

International VIEWPOINT

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**What's behind Gorbachev's reforms?
Spanish students rock Gonzalez regime
No real winners in West German elections**

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

Fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in conjunction with the French language *Inprecor*, which appears on alternate fortnights.

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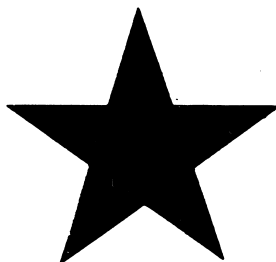
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A great loss for our movement

ON SATURDAY February 7, we learned of the death of our comrade and friend, Tom Gustafsson of the Socialistisk Partiet (Socialist Party), the Swedish section of the Fourth International.

This news came not only as a shock but a great blow to all those who had known and worked with Tom. Amid all the turbulence and difficulties facing the revolutionary movement today, Tom was a solid and reliable comrade who would gladly help with any problem, however large or small.

A central leader of the Socialist Party, Tom was also a leader of the Fourth International. He was a regular contributor to *International Viewpoint*, and took a close interest in the magazine from its inception. During his period as a fulltime worker for the Fourth International, one of his responsibilities was liaison with the editorial staff of *IV*.

On page 27 of this issue is a tribute to Tom's life and work written by Göte Kilden, the chair of the Socialist Party. We would like to take this opportunity to pay our own small tribute to a respected and dear comrade, and to extend our deepest condolences in particular to Tom's companion, Birgitta, and all the comrades of the Swedish section.

Messages can be sent to the Socialistisk Partiet, Box 42 107, 126 12 Stockholm. The Swedish comrades have opened a memorial fund for Tom, which will be used to fund international educational activities in Sweden. Donations to the fund should be sent to Tom Gustafsson Minnesfond, Post-giro 466139-3.

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A temporary and fragile success for Cory

THE FEBRUARY 2, 1987, constitutional referendum represented an undeniable political success for the Philippine president. With 80% of qualified voters voting, and 76% of those voting "yes," Corazon Aquino soared over the credibility threshold of 65%. The government is now going to use this new electoral legitimacy as a lever to pursue its stabilization plans and to increase the pressure on the revolutionary movement in the islands.

Spectacular as it was, this electoral success is still relative, temporary and fragile. The mass enthusiasm that followed the fall of the Marcos dictatorship a year ago has ebbed. The government has just used up one of its last resorts to stem the rising wave of disillusionment that began several months ago. The next tests, such as the spring legislative elections, threaten again to expose its weaknesses and its internal contradictions.

PAUL PETITJEAN

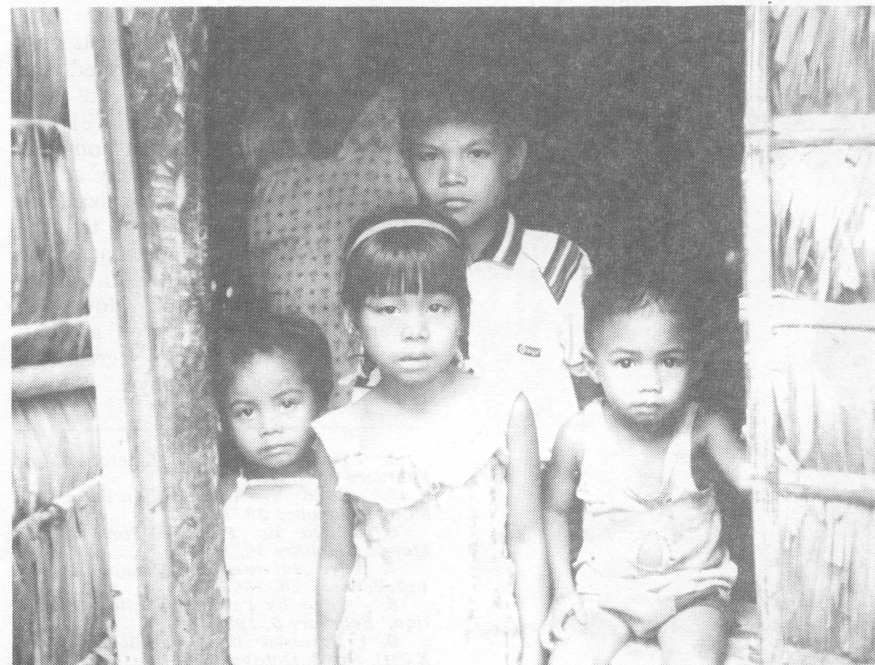
The voting on February 2 was held in a calm unusual for major elections in the islands. Nonetheless, on the very eve of the referendum the most alarmist rumors were going around in the capital, Manila. Particularly grave events had in fact occurred in the two weeks preceding the vote.

On January 22, 1987, the KMP (Peasant Movement of the Philippines) organized a big peasant demonstration

to demand the implementation of a real land reform. (1) On the Mendiola bridge that leads to the presidential palace, the army opened fire, killing about 20 people and wounding dozens of others.

Marines had been deployed behind the police cordons. The usual methods of controlling demonstrations (tear gas and so on) were neglected in favor of the means of war. It was an obvious

Poverty is still a way of life for many in the Philippines (DR)



provocation, reminiscent of the kidnapping and murder of union leader Rolando Olalia in November.

The Mendiola massacre aroused intense feeling. Cardinal Sin, the archbishop of Manila, said that the failure to carry out a land reform was "in large measure" responsible for the slaughter. In a pastoral letter, Sin declared: "We ask our government, in the wake of this tragedy, to turn its attention to the issue of land reform and the concerns most closely related with it." (2)

On January 26, 30,000 demonstrators turned out in response to the call from the KMP and other left organizations to march in front of the presidential palace as a sign of protest.

However, on January 27, the capital became the theater of a new attempted coup d'etat, more serious than the previous one. The rebels attacked military camps and the Villamor airbase, which is close to the city center. In Hawaii, the Marcoses tried to hire a plane for the Philippines. The plot was exposed and then aborted. But, nonetheless, the mutineers occupied the right-wing TV station, GMA-7, for three days and got active support from civilians mobilized for the affair.

Later, 200 soldiers regrouped on a property belonging to the former dictator's son-in-law at Montalban, to the north of Manila, withdrew into the heights of the Sierra Madre, languidly pursued by government troops.

Finally, on January 31, there was a new bloody provocation. The army fired on demonstrators in Bataan, the site of the country's main "free zone," killing three KMU (May 1 Movement) strikers and wounding about 30 people. (3)

Until the eve of the vote, various factions of the armed forces maintained a climate of extreme tension. It is in this context that the results of the referendum should be analyzed. Shortly before the vote, the journalist Patrick Sabatier noted that "the succession of dramas in these last weeks . . . probably favored a 'yes' vote. A lot of undecided probably

1. *The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP), the Peasant Movement of the Philippines, today claims 750,000 members. The KMP takes part in the coalition of mass activist organizations known under the acronym of Bayan. The KMP's "Program for genuine land reform" was published in 'National Midweek' (Quezon City) of November 26 and December 3, 1986.*

2. *Cited by Keith Richburg, 'International Herald Tribune,' January 26, 1987.*

3. *Since January 26, following the massacre of the peasants on the Mendiola bridge, the Kilusang Mayo Union (KMU), the 600,000 strong militant trade-union confederation, held a 'welgang bayan' (people's strike) in the province of Mariveles, Bataan, where the "industrial free-zone" is located.*

voted for Cory out of fear of disorder." (4) The victory of the "yes" vote — a vote of confidence in the president — remained primarily a vote against the military right, an affirmation of democratic aspirations.

With the backing of this plebiscite, Corazon Aquino has promised to bring the rebel elements in the army to heel. General Ramos has announced that 400 soldiers and officers accused of having taken part in the January 27 coup d'état will be brought before a court martial. It is, nonetheless, highly unlikely that the army will agree to return to its barracks.

The "no" votes won in North Ilocano, Ferdinand Marcos and Juan Ponce Enrile's home region, and in many military bases. The army voted against a constitution that seeks to ban it from interfering in political life and that puts the police under civilian authority (the country's main police force, the Philippine Constabulary, was a military body).

The pretext for the various strong-arm operations carried out by the "neo-fascists," as the Filipinos say, is anti-communism. "We are acting out of nationalism and anti-communism," Airforce Colonel Oscar Canlas declared during the occupation of the GMA-7 TV station. "For 11 months, we have seen this government rot under the influence of the communists. We have to act now. Afterwards it will be too late." There are real divergences over what policy to follow toward the popular insurrection. But behind these warlike statements lies a much more general dispute over the role of the armed forces: "We think that they have to play a political role," Colonel Canlas declared without mincing any words. (5)

The 700 or so military said to have been directly implicated in the recent

A sugar worker on the island of Negros (DR)

attempted coup d'état are only the tip of the iceberg. There are a lot of officers who do not conceal their sympathies for the mutineers, who, one such officer noted, "threw themselves into this operation to draw the attention of public opinion to the communist menace. We have to take into account the sincerity of their action." (6)

There are also a lot of Filipino officers who have taken the Thai army as their model, an army that has been in politics now for more than 50 years. In Thailand, military factions control certain parties. As a result, they are represented in the National Assembly. Nonetheless, the general staff's ideologues do not hesitate to challenge the authority of the legislature. The parties' Assembly, they say, does not represent the country but private interests, those of business circles (which is not false); the army, however, can speak in the name of the entire nation (which is certainly not true!)

Music to the ears of the military

That tune is music to the ears of the Filipino military parvenus. They will find allies in the National Assembly that is to be elected in May, in particular among the right-wing Ilocano politicians (since nepotism was the rule in Marcos' time, a lot of higher officers belong to the same Ilocano "clans" as Marcos or Enrile). But they will not be directly represented in the parliament or the Senate. A real and enduring political-institutional conflict seems to be shaping up between the army and the parties of the regional big families, between the civilian power and the military

power, a complex fracture running through the Aquino regime itself, as well as through the country's social elite.

The army has already let it be known that it is not satisfied with the government's shift to the right, which was carried out at the end of 1986 following the "recommendations" presented by General Ramos, the chief of the general staff, at the time of the November crisis. (7) "The government's problems with the army are not over," stressed Juan Ponce Enrile, former minister of defence and present leader of the right. (8)

The threat is clear, the pressure constant. While the army is divided into factions, it tends to close ranks against the civilian regime. At the time of the January 27-29 coup, General Ramos received a delegation of officers demanding clemency for the mutineers. He let it be understood that he himself was opposed to any overly severe penalties. While Aquino was already promising that the mutineers would be court-martialed, Colonel Canlas, one of their leaders, was able to participate in a press conference alongside Ramos and the defence minister, General Iletto, explaining to anyone who wanted to listen that the mutineers' abandonment of the occupation of the TV station GMA-7 should not be seen as a surrender.

The forces of the left divided over what policy to follow toward the referendum. In October, the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) issued a call to "reject the pro-imperialist and anti-masses constitution" and to "carry forward the struggle for national democracy." The statement went on to say, "the reactionaries peddle 'peaceful processes' to divert the masses from the path of real social change. But history shows — and has proven in the previous anti-dictatorship struggle — that it is only through direct struggles, armed and unarmed, that the people are able to achieve concrete victories." (9)

However, this position on the election was not automatically adopted by the other left organizations, including those belonging to the National Democratic current. The KMP and the national KMU, whose chairperson was struck down in November, also called for a "no" vote. On the island of Negros, the KMU called for a "critical yes" vote.

4. The Paris daily 'Liberation' of February 2, 1987.

5. Cited by Kim Gordon-Bates, 'Le Monde,' January 29, 1987.

6. Cited by Philippe Pons in 'Le Monde,' January 30, 1987.

7. See 'International Viewpoint,' No. 112, January 26, 1987.

8. Cited by Patrick Sabatier, 'Liberation,' February 5, 1987.

9. Editorial in 'Ang Bayan,' Vol. XVIII, No. 8, October 1986, pp. 1-3.



Gorbachev's dilemmas

In December, when the mass coalition Bayan held a poll of its member organizations, the "critical yes" position won out by 96 votes against 75 for a "no" vote and 7 for an abstention. (10) Over January, the "no" camp gained strength, but Bayan, as a coalition, called for a "vote according to conscience," thereby leaving its members free to choose. The Partido ng Bayan, which was initially favorable to a "critical yes" vote, had to rediscuss its position on January 25. It demanded that the vote be postponed. About 50 left organizations called for a "critical yes" vote. (11)

These political differences have to be understood in the general context of the country. Revolutionary struggles have been going on for years in the island; people's armed forces exist. But the political situation at present is far from revolutionary. It remains contradictory in many aspects. The fall of the Marcos regime opened up a "democratic space," favoring the expansion of the legal mass organizations. But the "center" in political life, which was flattened under the dictatorship, has rebuilt itself behind Aquino, with the middle classes as a base.

The people's movement — such as Bayan, the KMU and the KMP, for example — has grown remarkably since the start of the 1980s. But it still needs time to consolidate before it can go on the offensive on the national scale.

The Filipino revolutionary movement, therefore, is under the pressure of partially contradictory demands: the need to preserve the people's armed forces and the underground organizations; the fight to regain the "middle forces" that are swinging to the center; the need to defend the democratic gains that came out of the anti-dictatorial uprising of February 1986 against the military right; the need to bloc the Aquino presidency's counter-revolutionary scheme; and the need to expose the role played by US imperialism.

It is not easy at every stage of the struggle to find a single policy that best suits all these needs. In accordance with their strategic options, but also with their concrete situations, the various currents in the Filipino left have made different tactical choices. A complicated debate runs through each organization. I will take up these very important questions in detail in a future article. □

10. According to Michael Peterson, 'Direct Action' (Australia), January 21, 1987, p. 11.

11. For the argument of an organization such as the socialist movement *Bisig*, see 'IV,' No. 112, January 26, 1987, p. 25.

AFTER BEING postponed several times, a plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) was finally held on January 27-28. Mikhail Gorbachev's marathon six-hour report marked a definite acceleration of the course of reforms that he initiated upon taking power.

What was new was that the center of gravity of these latest reforms has shifted from the economic and social-moral fields (for example the fight against alcoholism and corruption) toward a strictly political level.

ERNEST MANDEL

The three main measures proposed concerned political structures in the strict sense. For the first time in 35 years, a special party congress will be called at the beginning of next year. The form of selecting candidates for the elections to the local and regional soviets will be modified. (It is not clear if this reform will extend as well to the choice of candidates for the Supreme Soviet.)

The form of electing party leaders at several ascending levels will also be changed. (Once again, it is not clear whether the introduction of the secret ballot will apply also to the election of delegates to party congresses, as well as to the election of members of the Central Committee of the CPSU.)

A series of such reforms were in the air. They were being discussed not only within the party apparatus but also among the intelligentsia, and even with foreign guests. Some of the proposals discussed, on the other hand, have not been upheld (at least, not yet), such as introducing the principle of compulsory rotation of top party positions and a limitation of terms in office, including in the Central Committee and the Political Bureau, to the life of two legislatures.

Nonetheless, it seems that Gorbachev achieved a surprise effect. While the draft report had circulated among Political Bureau members and candidates, precise details of the new modes of election had been omitted from it. It seems that they have had a bomb-shell effect within the Central Committee.

The surprise effect, the repeated adjournments of the plenums, the

interruption of the session, the number of speeches following the general secretary's report (there were at least 34 of them) and the fact that the resolution finally adopted does not mention a number of the more radical proposals all testify to the resistance Gorbachev is running into from the top echelons of the bureaucracy. The extent of this resistance is also pointed up by the fact that the infusion of new blood into the Political Bureau was more modest than expected. Shcherbinski remained a member; Boris Eltsin was not elected.

