International VIEWPOINT

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EL SALVADOR: A failure for US policy in Central America

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SUMMER BREAK

Please note that this is our last issue before the summer holidays. Our first autumn issue will be dated September 19.

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International Viewpoint

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Confrontation over Nagorno-Karabakh deepens

THE TWO-WEEK STRIKE in Armenia was suspended on July 15 by the formally banned Karabakh Committee. For the third time mass actions have been called off to wait for consideration of the problem by a leading Soviet body. On this occasion, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet was supposed to review the Armenian demand on July 18. In the two preceding phases, each time the Soviet authorities set their faces against the Armenian claims, the struggle rose to a new level.

The strikes and demonstrations of the last weeks have set a new high-water mark, and by now formidable experience in independent organization must have been accumulated. After so many enormous mass mobilizations, the movement seems no longer to have anywhere to go but deeper. The next phase of the struggle may very well focus on the Armenian party.

GERRY FOLEY

FOLLOWING the exposition of *glasnost* at Gorbachev's special party congress, it has been notable that *Pravda* has been giving regular coverage to the events in Armenia. Almost every day, there has been a column on the back page. It is more likely, however, that the reason for this is the pressure of the mass movement itself than any desire on the party of the all-Union authorities to widen the cracks of liberalization. The extent of the conflict must also have become widely known in the USSR by now. (*Pravda* opened its coverage of the latest wave of protests with a "response to letters from readers.")

In a country where the government speaks directly through the press, what the publications say has an immediate political impact. And when the population is not bound hand and foot, that can be dangerous for the rulers.

In fact, crudely biased coverage and commentary in the official press has become fuel for the fires of protest in Armenia, and after the latest rejection of the Armenia demands at the special party congress the flames have spread again. The press has had to be a bit more careful, take a slightly more subtle approach. The regular articles in *Pravda* use a bit of the truth to sugar a campaign of testimonies about people rejecting the protests. Almost constantly, on the other hand, the reports have played up opposition to the strikes and played down the scope of the actions.

The Soviet press has also been experimenting with new techniques, notably a hypocritical concern for the psychological damage the struggle is allegedly inflicting on the Armenian inhabitants of Nagorno-Karabakh. A third of one report, (they have not been more than a few paragraphs) consisted of an account of murders within an Armenian family. This case was subsequently woven in with the coverage. This sort of thing is quite reminiscent of the approach of the British media to Northern Ireland, except that it stands out more in the Soviet central papers, which almost never carry reports of violent crime. Another similarity is reports of arms finds.

In fact, the confrontation has sharpened dramatically with the spread of strikes in the Armenian SSR and the vote of the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous district soviet on July 5-6 to leave Azerbaidzhan and join Armenia. The decision of the local soviet in effect raised the question above the legal technicalities and put it squarely on the level of the principle of national self-determination. The existence of the autonomous district itself confirms that it has a distinct national character, and as such it surely has the natural right to determine which republic it wants to be attached to.

The response of the Azerbaidzhan soviet, however, was to rule the Nagorno-Karabakh decision null and void. What is more, according to a report from the *Washington Post* service on July 15, it has begun a blockade of food supplies in order to starve the district out. That would probably be about as close to an act of war as the Azerbaidzhan authorities themselves are capable of. (*Pravda* has also referred to difficulties in provisioning but blamed them on the strike.)

Implications for the party's authority

Thus, there is a situation of direct confrontation between two nationalities, without a single voice being publicly raised in the stronger nationality for a fair consideration of the claims and feelings of the weaker one. There could hardly be a more striking demonstration of the failure of the Communist Party to play the role of a "political vanguard," the absence of discussion, or of the party's lack of credibility. In Azerbaidzhan, it has unanimously taken a chauvinist position. In Armenia, it has been bypassed by the mobilizations.

Furthermore, even moderates who served as spokespersons for the Armenian claims in the first phase of the massive protests, such as the poetess Silva Kapoutikyan, also seem be have been outdistanced. Thus, while *Pravda* of July 9 claimed that the population of the Karabakh capital Stepanakert was"widely discussing the June 7 statements on Yerevan TV by the poetess Silva Kapoutiyan and the Catolicos of all Armenians, Vazgen I, who called for ending the strikes and condemned the incident at the Zvartnots airport," these declarations seem to have had little effect.

The authority of the Catholicos was probably already pretty threadbare. By comparison with him, the Polish hierarchy that tried to stop the August 1980 strikes were intransigent defenders of their people. The Soviet press ironically keeps trying to play him up as a great national leader.

The funeral of the two people killed at Zvartnots was the occasion of a demonstration of reportedly up to 500,000 people, representing one-sixth of the entire population of the Armenian SSR.

The failure of the Armenian CP to discourage the protests has led to the publication of some harsh remarks in *Pravda*, which have implications about the party's authority in general. The July 13 issue carried the following quote from an Armenian philosophy professor:

"When passions were heated up to the limit, why did not honest and brave people, able to restrain the youth from unconsidered actions leading to unfortunate consequences, show up alongside the people? And where were those people who until not long ago handed out and received red flags and gave loud speeches to sleeping listeners? Didn't they give the impres-

sion that a healthy moral-political atmosphere prevailed in the republic, closing their eyes to such monstrous phenomena as bribery and favoritism?"

The same issue carried the following quote from the chair of the executive committee of the the Artash raion soviet, R. Mkhitarian: "*Perestroika* has its open and secret enemies. Every destabilization plays into their hands." (The same quote was published again in the July 14 issue.) Apparently, the Soviet authorities are still trying to use *perestroika* as a weapon against the demonstrations. That is, if you demonstrate you are endangering the liberalization, and at the same time the protests are fomented by covert opponents of the reforms. This seems in particular to be a club to try to beat the local party members back into line against the protests.

The Armenian authorities were also blamed for the clash at the Zvartnots airport in the July 8 *Pravda*. A. Sarkisian wrote, "At the same time, I cannot fail to blame the local authorities also for the situation that has come about. I do not think that in the resolution of the conflict at the airport everything possible was done to prevent the clashes."

A rich experience of mass politics

Very little has been said in *Pravda* about the organization of the protests, although this subject was played up in the first official attacks on the movement. However, such prolonged and extensive actions, obviously not led by the official bodies, must be developing some sort of leadership. There was one claim in *Pravda* when the massive demonstrations resumed in May that the banned Karabakh committees were still operating. And in *Pravda* of July 12, Sarkisian mentioned one assembly that decided to continue the strike:

"On Sunday, a meeting was convened in the Institute of Ancient Manuscripts....As in the last month or month and a half, the meeting was led by the same people, calling themselves members of the Organizational Committee. On that evening it was decided again not to work." At the same time, Sarkisian wrote that "representatives of various strata of the population" appeared on TV and "did not support the idea of striking". (This last formulation was strangely weak, in fact.)

The political experience in Armenia in the last months has been the richest of mass politics in USSR since the onset of the Stalinist deep-freeze. So far, only a few surface features of it are yet visible.

These mobilizations already seem to have been welcomed in Eastern Europe as promising a new ally against the bureaucracy. It was notable, in that respect, that a banner that students hung up in Warsaw during Brezhnev's visit called for "sovereignty for all the peoples living in the USSR." ★

Gorbachev's conference and the crisis of the bureaucracy

THE SPECIAL conference of the Soviet Communist Party was widely hailed by the media as representing an epoch-making change in the Soviet Union. What problems did it reveal and what solutions did it offer? The transcripts of the speeches given in the last two days of the four-day conference provide some interesting indications.[1]

GERRY FOLEY

GORBACHEV'S concluding speech to the special party conference at the end of June attributed a historic importance to the affair. "This was a real, open party discussion about the main thing that concerns Communists and the entire Soviet people today, the attempt to find answers to the questions that are worrying them. Such a discussion, comrades, has never before been heard in the Palace of Congresses, and I think that there has been nothing like it in our country for nearly 60 years."

It was true that many genuine social problems were voiced, particularly in the last two days of the conference. But this is not the first time this has happened. Under Khrushchev also there were some frank admissions of problems, not the least being his memorable phrase that most of the fertilizer that reached Soviet fields was dropped by passing birds. But the frankness was more extensive and new problems were raised, such as defence of the environment and representation of women in leading posts and even — in a very general way — the violation of Lenin's policy on the national question. (It should be remembered that Lenin's last letters on the Stalin's violations of revolutionary national policy were made available for the first time under Khrushchev.)

The very fact that Gorbachev presented the conference as a break from the whole period after Stalin's assumption of power indicates the extension of the range of criticism permitted. Rejection of Stalin and his regime prevailed. (The conservative speakers tried to defend the heritage of the Stalin period only in the name of the labors and sacrifices of the older generations.)

One of the speakers at this conference said that it had to be recognized that the Soviet economy had run in the past to a large extent on the unpaid labor of the peasants. A number of speakers referred to the uninspiring conditions in the countryside and the need in particular for much more social and cultural investment to benefit the rural population. One, A.P. Aidak, a kolkhoz chairman from the Chuvash Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, even offered some suggestions about where the resources could be found.

"Enormous resources have been squandered"

"I think that they can and must be found. Unlike all the other speakers (agitation in the hall [in fact, he was one of the most outspoken]), I will point out where. For decades enormous resources have been squandered, and are still being squandered on grandiose projects that turn out to be useless or even harmful. And no one takes the responsibility for that. If ordinary workers take a handful of nails out, they have to answer for it....But what about Kara-Bogaz-Gol? Who answered for the millions that were lost? And for the damage done to nature?"

Aidak introduced his conclusion by saying, "The people are waiting to see what the conference will do. This is really the last chance."

He went on to say that there were three conditions for the success of *perestroika*: "The first is to guarantee the greatest authority of our Communist Party. In order to

1. For comment on the first two days of the congress, see *IV* 145.

do that it is necessary to do away with privileges wherever they may be. The second is to solve the problem of food. In order to do that it is necessary to achieve real and not verbal equality for peasants. We have to realize that we have 'abused' them for so many years. Third, in order to assure initiative, it is necessary to eliminate the fear of a return to the cult of the personality and lawlessness. For that it is necessary to limit leaders to two terms in office without exception."

The limitation of leaders to two terms was one of the major institutional changes adopted by the conference. The speakers generally supported it. One even expressed the idea that such a provision would have prevented Stalinism and the "stagnation" of the Brezhnev years. It is an important formal reform. But in even Mexico, for example, where the limitation of the president's term was one of the main issues in the revolution, every president since the consolidation of the regime has chosen his successor. Without a general change in the system of political power, the effect of such a reform can only be limited.

Call for abolition of privileges

Aidak clearly spoke as a representative of the Chuvash, a people of mixed Finnic and Turkish origins who are concentrated in an enclave in the east-central region of the Russian SSR. They number between 1 and 2 millions. He also complained of regional problems, notably a failure to promote agriculture in the centre of the Russian SSR.

