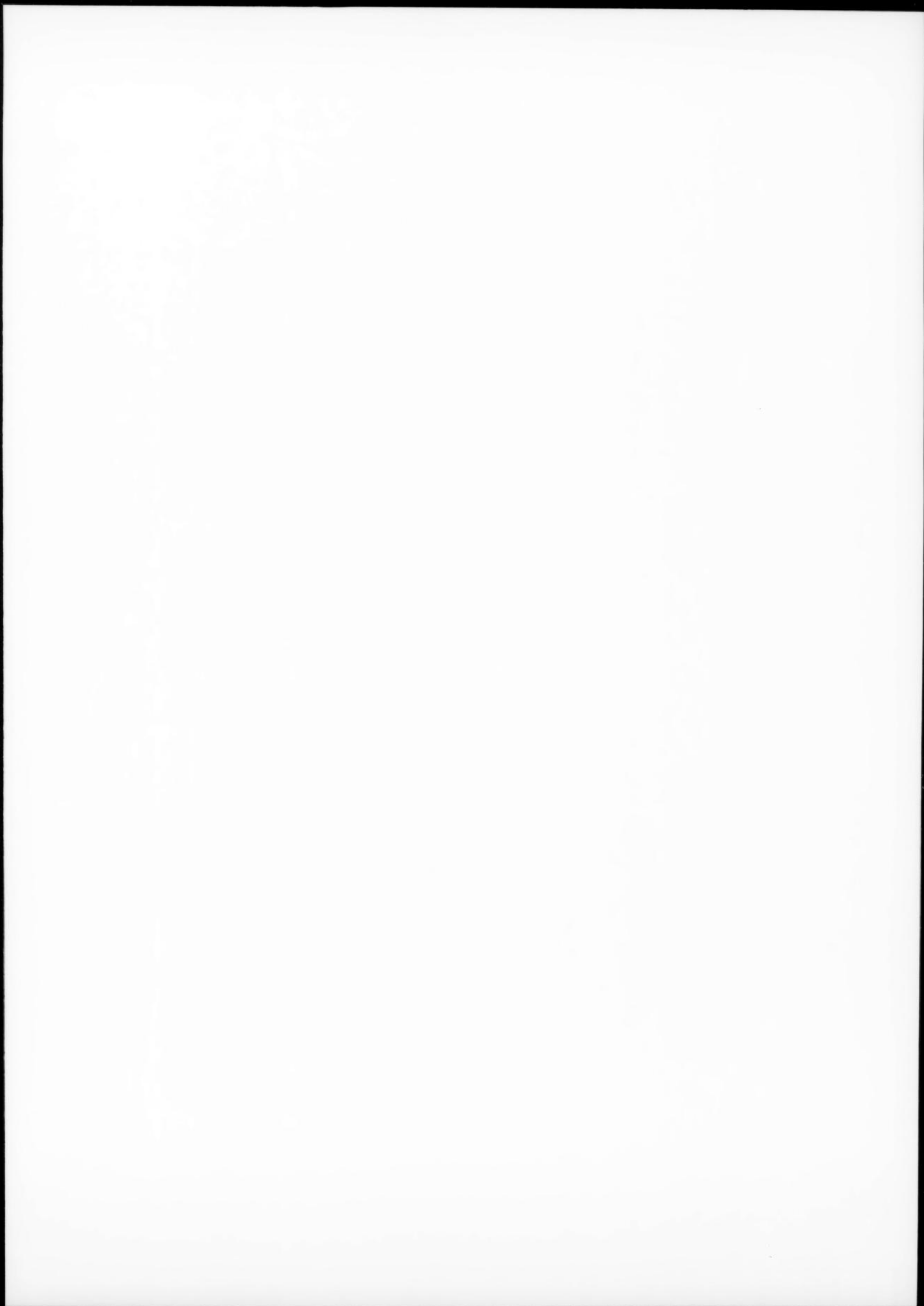
B. B. MANANDHAR
General Secretary,
Central Committee,
Communist Party of Nepal

A TALKING POINT

I have been a reader of your journal for 28 years now and I am especially interested in articles on perestroika in the Soviet Union and the radical reforms in other socialist countries.

As a loyal friend of the journal I would like to make a suggestion. Among the debates covered in *WMR* there still hasn't been any mention of one of the most crucial problems, that of splits in certain communist parties. It's not merely a question of raising this issue but of its comprehensive discussion. I think an open and comradely examination of the reasons behind these splits, with no outside interference in internal party affairs, would go a long way to strengthening the tendencies towards unity.

N. TSEKOV KRSTEV
Ruska Byala, Bulgaria





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—28—

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