This resistance is simply the reflection at the top levels of the bureaucracy of the conservatism of the majority of the bureaucratic apparatus. It is afraid of any deepgoing change, of any change that is more than purely cosmetic. It is apprehensive about Gorbachev's two central slogans — *glasnost* (openness, that is more honest, realistic and complete information) and *perestroika* (rebuilding, radical reform).

All this does not mean that Gorbachev represents a fundamentally anti-bureaucratic element, a reformer in the socio-political sense of the term, in the life of the state and the party, or that he is largely isolated from the rest of the society. He represents the more lucid wing of the bureaucracy, present above all among the intelligentsia and the technocrats but also, it would seem, in the police and military apparatus, which has recognized the gravity of the crisis into which bureaucratic management has plunged the Soviet Union.

The vast scope of this crisis of the



system has been known to us for a long time. We have analyzed it on several occasions. If Gorbachev described it in dramatic terms in his report to the Central Committee, if he speaks more and more of a veritable "revolution" being necessary, it is to save the bureaucratic system, not because he wants to overthrow it.

The differences between Gorbachev and the so-called conservative faction arise from the conservatives' criminal underestimation of the crisis, which is "criminal" precisely from the standpoint of the interests of the bureaucracy as a whole. Facing a scalpel the Brezhnevites murmur that all that is needed is an injection.

Much evidence could be cited of points from Gorbachev's report that his objective is defending the bureaucratic dictatorship. The principle of the one-party system was stubbornly upheld, as well as the dogma that the party must always play the leading role in politics. Gorbachev sang the praises of the KGB as an institution (a command performance, perhaps?)

The "principle" of democratic centralism as it has functioned since the victory of the Stalin faction (in reality, bureaucratic centralism) was considered the touchstone of the entire political system. Its extension from the party to the mass organizations and the state structures was celebrated as the *nec plus ultra* [zenith] of Marxism-Leninism, with which, of course, it has nothing to do. And so on, and so on.

It is precisely by measuring Gorbachev's aim against the means proposed for achieving it that the dilemma he faces is most clearly highlighted.

For nearly 60 years, everything in the Soviet Union has functioned on the basis of a vertical command system, from the top down, without any initiative or self-organization by the masses. Underlying the bureaucratic dictatorship is the principle that the "material interest" of the bureaucracy is the driving force in achieving the plan and turning the wheels of the economic machine.

The monopoly of power and material privileges each flow from the other. Logically, therefore, Gorbachev has started from the top in applying his reforms.

But, there you are, the apparatus resists. It demonstrates a ponderousness unsuspected even by its most lucid critics. It sabotages, or worse still, systematically obstructs. So, it has to be shaken up. You start by shaking up the administrators administratively. Then you find more obstruction, glaring new manifestations of inertia, new partial setbacks, new delays and postponements.

But the ticking of the time bomb represented by the crisis of the system goes on relentlessly. All the time that passes is time running out. The more time is lost, the worse the crisis becomes.

So, you have to act through other social forces. Outside the bureaucracy, only the masses can be the

protagonist of the "veritable revolution" that Gorbachev says the USSR needs. The technocratic and cultural intelligentsia, which is supporting him more and more enthusiastically, does not have the weight to counterbalance the millions of functionaries and inspectors defending their well-worn ruts and their privileges.

But how can some bureaucrats mobilize the masses against others and control and channel their mobilizations? The risks of such an adventure are confirmed by the examples of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, China; and the most terrifying example of all is the Poland of Solidarnosc. Give them an inch, and they'll take a mile.

Like the "liberal empire" of Napoleon I and Napoleon III, or the "liberal empire" of the czars, Gorbachev's "liberal dictatorship" is literally caught between two fires. Divisions within the bureaucracy widen a breach through which sooner or later the autonomous action of the masses can erupt.

While Gorbachev talks about a crisis of the system in the gravest of terms, even alarmist ones, he cannot offer an adequate explanation of how the USSR got into this predicament. Like all the ideologues and politicians of the bureaucracy, he is incapable of presenting and analyzing the bureaucracy itself as a social force. For him the bureaucracy is only a psychological phenomenon, a sum of defects and errors in behaviour, at most a sum or system of inadequate ideas. The social roots of these superstructural phenomena are covered over.

Bland condemnation of Stalin

Thus, when he condemned the Stalin period in his report to the Central Committee, he did so in such bland and purely ideological terms that it seemed an insult to the victims of the terror:

"The circumstances that we are aware of ... [in the course of which] authoritative evaluations and judgments become unquestionable truths that needed only to be commented upon."

The millions deported? A million Communists murdered? The all-embracing terror? The working class atomized, terrorized, made incapable of action? The proclamation of the omnipotence of the managers in the factories? The elimination of the right to strike? The enormous growth of social inequality? All this disappears from the analysis.

In these circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the condemnation of the Brezhnev era seems more radical than that of the Stalin era. In the case of the former, the picture is not outlined with a few fuzzy strokes but painted in big bold colors — stagnation in all areas, inertia, widespread lack of respect for the law, vast corruption, declining morality, holding back of economic and social progress, blocking positive changes, blindness to social problems. The general secretary certainly did not mince any words there!

Indeed, a relaunching of explicit de-Stalinization in the style of the Twentieth and Twenty-Second Congresses is not excluded. The regular Soviet press is mentioning Lenin's Last Testament, especially its negative judgement about Stalin. But, for the moment, it is not publishing the full text of the document or raising the delicate question of the Moscow trials, or the composition of the Political Bureau in Lenin's time, or of the Testament's generally favorable assessment of the Bolshevik leaders murdered by Stalin, in particular Trotsky and Bukharin.

However, these leaders are supposed to appear on the stage, as characters in a play by Mikhail Shatrov, *The Brest Peace*, which is supposedly to be presented in Moscow's Vashtangov Theater beginning in May 1987. The great novelist Antonii Rybakov has reportedly written a novel devoted to the murder of Kirov, entitled *Arbad's Children*, in which he exposes Stalin's responsibility for this crime and the Stalin terror.

Questioned by Monty Johnstone, editor of the British Eurocommunist magazine *Marxism Today*, Fyodor Burlatsky, political commentator on *Literaturnaya Gazeta* and quite close to Gorbachev himself, still expressed himself in an evasive and delphic fashion about a rehabilitation of Lenin's companions who fell victim to Stalin:

"... we must change our style of teaching the history of our party. It is now without personalities. And they must research the role of all political leaders, of leading members of the politburo, and explain what happened during Lenin's time, during Stalin's time, and after Stalin's time, dealing with every figure. It is our duty. But I can't answer now about the personalities you mentioned because it is a big question, and it is a difficult question, and maybe we'll have an answer in the not too distant future."

According to the Italian CP daily *L'Unita* of January 28, 1987, a rehabilitation of Bukharin is in the works.

All these questions are not merely

historical or symptomatic. They go to the heart of the problem. This is why Khrushchev tripped over the same stumbling bloc.

You cannot rehabilitate the victims of the Stalin purges without at the same time condemning en bloc their executioners, their jailers, and those who bore witness against them — that is, the bulk of the bureaucratic apparatus. (1) You cannot point an accusing finger at this apparatus as a whole without exposing the mechanisms of political power that made it possible to commit these monstrous crimes and the reasons why the bureaucracy tolerated (or wanted) them committed.

Bureaucratic privilege vs "the communist ideal"

That takes us back to the question of the bureaucracy's material privileges, in particular their special stores, special hospital rooms, their vacation homes, their dachas and their state cars. There was some talk about these things before the Twenty Seventh Congress of the CPSU but a veil has been cast over them since. Gorbachev does not seem to have mentioned these questions in his marathon report to the Central Committee in January 1987.

Here appears the second dilemma facing Gorbachev. He has exposed the veritable "moral corrosion" that Soviet society has supposedly suffered since Brezhnev (and what about Khrushchev's "goulash socialism"?). He has said that "Western values" and "consumer society" behaviour have asserted themselves in the USSR:

"Groups have grown, including many youth, for whom the aim of existence has narrowed to the search for material well-being, for gain at any cost. The cynical position of such people has taken on the most acute forms and is poisoning the outlook of those around them." (Summary of the report in *L'Unita* of January 28, 1987.)

So, Gorbachev makes a stirring eulogy to moral incentives and "the communist ideal." But how can you fail to recognize that all of that sounds hollow so long as enormous material privileges persist at the top echelons of the bureaucracy? Austerity for the masses, the workers, the producers, pensioners, petty functionaries; "material incentives" for the top bureaucrats and technocrats — can anyone think for a single instant that the people are not going to notice this fraud, with or without *glasnost*?

How can you break out of this dilemma without striking at the bur-

eaucracy's heart (which lies just below its wallet) and without dumping this cynical red herring of a fight against "petty bourgeois egalitarianism" (it would be far more correct to speak of petty-bourgeois opposition to equality) that, in the purest Stalinist tradition, still turns up in Gorbachev's report?

Underneath this second dilemma, there is a third. For a year, Gorbachev has been gradually shifting the axis of economic reform from the sphere of consumption toward that of production. At the CPSU's Twenty-Seventh Congress, a lot of space was still accorded to improving the standard of living of the masses, and in particular to the promise of modern and comfortable housing for everyone by the year 2,000. But in the background, more and more a new productivity pressure can be seen shaping up. This is what makes the workers suspicious. Burlatsky admitted this in a veiled way in his interview in *Marxism Today* mentioned previously.

In order for the economic reform to be accepted by the masses, for the workers to take part in it or become the active force in it, it is not enough to appeal to an "ideal," above all in a society so saturated with skepticism, hypocrisy, double talk, not to say cynicism, as Soviet society is today. The workers need guarantees that extra exertions will not rebound against them, above all that such additional efforts will not put in question full employment, will not aggravate inequality.

But how can such guarantees be given while at the same time increasing the rights and powers of the managers and technocrats in the factories and giving full play to "material incentive," which remains the essential feature of the economic reform?

You can see the extent of Gorbachev's dilemma by comparing his situation with that of Deng Hsiao-ping in the People's Republic of China. The Chinese old fox held a major ace. His economic reforms could sharply increase the incomes of the peasantry, even if at the price of growing inequality among the peasants. The peasantry represents the great majority of the population of China.

However, the great majority of the population of the USSR is not made up either of peasants or bureaucrats. It is composed of simple wage earners. But to these people Gorbachev does

1. It is true that unlike the Khrushchev epoch, those who were direct instruments and active accomplices of Stalin's crimes — the Yezhovs, Berias and the like — are more and more disappearing from political life and from life itself. This reduces somewhat the personally interested reticences and resistance to throwing light on this somber era.

not have a great deal to offer on the material level. Improving supply, even of food, by extending the cooperative sector, brings on a dizzying rise in prices.

In the "cooperative stores" opened in Moscow you can find high-quality sausages without having to stand in line. But the price is 10 times higher than in the state stores. No workers, not even skilled workers (who earn 300 rubles a month) can afford 10 rubles for a kilo of sausages. (The equivalent in the United States would be 40 to 50 US dollars for two pounds of sausages.)

Discussion on workers' self-management

Gorbachev's only way out, in these conditions, is to offer something on an institutional level. But the contours and content of what he offers are far too vague to overcome skepticism.

An interesting discussion is going on today in the USSR on the subject of self-management of enterprises. Despite all the hue and cry about "openness," only an indirect echo of this is perceptible. A notable example is in the article by Lev Tolkunov, member of the Central Committee of the CPSU and chair of the Council of the Union of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, in No. 10, October 1986, of *Nouvelle Revue Internationale*. The contradictions in the "official" position defended by Tolkunov are glaringly obvious.

"Our party . . . has resolutely rejected the conceptions of 'barracks communism' which deny the democratic forms of workers' self-management in order to give primacy to military-bureaucratic methods. At the same time, the party has declared itself, and still does, consistently and resolutely against all petty-bourgeois [sic] anarcho-syndicalist theories of 'workers' self-management.' The latter are unacceptable to us because they counterpose to the socialist state the self-management of workers' collectives. In reality, as experience shows [sic], the socialist state acts in common with the socialist organizations and the collectives of the workers, as the instrument for people's self-management" (p 57).

You can get the full flavor of this hash when you remember that since the victory of the Stalin faction, the principle of management in the enterprises has been the "unified command" of the managements, that the right to strike or to challenge the managers' decisions has been abolished, and that, as the author himself admits, until quite recently

the workers were simply informed of the content of the plans, and not even consulted about it!

Tolkunov proclaims grandiloquently: "As the complete masters on their home ground in the factories, the kolkhozy, the workshops or the farms, the working people must also be masters in the country" (p 65).

However, we learn in passing that in the "radical" reform that is being drafted concerning management structures in enterprises, "Workers' councils" are to be set up that will "bring together representatives of the administration, the party organizations, the unions and the Komsomol, as well as team councils, etc

" . . . it seems opportune to extend eligibility for election to all heads of teams, and then progressively to certain [!] other categories of leaders in the enterprises: foremen, chiefs of posts, of sectors, of workshops . . . of sovkhos administrations" (p 66).

The workers cannot determine what they produce, how they produce it, or to whom their product is to go. The workers who are the "complete masters on their home ground in the factories" have only recently been given the right to elect the factory manager, as they do in Yugoslavia, to say nothing of the higher ups in the trusts and groups of factories. The state, as the instrument of "people's self-management" is supposed to represent this "people" over and above the workers' collectives. One could not give a better illustration of bureaucratic centralism. (2)

What characterizes the Gorbachev team is mistrust of the workers. What characterizes the workers' attitude is mistrust of the Gorbachev team. This cannot be overcome by propaganda. On both sides, such misgiving by no means reflects any lack of clear-sightedness.

This mutual mistrust clearly outlines Gorbachev's dilemmas. It will not be overcome with propaganda. So far, Gorbachev has proven to be a great public relations expert. He has remained far from expert in dialogue with the working class.

In recent years, a real public opinion gradually formed in the USSR. But it was a public opinion confined to social "mini-milieus," that is, a fragmented public opinion that, by the same token, reflected a fragmented consciousness.

The new fact that we are now seeing, and one that is obviously not unrelated to Gorbachev's offensive in the name of *glasnost*, is the emergence of a social consciousness embracing social problems on a much vaster scale.

The writer Yevtushenko summed up this situation as regards the youth

with the lapidary formula: "Those who are finishing high school today are more interested in the spiritual [human] sciences than in the natural sciences or technical matters." (*Der Spiegel*, February 2, 1987.)

The Chernobyl catastrophe unleashed a real debate over ecology in the USSR, which despite all the references to *glasnost*, remains largely unknown to the broad public. This is how Burlatsky referred to it in his interview in the February 1987 issue of *Marxism Today*:

"But at the informal level there are different views, especially among the scientists and the writers, and there are views something like those of the greens in Western countries. Some writers argue that we should not place nuclear power stations near towns or rivers but instead maybe in Siberia or in other places where it wouldn't be so dangerous. You can see this mentioned in some speeches and articles especially by the writers. But, I repeat, Chernobyl is a very painful question. Therefore there are not such big and open discussions about it."

Women's councils

Moreover, feminist consciousness has advanced by leaps and bounds in recent months. The under-representation of women in the leading bodies of the party and the state is creating a real scandal today. The Gorbachev team has reacted. Discussions have taken place on the subject of institutionalizing "women's councils."

Although this may appear as a way of getting around the question of direct representation of women in the organs of power properly speaking, at the same time it creates a possibility for a debate on the social demands specific to women — not just an offensive against discrimination in pay but also and above all demands calling for a drastic extension of collective social services; improvement of the system of distribution and public transport to reduce lost time; and re-examination of the problem of the official attitude to the nuclear family, whose breakdown is manifest.