He was one of the most radical speakers, notably in calling for the abolition privileges of party members. Most of the other speakers who raised this question did so only to deny that such privileges existed and to argue that stories about them were no more than malicious gossip.

On two points, however, Aidak was in the mainstream of the conference — that is, the need to strengthen the moral and political authority of the party and the need to clarify responsibility in administration. These concerns do not necessarily go hand in hand with a radical attitude. They are clearly needed to make any system of government function efficiently. Their absence is extremely costly and more and more difficult for the system to bear, as most of the speakers and Gorbachev himself recognized.

Seeking security at any cost, and therefore avoiding responsibility, is one of the characteristics of bureaucratic rulers. But the Soviet chiefs now have to recognize that this irresponsibility has been leading their administration blindly to disaster. The worst forms of this result from the way the bureaucracy took power surreptitiously, adopting forms designed to cover up its rule — most importantly a system of parallel government. Real power was invested in the party leadership, but a whole apparatus of soviets was maintained alongside the party structures as a facade.

The institutional changes introduced by the conference seem to have been designed to try to rationalize this structure somewhat. This also produced a clear contradiction in the program of the *perestroika*. While the reformers talk about the need for dividing the party and the state, they have actually formally fused the position of party general secretary and head of state, as well as apparently (there were some equivocations) those of local party heads and heads of local soviets.

There has been a lot of speculation about the reasons for this apparent contradiction. But it seems to fit in with a long term trend to bring the formal situation more in line with reality. In the Baltic republics for example, which were the last areas incorporated into the Soviet Union, no distinction is made between the press of the party and the government, unlike the formal separation that still continues to made between *Pravda*, as the organ of the party and *Izvestia*, as the organ of the Soviet. Maintaining the pretence of a division becomes increasingly costly and confusing.

The introduction of a People's Assembly to elect the Supreme Soviet seems to fit into the same pattern. The role of the Supreme Soviet has always been to be formally representative. It decides practically nothing, and everyone knows it, but its makeup is designed to appear representative of the social groups that are supposed to rule in the Soviet Union. What is stressed when it meets is how many delegates are workers, peasants and so on.

Boris Kagarlitsky, a leader of the independent clubs, has speculated that the Assembly may also serve as a retreat for bureaucrats ousted in the multi-candidate elections the leadership has promised. In fact, in the experimental multi-candidate elections that have been held, the voters have tended to use their limited choice to eliminate the most senior party candidates. These bureaucrats could rise to the top again in quotas to be elected to represent specific groups.

Real separation of party and state could only come if the Communist Party actually had to win political support on its own. And after 60 years of fusion with the state, that would require renouncing its constitutional leading role and accepting the right of other parties to exist, transforming the soviets into multi-party bodies. Not a single speaker recommended that. One did raise the question of whether a single party system could guarantee democracy. That was L. I. Abalkin, director of the Economics Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. He drew fire from a number of speakers, but the delegates were demonstratively not prepared even to consider the question, although there has been some talk of experimenting with official extra parties subordinated to the CP but formally separate from it, as exist in most East European countries.

"The press is the only possible opposition"

One of the leading "reconstructers," V. G. Afanasyev, the chief editor of *Pravda*, even argued that since in principle there could be no socialist opposition, the press would have to play the necessary role of critic. He did this apparently in a defensive way, responding to a mood among delegates clearly hostile to the concrete *glasnost* engaged in by some publications:

"I am not going to repeat the words in the report [the opening speech by Gorbachev] that...contains an assessment of our press's work as in general positive. The press has done quite a bit to reestablish historical truth, social justice, criticism of our failings and omissions on a whole series of other questions. If I were chair of this assembly, I would put the question: Dear comrade delegates, do you agree with that assessment? I think that not a single hand would be raised against. But nonetheless a question bothers me. Why is there a certain, I would say quite marked, hostility to the press floating around in this hall, hostility to press workers? (noise in the hall)"

Gorbachev interrupted him to say that no area was now exempt from criticism. And then Afanasyev went on to make his point about the press being the only possible opposition, since a "class base" was lacking for any other kind.

Many speakers did make a point of attacking the press and press workers. The sorest point seemed to be reports about the

sins and failings of local officials. In fact, one of the features of Gorbachev's *perestroika* policy is to use the press to try to change methods of work in the local units, at the expense of bureaucrats too set in their ways or clearly incompetent or corrupt. This has obviously hurt. Proposals for a new law on the press or a libel law seemed to be a mark of conservative speakers, including notably Boris Yeltsin's successor as head of the Moscow district committee, V. K. Mesyats, who followed up such a proposal with these remarks:

"Poison, cynicism and disillusion"

"Of course — and it has been stressed at this conference that in the recent period expressions of demagogy have come to the fore — every imaginable sort of scandal monger, loud mouth and anarchistic element have been raising their heads. Under the flag of democracy they have been trying to spread doubt among the people about the party's course, harming *perestroika*. Voices are being raised about the loss of the party's resources, about introducing a multi-party system. The problem has been complicated by the fact that many party, Soviet and economic leaders, fearing that they will seen as opponents of democratization, have not sufficiently opposed all this rubbish. They have been avoiding sharp discussions, in part showing confusion, indecisiveness and even outright ideological impotence."

Despite some implicitly very far reaching criticisms by some delegates, no struggles were proposed against any specific opponent or opponents of *perestroika*. In fact, along with multi-partyism, separate political groupings in the party were also condemned. The area where the speeches seemed to reflect a real struggle was around the press and publishing. A few apparently conservative speakers condemned a supposed ruinous and ruthless fight for positions in the publications.

The vice-chair of the writers' union, Iu. V. Bondarev delivered a veritable tirade. "In our press we are constantly giving our youth not the truth, even the bitterest truth, and not experience that would teach them to improve themselves, but a chain woven of poison, cynicism, disillusion, which chokes the healthy joyfulness of youth." (The metaphor is rather tangled in the original and hardly does honor to a professional writer.)

Bondarev made some specific attacks: "In the last congress of film-makers, it was not the best, the outstanding directors and actors that went into the leadership. What operated here? Group passions, general nervousness, jealously of talent, of the successes of others."

He complained that the conservative journals *Molodaya Gvardia* and *Nash Sovremennik* had come under venomous attack. He also expressed outrage at a defaming of the Soviet past and of patriotism in general. He compared the official literary figures he said were suffering outrageous attacks with Socrates condemned to drink hemlock and the Russian classical authors rejected by the ultra-left proletkult writers of the 1920s (who actually prepared the way for the "socialist realism," of which he and his friends are the beneficiaries).

By comparison with the fireworks over the press, the much remarked on exchange between the out-on-a-limb reformer Boris Yeltsin and Yegor Ligachev, the leading conservative figure, was quite restrained, but it came closer to real power. Yeltsin spent most of his time defending himself. As for Ligachev, he said only that he had some disagreements with him and with his style of work. Yeltsin was put down very hard by Gorbachev, not in a Stalinist criminalizing style but nonetheless witheringly. In effect, he accused him of resorting to trouble-making because he could not handle his practical tasks.

In his response to Yeltsin, Ligachev contrasted his own record in practical work in Siberia with Yeltsin's supposed history as a mere bureaucrat. He also hinted that he had been responsible for Gorbachev's victory in 1985 and thereby for saving the country from disaster. That implied a threat, that is, if the start of *perestroika* depended on him, presumably its continuation did also.

Yeltsin defended and attacked

It was interesting that in the discussion, despite the heavy putdown from Gorbachev, Yeltsin had his defenders, notably former associates from the Sverdlovsk district, who praised the practical results of his work. No less interesting were the attacks on him by representatives of the Moscow region, who accused him of driving veteran party worthies to retirement or even suicide.

Perestroika is obviously making the lives of bureaucrats much harder, while not yet producing much, if any, concrete benefit for the masses. On the other hand, the speeches published in *Pravda* tended to stress the inevitability of the reform. Even Ligachev said that the country was heading for disaster in 1985. Three main reasons were stressed — that in the old conditions, the leadership could not know what the real situation in the economy was. This concealment of the real economic facts also favored corruption that was undermining the party. The party was losing all authority.

The call for removal of leaders implicated in the Brezhnev regime by V. I. Melnikov, first secretary of the Komi district committee, was much commented on in the international press. The political meaning of it was made a bit mysterious by the list he gave of persons who should be retired, when challenged to do so by Gorbachev. It included leading reformers as well as conservatives. His speech in general was rather critical, voicing complaints about the disadvantages of the Komi people, a Finnic nationality concentrated into the Komi Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic in the north-east of the Russian SSR. In addition to pointing to economic and social problems, he complained about the concentration of "corrective labor camps" on the territory of the Komi ASSR.

The reasons stressed by a large number of the speakers, including Ligachev, for the vital need for *perestroika* are sufficient to explain the frankness at the conference. This also allowed some certainly long-suppressed questions to be asked. These questions are undoubtedly on the minds of the Soviet public, and it would have been hard for a conference designed to display *glasnost* to ignore them. For example, it was asked why only dead leaders were criticized. There was a call for explaining why a dying man like Chernenko was elected general secretary, why there was no opposition to Brezhnev, and so on.

National and regional resentments

On one point, there does seem to have been elements of a real debate and a real change, that is, economic decentralization, the transfer of economic decision-making from the central ministries to the local and republic soviets. To a certain extent, this is required by the logic of the economic reform. But it can set off a very complicated and risky process for the bureaucracy, as the experience of Yugoslavia shows.

There is already considerable pressure for "economic home rule" in the Baltic republics (the Komi chairman, Melnikov also seemed to express a similar tendency), and there is every reason to think that this sort of thing can spread. The long years of Stalinist bureaucratic centralization and accompanying manipulation and maneuvers have clearly created a pandora's box of national and regional resentments. The *perestroika* has not, and will not create, any effective democratic means for resolving the conflicts arising from decentralization.

Democratic decision-making would require the abolition of bureaucratic power, the formation of democratic leading bodies, and the recreation of real political vanguards (the confrontation between the Armenian and Azerbaidzhani SSRs has shown how much these are lacking). None of the measures adopted or announced by the conference pointed in that direction. At most this affair opened the way further for publicly voicing a few plain truths about the country's problems. That is hardly a brilliant exhibition of democracy. But it undoubtedly reflects the depth of the crisis of bureaucratic rule, and that can lead to some genuinely spectacular developments, as the mass mobilizations in Armenia have indicated. ★

No letup in the Palestinian uprising

SINCE DECEMBER 9, 1987, the Palestinians have tied down on the world's most powerful armies. They have done it by throwing stones, civil disobedience and strikes, despite fierce, murderous repression by the Israeli state.