2. The idea that there is a pre-established harmony between the interests of the working class as a whole, the interest of each workers' collective and the interest (that is, the concrete functioning) of the state was already severely criticized by Lenin in the trade-union discussion in the Russian Communist Party in 1920-1921. At that time, Lenin recognized that strikes were justified (and therefore implicitly workers' autonomy) by the fact that the state was a "workers' state with bureaucratic deformations."

(This latter problem is finally being discussed more frankly in the press, instead of being hidden behind hypocritical references to the "disturbing rise in the number of divorces," as was the case for decades.) (3)

It must, however, be stressed that the reappearance of this broader social consciousness in the Soviet Union has not yet been accompanied by a real *politicization* of broader mass layers, even within the intelligentsia. The reason for this is twofold:

First of all, the leaders themselves discourage this. Monty Johnstone asked Burlatsky whether he envisaged the possibility of groups of citizens who take positions similar to those of the Greens getting permission to organize and express their point of view within the framework of a more populist society. He got a very curt reply: "That is not usual for our society."

Secondly, the masses themselves hesitate to set out on that road — once burned, twice shy! A recent event attests to this. The current sensation in Moscow — more than the Central Committee plenum — is the showing of Abuladze's film *Repentance*, which is a violent critique of the Stalin terror, but in an allegorical form, without the dead dictator being named. (This is obviously no accident; nor is it any accident that the dictator is presented with features that recall those of Beria more than those of Stalin).

As the crowds leave the movie theaters, groups form discussing the film's message and the balance sheet of the Stalin era vigorously, if not passionately. These discussions seem entirely spontaneous and free. But, at least so far, they have been limited to the past. They have not at all touched on current questions, either on the political structures presently in place or Gorbachev's reforms.

The British weekly *The Observer* also points out in its February 8, 1987, issue that during a pop concert in a suburb of Moscow, a young singer alluded in his song to the absurdity of the war in Afghanistan and to the human losses incurred (there is a similar reference in a recent film by Yuris Podnieks). The youthful audience applauded him frenetically. But there was no political discussion. Only the deaths of Soviet youths were deplored.

For the broader masses, political discussion, political criticism and the development of political awareness can arise only out of *practice and a spontaneous political apprenticeship at the base*. Marx laughed at those who thought that under the enlightened absolutism of Prussia

they could teach swimming without letting the pupils into the water. He ridiculed the "jumping teachers" who tried to prepare for vaulting a precipice with a tape measure. Gorbachev's enlightened paternalism is running up against the same obstacle. Likewise, science cannot progress without free discussion. For their political apprenticeship, the masses need free activity. Such political freedom is not provided for by Gorbachev's reforms.

Elimination of censorship needed.

That means that the masses — above all the workers and the youth — are waiting for a whole series of tests in order to judge the real portent of these reforms. These can be summed up in the following 13 points, which are given by way of examples (supplementary points could easily be added.)

1. Elimination of the censorship. The right for any given group of citizens (not just writers and journalists!) freely to publish books, pamphlets, magazines, periodical press organs, leaflets, etc.

2. Repeal of the articles in the penal code that restrict freedom of expression, in particular those that prohibit "anti-Soviet agitation" and "slandering Soviet power," articles that clearly concern neither spying nor criminal activities (terrorism, and so on) but institutionalize crimes of opinion and prevent or obstruct the exercise of democratic rights by the masses. (4)

3. Release of all the political prisoners, that is, all those who are in prison or in the camps for crimes of opinion.

4. Establishment of habeas corpus. Any persons arrested must be presented with a precise charge within 24 hours of their arrest, and have the right to a freely chosen lawyer to defend them. And these lawyers must have the right to see the evidence on which the charge is based.

5. As a protection against police arbitrariness, anyone arrested must have the right to appeal to the local soviets. The local soviets must have the right to do their own questioning of any person arrested, without the police present. The Soviets have to have the right to investigate police operations.

6. The right for any group of citizens, above a certain minimum number, not only to propose candidates for election to the soviets (including the Supreme Soviet) in nominating assemblies — that reform is contained in Gorbachev's report

to the Central Committee — but to run candidates in the elections themselves, if these candidates get a given minimum of votes in the nominating assemblies.

7. The right of these candidates to publish their platforms and distribute them to all the voters, with no political restrictions, even if they are different from those of the CPSU.

8. Free election of trade-union delegates, members of the "Workers' Councils" and the "Women's Councils" in the enterprises, with the right to put forward several candidates, without any restriction. For a transitional period, for the reasons indicated by Gorbachev himself, the freedom of such elections would have to be assured by a secret ballot.

9. The right for the freely elected trade-union members of the "Workers' Councils" in the enterprises to contact each other, to consult and organize "vertically" within an industry, and above all horizontally in the neighborhoods (in the great urban centers), in the smaller cities, in districts, regions and republics. Elimination of the principle of "democratic centralism" within the unions, enterprise groups, "Workers Councils" and all mass organizations.

This principle, even in its original Leninist (that is, genuinely democratic) form makes sense only when applied to persons freely associated on the basis of shared conviction, and not to class or state bodies. At this level, to assure that the masses will genuinely exercise the real power, the guiding principle must be that of delegated authority based on a mandate that can be taken back at any time by the electors who gave it.

10. Re-establishment and guarantee of the right of the workers to strike or carry out any other kind of action pursuant to their demands.

3. According to the Paris daily *'Liberation'* of February 3, 1987, Valentina Tereshkhova's report to the conference of the Union of Soviet Women on January 30, 1987, was really explosive. According to the report, the greater part of Soviet women still have to work at laborious and unskilled manual tasks, lose hours every day standing in line for poor-quality products and have to do household work that amounts to a second workday. The report denounced the lack of places in daycare centers, the lack of sanitary precautions responsible for the spread of infectious diseases among children and growing infant mortality, which is double that of the developed capitalist countries.

4. Burlatsky and the other Gorbachevites use the formula "freedom of discussion, but no freedom for anti-socialist ideas." Deng Hsiao-ping and Peng Chen use analogous formulas in the People's Republic of China. But how can it be explained, then, that in the USSR many Great Russian national chauvinist and openly anti-Semitic writings, such as those by Tseran Solodar, are tolerated, even if they do not have official blessing, while the writings of fiercely anti-capitalist communists, socialists and anarchists are banned?

11. Generalized workers' control over all economic activities, at all levels of the plan and management, such as over stocks and movements (shipments out and in, transport) of raw materials; use of, and demands for, equipment; calculation of current production costs; the establishment of production and wage norms; the targets of the plan within the enterprise and in other enterprises; the general priorities in plans governing employment; right of veto over layoffs and other forms of reducing employment, etc.

This is a key measure for increasing real, and not merely formal, "public relations" participation by the workers in management. This is a decisive step toward the economic democracy that Gorbachev talks so much about,

Leonid Brezhnev (centre) in 1945 (DR)

and which is supposed to be the "updated" version of the "democracy of the producers" that was talked about in the wake of the October revolution.

Interviewed by *Business Week's* Moscow correspondent, the Soviet historian Roy Medvedev reported a protest movement that broke out in December 1986 among the workers in the Kamaz truck factory to the east of Moscow. (5)

"When the inspectors who checked the quality of the products discovered a series of problems, they stopped the assembly line, which interrupted work in 20 workshops of the giant complex. The workers protested against the reduction of production bonuses that resulted from this. They

complained about losing money through the fault of the management."

No wonder. Such injustices cannot be avoided or even reduced unless the workers themselves can supervise and correct the management of the enterprises on their own initiative.

12. Elimination of the special stores and reserved wards in the hospitals, vacation homes, special restaurants, etc. Workers' control (and citizens' committees) to assure that these measures are applied.

13. Introduction of the principle that no state functionary, including at the highest levels, can get greater remuneration (including non-monetary benefits) than a skilled worker.

In view of the tight interlocking of the state and the CPSU in the USSR, the extension of a series of demands about "openness" to the structures of the CPSU does not reflect illusions about the nature of this party but rather elementary democratic demands.

"Really revolutionary changes"?

Since for the moment the only real political debates that are going on in the USSR are taking place within the Central Committee of the CPSU, it is logical for critical soviet citizens to demand that these debates be published. Since Gorbachev proposed that there be election by secret ballot of the members of the CPSU's committees, it is logical for the citizens to demand that these elections not be mere shows, but there be a choice of candidates distinguished by representing real opposing platforms.

All this, obviously, in no way detracts from the importance of demanding a multiparty system, that is, the right of Soviet workers and peasants freely to form political parties of their choice.

Is advocating such demands in the USSR "too much," "too soon"? Does this strengthen the position of the conservatives opposed to Gorbachev's reforms? That is one of the most moth-eaten of arguments. Already on the eve of the revolution of 1848, the liberals accused the communists (the revolutionary socialists) of the time of "playing the reactionaries' game" by putting forward their "excessive" demands. The

5. Roy Medvedev was a sort of "loyal oppositionist" under Khrushchev and Brezhnev. He even proposed his candidacy, not without some success, at a pre-nominating meeting for the elections to the Supreme Soviet in Moscow's Central district.



real problem lies elsewhere. It lies in the class nature of political activity, in the different social interests that are to be expressed and linked up.

Thinking that you can make "really revolutionary changes" (Gorbachev's phrase) in the Soviet Union as it is today without the working class moving is believing in Santa Claus. Thinking that you can get the working class to move without appealing to its interests is falling into the most sterile sort of voluntarist and idealist utopianism.

The main roads of both material and moral incentives for the workers follow the markers of solidarity, justice, equality and real decision-making powers that have been well known for more than 30 years.

To those who say that you cannot go too quickly without running into more and more obstacles, we should reply — along with Gorbachev, that up until now the movement has been much too slow. According to the London *Sunday Times* of December 14, a report drawn up by dozens of academicians stressed that the gravity of the crisis ("a terrible mess") calls for faster reforms.

To the Gorbachevites who say that the people cannot only adjust to democracy step by step, we should point out that their paternalism is leading them into a blind alley. Nothing better than their own slogans could reveal the depth of their contradiction, which borders on the ridiculous: "Don't be afraid [!] to advance in a brave [!] and resolute way."

In the real world, the brave are characterized precisely by the fact that they are not afraid, that no one can frighten them. That quality is something that the masses will acquire by their own experience and on their own initiative, as they did during the revolution of 1917, and not by command or according to rules established and strictly limited at the top.

Speaking on June 19, 1986, to a group of writers, Gorbachev came up with a very apt formula. "The enemy [it would have been better to say the international bourgeoisie] does not fear Soviet nuclear missiles. But they do fear the extension of democracy in the USSR." (*New York Times*, December 22, 1986)

Unquestionably, a Soviet Union in which a real socialist democracy prevailed, which would have a power of attraction for the masses of the entire planet, would change the whole world situation at one stroke. That is, it would, if this socialist democracy were real and not fictional, if it gave the workers not only more economic rights and powers but more political rights and powers than in the most developed capitalist countries. □

Irangate and Washington's dirty war

ON APRIL 25 this year, two major demonstrations are planned by the movement against US intervention in Central America, in particular to protest against US military and financial support to the contras against Nicaragua.

The following article explains how the recent Irangate revelations have affected the Reagan presidency and given a boost to the anti-intervention movement. The article is from the February 1987 issue of *Bulletin in Defense of Marxism*.

TOM BARRETT

Ronald Reagan's presidency has begun to fall apart. The shallowness of his support among the American people was demonstrated during the first week of December by a 20-point drop in his approval rating within a matter of days, falling below 50 per cent for the first time since his inauguration. He and his staff have been shown to be as inept as the Jimmy Carter team and as dishonest as the Nixon team.

The unraveling of Reagan's credibility has opened new opportunities for those working for positive social change, especially for those opposing US intervention in Central America. The exposure of illegal military action in support of the contra terrorists will harden opposition to war against Nicaragua among a population which has never supported it.

The demonstrations planned for Washington and the West Coast on April 25, 1987, have every chance of being the biggest and most important protests in many years.

Reagan's electoral victories and approval ratings have never been based on popular support for his reactionary ideas and policies. Rather, the former movie actor and public-relations representative had a consummate ability to use the media to appeal to people's emotions. Reagan's body language, Madison Avenue phrases, and avuncular speaking tone are designed not to communicate ideas, but to put forward an image of himself and of the country: "America is standing tall again." One of my co-workers, who voted for Reagan in 1984, explained that every time he heard Reagan actually express his

political ideas during the campaign it made him think about voting for Mondale, so he simply stopped watching Reagan's speeches! He, like millions of other Americans, voted for Reagan simply because he "liked him."

Throughout his presidency Reagan had attempted to generate hysteria about "terrorism" and to use it to his advantage. He used the Iranian hostage crisis to get himself elected initially and has used "terrorism" as an excuse to carry out acts of war against those countries that refuse to "cry uncle" to him — Libya and Nicaragua specifically.

"Ayatollah-bashing" has been for Reagan a cheap way of attempting to generate support for his war policies. "We will not negotiate with terrorists" has been the constant refrain from Reagan, Secretary of State Shultz, Secretary of Defence Weinberger and all the rest of the Reagan gang.

More and more revelations

The revelation by an Iranian official, shortly after [US hostage] David Jacobsen's release from captivity in Lebanon, that former national security advisor Robert McFarlane had been in Iran negotiating an arms deal implied that the Reagan administration had traded arms for Jacobsen's release. Whatever the complexities of the situation, all the talk of "no negotiations with terrorists"

was shown to be nothing but bluster.

After the initial revelations, new and more damaging reports came out with startling rapidity. It was shown that arms trading with Iran had been going on since 1983, and that Israel and Saudi Arabia had acted as go-betweens. Most damning of all was the information that the profits from the Iranian arms deals had been secretly deposited in a Swiss bank account and turned over from them to the Nicaraguan contras.

Besides being a moral crime, that act also happened to be against US law. The principal architects of the arrangement — national security advisor Admiral John Poindexter and National Security Council staff member Lt. Col. Oliver North — have both taken the Fifth Amendment in response to the congressional investigations of what has become a full-blown Washington scandal.

That scandal has given socialists a big opportunity to expose the Reagan administration's crimes. However, to take advantage of it fully socialists need a clear understanding of what it means. It would be a shame to see the Democrats reap the biggest gains from the situation, for their record in affairs of this kind is every bit as sordid as the Republicans'.

This affair has exposed Reagan's — and Thatcher's, Chirac's and other imperialist leaders' — rhetoric about "international terrorism" to be a thorough fraud. It has shown conclusively that military attacks on so-called "terrorist states" have nothing to do with concern about terrorism; rather, they are attempts by the imperialist military powers to impose their will on states and peoples who are trying to achieve some measure of independence.

Robert McFarlane admitted knowing that the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut was probably carried out by a group with ideological ties to Iran *before* he began



arms negotiations with Iranian representatives.

The revelation that Israel — the most strident voice in the international "anti-terrorist" chorus but which in fact carries out its own state-sponsored terror campaign against the Palestinians — was involved in the arms shipments, exposes the fraud even further.

In addition, if one adds up the number of US citizens who have fallen victim to terrorist acts over the past quarter-century, the largest number have been victims of the counter-revolutionary Cuban exile groups. Gangs like Omega-7 and Alpha-66 exercise a vicious tyranny over Cuban communities in North American cities and do not hesitate summarily to execute anyone who gets in their way. These terrorists are providing money and material aid to their contra counterparts in Nicaragua — and they are directly implicated in this latest scandal. The Reagan administration bombs Libya, but gives money to those who perpetrate car-bombings in Miami!