After six months of a fantastic mobilization, which the media are no longer talking very much about, what is the situation now? We asked our correspondent in Jerusalem, Michel Warschawski.

THE UPRISING is no longer on the front pages of the papers. What are the most significant recent developments?

Since the beginning of June, a series of actions and strikes called through communiques from the United Leadership have drawn great support in the Gaza Strip, and a bit less on the West Bank. Contrary to what the authorities wanted people to believe at the beginning of the month, we have seen no return to relative calm. Quite the opposite. We get the feeling that the confrontations are tending to sharpen.

The strikes have been total in Gaza, and very largely respected on the West Bank. These are strikes concentrated in one to two days, called at dates set by the Unified Leadership. A new element in the uprising is starting fires [a form of sabotage]. An average of 18 fires a day were recorded in the second week of June. These probably started as individual initiatives; today they have become one of the dimensions of the resistance strategy.

■ The uprising is going into its seventh month. At this stage, what sort of a balance sheet can you make, among other things concerning the repression?

The human cost is becoming impressive. The number of dead are estimated at more than 250 — some even say more than 300 — with a growing proportion of people killed in unclear circumstances, that is, by the settlers. There have been about 40 cases of this sort. A very large number of people have been injured by plastic bullets, at least 60 in the past month. Some of them have lost eyes. There has also been an excessive use of tear gas. Amnesty International has made an appeal to the Israeli government about this. It talks about 40 Palestinians losing their lives, including 18 babies under six months of age.

Moreover, there are officially 2,500 people in administrative detention. The army recognizes that alongside this, there are 3,000-4,000 "normal" prisoners. We think that there are more than 2,500 administrative detainees and 7,000-8,000 normal prisoners. The difference comes from the fact that the army only counts those who are held for more than a week.

But one thing is evident to everyone. The *Intifada* [uprising] is not an ephemeral explosion. It is a prolonged popular struggle that is going to go on for many months more, or even years. The uprising has to be seen as a long-lasting movement, as a new kind of relationship between the Palestinian population and the Israeli state. The whole strategy now is built around the perspective of a prolonged struggle. What will be the next stage? Probably total civil disobedience, that is, refusal to pay taxes, boycotting Israeli products, refusing to apply for the various permits necessary for daily life — burning all the bridges with the authorities.

The first phase of the *Intifada* was one of confrontation with the occupation forces. We are now in an intermediate phase that involves preparation for total civil disobedience. On the one hand, this is based on broadening and reinforcing the People's Committees, which are nuclei of self-administration at a local level and which are one of the most important factors in the present situation. On the other, it involves a certain economic self-sufficiency even if the whole of the population has to live under a curfew for a month or more. There is of course a debate about timing, about how prepared the population is already.

■ Do you see a growth of solidarity in Israeli society?

There is no broadening of the solidarity, but there is undoubtedly a deepening. A whole series of initiatives have been taken to express concrete solidarity with the movement and the victims. An example is the Beita Committee — named for a village wrecked by the settlers — that has brought together prominent personalities and is organizing collections of money and days of volunteer work to rebuild what was destroyed. Of course, this is still far from the dimensions attained by the protest movement at the time of the Lebanon war. That is because today the stakes are much higher and involve the very foundations of the Zionist state.

In this sense, you can speak of a deepening of solidarity. I see another indication in the unprecedented success of the "traditional" June 4 demonstration that commemorates the 1967 war. Usually, sympathizers of the [Israeli] Peace Now movement have not taken part. This year, on the other hand, we made big inroads in this layer, even though this demonstration was called by organizations known to be left and radical.

In the reserve units that are doing their service in the territories we see also that in almost every unit, one or two soldiers refuse to go. This is especially true in units called up to go to the territories for the second time, because the tours of active service have been increased from 30 to 62 days and have to be done two or three times. Moreover, reservists are being used increasingly in the territories. As they do their second or third tour in the territories, this sort of effect will be felt more and more.

Even at the level of the relationship of political forces, the most recent polls give a slight lead to Labour over Likud. In future elections, it is expected that we will see a renewal of the balance between the Labour Bloc and the Labour left on the one hand and Likud and the extreme right on the other. ★

El Salvador: a failure for Reagan's "*pax Americana*"

EIGHT YEARS of "low-intensity" warfare have destabilized the whole of El Salvadoran society, and even the United States' plans, without resolving any of the social and political factors at the root of the conflict. Yet in 1984, North American strategists were optimistic about the future: the election of President Napoleon Duarte provided a democratic facade.

At that time, General Paul Gorman of the US Southern Command — the troops "in charge" of Latin America and based in great numbers in Panama — announced that in two years "we will have control of 80%-90% of the country and the guerrillas' ability to rebuild will be severely undermined." Four years later this attempt at imposing a *pax Americana* has become a failure.

MICHEL THEVENAZ

NOBODY denies this failure any longer. Senator M.O. Hatfield and Representatives J. Leach and G. Miller assessed it in the following terms in November 1987: "American aid for 1987 has reached $608 million, or 105% of Salvador's budget. El Salvador has almost attained the record dependence of South Vietnam at the height of the Vietnam war."[1]

In spite of this effort, "the counter-insurgency campaign of 'pacification' [based on the South Vietnamese model] has not succeeded in eroding the social base of the rebels....The aid allocated to the war corresponds to $45,000 for each of the 7,350 rebels, while the aid allocated to reforms and development only amounts to $105 for each one of the millions of Salvadorans who live in a state of 'absolute poverty'....

"The size of the Salvadoran army has grown from 10,000 to 54,000 men since 1980. In spite of good wages and allowances, recruitment is only 25% of that needed — 12,000-15,000 new recruits are necessary....The US ambassador has envisaged that it will take another seven years to marginalize the FMLN [Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front] — that is, until 1994!" The list could go on.

This reminder of Vietnam is not accidental. Since the Pentagon's defeat in one of the longest and hardest wars since 1945, its strategies have aimed at putting an end to revolutionary movements by other means. "Low-intensity warfare", as they call it, was to replace the sending of a big contingent of US troops (costly, including in human lives, for the United States). This was realized by two complementary means. The first was setting up native elite units, trained in the US, specializing in counter-insurgency and equipped with sophisticated armaments. The second was advancing so-called democratic reforms, from agrarian reforms to the constitution of elected and representative governments, in order to wear away the social base of the resistance.

Salvador — a tiny country on the map of the world where open civil war broke out in October 1979 just after the Sandinistas' victory in Nicaragua — has become the laboratory and the model of this new North American strategy.[2] This should be remembered so as to measure the scope of the current failure.

US prospects looked promising in 1984

Indeed, in 1984 this project was not an unpromising one for the United States. Duarte's election had channelled the hopes of wide sectors of the masses for an alternative to the extreme-right represented by the National Republican Alliance (ARENA). A long-standing opponent of the Salvadoran oligarchy, Duarte was supported by a number of mass organizations, mainly of peasants, who signed a "social pact" for reforms with him. ARENA was responsible for the 1980-83 wave of terror, the death squads and for instransigently blocking any serious agrarian reforms.[3] In 1984-85, the injection of American economic aid and the relaunching of the agrarian reform momentarily stabilized the continuing fall of salaries and the per capita national product.

At a military level the Salvadoran army increased its regular forces four-fold, formed elite battalions (today there are eight of them) and received a modern air-force for bombarding the war zones and guerrilla bases. The FMLN itself, following the failure of its "final offensive" of January 1981, was recomposing its forces at the expense of violent internal tensions.[4] The Pentagon's plan was, therefore, not totally unrealistic, and all the international press was singing the praises of the exemplary "democratic solution" under way in Salvador.

US intervention led to social disaster

So today's failure is even harder to take, not only for Duarte who is ill and out of action, but for American strategists themselves. And it is not for nothing that the experts in the US Congress are recalling the spectre of Vietnam: once again, the "*pax Americana*" has not achieved its goal.

Some outstanding features make it possible first of all to measure the veritable social disaster created by the US intervention. The war has magnified the economic crisis to the point of catastrophe. The Economic Institute of San Salvador University estimates that from 1980 to 1986, the per capita gross national product fell by 16.7%, and the review of the José Canas Central American University (Jesuit) puts the fall in real wages during the same period at around 50%.

"According to the minister of the economy, the value of the average family food basket for March, which measures real wages, went up to 1,771 colons (about $354). Taking into account of the numbers of people unemployed, it is obvious that a growing percentage of the active population was unable to buy these basics, which represent four times the value of the minimum wage for workers in commerce, industry and the services, and more than seven times the income of workers in the agricultural sector. Far from improving,

1. *Report to the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus* (official report to the US Congress, November 1987), cited by *Correos de centroamerica*, June 1988.
2. It was developed notably by Henry Kissinger, who was sent to Central America by Reagan in 1983. Both Republicans and Democrats have made it their model.
3. On the subject of the agrarian reform, see *IV* 134, February 8, 1988. For more general coverage on the economic and social situation, see *IV* 119, May 4, 1987.
4. The culmination of this crisis was the assassination of Commandant Ana Maria and the suicide of historic leader Caetano Carpio ("Marcial") in April 1983.
5. *ECA*, journal of the Central American University, February 1988. See also *Coyunctura Economica* 11, Economic Institute of El Salvador University, February 1987.

this situation has worsened even further during 1987." [5]

The same magazine estimates that the combined rate of full unemployment and under-employment is 65% of the economically active population; the UNTS union federation[6] puts the figure as high as 78%. According to them, last year a pound of haricot beans — the main staple of the daily diet — went up 200%, and rice by 50%. "In January 1986, three colons would buy ten eggs, but in January 1987 the same money would only by seven." Around 5,000 families live in shantytowns, 29,000 in multi-occupancy slums, 14,600 in illegal camps (which spring up on empty land and have no basic services), 1,500 families who have fled from the war zones live in tents and 5,000 others on land at the side of the roads. In total this means that some 300,000 people are living in such conditions in the San Salvador region, a quarter of its population.[7]

There was a slight economic upturn in the construction sector last year, following the earthquake in October 1986, but this had no multiplier effect on other sectors. On the contrary, coffee exports — which make up a third of the state's income — are down, as is production itself. The national budget, whose main item is defence spending, goes into a huge deficit every year with foreign aid (above all from North America) filling the gap, but at the cost of mounting interest on the foreign debt.

As for American aid properly speaking, according the the magazine *ECA*: "In 1987, $3 of North American aid were destined for the war and its effects, as against $1 for remedying its causes. Even though this ratio is lower than in 1985 (when it was 4 to 1), the budget proposed by the government for 1988 indicates a ratio of 3.5 to 1. 'Economic' aid is therefore still being used to stimulate the war effort." The magazine explains that American law forbids in principle the use of economic and food aid for military ends. Experts in the Congress say in this regard:

"As was the case in the Vietnam war, some American personnel are there to promote a counter-insurgency campaign, including 'civil actions', in poor rural areas, and to create 'civil defence' groups to patrol and report on rebel movements. When villagers refuse to take part in these patrols for fear of eventual reprisals from the rebels, local commanders force them to join by blocking American economic aid until such patrols are formed." [8]

These few examples suffice to show what the five-year-long "American peace" plan means on a social and human level in Salvador. The agrarian "reform" has sold (and not distributed) land to some peasants, loading them down with debts. The economic crisis has aggravated unemployment, and the war has displaced thousands of peasants who now have nothing. State spending on the war and consequent indebtedness to the USA leads the war effort to eat up an ever higher proportion of the budget.

Reagan, Duarte and the extreme-right

ARENA were, and still are, ready to pay this social price in order to win the war. However, this result is far from being accomplished at a military level. In 1987, the armed forces suffered 3,285 dead and wounded, or 6% of their forces. This was 20% higher than in 1986. On the other side, the FMLN reckons these losses to be more like 8,079 — 14.7% of the army. In return, the armed forces estimate FMLN losses at 1,674 men, or less than 4% more than the preceding year.

Two further military indications add to this sinister picture. During 1987, the FMLN called seven transport strikes. The main ones were in May in solidarity with the unions and at the beginning of November in protest at the assassination of H. Anaya, the president of the Human Rights Commission. According to all the observers, these strikes were largely followed (up to 90% effective), including in the capital, forcing the army to interrupt its operations so as to mobilize around 45,000 men to provide transport services with lorries.

Another indication was the surprise attack in March 1987 on one of the main barracks, El Paraiso, a strategically key entry point for Chalatenango. This not only destroyed, for the second time, a bastion that had been rebuilt using the most sophisticated methods, but also forced the military commandant to use his elite troops to hold strategic points when they should have been free for other operations. Incontestably, the FMLN was able to retake the initiative militarily, and American advisors now think that the war will take another seven years to finish.

These strictly military aspects, however, reflect a more basic social and political problem. Confronted since 1981 with an increasing American intervention in Salvador, the FMLN has adapted in a remarkable way both militarily and politically. The American intervention certainly modified the character of the war, merging the civil war with a war of aggression, whose full effects the Salvadoran people rapidly came to feel and suffer from, first in the countryside and the war zones and today in the cities. The FMLN countered the sophisticated means and military superiority introduced by the United States — above all in the air — by deepening popular resistance at all levels. A large section of the fighters was dispersed throughout the country, developing both political work in the villages and basic military training.

For a people constantly suffering from brutality from the army and the death squads, the use and distribution of home-made mines has not only extended operations to the whole country but also given thousands of people a simple way of defending themselves. Many army patrols searching for the guerrillas return empty-handed but with soldiers killed or wounded by the mines, which noticeably saps the morale of the army. The scattering of the fighters and systematic sabotage have made

6. UNTS — National Union of Salvadoran Workers, created in 1986, with around 350,000 workers and a large section of diverse unions, associations and peasant organizations.
7. *Analysis of the current movement*, report presented to the UNTS national assembly, February 8/9, 1988.
8. *Report to the Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus*, ibid.

massive aerial bombardments less effective (that is, on the military level, because the effects on the civil population are dramatic).

This adaptation to a war of popular resistance — and this second element is important — has had some considerable political repercussions. The FMLN/FDR [Revolutionary Democratic Front] has effectively combined its military adaptation with a political offensive for a "negotiated solution among Salvadorans without interference from the United States", which large sectors of the population support today. So, especially in the last two years, the cumulative effects of the economic crisis, the burden of the war and the corruption of the Duarte regime, dependent on the United States, have won over ever broader sections of the population to a negotiated solution with the FMLN/FDR. The development of this social and political movement, which is much broader than the FMLN fighters, has become one of the decisive factors in the current crisis.

Rise of the mass movement and UNTS

The intelligence of the Salvadoran revolutionaries should be stressed. From a perilous situation (above all in such a tiny country), they were able to develop a military and political response that has obviously accelerated the failure of the 1983 North American plan.

The rise of the mass movement in this last period can be judged, in the first place, by the development of the National Union of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), a grouping of left or Christian democrat-leaning unions, cooperative peasant federations and associations of students, women, youth, mothers of the "disappeared" or prisoners, and so on.

The UNTS was created in February 1986 at a time when the Duarte government, absorbed by the crisis and the war, changed horses and proposed a first "economic package" of austerity policies. Some months earlier still (in November 1985), the union at the Ministry of Finances, AGHEMA, had led a strike for wage rises that won increases for all state employees. Rey Prendes, presently one of the two candidates for Duarte's succession and at the time minister of culture and communications, declared that the government "would no longer negotiate any agreements to resolve strikes by public employees".[9]

In December 1986, the government devalued the colon and imposed an austerity plan. This choice was dictated by the financial impasse that the state was in, as well as by the agricultural crisis. The devaluation was far from sufficient for the long-term relaunching of Salvadoran agricultural exports in the world market. At the same time, it increased the prices of all the goods needed for agricultural production precisely when the first beneficiaries of the agrarian reform should have begun to put money back into their land. The peasant debt became unpayable. Parallel to this, the social effects of the war and inflation aggravated living conditions in the towns. These factors pushed forward the process of regroupment of unions and associations inside the UNTS.

In 1987, an important wave of struggles, notably of workers in the public services, gave a new momentum to the urban mass movement. The so-called low-intensity warfare, which, along with winning the war, was supposed to "win hearts and minds" of everyone by promising reforms and democratic rights, brought the opposite result — a vast movement breaking with the government and its bellicose policy, advancing its own wage, social and democratic demands, including the demand for Duarte's resignation and for a negotiated settlement without American interference.

Social movement confronts enormous obstacles

But this social movement confronts enormous obstacles. The first was noted in the reports of the UNTS national assembly in February 1988: "Our economic victories for the workers remain minimal in view of the policies of the Duarte government, of the Christian-democratic functionaries and the bosses of private enterprises. They have not only systematically refused to negotiate and find solutions to the just demands of the workers, but even tried to split and break up the principled mass organizations".

Some small wage increases have been obtained, but essentially the struggles in 1987 brought scant successes. For example, the long social security strike ended without producing any results, and the hospitals were put under military control. The strikes did not succeed either at a material level or in terms of winning legal recognition for the unions (in spite of the Esquipulas Accords!) In the long term, this "systematic refusal" — to which has to be added the murders and disappearances perpetrated by the army or the death squads at a rate of at least two dozen a month — can contribute to demoralizing workers and sapping their resistance.

A second obstacle is that the various unions and associations making up the UNTS — given their very different origins and development — have very heterogeneous levels of experience, organization and cadre training.

Political difficulties for union struggles

The UNTS balance sheet presented in February 1988 noted "a certain separation between the leadership and the base and poor participation in all the activities of the union and association movement, a deterioration of these unions and associations". In order to assess this, the Salvadoran context must be understood. In its effort to draw in broad social sectors, the UNTS has put an enormous amount of effort into social and political activities. At the same time, its struggles have brought few results, if not violent repression.

In such conditions, where the smallest wage rise becomes a political problem (rejections by the government, accusations of connections with the FMLN), action by the unions or the other associations is obviously strictly dependent on a political opening, and therefore on the ending of the war. But between this prerequisite, which workers understand immediately, and the chance of achieving it, looms the wall of the army, the police and American interference.

Extremely exposed to the blows of the repression — selective repression combined with a flat refusal by the government to meet the most urgent needs — the UNTS could suffer a serious setback if no political solution appears in the future.

This somewhat detailed description throws light on the failure of the whole of American policy in Salvador for the last eight years. The accumulated effects of the social crisis, military failures and the growth of popular discontent ended in March in the eruption of a crisis in Duarte's government. The legislative elections were elections inside the ruling layers. Estimates of the rate of abstention vary between 60% and 70%. The whole "electoral" debate — centred on the war and the murders — was dominated by a single question: who can retake the reins with enough credibility in Washington?

Duarte's Christian Democrat Party (PDC), now in a minority, held 50% of the national assembly for a few weeks in coalition with the small Party for National Conciliation (PCN), and has just lost it after one of these deputies went over to ARENA. The parliament, which was no longer meeting, will be able to sit with a "legitimate"

9. *Coyuncture Economica* 2, November 1985, p.14.

51% majority. In the PDC, two fractions have been formed behind the two candidates for the presidential elections in March 1989.

Although victorious in terms of seats, ARENA has few solutions to offer. Again, as in 1972 or 1982[10], there is a polarization between the ruling oligarchy grouped around ARENA and the opposition. This is undoubtedly the most important development in the recent period. By wanting and needing to save the oligarchy (both in terms of the agrarian reform and in the inquiries into the repression), the American intervention has paralyzed any political solution in Salvador and shown, once more, that national and social liberation cannot be achieved without destroying this system. But since the beginning of this war, the social crisis has taken on such a scale that only a big programme of reforms and economic aid could redress it — exactly what the oligarchy cannot contemplate. At the same time, the regained political and military strength of the FMLN limits the chances for rapid successes.

From here to victory is a big step

From now until the presidential elections in 1989, this political and institutional crisis is going to sharpen. The failure of the North American project leaves the USA facing some difficult choices. The mass movement, in spite of its limits, has won enough political space to destabilize any political solution that does not respond to the need for national independence and social justice. After eight years of war, the idea of a negotiated solution with the FMLN/FDR, without foreign interference, has won a large following. But the presence of the USA is preventing this from happening, at the cost of a veritable social and human disaster, and the oligarchy is relying on the USA to help them get out of the mire.

For the Salvadoran revolutionaries, this crisis involves difficult responsibilities. They have shown a remarkable capacity for resistance, which has won them credibility in wide popular layers. But from there to victory, to imposing a negotiated solution unwanted by either the Americans or the oligarchy, is quite a step.

The editorialist of *ECA* magazine already cited — a partisan of a "third way", whose outlines are fuzzy after the long of rule of the oligarchy and the USA — himself concludes: "In 1988, the FMLN has the more difficult hand to play". ★

10. In 1972, the Duarte (PDC)/Ungo (MNR social-democrat) duo won the elections. This reformist solution was brushed aside by the dictatorship. Since then, Ungo has gone over to the FDR (with a minority of the Christian Democrats), and Duarte has worn threadbare the solution of "American-style reforms". Already in 1982 Duarte was beaten for the first time by ARENA, who profited from this majority to block the reforms and all democratic processes.

"An end to the war is nowhere in sight"

BELOW we publish extracts from a report on the military situation in El Salvador prepared by four American lieutenant-colonels for the John F. Kennedy School of Government. This internal report has been widely leaked in San Salvador over the last couple of months, presumably as a way of putting pressure on the Salvadoran officer corps and its more recalcitrant backers in the oligarchy.