Anti-abortion terror campaign

Furthermore, in recent years the grossly misnamed "Right-to-Life" movement has carried on a terrorist campaign of its own, fire-bombing abortion clinics, supposedly to teach "respect for life." More Americans have fallen victim to the anti-abortion mobs' terrorism than to political violence in the Middle East. Reagan's only response is to continue to denounce abortion and to say nothing about the fire-bombings.

The cynicism of all parties in this business is revolting. Among the participants in the arms trading with Iran was Saudi Arabia — which has officially sided with Iraq since the war began. While the Reagan White House was shipping arms to Iran, the CIA has been providing Iraq with intelligence information to aid its bombing of Iranian oil installations and other strategic targets. The US, Israel, Saudi Arabia and the private arms businessmen seem only to want the war to continue indefinitely. They are indulging in an obscene orgy of money and death.

While it is important to point out the administration's barefaced hypocrisy with respect to terrorism and Iran, the crime which deserves the greatest outrage in this whole affair is the diversion of yet more money to the Nicaraguan contras. It was bad enough that congress legally appropriated 100 million US dollars to

finance a very real form of "state-sponsored terrorism." The revelation that Reagan White House aides have been involved in illegally channeling money — over and above the 100 million dollars — makes it that much worse.

The latest "dirty trick" to be exposed is that not only has money been diverted to the contras, it has also been used — illegally — in US political campaigns to defeat members of congress who oppose contra aid. Of all the revelations to date this is the most reminiscent of Nixon's Watergate scandal.

This entire affair has begun to blow the lid off of Washington's dirty war against the Nicaraguan people. The revelations which began after Eugene Hasenfus was shot down delivering arms to the contras have exposed a network of the CIA, Cuban exiles, right-wing businessmen and mercenary soldiers attempting to overthrow the Sandinista government — a government which rules in the interests of the workers and peasants, and a government which in no way constitutes a threat to North American working people.

The contras and their supporters have in fact been no match for the Nicaraguan army in head-on combat; however, they have killed thousands of unarmed civilians, disrupted important agricultural activities such as the coffee harvest, and forced the Nicaraguan government to devote a disproportionate amount of its resources to defence — thus slowing down the pace of improvements in the people's standard of living.

Washington does not entertain any illusions that the contras, by themselves, can overthrow the Sandinistas. The US government is hoping that the Nicaraguan people's will to resist can be worn down so that a Grenada-style quick strike can put an end to the Nicaraguan revolution. This is unlikely, however, for the Nicaraguan people, whatever their problems, have no intention of relinquishing the governmental power which they have conquered at such a huge cost.

It may be that the Iran-contra arms scandal reflects a split in the US ruling class, with one wing consciously seeking to prevent the US from getting involved in a war which it cannot win quickly and which can unleash — at a higher level — the same kind of social unrest generated by the fiasco of Vietnam in the 1960s and early 70s; while the pro-Reagan wing wants to drive ahead whatever the cost and sees the main priority to be pursuing the military battle against the Nicaraguan revolution.

If the Iran-contra arms scandal proves anything it is that US foreign

A semi-victory for the Kohl government

THE DAY AFTER the elections to the West German parliament, the stockmarket in the second most powerful imperialist country plunged. Nonetheless, the conservative and bourgeois liberal parties the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), Christian Social Union (CSU) and the Free Democrats (FDP) -- won the January 25 elections and once again formed the government. The "red and green chaos" feared by the West German bosses, that is, a majority for the social-democratic SPD and the Greens, had not come to pass.

WINFRIED WOLF

Another contradictory index of this election was that the mood in the left and in the factories and offices, among organized workers and activists in the various movements can be summed up in the phrase: "We were lucky again -- we had feared much worse."

If you study the results of this election more closely, and look at it against the background of this country's political and economic development, you find enlightening explanations for these apparent contradictions.

Overall, the government parties -- the CDU, CSU and FDP -- got 53.4% of the vote and a corresponding majority of the seats in parliament. (In West Germany, there is a proportional representation law). The SPD got 37% and the Greens 8.3%.

If you add up the votes for the SPD and the Greens -- which, as will be seen, is only a mathematical exercise without a lot of political meaning, then "red" and "green" parties together got 45.3%. Thus, they missed a majority by exactly five percentage points. From this standpoint, the Kohl government's victory seems convincing.

The result looks different against the background of the previous elections and the general mood that has prevailed in the Federal Republic since the second half of 1986.

In September 1982, the 13-year-long era of "Social-Liberal" governments formed by the SPD and the small liberal party, the FDP, came to an end, when under the pressure of big industrialists and banking circles the FDP changed coalition partners and formed a government together with the CDU/CSU.

In the March 1983 election, the CDU/CSU got exactly 56% of the vote. The SPD got 38.2%, and the Greens, 5.6%, getting into parliament for the first time. (West Germany maintains a 5% threshold for representation of parties in parliament.) This conservative electoral success was generally taken as a grave defeat by the left and the organized workers.

In the subsequent period, running up to mid-1986, there were a series of developments that fostered hopes that the Kohl government could be ousted in the 1987 parliamentary elections in favor of an SPD government that in one way or another would collaborate with the Greens.

The landmarks of this period were as follows:

* The Kohl government became involved in a series of scandals, the biggest of which was the discovery of massive operations by the big industrialist Flick and other capitalists and banking circles to influence the CDU, CSU and FDP.

* In 1984, the biggest West German union, IG Metall, won an important victory with an agreement for a 38.5 hour workweek. That broke the bosses' and the government's taboo on shortening the 40-hour week.

* In 1985, when the Kohl government introduced a law designed to undermine the right to strike and got it through parliament, the unions staged successful mass mobilizations and political strikes, a new experience for the West German unions, which have suffered from a parliamentary fixation.

* For several years, the core of a new movement against nuclear

policy has nothing to do with justice, democracy, the safety of American citizens or anything of importance to working people anywhere.

In Central America and Southern Africa, workers, peasants and other oppressed are fighting to put an end to foreign domination and exploitation by the wealthy. Washington is trying to stop them. Those in this country who support the rights of the Central Americans and South African Blacks to determine their own future should use this scandal to expose the US government. It is up to no good wherever it intervenes. It has no business interfering in the affairs of any other country in the world.

Even before the scandal broke, the movement against Reagan's war policies had begun to set in motion the machinery to respond in the necessary fashion. Work has already begun on organizing a march on Washington for next April 25, with a simultaneous action or actions on the West Coast, to demand an end to US intervention in Central America and an end to apartheid in South Africa.

These demonstrations will be the best response to the dirty business which has actually been going on for years behind the backs of the American people, but which has only now begun to be exposed.

It is not only the illegal contra aid that we want stopped -- we want *all* contra aid stopped! And it is important to keep in mind that the activities of the US government would not be significantly different if some other capitalist politician besides Ronald Reagan were president. We know that the same kinds of activities went on under Democrats like John F. Kennedy (Bay of Pigs), Lyndon Johnson (Vietnam) and Jimmy Carter (Iran) -- not to mention other Republicans like Richard Nixon.

The revelation that US foreign policy is a cynical game of greed and murder and has nothing in common with the values of working people is a problem for the entire ruling class, not just for Reagan. Conversely, it is the working class -- not its Democratic Party "friends" -- who should respond to the current crisis.

If Reagan's presidency is the only casualty of this affair, then we will have missed our opportunity. Working people of the United States should do their best to turn this scandal into the unraveling of the entire bipartisan counter-revolutionary foreign policy of our government and use it as a strong argument in favor of a break by the labor movement from its policy of giving support to the capitalist politicians of the Democratic and Republican parties. □

power plants developed around Wackersdorf in Bavaria. The concrete issue was the planned construction of a reprocessing facility. After the catastrophe in Chernobyl, anti-nuclear demonstrations developed throughout the country.

The deep political crisis into which the Kohl government had fallen, explained why, in 1985 and early 1986, the question of dumping Helmut Kohl as chancellor and replacing him with a less compromised figure was being more or less openly discussed in business circles, the bourgeois parties and in the government parties. (Most often named as a possible replacement was the finance minister, Gerhard Stoltenberg.)

Neue Heimat scandal

In mid-1986, roughly a half a year before the parliamentary elections, there was a drastic alteration in mood. In this, essentially five factors were decisive. First, from mid-1986 on it was not possible to develop the movements I mentioned any further. They all dried up for various reasons. In particular, the union leaders were not prepared to pursue their campaign against the undermining of the right to strike after the question was finally settled in parliament. Instead, they pointed to the elections coming in January 1987.

In this attitude of the union leaders, a second factor played an important role. It was the scandal around the union-owned home-builders firm Neue Heimat, which had been Europe's biggest housing builder. Revelations in the media and by a parliament investigating committee showed that the managers of the concern had not only led the company into bankruptcy by unheard-of mismanagement and at the same time lined their own pockets. These managers also showed themselves incapable of removing the more and more dangerous financial burden that this concern represented from the unions.

After a shady sale of the building concern to a fly-by-night speculator, the creditor banks forced the unions to re-purchase the company, with its 17,000 million in debts (and an expected loss of 1,000 million marks for 1987 alone).

For obvious reasons, the government used this scandal to mount a large-scale campaign against the unions and the SPD. The social democrats were thrown completely on the defensive, and took a safe distance from the union bosses, all of whom held SPD party cards.

The right managed to use the Greens in its offensive. (For example, in the parliamentary investigating committee, the Greens voted together with the CDU/CSU for the arrest of the Neue Heimat manager Lappas, which took place during the congress of IG Metall in October 1986 in a big splash of publicity.)

Third, there was the position that the SPD had in effect taken in selecting Johannes Rau, with the program he represented, as its candidate for chancellor. It meant drawing a line against the Greens, an attempt to hold them under 5% and thereby keep them out of parliament. At the same time, it meant that the party was setting its sights on winning an absolute majority. In the given circumstances, such an objective — unique in West German history — was totally lacking in credibility. Moreover, a large section of the SPD base found the attempt to draw a line against the Greens to be sectarian.

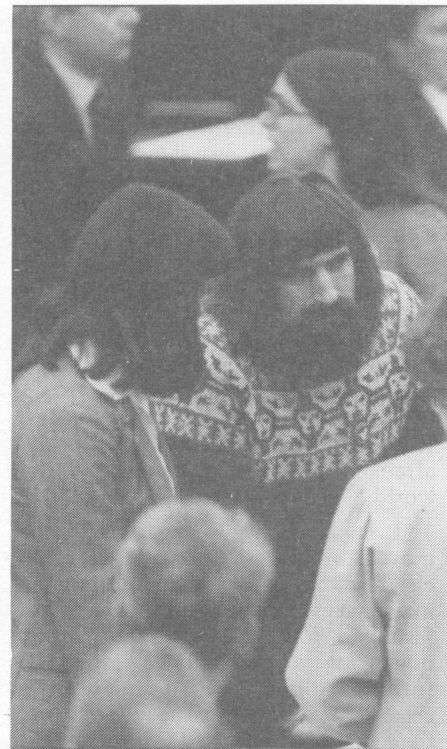
With the SPD and its candidate, Rau declaring that under no circumstances would they agree after the election to collaborate with the Greens, the only conceivable parliamentary alternative to a CDU/CSU government — an SPD-Green majority — was ruled out. That discouraged a considerable part of the SPD's ranks and of its potential voters.

Fourth, like most other imperialist countries in 1983, West Germany experienced an economic upturn, even if modest. This coincided exactly with the life of the legislature under the conservative-liberal government, which it exploited to the fullest. The preceding crisis of 1980-82 was blamed on the social democrats, while the government took the credit for the upturn.

From mid-1986 until the election, an extensive media campaign was mounted, backed up by various "expert opinions," which played up the modest results of this upturn and pushed the idea that a conservative victory in January 1987 would mean that the upturn would continue.

Fifth, in the fall of 1986, the SPD suffered massive vote losses in two state parliamentary elections (in Bavaria and Hamburg) that were already being looked on as tests for the coming Bundestag election. It was absolutely clear that there was no chance that the SPD could get a majority of its "own". But the SPD leadership only stuck to its tactic and to drawing a line against the Greens.

In Hamburg, where they lost their former majority but had the possibility of forming a majority with the Greens (the Green-Alternative List, the GAL), they rejected collaboration with the Greens, and



Greens arrive in the Bundestag for the first time.

took the first serious steps in the direction of a "great coalition," that is, collaboration with the CDU. Precisely such a policy was attributed to candidate for chancellor Rau — permitting a continuation of the CDU/CSU-led government, if the alternative was a "red-green" majority.

Scare of "red-green" chaos

In this situation, the government parties went on the offensive in the fall of 1986. The CDU/CSU struck out on a line that went far to the right. Their key slogan in the final phase of the election campaign was "a future instead of red-green." Everywhere a scare was whipped up about "red-green chaos."

At the same time there were deliberate provocations aimed at inciting strong anti-communist moods, such as Kohl's likening of Gorbachev to Goebbels, and the claim that there are "concentration camps in East Germany." The CDU/CSU leaderships and a public opinion polling agency spread the claim that a landslide victory for the government coalition was a sure thing, that even an absolute majority for the CDU/CSU alone was conceivable.

In this situation, the liberal FDP appeared as insurance against a sweep by the CDU/CSU and an associated revival of the cold war, as a guarantee of a "rational" conservative government. Promptly, the big liberal week-



e in 1983 (DR)

lies, *Der Spiegel* and *Stern*, the only mass-circulation publications that supported the social-liberal coalition in the 1970s, came out for a vote for the FDP as the "lesser evil" in the event of a certain victory for the coalition government. If you consider that the readership of these publications is 4 to 5 million, and that the FDP got 9.1% of the vote, that is about 3.5 million votes, the importance of the stand they took becomes obvious.

Thus, the FDP was the only government party that managed to score a slight advance (an increase of 2.1%). The CDU and its Bavarian sister party, the CSU, on the other hand, registered a loss of 4.5 percentage points. This was their worst result since the first Bundestag election in 1949, and fell even below their score in 1980, when Strauss bombed as a candidate for chancellor against Helmut Schmidt. Even if you look at it from the standpoint of the total vote for the government parties, the coalition lost 2.4 percentage points.

The drop of 1.2% for the SPD was less than expected. But this result also represented an historic low point — the party's lowest vote since 1961. The big winner on the left was the Greens. They managed to gain 2.7 percentage points over the 1983 election, thereby increasing their total vote by roughly half.

Along with CDU/CSU's losses and the relative weakening of the parties as a whole, the Greens' vote is the result that prompted the feeling among the left and the organized workers that the outcome was "not so bad."

A more detailed study of the SPD and Green vote reveals the following facts:

* The SPD suffered losses above all in the big cities where there is a prominent services sector and a concentration of administrative workers (such as Munich, Frankfurt and Stuttgart). Its sharp losses in Hamburg (-6.2%) can be attributed to its orientation toward a "great coalition" with the CDU.

On the other hand, in traditional industrial areas with high unemployment, the SPD *gained*. Throughout the Ruhr and in Saarland, the SPD increased its vote. This was most marked in solidly working-class voting districts. For the Ruhr, West Germany's industrial center, the results were the following: 54.2% for the SPD (+0.8%), 32.3% for the CDU (-4.3%), and 7% for the Greens (+2.1%).

Once again, the Greens scored their biggest wins in the university towns (such as Freiberg, Tübingen, Heidelberg, Münster), where in every case they came in second place, sometimes with more than 20%. At the same time, they were able to increase their base among teachers and technical intellectuals and in the service sector.