It includes not only a frank admission of US aims and methods, but a damning indictment of the failure to realize them.

HAVING reached its eighth anniversary, the war in El Salvador retains a remarkable ability to surprise. The war's course has refused to conform to the expectations of self-appointed experts. The conflict has not become "another Vietnam," as tremulous observers in the US had feared. Nor has the prolonged struggle led to the collapse of the armed forces of El Salvador, as the latter's many critics once confidently predicted. Alas, for the Reagan administration, neither has the Salvadoran army's resilience combined with substantial American backing led to decisive defeat of those attempting to overthrow the government. Indeed, the perseverance of the adversaries is such that, in early 1988, an end to the war appears nowhere in sight.

The Salvadoran conflict provides an example of a war that is both old and new. On the one hand, the war falls clearly into the now-familiar tradition of insurgency, articulated by Mao Tse-tung and applied with varying degrees of success on many battlefields since the end of the second world war. For the United States, on the other hand, El Salvador represents an experiment, an attempt to reverse the record of American failure in waging small wars, an effort to defeat an insurgency by providing training and material support without committing American troops to combat....

As the US girds itself for intervention, it faces major strategic questions. What are US objectives? Given the war's particular character, what is winning? What measure of success will enable policy-makers to evaluate progress over time? Does domestic political support exist? Once mustered, can it be sustained? In a broad sense, what American resources are required and how

are they to be employed to achieve American objectives?

In El Salvador, American efforts to provide timely and definitive answers to these questions left much to be desired. The officers we interviewed agree that the US has yet to define clear policy objectives in El Salvador....Asked to describe US national objectives in El Salvador, for example, one general officer replied that the White House was hoping for "a bright, shiny democracy to spring into being overnight," that the State Department was preoccupied with surviving the next vote on Capitol Hill, the Defence Department worried lest controversy over El Salvador jeopardize other defence programs, the Congress strove to prevent El Salvador from becoming another Vietnam, the CIA was absorbed in attempting to manipulate Salvadoran political factions, while SouthCom [the US army Southern Command] searched for ways to "let the government of El Salvador operate without too much fear of interference from the insurgents."

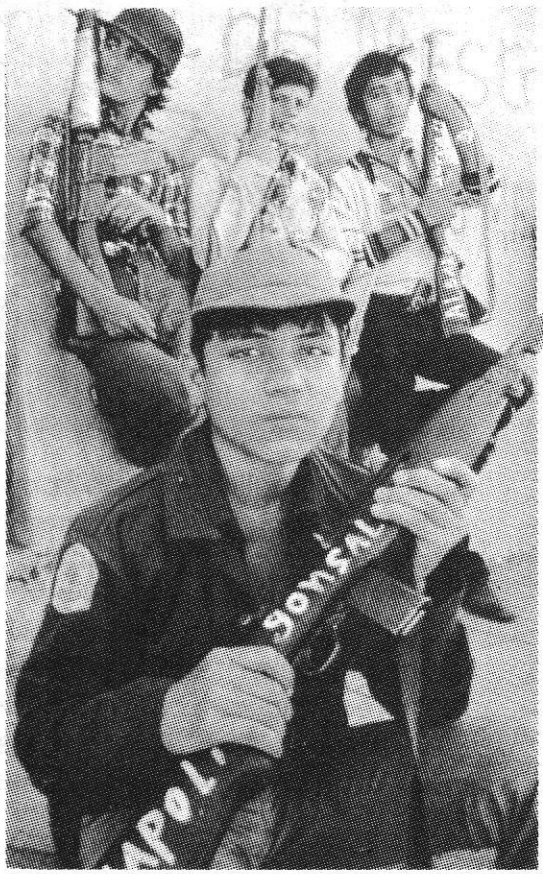
An off-the-cuff judgement, such a rendering surely suffers from oversimplification. Nor are the various objectives listed necessarily inconsistent with one another. But they do reflect the frustration of a principal actor, shared by most of those whom we interviewed, at the absence of any common sense of purpose or theme uniting the efforts of the Americans concerned with the Salvadoran war....

In the absence of any agreed upon measures of success, evaluations of American policy rely excessively on "gut-feel" or on statistics (misleading in isolation) of how many guerrillas are being killed and how many continue to fight. Deprived of clearly stated objectives and quantifiable measures of success, officers in El Salvador today have difficulty knowing whether or not American policy is any closer to achieving its purposes than it was a half dozen years ago....

American intervention in El Salvador occurred without the benefit of a unifying visionary document. Interestingly, however, American involvement there provides examples of three documents composed over a three year period, none of which alone offered the necessary unifying vision, but when considered together constitute something like a comprehensive strategic overview. Those three documents are the Woerner Report (1981), the National Campaign Plan (1983) and the Report of the Kissinger Commission (1984).

The Woerner Report had a seminal influence on subsequent American efforts. Yet this report didn't go far enough. As a senior member of the team drafting the report recalled: "Our original purpose was to design a national strategy; [but] that mission proved too broad. Our purpose got reduced to assisting the Salvadoran armed forces to draft and design a national military strategy." The distinction is a crucial one. Pressed for time and with its perspective shaped by its purely military composition, the Woerner team concentrated on sketching out ideas to retool the armed forces: quadrupling the force structure; upgrading command, control, communications and intelligence; establishing a logistics system. The Woerner Report also examined the war's naval and air dimensions, paying particular attention to the modernization and expansion of the Salvadoran air force.

Apart from an emphasis that was arguably too conventional given the character of the Salvadoran war, the Woerner Report's recommendations for improving the army were generally sound. Unfortunately, the team's members had neither the time, the expertise, nor even the charter to examine with equal thoroughness the other facets of counter-insurgent strategy: population control, social and economic reform, the reinforcement of democratic institutions, improvement of government services, civic action, civil defence or psychological operations (psyops). As a result, the report dealt with these issues in passing or not at all.



Drafted some sixteen months later, the National Campaign Plan (NCP) represented a commendable if belated attempt to formulate a comprehensive counter-insurgent strategy. If the Woerner Report focused on converting the Salvadoran army from a constabulary into a fighting force, the NCP prescribed a method for incorporating the army's efforts into an expanding panoply of capabilities all intended to earn popular support for the Salvadoran government. The Woerner Report had aimed to create an army that could kill guerrillas; the aim of the NCP was to win.

Conceptually, the NCP represented a breakthrough in thinking about the war. Yet the plan advocated a strategy without moorings. The MilGroup [military group based in Salvador] devised the NCP when "baloney-slice funding" was at its most severe. Even after Americans in-country had cajoled Salvadoran officers and their government into adopting the plan, it possessed little standing in the United States as something Americans or their representatives in Congress needed to support. In large measure, this lack of enthusiasm for the NCP reflected the fact that Americans in the early years of the Reagan presidency did not share the administration's enthusiasm for El Salvador.

Recognizing the need to broaden domestic support for his policies in El Salvador and elsewhere in the region, President Reagan, in mid-1983, created a bipartisan commission on Central America. Commonly known as the Kissinger Commission after its chair, this too was a positive, if belated, initiative.

Did anyone ever doubt that the commission's final report would endorse the major thrust of the president's policies? Probably not. Yet despite its predictable conclusions, the commission's report educated Americans about the stakes in Central America and helped regularize subsequent congressional funding of the Salvadoran war effort. The commission's bipartisan composition, the stature of its individual members, and the thoroughness with which they went about their task bestowed on American policies a mantle of legitimacy that they had lacked previously.

What is the significance of all this for future American involvement in small wars? In the early years especially, the failure to define an overarching strategic vision hampered American military efforts in El Salvador. Yet over time, via these three documents, the US did cobble together a vision of sorts. The prolonged gestation of that vision limits its utility in El Salvador. Yet as a model for the visionary document that should accompany any future American interventions, the Woerner Report, National Campaign Plan and Kissinger Report considered collectively have much to offer.

The Salvadoran experience suggests that the ideal visionary document will avoid partisan identification. It will derive its authority from the fact that its authors — a mix of political leaders, businessmen, academics and soldiers — are "above politics."...Its purpose must be to generate domestic support for the intervention and its purposes from the outset of American involvement. In outlining planned US actions, the ideal visionary document will

certainly address the full spectrum of military activities. But it will look beyond that to consider factors that are nominally non-military but integral to any war-winning counter-insurgent strategy....

Can the Salvadoran army defeat the guerrillas?

Beyond its attempts to reform the officer corps and introduce non-commissioned officers into the Salvadoran armed forces, the US sought to change the way Salvadorans fight. Efforts on this front — focusing on organization, hardware, tactics and training — have transformed the army. In outward appearance, the somnolent Salvadoran military that existed prior to the US intervention has all but disappeared, eclipsed by a force that is bigger, better equipped, and hardened by years of combat. Whether this transformation has bestowed on the Salvadoran armed forces the qualities needed to defeat the guerrillas is the question to which we must next turn.

In several respects, the Salvadoran army's American-sponsored metamorphosis has achieved indisputable success. The rate at which the army has fielded new battalions is itself an accomplishment, stemming directly from the generosity of American support. In 1980, the ratio in numbers of combatants between the army and the FMLN stood at hardly more than 1.5:1. By early 1988, the army's advantage approached 8:1, not far short of the 10:1 commonly cited as necessary for a counter-insurgency....

A second success, the Salvadoran infantryman today has the wherewithal to subsist in the field and to fight effectively. Instead of the worn G3 rifle that his predecessor of ten years ago carried, he has a new M16. Small arms ammunition for training and for battle is in plentiful supply. As a result of US security assistance, the army in El Salvador today has the boots, battle dress and field gear to outfit its soldiers — although the distribution system breaks down with aggravating regularity....Perhaps the most spectacular manifestation of the army's transformation lies in facilities. Nowhere does American assistance translate more directly into tangible and genuinely usable results than in building things....

Elsewhere, the results of American efforts to sponsor change in the Salvadoran army have been disappointing. Despite the oft-expressed American intent to convert the army into a counter-insurgent force, US policy has failed to wean the Salvadoran from their conventional mindset. If anything, American actions have reinforced that bias.

American security assistance has permitted the Salvadoran army to purchase heavy weapons — 105mm howitzers, 90mm recoilless rifles, and 72mm light anti-tank weapons — of little utility in counter-insurgency. Rather than risk disaffecting the army by opposing requests for inappropriate hardware, American officers at times succumb to the temptation to go along. Take the example of artillery. The Salvadoran army fields fifty-four 105mm howitzers, employing them in one or two gun sections used primarily for harassing and interdiction missions. American experience in Vietnam demonstrated that in an insurgency such fires are at best wasteful and at worst counter-productive. ...

How does "heavying up" the army affect its tactical performance? Time and again, American officers told us that loading down the Salvadoran infantryman with heavy weapons has reduced his tactical mobility, made him dependent on mechanical transport, and encouraged an over-reliance on firepower. In one former defence attache's judgment, "by giving people indirect fire and recoilless weapons...you teach them bad habits." This officer blamed inappropriate equipment for having made the army "much, much, much less mobile than the insurgent." A cumbersome, heavily burdened force is ill-suited for conducting the small unit operations that American trainers have eagerly advocated....

Over-reliance on high technology

An analogous emphasis on conventional methods retarded initiatives to provide tactical intelligence to the Salvadoran army. When the war began, Salvadoran deficiencies in military intelligence were exceedingly grave. For all practical purposes, a meaningful capacity to collect, analyze and disseminate intelligence did not exist. In response to this need, the US initiated the routine collection of information on the FMLN. The enormous volume of data generated was funnelled to the Pentagon.... The Pentagon collated and analyzed the data and then routed it back to SouthCom as finished intelligence — theoretically in a timely fashion enabling the army to react operationally.

In practice, things didn't quite work out that way. The Pentagon's effort did prove invaluable in composing an overall picture of the insurgency. It helped the Salvadorans understand how many guerrillas there were, what areas they inhabited, how they sustained themselves, and when and how they preferred to attack. As important as this was, however, the technically generated intelligence seldom arrived with either the detail or timeliness permitting a Salvadoran commander to preempt an FMLN operation. Unhappiness with this poor responsiveness has led American officers over time to de-emphasize technological methods in favor of human intelligence....Experience has taught American officers that in counter-insurgency operations human intelligence provides the payoff. High technology has a role, but that role is distinctly secondary....

"One US trainer referred derisively to the Salvadoran army's 'search and avoid' patrols"

A counter-insurgent campaign tends to divide into two phases. Recent history suggests an American penchant for intervening in an insurgency at the eleventh hour, with the situation desperate and defeat apparently in the offing. (Somewhat perversely, such discouraging prospects may constitute a pre-requisite for inducing domestic American support.) Given this situation, the first phase of a counter-insurgent campaign necessarily aims at halting what one American officer called the "slide into chaos" and restoring a semblance of military stability.

In short, the objective of the first phase is the negative one of precluding defeat. This task involves heavy fighting, especially as the guerrillas — sensing that victory lies within their grasp — grow bolder and more aggressive. At its most intense, fighting during this phase is hardly distinguishable from conventional war.

The requirements of this first phase have the advantage of being straightforward and discernible. By killing guerrillas, you deprive them, at least momentarily, of the ability to seize power. Yet success in phase one — an achievement not to be taken lightly — does not make victory inevitable. Far from it. The campaign's second phase will be prolonged and difficult, demanding much in terms of patience and creativity.

"Persuading the people to reject revolution"

During phase two, success is likely to prove elusive. For the object of phase two is to win the allegiance of the people, thereby sealing the insurgents' defeat. Persuading the people to reject revolution requires a campaign based not on coercion but on positive and preemptive change. The existing government wrests legitimacy from the guerrillas by demonstrating its capacity to establish a just and equitable order. Survival may well require, in the words of one senior American functionary, that the government "in some cases be more revolutionary than the Marxists."

Almost inevitably, this involves reforming the courts and bureaucracy, modifying the military's role in society, improving services such as education and healthcare, expanding popular political participation and increasing individual opportunity. For the typical target of an insurgency, an underdeveloped and financially strapped third world nation burdened by stagnant and probably oppressive institutions, this is a tall order.

The Salvadoran experience confirms the perception that the US performs well during phase one of a counter-insurgency, only to be stymied by the second. Notwithstanding the reservations expressed earlier about the Salvadoran army's organization and equipment, we would not want to underestimate the magnitude of the American achievement during phase one of US involvement in El Salvador, running from 1980 through 1984. The transformation of the Salvadoran army during that period from a "militia of 11,000 that had no mission" into a much larger and incomparably more capable force that turned back the FMLN stands as a significant feat of arms.

Credit for the achievement goes above all to the Salvadoran soldiers who did the fighting. Clearly, however, the Salvadorans could never have succeeded without American arms, advice and training. The transformation of the army that has occurred under American tutelage is little short of remarkable. Embellishing his assertion that this army has become the most powerful in Central America, one US officer with long experience in El Salvador predicted to us that if Nicaragua ever did start a war, the Salvadoran armed forces would demolish the Sandinista army. That judgment may be correct, but if so it suggests one reason for the army's inability to demolish the enemy it currently faces.

Reasons for the American failure

Despite professed American intentions, the Salvadorans today are using a conventional army and conventional tactics to fight an unconventional war....Since 1984, FLMN tactics have changed radically. The guerrillas now operate in smaller units and emphasize hit-and-run attacks, mostly against economic targets, while avoiding confrontations with the army except on their own terms.

By comparison, the army has hardly changed the way it fights. To be sure, a handful of elite units...have adopted counter-insurgent methods and routinely achieve successes far out of proportion to their size. Apart from such exceptions, however, Salvadoran attempts to adopt small unit tactics have been ineffective. One American trainer we interviewed referred derisively to the army's "search and avoid patrols." Another likened the security of Salvadoran night positions to "a boy scout jamboree — camp fires and transistor radios."

As a result, most Salvadoran operations today produce little even in the narrow sense of attrition against the FMLN. American trainers have recognized the trend. "We stabilized the situation," observed a former defence attache, but soon "reached the point of diminishing returns." American trainers continue to prod the army into adopting a counter-insurgent style — small unit patrols, ambushes and night operations....

"Sometimes the worst thing you can do to defeat an insurgency is to nurture democratic institutions"

We should note, however, that even if the Salvadoran army does adopt more relevant tactics, the benefits at this stage of the war are likely to be marginal. As American officers told us repeatedly, the real key to success in phase two of a counter-insurgency was not to be found in more efficient methods of killing guerrillas. As one American observed: "The short-range fix is to go up the hill to kill the guerrilla; but that's addressing the effect, not the cause." Getting at the cause implies that realm of activity often known as the "other war": psychological operations, civil defence, civic action and the coordination of civil and military activities to effect that reform....

A government under siege by insurgents must persuade the mass of the people freely to choose the existing order in preference to those who would destroy it. Such willing support presumes an honest and responsive government, capable of meeting basic human needs. The government of El Salvador did not manifest those qualities when US involvement in the war began. Unfortunately, neither does it manifest those qualities today....Morally and politically, the value of the Duarte regime's democratic credentials has been huge. Unfortunately, making a government democratic does not make it effective. If anything, democratization has exacerbated the ineptness of the Salvadoran political system. At a time when war puts a premium on single-minded, decisive governance, the opening up of Salvadoran politics has fueled partisanship and created conditions where nothing works. "Sometimes the worst thing you can do to defeat an insurgency," one State Department official told us, "is to nurture democratic institutions at the same time."...

Despite their appreciation that winning popular support remains as the ultimate strategic aim in a counter-insurgency, American officials have yet to devise adequate mechanisms to achieve that aim. More comfortable giving advice on the minor tactics of counter-insurgency, they allowed themselves in El Salvador to drift into what one official termed "a band-aid approach" to fighting the "other war."

The United States has yet to grasp fully what it will take to win such a contest and how to go about doing it. Failure to solve that riddle will condemn Americans to recurring frustration in future small wars. ★

● "American military policy in small wars: the case of El Salvador," *John F. Kennedy School of Government, March 1988.*

The sour fruits of "market socialism"

A NEW TEAM took over the leadership of the Hungarian Communist Party at its special congress at the end of May. The change was hailed by the Western capitalist press as a new major shift toward the "market economy" and "private initiative," supposedly part of the general trend represented by Gorbachev's *perestroika*.

Hungary has been a focus of attention in particular because it represents the major model in the Soviet bloc for market economy reforms. Although the Gorbachev course is supposedly to include political liberalization as well as market-style reforms, the new course in Hungary has been marked by tightening the screws on dissenters. At the same time, open dissent has been growing significantly.

The following article looks at the results of the celebrated Hungarian economic reforms. It is from the June 17 issue of *Die Linke*, the magazine of the Austrian section of the Fourth International.

ROBERT MISIK

THE DYNAMIC young Groscz took over the post of general secretary from the old man Janos Kadar, not apparently without some jostling behind the scenes. Otherwise, it would be hard to explain the two-hour delay before the special party congress began its decisive session. But that is not the only thing that attracted the interest of Western sensationalist journalists to the new Hungarian party chief.

After his visit to Margaret Thatcher, during which he openly expressed his admiration for the British prime minister's free-market orientation, there can hardly be doubt any longer about Grosz's line. And if there had been, it would have been swept away by the first actions of the new party chief — a strengthening of austerity policy and the introduction of a severe anti-inflationary program.

Many Western observers try to portray Grosz as the trustee of a bankrupt Hungarian economy. In fact, the head of Hungarian "actually existing socialism" is himself a part of the bankruptcy of this system — a confession of the bureaucracy's disorientation in face of the crisis.

The historical sources of this crisis lie, on the one hand, in the structures created in the Stalin era; and, on the other, from the failed attempts at reform over the last twenty years. It finds its expression today in inefficiency, in a tight integration into the capitalist world market — going hand in hand with fading hopes of achieving competitiveness — and in massive foreign debts.

The economic policy of the last period of the Kadar regime rested, fundamentally, on the conditions that were created in the 1960s, in particular the "New Economic Mechanism" that went into force on January 1, 1968. These measures, moreover, foreshadowed many aspects of Gorbachev's "revolution" in the USSR:

- Every enterprise was supposed to function independently in market conditions, and no longer given directives about who to sell goods to and at what price.
- The guiding instruments and institutions were cut back, and compulsory targets eliminated.
- Allotting resources and producers' goods was shifted from the central authorities to the trade organizations.
- Incentives and the search for profit were guided by a unified price system.

Along with this went the possibility of forming private and cooperative enterprises. The reform policy rapidly ran up against its political limits, namely the Brezhnev principle of "no experiments," and in 1972 it ran out of steam. The "father of the reform," Reszö Nyers, left the Politburo in 1973. This is worth noting because now, 14 years later, the special party congress that made Karoly Grosz general secretary brought Nyers back into the Politburo.

The relative prosperity of the 1970s was less the result of growth in the country's productive forces than simply of borrowing. "The country achieved a considerable rate of growth by international standards in the 1950s at the expense of agriculture, in the 1960s at the expense of the infrastructure and in the 1970s through borrowing." (*Magyar Nemzet*, May 9, 1987.)

Downward slide of the Hungarian economy

This was a consequence of deterioration in the terms of trade, produced especially by the soaring prices for raw materials (the oil crisis), which was aggravated by the fact that USSR, the only major supplier in Comecon, created a growing shortage of raw materials. In order to increase its precious hard currency income from the West, the Soviet bureaucracy began increasingly to cut back on supplying oil at favorable prices. On the other hand, it increased its sales of oil at the high world-market prices, and so forced the members of Comecon to buy oil at high prices from the Middle East.