* The results of a separate study of the voting behavior of trade-union members underscore the above observations. Out of the 7 million union members combined in the German Confederation of Unions (DGB), exactly 70% voted for the SPD, 22% for the CDU/CSU and a trace element for the FDP (around 1%). The Greens got about 8% of the union members' votes. That means that their vote among trade-union members is still slightly below their percentage among all voters (8.3%).

The assertion that has often been made that the Greens have achieved significant success among workers, or among the most progressive sections, the organized workers, is therefore not tenable. It is true, on the other hand, that they are getting as high a percentage among organized workers as among the general population, attracting about a tenth of the vote that the SPD gets in this category. (1)

After the elections, the SPD made a screeching turn. The day after the election, the candidate for chancellor, Rau, already declared that his "task" was "ended," and that he "was not available for any new posts," which apparently meant that he is not a candidate to succeed Willy Brandt who will be retiring as SPD chair no later than 1988. At the same time, Oskar Lafontaine, the state premier of the Saar, said on the night of the election itself that the SPD rejection

of an alliance with the Greens was a crucial error. At the same time, he indirectly announced his candidacy to be the next chancellor designate, or perhaps Willy Brandt's successor in the party chair.

Up until now Oskar Lafontaine has been seen as leader of the party's left wing. Already in 1979 he was the most important spokesperson of the SPD minority that opposed the NATO Double-Track Decision, that is the deployment of Pershing II and cruise missiles. He argued for disengagement from nuclear energy production and is considered an opponent of NATO.

Compromises of SPD's left leader

The London *Economist* of January 31, 1987, described Lafontaine as a politician "whose views shade easily into the pro-ecology, anti-nuclear and anti-NATO policies of the Greens." With the SPD "turning greenwards, the Social Democrats would startle Germany's allies . . ."

The next striking thing is how little resistance is being expressed within the SPD to Lafontaine's march to the top. The former candidate for chancellor, Rau, declared that his rejection of the Greens applied "only to this election," and there could soon be a change around. It is more the right-oriented state associations of the SPD, such as the Bavarian one, that are already declaring for Lafontaine as the next candidate for chancellor. Even big bourgeois papers are coming out for Lafontaine. Above all, they are stressing that the task of the SPD is now to draw the Greens into "mainstream politics."

In a debate with the Greens' representative Jutta Diefurth in *Der Spiegel* of February 2, 1987, Lafontaine made an open offer of political collaboration and even coalitions with the Greens. Nevertheless, in the same discussion, on the three "sensitive" questions that the *Economist* cited, he made it clear that he is prepared to accept wide-ranging compromises in order both to hold the SPD right and to avoid frightening the bourgeoisie.

1. That is also partially true for the resistance to nuclear power plants. In the Schwandorf district of Bavaria, where Wackersdorf, the site of the planned reprocessing plant, is located, a considerable part of the local population sides with the opposition to this project. In this election, the SPD, which has also taken a strong position against the reprocessing plant, gained 6.7 percentage points, getting 32.7% of the vote. The CSU, previously overwhelmingly dominant, dropped from 65.3% in 1983 to 54.2%. The Greens were able to increase their vote from 3.9% to 5.6%, that is, less than proportionately.

Disengagement from nuclear power is to be aimed for only in the medium-term. This can only be achieved when, apart from the Bonn parliament, there is a majority for it in the states, local governments and in the state energy company. This position reflects the conception of a "national consensus" that the SPD has officially adopted on this question.

The same goes for a reversal of the deployment of the Pershing II missiles. In the event of a red-green majority, the parliament is to "ask" the United States to withdraw these missiles. Lafontaine assumes that "a democracy like America will respect the decision of a parliament in another country."

The most interesting point is Lafontaine's retreat on the NATO question. While he was regarded in the early 1980s as an opponent of NATO, for some time he has been proposing a precise model "like France or Spain" — that is, membership of NATO but no military integration. Now, looking forward to his advancement, he formulated his position in the following way in the *Der Spiegel* interview mentioned above: "Out of NATO is not my position . . . I consider NATO reformable — it goes without saying. I would like more sovereignty for West Germany."

And the Greens? Here the *Economist's* analysis largely fits: "They are deeply divided between a 'realistic' wing, which favours some sort of links with the Social Democrats and the 'fundamentalists' who do not." The conclusion also can be agreed with: "if anything, this division is becoming deeper as the party gets bigger and more established."

However, the speculation about

this division leading to a split, which is naturally being indulged in in the SPD and the bourgeois camp, may prove premature. It is true that the proposal that the SPD is now making for the first time for red-green collaboration on the countrywide level will strengthen the "Realo" [realist] wing in the Greens on important political questions — above all the three mentioned before. It will now be tested how far the Greens will retreat from their positions and to what extent the "realist," that is, the right wing — which up until now has dominated the party's parliamentary fraction — can overcome the opposition of the "fundamentalists," who have been the majority in the party leadership.

Red-green coalition experience

There is already some practical experience. For a year, the Greens have been coalition partners with the SPD in the state of Hesse. (2) The state association of the Greens in Hesse was considered a year ago to have a "fundamentalist" majority. The Ministry of the Environment in this state is now held by a Green, Joschka Fischer, while the state has the biggest nuclear power plant in Europe (Biblis).

Despite many demands for a "disengagement" of this state from nuclear energy production — especially after Chernobyl — this red-green coalition in Hesse and the assumption of governmental responsibility by the Greens (voting for the budget for the police, prisons, and so on)

has not been opposed by the ranks of the Greens. There has not even been a debate on this.

That indicates that it is possible that the Greens may arrive at an orientation of "red-green" collaboration without sharp controversies or debates, to say nothing of a split. That is particularly true for the states, which are the only places the question will be posed in the next few years.

An important reason for this is the structure of the Greens. Nominally, they have 45,000 members. In reality, about 15,000 can be considered more or less active. At the same time, the Greens have 8,000 elected representatives in parliamentary bodies — on the local, city, state and country-wide level. This total, moreover, does not include the party's top functionaries. That means that the majority of the active members, those who generally come to membership meetings, are implicated in parliamentary functions. The great majority of these parliamentary representatives of the Greens have to be considered to belong to the "Realo" wing.

This takes nothing away from the fact that the 3.1 million people who voted for the Green party in this parliamentary election voted for the most progressive program that was presented. It takes nothing away either from the fact that the great majority of the 14 million people who voted for the SPD are also for a red-green alliance, and therefore criticize the SPD from the left.

The SPD and the Greens could have won several hundred thousand more votes and a chance to form a common majority, if they had posed such a red-green majority as a *political possibility*. Another record was set in this election — the lowest voter participation since 1949. And undoubtedly in the coming confrontations that will be provoked by beginning recession and the new strikes for the 35-hour week that are expected in the spring, such a red-green alliance will be seen as the only conceivable parliamentary alternative to the conservative-liberal government under Kohl.

Revolutionary socialists have to connect up with these expectations and advocate such a red-green alliance, while criticizing the Greens and the left in the SPD when they go back on progressive positions and policies which are in the interests of wage earners and of the various social movements. □

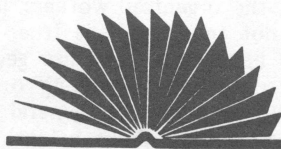
Notebooks for Study and Research

ISSUE NUMBER 2 of the *Notebooks* is now available. The first edition of this Marxist educational series contained a study by Ernest Mandel on "The Place of Marxism in History". The second edition is the first of a two-part study of the Chinese Revolution by Pierre Rousset.

This deals mainly with the Second Chinese Revolution, that of 1926-27, which ended in the disasters at Shanghai, Wuhan and Canton. It includes, in addition, a brief chronology of the republican revolution of 1911 led by Sun Vatsen; a review of little known facts about the 1921-24 period (during which the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Kuomintang were actually able to collaborate), and an analysis of the long-lasting effects of the defeat, notably the formation of the so-called red or "soviet" zones with their red armies; and the rise of Mao within the CCP. A final chapter entitled "The quest for the Chinese road" examines the problem of adapting Marxism to non-European societies. These topics usefully complement the works of Trotsky and Harold Isaacs on China in 1926-27.

In Part Two (issue number 3 of the *Notebooks*), the author will examine to what extent the Maoist project of the early 1930s was applied in the reality of China in the 1940s, and its contribution to the victory of 1949.

Single copies of the *Notebooks* are 20FF, £2, or US\$3.50. A subscription for 9 issues is 180FF, £18 or US\$31 (surface mail). Add 20% to cost for airmail. Payments in French francs preferred. Cheques to Pierre Rousset. Mail to: CER/NSR, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Paris, France. (Please write for information on bulk orders.)



2. On February 9, shortly after this article was written, the SPD-Greens coalition in Hesse collapsed. This was due to Joschka Fischer, the Green environment minister, resigning over the SPD's agreement to allow the Alkem plutonium plant to continue operating until 1996. — 'IV'

Students rock Gonzalez regime

THE EDUCATIONAL reforms being put forward in Europe have run into the same opposition everywhere from youth. In France, Italy, Greece, Belgium, and Spain, everywhere government schemes have been fundamentally identical -- to make university entrance more restrictive, to adapt the universities to the needs of private industry, to institute competition among schools, and to top all this off with higher and higher registration fees.

The schemes of the Spanish minister of education, Jose Maria Marraval, have essentially similar objectives. In a sense, Spain has been in the forefront of the setting up of an educational system for an elite. Felipe Gonzalez's Socialist Party government has not seen anything better to do than increase the restrictiveness of education, continuing the work begun more than ten years ago.

The high-school and vocational school students' demands have two axes -- opposition to social selection in admissions and the fight for democratization of education.

They are demanding repeal of the decree-law on the September exams, lower registration fees (which are in the order of 417 US dollars); rescinding of a circular on tighter discipline in the high schools and vocational schools; resignation of the so-called high-school student representatives in the State Scholastic Council (CSE) set up by the Basic Law on the Right to Education (LODE) adopted in 1985; and repeal of that law itself.

The student movement has reached out to the whole territory of the Spanish state. In many cities, the high-school and vocational school students have made up nearly all the participants in marches and demonstrations.

Violent clashes with the police, who have used rubber bullets in many demonstrations and on January 23 wounded a 14-year-old female student with live ammunition, have led to a radicalization and strengthening of the movement. The resignation of Barrionuevo, the civil governor of Madrid, is being demanded. The government has been forced, if not to retreat, at least to open negotiations on the demands. It has to reckon with the popularity of the movement.

According to a study published in the Madrid daily *El Pais*, 67% of

people questioned considered that the high-school students were right in their complaints against the Ministry of Education, 81% considered that the government should negotiate and meet the demands that they judged reasonable, and, finally, 42% thought that the movement could expand and create a grave situation for the government.

The situation is very embarrassing for the premier, Felipe Gonzales, who could pride himself on having an excellent year in 1986. Despite a poor economic outlook and unemployment topping 20%, the adoption of the proposal for staying in


NATO in the March referendum, the victory of the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE) in the general elections in June and Spain's entry into the Common Market all reinforced Gonzalez's personal position. The youth movement is shaking this nice balance.

The following round table with five revolutionary high-school students from various regional and nationality coordinating committees in the Spanish state is from the January 31 issue of *Combate*, the paper of the Liga Comunista Revolucionaria (LCR), the Spanish state section of the Fourth International. The participants were Sergi Raventos, from the Barcelona Coordinating Committee (Catalonia); Natalia Castro, from the Asturias Coordinating Committee; Mercedes Julian from the Zaragoza (Aragon) Coordinating Committee; Inaki Garcia from the Euskadi Coordinating Committee; and Javier from the Madrid Coordinating Committee.

* * *

Question. What demands played a decisive role at the start of the high school students' mobilization?

Sergi (Catalonia). The demands on which the youth in the academic and technical high schools agreed on were defence of the September exams and night classes, and on such basic questions as opposition to selectiveness and quotas. There was also a feeling of opposition to an educational policy that every day shows more favoritism to private schools at the



International
VIEWPOINT

SPECIAL ISSUE ON
WOMEN

In celebration of international women's day, IV will be producing a special issue on March 9.

This issue will include articles on women's struggles and their fight for liberation in South Africa, Japan, China, the Philippines, Nicaragua, Eastern Europe and France.

Extra orders for this issue should be sent to IV (at the same address as for subscriptions -- see page two) as soon as possible.

ASW

The selection cycle

THE SYSTEM for weeding out candidates for higher education was set up under the dictatorship in 1974 by the Esteruelas Law, minister of education at the time. It established an entrance exam for holders of academic high-school diplomas.

At present, after three years of study in the second cycle for comprehensive high-school diplomas, which in reality is only a leaving certificate leading to unemployment, the "best" students are shunted to University Orientation Centers (COU). Up until now, the COU have led on to the universities, after passing an exam in June or September. The problem then was to find a place in the university of your choice.

Quotas were first established in the medical schools in 1976-77 under Adolfo Suarez's Democratic Center Union (UCD) government. They have gradually spread to all the universities. Under the pretext of granting autonomy, the University Reform Law (LRU), drawn up in 1983, instituted real competition among the universities. For example, at the end of the 1985-86 school year, the Autonomous University of Barcelona (UAB) distributed more than 20,000

bulletins to COU students extolling the prestige of the UAB in the eyes of the companies to the detriment of the University of Barcelona, whose diplomas were supposedly less "valued" on the job market.

The issuing of a decree-law invalidating the September exam for COU students provoked the anger of the high-school students. Education Minister Marraval rushed to say that the September exam was being maintained until further orders, at least formally. What is happening in practice? "This decree-law gives priority to students passing the June exam at the expense of those passing the September one when it comes time for them to choose their school. As a result of this preferential treatment, the Madrid universities that get a very large number of requests for admissions had exhausted their quotas even before the September exams were given." (*El Pais*, December 6, 1986)

After that, you have a choice. You can go to other schools, whose diplomas often have little value. Or you can go directly into unemployment, joining the 50 per cent of youth who are unemployed.

expense of public education. This last question is very important, because every day high-school students experience the shortages of materials, the run-down state of the buildings and the lack of hygiene, even of the most basic facilities.

Q. Has the national question been a factor in these mobilizations of the youth?

Sergi. Yes, especially since the Valencia court ruling in December that banned the use of Catalan in the University of Valencia. The language question is very much a factor. Very often in the high schools, we can see the discrimination engaged in by some teachers who refuse to let people take exams in Catalan or to put questions to the students in Catalan. In Barcelona, this is a problem in a lot of schools.

Inaki (Euskadi). In Euskadi one of the objectives of the student movement is to get a Basque public school and university system. A Basque public school system would be a popular, democratically run, one that would seek to defend the Basque language, to study our nation, its history, its economy, its social forms and so on.

Q. How is the movement organized in the academic high schools

and the vocational schools?

Natalia (Asturias). The general assemblies are the decision-making bodies. In these assemblies, strike collectives form spontaneously. A collective forms, and volunteers come forward. As the mobilizations grow, the strike collectives also grow. Then, these collectives take proposals from the students and transmit them to the local coordinating committee. Once they are adopted by this body, they are referred on to the regional coordinating committee. There the proposals are discussed again and voted on. They then go back to the general assemblies in the schools, which decide finally whether or not to adopt them.

Q. Is the organization in Euskadi similar to this?

Inaki. In public schools, there is an assembly of delegates. Each of the delegates represents a class, and is responsible for it. It is the delegates who have the task of organizing the general assemblies and supervising the votes.

The process of developing coordination among the various schools started in December, at the time of the youth mobilizations in France and at the beginning of mobilizations in the Spanish state. Thus, after the general assemblies in the

individual schools, two representatives were elected for each school, who then formed the Secondary School's Coordinating Committee of Viskaia, which later was incorporated into the Euskadi National Coordinating Committee.