Thus, the terms of trade with the capitalist countries deteriorated by 23.6% in the period from 1973 to 1979, and even by 17.2% with the Comecon countries as a whole. In trade with the Soviet Union alone, Hungary had piled up a deficit of $1.1 billion by 1980. As happened in the third world countries, the leadership of the state and party counted on the loans to strengthen the productive forces so that future export income could assure repayment.

This calculation was wrecked not only by the sharpening structural crisis of capitalism, which narrowed export markets, but also by squandering the credits that were obtained. In a barely changed economic structure, the bulk of the investment went into the big plants, raw materials production and heavy industry. The dollar credits financed outmoded production structures and consumption, but not modern technology. The same applied to the infrastructure, which continued to slip through the loose net of bureaucratic planning and to lag 40 to 50 years behind the developed capitalist countries.

Since the end of the 1970s and the beginning of the 1980s, the crisis of the "Hungarian model" has gone very deep. The government applied an austerity cure that cut net investment almost by half from 1978 to 1982, and the living standard of the population dropped dramatically. The country moved closer and closer to insolvency.

In 1982, Hungary was the second Comecon country to join the IMF. In joining, it adopted one of its notorious adjustment programs, which was designed to reduce demand throughout the economy by restrictive tax, wage, and interest policy, and by

further compressing state investment. Parallel to this, there was a "third wave of reforms," in which a series of measures were taken — price reform was instituted to let world prices operate also in the domestic economy; private initiative and small enterprises were to be promoted, and their autonomy of decision-making widened. The banking system was to be restructured. All of this was supposed to be accomplished by 1985.

Living standards continue to nose-dive

From 1980 to 1985, the national income dropped twice (in 1980 and 1983) in comparison with the previous year. And this was in a period in which all the Comecon countries — except Poland in 1980/81 — still showed a positive growth rate.

In 1986, another law was passed that provided for closing plants and introduced state unemployment benefits. In the meantime, the debt burden has been growing heavier and heavier. In September 1987, it was over $16 billion. And the last estimate (in May 1988) indicates that it may already be $17 billion.

Living standards are continuing to nose-dive. According to official estimates, at least 200,000 people are temporarily unemployed. A million Hungarians are living below the subsistence level. And according to the data of the Communist youth organization, the majority of people in Hungary are now living only at the 1971-72 level.

There is hardly a Hungarian family that can still make ends meet on the [normal] wages of both parents. Of the roughly 5 million wage earners, about 4 million have a second job. The workday has stretched to between 12 and 14 hours. Health and family life have been severely affected. The breakdown of human relations and social/psychological problems are driving up the rate of illness....

After Karoly Grosz took office as premier in June 1987, he immediately became one of the main supporters of this course. His "opener" was a new tax law, in particular a completely new sort of value-added [sales] tax introduced on January 1, 1988. It increased prices by at least 15%. Many say (for example at the party congress) that the increase was as much as 20%....

The three pillars of the historic gains of the East European countries are collective ownership of the means of production, central planning and the state monopoly of foreign trade. Such economies can only work if those concerned hold these instruments in their own hands.

If the immediate policy of the Hungarian leadership is counterposed to these principles, that leads to the following conclusion: The bureaucracy's answer to the economic catastrophe for which it is responsible is to increasingly dismantle the remaining historical gains. ★

"There is no freedom without Solidarnosc"

THE WAVE of workers' strikes and student protests that began on April 25, 1988, was the largest for years. Only the street demonstrations called by the underground leadership of Solidarnosc on August 31, 1982, surpassed it in scope.

ARTHUR WILKINS & CYRIL SMUGA

FOR THE FIRST TIME since the strangling of the Polish revolution in December 1981, such actions persisted. They were also marked by a rapid escalation of demands. On the basis of the initial immediate demands in defence of workers' living standards, demands for trade-union freedom were quickly raised. The fight for the legalization of Solidarnosc was soon accompanied by demands for university autonomy and political pluralism.

The April 25 strike in the Bydgoszcz and Inowroclaw public transport system, which gave the signal for the strike wave, was spontaneous. There was no public or underground Solidarnosc organization. Nonetheless, the action immediately spread to all of the personnel. It ended the same day with a spectacular success — a 67% increase in hourly wages.

On the following day, April 26, the strike that started up in the Lenin steel complex in Cracow was not the result of activity by a Solidarnosc steelworkers' commission. It was launched on the initiative of a single worker, Andrzej Szewczuwaniec. He immediately got the support of all the workers in the rolling mill.

Within 24 hours, the strike spread to the entire enterprise, involving the majority of some 30,000 workers. A few days later, students in Cracow mobilized in solidarity with the striking steelworkers. The steelworkers, however, did not manage to draw any other enterprise in the city or the region into the strike. Attempts to broaden the strike, notably among transport workers in Cracow, proved ineffective.

With the beginning of a sit-in strike on May 2 in the cradle of Solidarnosc, the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk, the regime realized that the danger of the strike wave broadening was increasing, and decided to break it in its main center. For the first time since December 1981, the police intervened against the strikers inside a factory.

The attack by the ZOMO [riot police] in the early hours of May 5 against the strikers at the Lenin steelworks in Nowa Huta [outside Cracow] was extremely brutal, as witnessed by the injuries inflicted on the workers. Nonetheless, the repression did not succeed in breaking the steelworkers' resistance.

A large section of the workers continued the strike by staying away from work or failing to do any real work. This demonstrated an extraordinary militancy and determination. Work resumed only on May 18, when the strike committee called for ending the action. It lasted 22 days.

Militant young workers isolated

The determination of the strikers at the Gdansk shipyard was equally strong, because, unlike the steelworkers, at the start they included only a minority of the workers. This was not a mass strike but rather a vanguard one. The militant young workers, who in the end represented no more than 10% of the personnel employed in the shipyard, were not followed by the others. The attempts to get a strike going on the docks in the naval repair yard in Gdansk and in the Paris Commune shipyard in Gdynia were likewise fruitless.

In some of the country's other industrial centers there were attempts to broaden the strike. The first came on April 29 in the Stalowa Wola steelworks, but it did not succeed. For a week after May 2, the tension seemed to increase. In Wroclaw, there was a brief strike at Dolmel (an electrical machinery plant) and a long one at Pafawag, which makes rolling stock.

In Szczecin, the regional coordinating committee of Solidarnosc issued a call on May 3 for strikes in all enterprises around two demands — an increase in wages and social benefits proportional to the rise in the cost of living, along with the legalization of Solidarnosc. In response to this appeal, two days later, workers in the bus depots in Szczecin-Dabie and the city of Police went on strike, but their walkout ended the same day. In Dabie, the police stopped it.

In the Szczecin shipyard, attempts to start a struggle were effectively torpedoed by the repressive apparatus and the foremen. In those enterprises in Szczecin where pub-

lic Solidarnosc committees existed, the factory managements got budget supplements to enable them to raise wages. In other places, these committees — which are oriented toward a struggle to obtain legal registration and not, like the Stalowa Wola, Ursus and Wroclaw committees, toward trade-union activity here and now — proved incapable of mobilizing the workers.

Many Solidarnosc structures issued a call for a strike on May 9. In the lignite mine and public transport in Belchatow, the strikes projected for that day were called off. In the Rybnik mining region (ROW, in Upper Silesia), strikes were planned in many mines and factories. But finally the only strike attempted was in the Manifest-Lipcowy mine.

The situation in the Ursus tractor factory in Warsaw could have had a profound impact on the country. For several days, the public Solidarnosc committee in the enterprise had been preparing for a strike. But, at the crucial moment, the police managed to paralyze the committee's activity.

A strike broke out, but it involved only a minority of the workers, about 2,000 at its peak, and then the number of strikers dropped to 150. In the evening, the organizers decided to suspend the strike. On the same day, the Cracow students' inter-faculty protest movement decided to end their occupation of the campus and boycott of classes.

It became clear by May 9 that the strike wave was broken. On the following day, the strikers in the Gdansk shipyard realized this. Lech Walesa convinced them of the need to end the strike and leave the yard without informing the authorities, on the basis of their own sovereign decision. At 8pm, they marched out in a compact column.

The conclusion that has to be drawn is that during this period the situation was uneven from enterprise to enterprise and from region to region — and even within each individual enterprise, where often workers were polarizated between supporters and opponents of the strike. As one of the Warsaw Solidarnosc leaders, Henryk Wujec, wrote, "you can see that this was the lightning before the storm." (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 251, 1988.)

The wave of struggles in April and May also revealed the growth of resistance in the working class to the economic reform being imposed by the regime.

The "second stage" of the economic reform has only one fundamental objective: to find the means to pay the incredible tribute imposed on the Polish economy in the name of foreign debt by reducing workers' share of the national income even further. The new fall in real wages caused by higher prices for necessities that marked the start of the "second stage" is not the only way of exacting this tribute. The mechanisms enabling the central authorities to manipulate the determination of wages in the enterprises is another. These involve various forms of taxes on wages, notably those imposed on enterprises by way of penalties for "raising wages above the norm."

Longer hours only way to boost wages

Thus, workers trying to maintain their real income often have no other means except agreeing to work longer hours. The official statistics show that the wages in the Nowa Huta Lenin steelworks are rather good, on average around 40,000 zlotys in 1987. What the statistics do not indicate is that these are by no means wages for an eight-hour day. It is not surprising therefore that we find references to people dying of exhaustion (for example, in *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21, 1988.)

New forms of organizing work, so-called group forms, are making working conditions still worse. The Kielce regional labor inspector has said: "Group work has become a legal form of speed-up....The workers are given a stake in it, because their wages increase, but only for 12- and 16-hour days. In investigations of the cause of accidents on the job, we often find that fatigue is one of the main causes of the tragedy." (*Tygodnik Robotniczy* 13, 1988.)

Declaring that their "confidence in the reforms promised by the party is exhausted" (see *IV* 141, May 16), the Nowa Huta strikers dotted the "i"s.

The economic reform is aimed at breaking the unity and solidarity of the working class, at scattering its resistance to the draconian changes in the distribution of the national income and in bottling up the pressure of immediate demands within the walls of the various isolated factories. Some of the most sincere — or most cynical — spokespeople of the regime say so openly. For example in *Polityka* 13, 1988, Daniel Passent wrote:

"There is no doubt that in the Poland of 1988, trade-union pluralism...would lead to an eruption of demands equal to, if not greater than, what existed before the state of war [Jaruzelski's crackdown in December 1981]. The economic situation and the material fate of the people are more difficult today than at the end of the 1970s; the accumulated resentment is graver, and the economy has remained statist.