The delegates to these bodies have the task of putting forward the positions of their schools and informing them of the evolution of the situation in the other schools so that they can act in a united way in the struggle.

Q. On January 17-18, a coordinating committee met at the Spanish-state level. Is this coordinating committee as representative as the various regional coordinating committees? Are there at present any problems about the representativeness of this coordinating committee, and if so, how can they be resolved?

Javier (Madrid). Yes, there are problems. It should not be forgotten that coordination at the level of the entire state is different from regional coordination. It is more difficult, and we were only holding our first meeting. Only the development of the mobilization can increase the representativeness of the coordinating committee.

As the mobilizations proposed by the Spanish State Coordinating Committee and discussed in the general assemblies build up, more people will be coming into the committee. This body is not an executive. It is a body that takes democratic decisions that have an indicative value, and are subsequently rediscussed in the general assemblies.

Q. In Euskadi, how do they envisage the possibility of coordination with the rest of the state?

Inaki. That is a subject of controversy. The students think that we should first build a real student movement in Euskadi and a real coordinating committee, or union. As regards coordination, we want to see first who fights and in what forms and whether they are going to respect fully the specific forms of our nationality. Of course, we are in solidarity with the students throughout the Spanish state, and we do not exclude the possibility of sending representatives to Madrid.

Q. Do you think that the Students' Union is representative?

Mercedes (Zaragoza). I think that the coordinating committee is more representative than the union, because the latter only represents, defends and fights for the demands of its members. On the other hand, the coordinating committee that is organizing represents all the students,

Platform adopted by the Coordinating Committee of Representatives from the entire Spanish state on January 17-18

IN THE FRAMEWORK of a struggle for a free, unified, secular and public educational system that will respect national differences, avoid sexism and promote peace, a democratic and high-quality educational system:

The University and High-School Student Coordinating Committee calls on the responsible authorities — governments, parliaments and school administrations — to withdraw the laws, decrees and measures (LODE, LRU, etc.) that violate the right to education or run counter to the exercise of democracy in scholastic establishments by depriving high-school and university students of the voice that they must have in the making of decisions that concern them first of all. To this end, we demand:

1) Higher appropriations for education in order to assure the right of all to study. The number of places in the academic and vocational high schools must meet the existing social demand. We want a guarantee of quality education, more scholarships, a sufficient number of schools and teachers, and cheaper school supplies.

The increase in appropriations for educations should come from lowering the military budget.

We also demand that night-school courses be continued.

2) A freeze on registration costs in the universities. We accept no increases but rather demand that these charges be progressively reduced until they are eliminated altogether. This must be linked also to an improvement in the policy of granting scholarships.

3) We want equal representation of students in all government and administrative bodies concerned with education, with real decision-making powers.

In addition, we call for:

— A freeze on the reform of the secondary schools and the plan for reform of higher education.

— Resignation of the student representatives to the State Scholastic Council because of their lack of representivity. The election on a pluralistic basis of high-school student representatives to this body, with elections by school and not on the basis of associations' slates.

— Setting up of mechanisms for monitoring the quality of teaching and of the teaching staffs.

— Free exercise of democratic rights in the schools and elimination of the prevailing authoritarianism. Establishment of a department of educational psychology and teaching methods in all secondary schools.

4) The elimination of centralist ideology in teaching. The rights of the oppressed cultures and nations must be respected. The various national languages of the state must become the sole official languages at all levels of education and in the various territories of the state [where these languages are the languages of the nationalities concerned].

5) Elimination of restrictions on access to education. Repeal of those laws that block access to university education, elimination of quotas, the right to enroll in the university of your choice, no weeding out between university cycles, freedom of choice of universities.

6) We denounce and reject the practical training periods provided for in the agreements made between companies and vocational education centers. Work done in these training periods must be paid. The right of direct access to higher education. No reductions in schedules of practical work.

significant support to the students' struggle, or was Camacho's presence just a gesture "for the gallery"?

Javier. At present, the policy of the leadership of the Workers' Commissions is to issue declarations about the representativeness of the movement and simply to join the biggest mobilization when there is one, or to come out in front in demonstrations so as to make the headlines.

We think that it is positive that figures from the political world join in the student struggle in order to show that other sections of society support us. But we want this support to be a real contribution to the mobilization, not a mere propaganda exercise. We want it to be reflected in the workplaces because our mobilization goes in the same direction as the workers' interests.

Q. Are you thinking of taking initiatives to extend the struggle of the youth to broader layers of society?

Javier. I think that, fundamentally, the struggle of the young people is also an economic fight. We are demanding an increase in appropriations for education, free education for the working people, and finally a series of social reforms that also concern workers who have to face industrial reconversions.

A large part of the youth today is sick of this situation and ready to fight. It no longer accepts the institutional framework foisted on it or the so-called representativeness of the official parties. A new section of the youth is radicalizing in this struggle.

Natalia. This is not a struggle by just one section of society. It is something much broader, which involves the society as a whole. One of the points of the platform calls for a reduction of the military budget so that the money saved can be devoted to education. Closer links are going to develop between the peace movement and the youth movement.

Q. Javier said that the movement was going over the heads of the official parties. The press chooses to say that the movement is apolitical, that it is not interested in politics. Is that true?

Javier. No. Any social struggle is a political one. The fact of not belonging to any political organization does not imply that you are apolitical. Inasmuch as we are involved in a struggle against the government's educational policy, that is clearly a political struggle. Of course, the youth reject political manipulation, they refuse to let certain political organizations manipulate the coordinating committees. But we are fighting the government's education policy, as is shown by the platform that we have adopted.

whether or not they belong to any organization. In practice this greater representativeness is notable.

Q. Even before the meeting of the Spanish State Coordinating Committee on January 17-18, the Students' Union set January 20 and 23 as the dates for mobilizations. Was this decision a factor of division for the movement?

Javier. No. Not for us. We are for mobilizing, and it doesn't matter much where the initiative comes from. If other organizations, other associations are also for mobilizing, we should join together. What is important is unity in mobilizing.

Q. What was the experience of the struggle by the academic and technical

high-school students before the first demonstration of December 4?

Natalia. I think that the demonstrations against NATO had an enormous influence. We realized this because a lot of the high-school students who are forming the strike committees today are people we already know. We worked with them in the mobilizations against NATO. Of course, the present mobilization is a lot broader, it involves younger people, but the important role played by the anti-NATO demonstrations should be pointed out.

Q. At the December 17 demonstration, Marcelino Camacho [one of the main leaders of the Workers Commissions] could be seen in attendance. Are the Workers' Commissions giving

Q. What is the JCR's principal task in this movement?

Javier. Our first task is to extend the mobilization and to make sure that the demands required by the growth of the movement itself are integrated.

Q. How were the mobilizations in France seen?

Natalia. I think that was important because the students had not mobilized for a long time. Seeing the example of the French students, the success that they had, people began to think that it was possible. For years we thought that a student mobilization of this scope was impossible. Everything seemed blocked, and a lot of people thought that a victory was impossible, no matter how extensive the mobilization was.

But after what happened in France, people started to reflect, to think that we could do something like that here. The victory of the French students had a big influence on our spirit.

Javier. It is not surprising that we are seeing a mobilization running across national boundary lines, because the attacks we are facing are the same as everywhere else. You might say that there is a plan for a "reconversion" of education for the EEC in general, in order to make it more competitive, to improve its "performance" for private business.

This is why we are seeing struggles nearly everywhere in Europe — in France, in Greece, in the Netherlands, in Italy — in all those countries where they are trying to wipe out the most modest gains in education. For example, they want to introduce a weeding-out process between the various cycles in the universities and create short courses of study for the sake of private industry. They want research to be done to suit the interests of private industry and not social needs.

Q. Do you think we are seeing the birth of a new generation that could change the traditional pattern of politics?

Natalia. Everything suggests that. With the mobilizations against NATO, which included a lot of young people who had never engaged in politics, with the struggle that we are going through now, which has drawn in a considerable part of the youth, I think that we can be optimistic about the combativity of the student movement and the youth in general. A lot of people are going to consider fighting in other areas and are beginning to move more than they have done up till now. □

Dublin government collapse forces general election

THE FINE GAEL/LABOUR government headed by Garret FitzGerald collapsed on January 20, forcing a general election on February 17. The four Labour ministers resigned after they had been outvoted 11 to 4 by the Fine Gael ministers on the 1987 budget. This collapse was signalled months in advance, when both government parties suffered defections in the Dail [parliament] and could no longer command a majority.

JOHN MEEHAN and ANNE CONWAY

Before Christmas the government had several narrow escapes. However, it successfully rushed through an Extradition Bill, making it easier for southern Irish courts to send wanted Republicans to the British authorities.

Previously, it had been possible to invoke the "political exception": people wanted by the British could show that the charges against them were related to the national liberation struggle in the northern Six Counties directly controlled by Britain. This defence has now been abolished. (1)

This squalid haste over extradition coincides with a growing campaign against the frame-ups of Irish people in England during the 1970s: the Birmingham Six, the Guildford Four and the Maguire family. Even the right-wing journalist Robert Kee, who has written a book on the Guildford Four frame-up — *Trial and Error?* — has condemned the Dublin government's haste over extradition, while so many innocent people still languish in British jails.

This extradition bill is a result of the Anglo-Irish Agreement. (2) At the time it was formally announced, this deal was described as "an astronomical setback and a bad day for Irish nationalism" by Charlie Haughey, leader of the bourgeois party, Fianna Fail, which has traditionally most exploited nationalist sentiment.

However, Haughey has declared that neither the Anglo-Irish Agreement nor the Six Counties should be an election issue. Fianna Fail would not dispense with the Agreement. That was "totally to misrepresent my position," he has said. (*Irish Times*, January 19, 1987.)

Haughey expects to be taoiseach [premier] after the February 17 poll, but knows that he is mistrusted on the question of the North and on the economy by big business. Fine Gael is trying to exploit Haughey's recent track record of high-blown promises, followed by crushing disappointment when he gets into office. Its answer to Ireland's economic crisis is Thatcherite attacks on living standards. Its governmental record for the last four years is grim:

* Unemployment of 250,000 — at 20 per cent of the insured workforce this is the highest in the EEC, and a record for the State.

* Emigration of 70-100,000 in the last year, according to the preliminary results of the 1986 census.

* A national debt of IR£24,300 million — 148 per cent of GNP.

This has caused a huge fall in FG's poll ratings. The party got 39.2 per cent in the 1982 general election, but today most polls give them only 20-25 per cent.

Undeterred, Fine Gael put forward an even harsher austerity programme in its 1987 draft budget, which forced the Labour Party to leave government. Proposals included cutbacks in un-

1. For background on extradition, see article in *International Viewpoint*, Nos. 93, 108 and 110.

2. For analyses of this deal and its consequences see *IV*, Nos. 90 and 93.

3. See *IV*, Nos. 109 and 110 for reports on Sinn Fein's November 1-2 Ard Fheis (Congress), where the abstention policy was dropped.

4. The Workers Party was formerly a wing of the Republican movement, having now moved far to the right. It combines abstract socialist rhetoric with such right-wing positions in practice that it has come over to the pro-imperialist side of the divide in Irish politics.

employment benefit and assistance, charges for previously free hospital services, slashing of public sector budgets and the privatization of industries currently owned by the state.

Fine Gael know that they will lose this election — it may even cost Garret FitzGerald the leadership of his party. But they also know that any capitalist government in place after February 17 will, sooner or later, have to carry out an identical austerity programme. Fianna Fail, as the likely winner, riding high in the opinion polls, is trying to stay silent on its intentions. It does not want to make promises it cannot deliver — and which nobody will believe.

In fact, Fianna Fail suffered a significant split in 1985. Since 1970, when Charles Haughey was sacked from the Fianna Fail cabinet and unsuccessfully charged with conspiring to send arms to the Republicans in the Six Counties, the party has been riven with faction fights.

Not surprisingly, Haughey is standard-bearer for a populist wing, long on talk about nationalism, jobs, and Irish Catholic traditions. It has only been in the third category — bigoted Irish Catholic sectarianism — where Fianna Fail has backed up its talks with effective action.

The split from Fianna Fail is called the Progressive Democrats, and is headed by an ex-FF minister, Des O'Malley. Its politics are very similar to Fine Gael — openly pro-austerity, mildly liberal on issues such as divorce and women's rights, and very anti-Republican. The opinion polls show it taking about 15 per cent of the vote, and it is most useful to the big capitalists. While it has the same politics as Fine Gael, it can exploit its "new" image and push the political pendulum to the right.

On the left, the most promising recent development is Sinn Fein's recent decision to abandon abstention and, if elected, take their seats in the 26 County Dail. (3) Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams does not expect a breakthrough in this election — he sees the party's real test coming in a following one. While this is a prudent approach, it is also true that Sinn Fein does not have unlimited time to build up its intervention in electoral politics.

In the upcoming election, Sinn Fein are standing in the context of an absence of any mass mobilization since the 1981 hunger-strike campaign. In June 1981, two H-Block prisoner candidates were elected to Leinster House [the Irish parliament]. Fianna Fail was severely damaged by the electoral intervention of the H-Block/Armagh Campaign, which resulted in a hung Dail in 1981.

In this election, a major swing towards Sinn Fein is unlikely, as both

the Anglo-Irish Agreement and the austerity offensive have not been opposed with mass mobilizations.

It was the depth of the crisis in the South that gave the impetus for the decision by the last Sinn Fein Ard Fheis [congress] to drop abstention. The challenge now facing the anti-imperialist movement is to provide leadership for those forces struggling against the crisis and looking for an alternative. Such an alternative will, of necessity, involve the anti-imperialist movement forging alliances with other oppressed groups and links with the working class in particular. It will also require the opening up of a debate on the nature of the imperialist offensive and the strategy needed to combat it.

Attacks on women a major issue

In recent years women have suffered the harshest attacks, the most recent being the closure, under a High Court order, of pregnancy counselling agencies that give women information on abortion. The constitutional ban on abortion was reinforced by a referendum backed by "right-to-lifers" in 1983.

There has been a quick response to this blow from the women's movement, and the sweeping nature of the judgement makes it an urgent necessity for all anti-imperialists and Republicans to build support for the defence of the clinics, and make this a major issue in the election campaign.

On February 17, we can expect a certain amount of protest voting (a notable protest vote having emerged as a prominent feature in more recent elections) and a sizeable abstention,

especially in the most deprived working class areas.

Sinn Fein can expect to win some of this protest vote, but in the absence of any fightback that would enable the working class to distinguish who their real allies were, the "left vote" will be divided among all sorts of "alternatives" such as independents and the pro-imperialist Workers Party. (4)

People's Democracy, the Irish section of the Fourth International, is calling for a first preference vote for Sinn Fein in these elections.

In conclusion, the election was called not because of a working class challenge but because of the inability of the coalition to carry out the programme of austerity and the political offensive needed by the bourgeoisie.

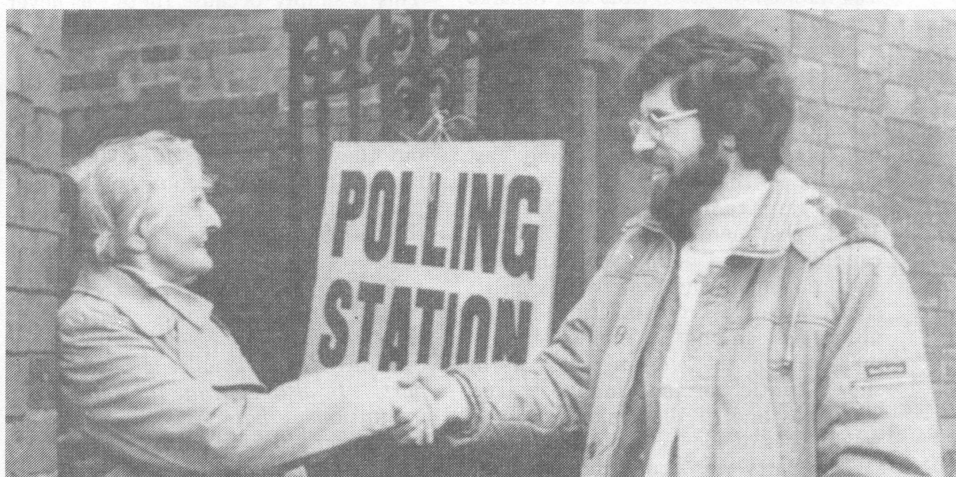
The bourgeoisie's problem remains the lack of a clear alternative government, a Fine Gael/Progressive Democrat coalition not being on the cards this time round, although it is the favoured choice of the ruling class.

Fianna Fail, who are likely to form the next government, will be obliged to carry out attacks similar to those of the coalition on both the working class and the anti-imperialist struggle in the Six Counties. Their populist and nationalist rhetoric will fade very quickly once the election is over.

The offensive against the working class and the oppressed will intensify. The central element of Fianna Fail's strategy will be to support and strengthen the attacks by the Church and the "Morality Mafia" on women's rights, and use this as a cutting edge for wider attacks on democratic rights.

By confronting and challenging the bourgeois nationalists of Fianna Fail, the anti-imperialist movement can widen its base of support and hasten the crisis of the bourgeois parties. □

Gerry Adams on the election trail in 1982 (DR)



What went wrong in the New Jewel Movement

THE FOLLOWING is an interview with Don Rojas, the former press secretary to Grenadian Prime Minister Maurice Bishop.

Rojas is currently a representative of the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement to the 10-party coordinating committee of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America. He recently completed a five-city US tour, during which he spoke on "The freedom struggle in the Caribbean and Central America today."

The interview was conducted in San Francisco on January 15 by Jeff Mackler, national secretary of Socialist Action. It first appeared in the February 1987 issue of *Socialist Action* newspaper, published in San Francisco.

Question. The purpose of this interview is to explore the lessons of the defeated Grenadian Revolution. I'd like to focus on questions that are seldom discussed by the left press in this country.

The revolution was overthrown by the US imperialist army. But by the time the invading troops landed, the revolution had been delivered a death blow when Maurice Bishop and his comrades were assassinated by the Coard faction in the New Jewel Movement (NJM).

How do you account for the fact that when crucial differences arose within the Central Committee of the NJM over the questions of the leadership of the revolution, there appeared to be no mechanisms within the party itself to resolve these differences? How did the NJM function? What was its membership? How did it make decisions?

Answer. During the years of the revolution, from 1979 to 1983, the membership of the party expanded. But looking at the problems that developed, it did not expand fast enough. So that by the time the crisis in the party came to a head in October 1983, the membership of 320 full, candidate, and applicant members was too small and too narrow in its social and class composition. It did not have among its ranks enough members of the working class or of the patriotic farmers and peasantry. That was one of the major structural weaknesses of the NJM in 1983.

The party was structured along the lines of a typical Marxist-oriented party. It had a Central Committee

and a Political Bureau. It attempted to carry out internal party discussions and decision-making based on the principle of democratic centralism.

But what happened was that this principle was distorted in many cases to the point where we did not have the balance of democracy and centralism that should take place for this principle to work.

Mechanisms that were theoretically in place did not function to facilitate the broadest possible democratic involvement of all party members in discussion and debate.

The truly democratic application of centralism would call for the leading bodies of the party to be elected by the party members. But in our case, the NJM's Central Committee and the Political Bureau were never elected by the rank and file of the party. This is simply because there was never a congress of the party. In hindsight, this was a fundamental error.

The party leaders enjoyed the support and approval of the rank and file by virtue of their authority — but they were not elected. They were not in any way accountable to the party rank and file and to the rest of the people of Grenada.

Q. It seems that one of the central problems was that there was no way to resolve differences outside of the smaller group in the party. It also appears that the mass institutions that existed had no real power.

I attended some of the zonal and parish council meetings in Grenada. I understand that over a period of

time, the number of people who attended these meetings declined.

These meetings were democratic in the sense that they allowed ample discussions and input. But they didn't make any fundamental decisions. This power was not in the hands of these institutions.

A. That is correct.

Q. How did the party see the relationship between the NJM and the mass organizations?

A. The relationship was one where the NJM played — or should have played — a guiding role in the development and direction that the mass organizations were to take.

The ultimate objective was to empower the mass organizations and institutionalize them as organs of people's power that would play not just a participatory role, but a decision-making role, in carrying out policies presented by the Provisional Revolutionary Government (PRG).

This was the objective behind the establishment of a new constitution — a people's constitution — that was drafted by the democratic involvement of the masses and the mass organizations. This process, unfortunately, had only just begun at the time the revolution collapsed.

Today I am very heartened by the successful conclusion, in Nicaragua, of the process that has led to the approval of the new constitution. That is exactly how we, in Grenada, had envisioned a truly democratic people's constitution evolving.

Q. Maurice Bishop used to joke about how, under the parliamentary democracy of the United States and Great Britain, the people had the right to democratically pull the lever once every four years. He said he envisioned a society where the actual decision-making power rested in the hands of the people and their organizations on a day-to-day basis.

Nicaragua is obviously a popular revolution, like Grenada was. But the Nicaraguan unions and mass organizations are essentially participatory. The FSLN makes the final decisions. The FSLN is as concerned as you are about factionalism. But from everything I saw during my recent visit, and from everything I have read, there does not exist in Nicaragua an institutionalized structure of workers' control whereby the masses can rule through their own organizations.

A. I think the challenge before us is to find a formula that guarantees that the people can participate in national decision-making — either through their popular organizations or through their parliamentary representatives — while at the same time

maintaining the important role that the vanguard party has to play in pushing the revolution forward.

There are no schemas or formulas that can or should be followed. You can learn from all the experiences of other revolutions, but in the final analysis you have to proceed based on the concrete conditions that prevail in your own country.

One of the mistakes that we made in Grenada is that we overlooked the importance of taking into consideration the objective factor at all times. I think too much subjectivism began to creep into the NJM and into the thinking of the leadership of the NJM.

That subjectivism, fueled by individual ambitions, led unfortunately to a series of events and decisions that were catastrophic. Maurice Bishop was arrested. This was a subjective decision taken by a handful of individuals in the leadership of the NJM without the legitimacy or approval of the rank and file of the party, let alone the government, the mass organizations, or the masses.

The government was never consulted in this decision. The party was not the government. But in the reality of Grenada, the party was paramount to the government.

Q. Who made the decision to arrest Bishop?

A. The decision was made by the leaders of the Ministry of the Interior with the approval of members of the Central Committee. Leaders of the Ministry of the Interior were also members of the Central Committee. So, basically, we are talking about the same individuals.

Q. Returning to the subject of workers' control and democratic decision-making. The model that Marxists traditionally look to is the Russian model, that is, the model of the soviets established in the Soviet Union in 1917. The Bolshevik Party was the vanguard party, but the power of the revolution was vested in the soviets.

The soviets were qualitatively larger and more representative than any other institutions in Russian society. The unions and the Bolshevik Party were relatively small. The Bolsheviks had the political majority in the leading bodies of the soviets because they had won this majority.

But the soviets were multi-party institutions. They allowed for free and open discussion and decision-making. And they — not the Bolshevik Party — were the government, the Soviet government. Later, as the revolution proceeded under Stalin, the power of the soviets disintegrated, and the party took on a bureaucratic



Bernard Coard (DR)

role.

Many in the radical movement don't believe that working people — particularly in the underdeveloped countries — can rule society through their own mass organizations. They say that the people aren't yet ready to rule and that they don't have the necessary education. In my view, this kind of thinking is extremely paternalistic...

A. It is paternalistic and arrogant, and borders on racism.

Q. The Russian workers and peasants did not read, but they learned how to rule and make decisions based on their class interests.

In Grenada, was there discussion within the NJM on whether or not the people should rule through their own institutions — like the Russian workers and peasants ruled through the early soviets?

A. There were basically two schools of thought on this question. One of them, the Bishop school, favored rule by the people as soon as it was possible. But it understood that rule by the people could not be separated from mass education — political mass education — as well as formal mass education. I share that view.

Another school of thought believed that the masses could attain the necessary political consciousness to rule, but that this would take a long time, and it could not happen without a party to guide this process. This school of thought believed that the party would have to be paramount in this process for quite some time.

Bernard Coard was in that school of thought.

What happened in Grenada in October 1983 is that Coard's current degenerated to the point where it confused the vanguard role of the party with the revolution itself. A lot of Coard's supporters began to substitute the party for the revolution.

Once you do that, once you think that the party is superior to the revolution, you will almost inevitably develop an anti-people arrogance.

The Coard current considered the people to be backward and Bishop to be backward. The only way to fight that backwardness, in their analysis, was to get Bishop out of the way. The ultimate manifestation of that arrogance was the massacre of Bishop and his supporters at Fort Rupert in October 1983.

Q. It seems, therefore, that Bishop's arrest was the decisive turning point in the revolution.

A. Absolutely.

Q. Unison Whiteman led a demonstration to free Bishop from his house arrest. Ten thousand people led by Bishop, proceeded to Fort Rupert. Wasn't the power of the revolution re-vested, so to speak, in the people at that point?

A. Exactly. The most important mass movement in the modern history of the Grenadian people took place on October 19, 1983, when the people, on their own initiative, took things into their own hands. Through their determination to win back the power that had been stolen from them

— that had been usurped by Coard and the others.

Q. At that moment there was a confrontation between the will of a revolutionary people who supported the programs of the government, and the party, which was out of step, to say the least.

A. Correct. At that moment the party became the number one contradiction in the eyes of the people. And objectively they were correct.

Q. Coard then called out the troops, and the people became subordinate to the power of the army. At that point the revolution was defeated. The Reagan administration had an open door to walk in . . .

A. Exactly.

Q. Concerning the question of arms. To what extent did the Grenadian people, outside of the army, have arms? To what extent were the militias armed? What was the view of the NJM concerning the daily arming of people in their workplaces, the fields and the factories?

A. The people were not armed independent of the army. The people received their arms from armories under the control of the army. And the people received the arms only in periods of high mobilization and periods of crisis.

Again, looking at things in hindsight, I would say that this probably was an error. At any rate, the NJM felt at the time that it was somewhat dangerous to make arms freely available — even to the militia, which was without question fully in support of the revolutionary process.

The fear, I suppose, rested on the possibility that imperialism would provoke counter-revolutionary elements who would have access to arms in an open situation like that. These elements could carry out counter-revolutionary activity of a violent nature.

Q. Following the US invasion of Grenada, The New York Times reported on a hotel owner in Grenada who spoke joyfully about how he, with his two-way radio, had contacted the American warships and directed them to fire against strategic targets on the island.

I had this vision of a man who was relatively rich and powerful directly collaborating with the United States.

What was the attitude of the NJM, under Bishop, towards those merchants, hotel owners, and other wealthy sectors? How did you view the process of social transformation — of class transformation? How did you view your relationship to the

hotel owners and the merchant class in the course of the revolution?

A. From the very outset we made it clear to the merchant class, to the hoteliers, to the propertied bourgeoisie as a whole, that this revolution was made for the poor and working people of the country.

We stated that this revolution placed, as its most central priority, the concerns and the interests of the majority of the population, i.e., the popular masses. We made it very clear to them that this revolution was not going to allow them to exercise political power for the benefit of their narrow class interests. And that is what happened during the revolution.

However, the revolution also understood that there had to be a period of time during which to transfer the economic power of this propertied minority to the majority. But this is not something that can be done effectively overnight. Maurice said that the economic transformations are not like Nescafe — instant coffee.

The first step was to put political power into the hands of the dispossessed and powerless masses of the country. The next step was to prepare the masses to accept the transference of economic power. That process would have taken a little longer.

It is necessary to encourage the private sector because they have the entrepreneurial and managerial skills to invest their capital in development projects. But if they do not respond positively to that encouragement, then it is possible to explain to the masses that these private producers cannot be considered patriotic elements. At that point, it is permissible to take whatever measures are considered necessary to protect the interest of the masses.

Q. Concerning the interventionist policy of the US government. Following the latest US elections the pro-Sandinista press in Nicaragua extensively quoted leading Democratic Party representatives, who stated that there would be no fundamental change in US policy toward Central America even though the Democrats had gained control of the senate.

The Nicaraguan FSLN seems to be moving to the conclusion that replacing Republicans with Democrats in the elections will not lessen the US war against the Nicaraguan revolution. They seem to be more interested in seeing the development of an independent mass anti-intervention movement everywhere in the world — and in the United States in particular.

I know that the leadership of the Grenadian revolution watched the US internal political scene closely

and expressed the view that Carter would be preferable to Reagan, and that the Democrats were preferable to the Republicans.

What discussions, if any, take place in the Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement concerning the Democratic and Republican parties, and more generally concerning the process of social change in the United States?

A. We don't labor under the illusion that if a Democratic president is elected, or a Democratic Congress is elected, this would necessarily result in a qualitative change in the policy of US intervention in our part of the world.

We have looked at the bipartisan support for the Grenadian invasion very closely. We are alarmed at the continued bipartisan support for aggression against Nicaragua, for support to El Salvador.

We hope, of course, that more progressive elements within the Democratic Party would be elected and would eventually contribute to a lessening of Democratic support for such policies, but we are not terribly optimistic that this will happen in the near future.

We recognize that the policy of intervention is a policy of imperialism and we recognize that both the Democratic and Republican Parties are imperialist parties.

We do not forget that when our revolution came to power in 1979 — the Carter administration was in power at the time — the Pentagon was authorized to draw up a plan for a naval blockade of Grenada within weeks after the triumph of the revolution. That plan was deferred, if not aborted, by the Carter government after it was clear that we enjoyed international recognition from even the United States' closest NATO allies. But an invasion of Grenada was contemplated during the Carter years.

We do not forget that it was under the liberal administration of John F. Kennedy that the Bay of Pigs invasion was conducted. We do not forget that it was under the so-called liberal administration of Johnson that the Dominican Republic was invaded in 1965.

We would hope that the present Democratic majority in the Senate and the House would put a little brake on the headlong rush towards intervention in Central America. But we have no illusions that replacing Mr Reagan with a Democratic president is going to, overnight, put an end to what is essentially a policy of an imperialist form of government.

This form of government, unfortunately, will continue to exist in the United States until the American people, by their united resolve, are able to do something about that. □

ANC celebrates 75th anniversary

THE MAJOR South African political movement, the African National Congress (ANC), has just celebrated its 75th anniversary. It was formed on January 8, 1912, as a democratic formation of Africans demanding the emancipation of their people. At that time, South African society was colonial in the strict sense of the term. While Coloureds and Indians could still exercise some rights, the "natives" were entirely bereft of them.

DOMINIQUE LEGRAND

The question of the liberation of the African people of South Africa came to the fore with the rise of the first Black movements in Africa and the Caribbean, initially groupings of intellectuals inspired essentially by a cultural and democratic awareness.

At its inception, the ANC was a strictly nationalist, largely legalistic and petty-bourgeois movement. At the end of the 1930s, when the economic and social situation in the country was undergoing big changes, the ANC experienced a serious internal crisis. A few years later this led the younger generation to take the reins. Among them were Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo.

This was an important change for the ANC. It meant turning more toward the mass movement, more toward mobilizations on concrete issues and an end to relying on petitions based on statements of principle. The rise of African trade-unionism and the big miners' strike in 1947 indicated these new needs.

However, the ANC remained a nationalist movement, open only to Africans. Its conception of a democratic South Africa called for a multinational society in which laws would guarantee a certain defined legal space for each "nationality" in order to assure coexistence among all of them. This conception was reflected in the drafting of the famous Freedom Charter of 1955.

The ANC put forward a special sort of united front policy which corresponded to its conception of the national question. It was based on bringing together equivalent movements representing the Coloureds, Indians and whites. That gave rise to the formation of the Congress

of the People, which launched the Charter in the name of five organizations: the ANC, the South African Indian Congress, the Congress of Democrats, the Coloured Congress and the South African Congress of Trade Unions (SACTU).

During the 1950s, the ANC held to this line. When the government forcibly imposed all the mechanisms of apartheid, the ANC sought the support of liberal leaders who already represented a significant section of big capital. These figures were supposed to offer a workable solution for setting up a democratic government.

At the time, all of Africa was fighting for its independence, and South Africa, which was wrongly seen as a classical colonial society, was regarded as heading for Black majority rule. Unfortunately, this view failed to take account of the country's special features and imperialism's need. The apartheid regime gave no ground, and installed a system of repression and surveillance of Black labor that all South African capitalists, including the "liberals," found useful for about 20 years.

The ANC then experienced a split by those who claimed that it was no longer the single-minded defender of the African population. From their standpoint, the ANC's relations with whites and also with the Communist Party appeared to represent a qualitative change.

While fundamentally federative, the Freedom Charter had perhaps, in the eyes of these people, left open the door for a South Africa where the Black majority would have to share its power. They ended up by breaking with the ANC and forming the Pan-African Congress (PAC).

In this period, the PAC and ANC — along with other groups — opened up large-scale campaigns against the internal pass system that had been imposed on Africans. The PAC called for giant demonstrations for March 21st, 1960, in which the passes were to be symbolically burned. At Sharpeville and Langa, the force of the repressive system descended. The ANC and PAC were banned. The leaderships went underground.

This was to be the second major turning point for the ANC. Faced with the most systematic repression, inspired by the example of the Algerian revolution and aided by the Communist Party, it opted for armed struggle.

However, Sharpeville was the culmination of a retreat by the mass movement. It marked a defeat. Therefore, the armed struggle of the ANC and the PAC was launched against the current of the real situation. It was scarcely begun before it suffered setbacks. Many of the main leaders were arrested, tried for high treason and sentenced to life in prison. Nelson Mandela was one of them.

That impelled the ANC leadership to go into exile and to rebuild the movement, while maintaining the principle of guerrilla warfare within the country. The newly independent African countries were supposed to serve as a backup. In Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe), the ANC worked with Nkomo's ZAPU and formed a giant guerrilla column that came to a tragic end.

New developments of 1970s

The ANC began a march through a desert. Exile can be a necessary temporary solution; it can also be a blind alley. The situation within the country was to change more quickly than the backers of apartheid expected. The industrialization achieved through high profitability for capital developed a new working class. In 1973, the first expression of this change was seen in a general strike in Natal province that gave rise to the new generation's first teams of trade-unionists.

At the same time, a radical nationalist current developed among African youth that combined a new cultural awareness with a rejection of any collaboration with the system and with any section of "enlightened" capitalism. This "Black Consciousness Movement" influenced and organized the June 1976 rebellion in Soweto.

These two developments marked the beginning of a radicalization,

and the ANC was largely bypassed by them.

Around 1980-81, it became evident that the entire system of rule had gone into crisis, and that the mass movement was continuing to radicalize. The ANC existed. It had a definite base of cadres and influence within the country. But it was far from being able to claim leadership of the growing mass movement.

In recent years, however, the ANC was to change its position on a series of important questions. This is not the place to interpret these changes. But it is important to take note of them.

The ANC was to make a considerable effort to build its organization within the townships by making the best use of its network of activists. It was to give relatively less prominence to its claims of conducting an "armed struggle" and attach more importance to mass work. It was to succeed in using its tactical devices to build a broad multi-class democratic movement around itself, winning the confidence of white democratic circles and the churches. This led to the launching in August 1982 of the United Democratic Front (UDF), which federates a large number of community associations and organizations that take the Freedom Charter as their basic reference.

In the trade-union movement, where its authority was challenged by radically anti-capitalist leaderships, the ANC made a turn after the founding of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in November 1985. It adopted a more open attitude toward those whom it had formerly condemned, and aimed

at winning them politically to its own strategic project.

As the only movement that has built up a real network of representatives outside the country, the ANC can call on varied and valuable support. It has built up a real foreign diplomatic service, established contacts with the South African liberals and big capitalists, and is developing a profile as an essential partner in international consultations on South Africa. The recent meeting between Oliver Tambo and US Secretary of State Schultz is the token of this worldwide diplomacy.

Finally, in an apparent contradiction, it is more and more proclaiming its structured links with the South African Communist Party, whose general secretary, Joe Slovo, was put on the national leadership of the ANC at its last congress in June 1986.

ANC has rebuilt considerable strength

The ANC has thus rebuilt a very considerable strength within the country. Whatever differences may divide it from other currents and organizations, it cannot be gone around. Over and above what it represents as a centralized political movement, the ANC — or rather the "Chartist tradition" — is also a vast social movement that united, often without organizing, thousands of young people and workers who look to Nelson Mandela or identify with a movement with 75 years of history behind it.

It would undoubtedly be false to claim that there have been 75 years of real continuity. But these 75 years of struggle, suffering and repression do serve as a foundation for credibility. The ANC has continually suffered heavy blows. Hundreds of its activists have been murdered by the racist regime without this weakening the determination of the new generations joining it.

The South African revolution is not right around the corner, and a lot of programs and tactics of the various forces will be modified as time passes. The question of socialism is being discussed more and more. The future of the trade-union movement, in particular COSATU, is becoming increasingly tied to the building of a politically independent workers' movement. It is impossible at this stage to predict what role the ANC will play in this debate and how it will affect these developments.

The ANC's past belongs to history. It has to be freely discussed and debated with no taboos or romanticizing. As for the future, the complexity of the debates that are going on in South Africa itself and of the strategic questions in that country indicate quite clearly that the ANC does not have all the answers. These two points reveal the need for open discussion.

But that must not detract from the solidarity and respect that is owing to the ANC. Like all the other South African movements, this current is writing one of the most glorious pages in the history of the resistance of the toiling masses to racism, repression and exploitation. □

The ANC and other movements are fighting the racism and poverty of South African society (DR)



Tom Gustafsson (1947-1987)

“A strong link has been broken”

A FRIEND and comrade is dead. A strong link has been broken. For the first time in his life Tom Gustafsson had to give up — a malignant disease finally conquered his strong physique and his big appetite for life. He died just a couple of weeks before we were to celebrate his fortieth birthday.

GOTE KILDEN

We cannot deny our feelings of sorrow and of loss. Open wounds always hurt. But still it is not difficult to draw a portrait of Tom. We need only bright colours. He was to live only four decades, but with his intensity and energy he experienced four centuries.

Our movement doesn't glorify its leaders. The worship of icons does not foster emancipated human beings. But we recognize greatness where we see it.

The key to Tom's greatness was that he always lived in accordance with his thinking. He didn't "sacrifice himself for the party". His attitude towards politics was scientific, moral and full of joy.

Tom's father, Aake Gustafsson, is one of Sweden's leading genetic scientists (moreover, one of those who showed that Stalin's protege, Lysenko, was only a fraud). From him Tom got not only his burning interest in biology, but also a scientific method, a habit of always asking why and always studying everything in detail. Anyone who has gone out for a walk with Tom knows that he never could stroll slowly. Either he was like an express train, hurrying somewhere, or he had his hands full of flowers and leaves and gave an inspiring biological lecture.

In the mid 1960s, Tom started to study at the university of Lund in the south of Sweden. Here he soon found himself in the middle of the political turmoil and social revolt that shook the university cities all over the world. The Tet-offensive in Vietnam 1968, the May revolt in France and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in the same year marked, each in its way a turning point in world political development. In Sweden the idyllic decade was over and the big miners' strike in Lapland in 1969-70 exposed the state of bureaucratism and degeneration within the traditional labour movement.

Tom was raised in a liberal home, and for a few months he tested the Young Liberals. But they could not explain the social and political convulsions that shook up the world. In an epoch when the decay of the market system and the growth of the mass movements for social liberation cannot be concealed, liberalism is a reactionary political force. Tom saw it and rejected it. Very soon he was to join the left-wing student organization, Clarte, and it became his real university.

Clarte in Lund was boiling with ideas and debate. It was a pot where you could find ingredients from all the sources of the labour movement, and from the largest to the smallest of the gardens of Marxism.

Twenty years ago, in 1966-67, Tom started to be active in the solidarity movement for the Vietnamese revolution. That was one of his longest and most passionate engagements that also became decisive for his own political development.

He soon became one of the leading figures in building the Swedish NLF movement, and therefore his demand for honesty, a scientific method and a clear political program quickly collided with the Maoists who tried to monopolize the young solidarity movement.

The first years of struggle against the neutralism of the Swedish Communist Party on the war in Vietnam was now succeeded by a ten-year-long resistance against the miseducation by the Maoists of a whole generation of young activists. In hundreds of articles and speeches Tom underlined, time after time, that the war in Indochina was not only a war for national liberation. It was also a social civil war. And our solidarity was solidarity with revolutionists who were leading the poor masses of Indochina in a socialist revolution. But he also warned against the consequences of the underdevelopment in the region, of the mass destruction, and also against the political shortcomings of the revolutionists themselves. Thereby it was possible to combine the fight for the most broad and whole-hearted solidarity with a critical mind.

To us this insight was invaluable as it was a political vaccine against the bitterness, cynicism and demoralization that were to paralyze tens of thousands of dedicated internationalists when the barbary of Pol Pot became known to the world. In the same way that the Budapest uprising in 1956 crushed the illusions of Stalinism, the tragedy in Cambodia was to extinguish the ideological star of Maoism.

Tom's political fight during these years meant that hundreds, perhaps thousands, of revolutionists were saved from being drawn down in the black turmoil of defeat.

Tom's work with developing these standpoints was to have great consequences for his whole political life. The years of 1967 to 1971 saw Tom throw himself into what we sometimes used to call "the battle of history", that is the total showdown with the traditions of Swedish and international reformism and the Stalinist movements. The Russian revolution, the victory of nazism in Germany, the Spanish civil war, the Second World War and the Hungarian uprising were only some of the experiences of the international workers' movement he now studied. The mistakes in Indochina were not unique but universal, they were not exceptions but the rule and the logical consequences of reformism and Stalinism.

Tom was always in the front ranks

Tom, like so many others from his generation, was there, at the barricades in Paris and sang "Einheitsfrontlied" together with tens of thousands of internationalists in the mass demonstrations of the German SDS. He was a child of May '68, and like so many others of these children he was raised with internationalism. "Create two, three, many Vietnams", the watchword of Che Guevara, spread like wildfire throughout the world. I remember all the countless Vietnam demonstrations when this revolutionary message resounded in the streets. There, in the front ranks was always Tom, tall and huge, like a fir-tree, with his strong voice.

The experiences from Saigon, Paris, Prague and the Swedish minefields — together with the balance sheet of the history of Stalinism — converged for Tom in a single conclusion: the absolute necessity of breaking with the traditional leadership of the labour movement and joining the Fourth International. That also meant a gigantic challenge — to build new mass parties all over the world.

In Sweden this challenge was met by two small circles, or groups: Revolutionary Marxists and the Bolshevik Group. The Bolshevik Group was formed by the majority within Clarte in Lund. Tom was one of its founders. In 1971 the two groups fused into a united organization; the League of Revolutionary Marxists, Swedish section of the Fourth International. Here, young and inexperienced people, without any historical continuity and any physical links with an older generation, were to start building something completely new.

Of course, we committed many mistakes. We had learned from history and agreed with the more principled and theoretical heritage of the Fourth

International. But to translate these experiences to the Sweden of the '70s and '80s was a difficult and lengthy task. It dealt with everything, from setting up small book shops, developing a tactic for work in the unions, and reasonable ways of organizing, building an effective party-apparatus to learning a useful political language. We have still much to do in these fields, but the foundations were laid at the time when we adopted the name of the Socialist Party in 1982.

Tom played one of the main roles in this process. His own decision to work for the Fourth International was conscious, and as the political "botanist" he was, he had tested and rejected all other alternatives, and knew that to meet the challenge demanded an immense patience.

Tom developed a fine political ear that could register the situation in our own organization. He knew when the bow was too bent or too weak. Tom had the rare capacity of always being prepared to listen. He won respect even among his opponents.

Tom Gustafsson – a comrade who will be sorely missed (DR)



He didn't try to win on every debated issue or always have the last word, but in a generous way he was always prepared to work out a temporary compromise or an agreement. We were often comrades who quarrelled with Tom because of that capacity – mostly with a smile, sometimes with a little irritation. Now, when he is gone, we know that it is this capacity we will miss the most. The anger and holy rage we have to spare for the big principal questions.

During our twenty-year-long history, Tom was the only one who almost uninterruptedly worked as a political fulltimer. But not because he was the prisoner of the apparatus or became dependent on the organization. On the contrary, it was because he was absolutely necessary in making possible a viable apparatus. He also had the confidence and integrity to make us want him in this position of trust. He was a professional revolutionary.

His only "attempt at escape" during these years was a period at

Atlas Copco [a big Swedish-owned multinational firm.] There he joyfully threw himself into new friendships and trade-union activities. But after a couple of years he was forced to give up this new life, when we convinced him and his companion Birgitta to move to Paris to take on international responsibilities and work.

An internationalist first and foremost

Tom's political clearheadedness, his great capacity for work and the confidence his friends and comrades had in him led to the fact that he got responsibilities and assignments in all areas of work. He has contributed to nearly every issue of the newspapers and magazines we published through the years. He often acted as the secretary of the Verkstallande Utskottet (the executive committee of the party), and was a candidate in local and national elections and carried heavy loads in the election campaigns. But also he led the "Norlandssatsningen" [a campaign to root the party in the working class of the northern part of Sweden], and laboured in the Stockholm branch.

And despite everything, he was a child of May '68 and internationalism was the red thread of his life. As passionately engaged as he was twenty years ago on behalf of the Vietnamese revolution he was, until only a couple of weeks ago, engaged in the defence of the revolution in Nicaragua.

For us he was the most important link to the Fourth International. Here in Sweden he always tried to create an understanding for both the everyday problems of the Fourth International and its important political discussions.

But Tom was not only a link to the Fourth International. During the last six years he was also a part of its executive leadership, the United Secretariat (Usec). During 1981-83 he was also a part of its daily leadership, the Bureau of the Usec. There he first of all succeeded in overcoming language and cultural barriers to create a real authority and play a leading role.

In the same way as in Sweden he became an organizational motor, but also played a prominent role in directing the sections of the Fourth International towards a bigger concentration on activities in the trade unions, and in the hard struggle during the most recent years to defend the programmatic continuity of the International, in defence of Permanent Revolution, the theory which he had used so well to analyse the Vietnamese revolution in his youth.

We are convinced that Tom did not live in vain. A strong link has been broken – but Tom has, by the example of his life, his greatness and his leadership shown us how to forge a new one, how to make the chain strong again. □