"The division is still between a society of workers and a state of employers. So long as this situation is not overcome by a reform, a radical one and not a partial one as today, demands will immediately assume a political character, because they will be directed at the government. But if the leaders and experts of these unions are not only full of good will but wiser from the experience of the last ten years, I cannot imagine that alternative unions would take a different attitude. They would begin to mobilize public opinion around their demands, just ones from the standpoint of the workers, and this would lead to an aggravation and not an improvement of the political situation. Free unions [that is, not tied to the government] are possible when the government is not the employer but an arbiter."

In April and May, the regime sometimes managed in many enterprises to demobilize the workers who had gone on strike or were threatening to do so by granting large wage increases and compensation. The Nowa Huta strike committee tried from the outset to counter this tendency. In its first communique, it advanced demands in defence of the standard of living of all Polish labor. (See *IV* 141.)

In this way, the strike committee at the Lenin steelworks laid the foundations for unifying the protests and social pressures into a single economic movement. This was one of the main gains of the May-April 1988 wave of struggles. It has to be pointed

out that on May 17, the strike committee at the steelworks included this in the platform on which it wanted to base itself after becoming an open Solidarnosc organizing committee in the plant.

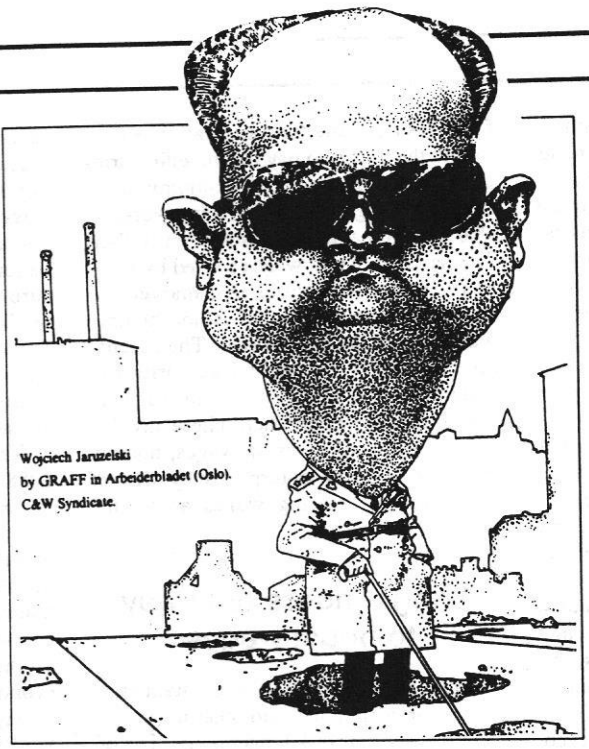
"We are not asking a lot. We need nothing more than Solidarnosc," said Jan Gorczak, the 26-year-old vice-chair of the strike committee at the Gdansk shipyard. (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 251, 1988.) The most significant thing in this strike was the steadfastness of the participants in the fight for trade-union rights, which were understood by everyone as meaning the legalization of Solidarnosc.

In leaving the shipyard on May 20, the strikers reaffirmed this conviction: "The Nowa Huta workers and we at the Gdansk shipyard have won a priceless victory. After several years of passivity and a feeling of powerlessness, Polish society is reviving, and in particular its young people. The youth realize now more than they did a few months ago the need for taking up the fight for their rights. We are not giving up the fight for Solidarnosc. In these last days, the young generation of workers and students have opened up a new spring for Solidarnosc. We remain faithful to the slogan of our strike, 'There is no freedom without Solidarnosc'."

The strike at the shipyard showed that a new generation is beginning to take the leadership of this struggle. Lech Walesa participated in it, and Alojzy Szablewski, a 62-year-old engineer, headed the strike committee. But those who were active in Solidarnosc in the shipyard in 1980-81 could be counted on the fingers of your hands. This strike was an action of young workers who were teenagers at the time, and for whom Solidarnosc is mainly a symbol. "For them, this is not a fight to win back free unions; they never had one," wrote *Tygodnik Mazowsze*'s correspondent (No. 250, 1988.)

Jacek Merkel, a veteran of Solidarnosc in Gdansk, explained the reasons for their attitude in the following way: "These young people are more struck by injustice. When you have worked for years, you have buddies on the job, relationships. But these young people who have just come in run up against injustice, see their dignity mocked, find themselves robbed of wages. These thousands of petty day-to-day conflicts and expressions of a lack of respect for the workers' rights did not exist at the time of Solidarnosc. The very existence of the union put an end to them.

"For these youth the existence of an independent union in the classical sense is indispensable, and this is what explains their determination in the struggle. For them, this is not a new stage in the fight against totalitarianism but a struggle for elementary rights. The strike's central slogan, 'There is no freedom without Solidarnosc,' means for them that as long as there is no Solidarnosc, there will be injustice." (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 251, 1988.)



After the strike ended, Szablewski said: "We now have 800 young people who have gone through the workers' university, a strike. They will be the future leaders of Solidarnosc. Before we did not know who was who, we did not know the young people. Now in the enterprise the atmosphere will be completely different."

Worker/student alliance revived

In the wave of workers' strikes, the worker/student alliance forged in 1980-81 not only revived but was consolidated. In Cracow, students already began demonstrating in the streets together with the strikers and under the banner of Solidarnosc on the third day of the strike. Students also made up the great majority of the 10,000 people who demonstrated on May 3 in response to a call from the Regional Alliance of Independent Groups in order to support the fight of the steelworkers and to press for its extension.

In response to the brutal police attack on the strikers, the students at the Jagellon University launched a boycott of classes and a sit-in in the dormitories. The strike and protest movement also affected other institutions of higher learning in Cracow. The statement adopted by the general assembly of students and teachers at Jagellon University on May 5 became the platform of this movement:

"In the spirit of solidarity of the intelligentsia with the workers, we express our unreserved support for the strikers at the Lenin steelworks and other enterprises and universities in the country. In particular, we want to express our appreciation of the fact that they have demanded an improvement in the material situation of health and education workers.

"We protest against the use of force on striking workers and students... We demand the immediate release of those who have been arrested and suffered repression for their opinions. We consider the following as the bases for getting out of the present crisis: a real extension of democracy through the establishment of trade-union and political pluralism, the implementation of real structural reforms in the economy, and the guarantee of autonomy for the universities."

Student strikes, rallies and demonstrations in solidarity with the workers also took place in various other cities.

The breadth of this mobilization is an indication of the extent of the recomposition of the independent social movement and its most active forces, which is linked to a new generation of activists who are coming to the fore. A first sign of this recomposition was undoubtedly the appearance of the Freedom and Peace Movement (WiP).

On this subject, Wolicki has written: "The Freedom and Peace Movement was at first viewed with a lot of suspicion, both by the moderate wing of Solidarnosc — because it nonchalantly defied the taboo of the military institutions and the Holy Alliance with the Eastern power — and by the radicals, who criticized its contacts with Western peace activists. Today, the WiP has a 'good press' everywhere. It has usefully broadened Western peace activists' view of the world, and little by little made Warsaw's officers realize that by punishing those who refused to pledge allegiance [to the armed forces] and demanded alternative service, they were getting themselves into a political impasse." (*Kultura* 5, 1988.)

With the elimination on June 27 of the references to allegiance to the Soviet army from the oath taken by draftees, this movement gained its first big victory.

The student mobilizations were preceded by another sign of mobilization of the youth, the revival and growth of the activity of the Independent Association of Students (NZS). "Solidarnosc," Wolicki reports, "was at first surprised by this success. This is hardly surprising, because the organizers themselves did not expect it. At the beginning of 1988 it became clear, even for the most cautious student proponents of an understanding with the regime, that despite the government's pretence its famous democratization is an empty slogan (unlike the liberalization, which, while decreed from above, is real)....Therefore, when the NZS confidently launched the demand for full autonomy for higher education — with the total support of young intellectuals and students — and for a new higher education law, Solidarnosc circles in the universities, in their immense majority, offered their support to the young people."

Among the symptoms of this recomposi-

tion, we should mention the formation of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS) in November 1987. This first attempt to form an independent workers' party — or as its members call it, a "political party of independent trade unionists" — was marked by a radical programmatic and strategic orientation. This radicalism is indicated in the "Principles for Action until the Statutory Congress" adopted in February 1988. (See *IV* 137, March 21, 1988.)

Struggles dealt a blow to social pact

The struggles of the workers and students dealt a serious blow to the strategies that in the preceding months were beginning to be accepted in the leading circles of the democratic opposition and Solidarnosc. This applies in particular to the "anti-crisis pact" strategy worked out by former moderate advisers of the trade-union leadership — Bronislaw Geremek, Andrzej Wielowieyski, Ryszard Bugaj and others. Such a "pact" was supposed to offer social credibility and support to the market economy reform by convincing the society to subject its activities "to the rigors of reason and political imagination" and keep its demands "in the limits of wisdom" in return for democratic concessions from the regime. Such concessions supposedly involved accepting "social pluralism."

Bugaj wrote: "This term expresses the intention of seeking a body of changes that can fit in with the principle of the leading role of the party, the latter being interpreted in a limited way, of course. In general it is considered that social pluralism has to offer a guarantee for the unions, associations, local authorities (if only at the municipal level) and public opinion functioning outside the control of the party and state authorities. It is accepted, on the other hand, that social pluralism (unlike political pluralism par excellence) does not include the key element in any democratic system — multi-partyism. The demand for social pluralism, as Jerzy Holzer has correctly noted, is not a demand for democracy but only for 'more democracy'." (*Tygodnik Powszechny* 22, 1988.)

Daniel Passent, the *Polityka* journalist who presents the official point of view of the Jaruzelski team, explained clearly back in March what this group thought of such a proposal. "You have to have little respect for your adversary to offer such a pact...What really counts in politics is power and the fight for power. The present regime, it is true, does not enjoy general or even effective support, but the neo-compromises and pacts proposed will not at all help to carry through such unpopular measures as price rises, wage freezes, belt-tightening and so on. The result would reduce the government simply to a police force dispersing the rebellious masses, who would come out in the street this time as a self-organized civil society under the banners of already legal associations and unions, against which the government would be impotent." (*Polityka* 13, 1988.)

Thus, the "radical reformers" in the ruling team, with whom the advocates of this "anti-crisis pact" would like to reach a "neo-compromise," are well aware that they cannot let themselves yield to any such temptation. "Who knows," Passent wrote, "whether the effective recipe for curing the economy is not one combining a free market and a strong police force."

Despite this, a month later, confronted by the Nowa Huta strike and the danger that it could spread, the regime made a sudden turn. It judged that the illusions of the advocates of an "anti-crisis pact" should be exploited to get their support for the economic reform in order to make it easier to get the workers to tighten their belts. In this way it counted on being able to play off the democratic opposition and a section of the Solidarnosc leaders against the striking workers, and isolating those in opposition circles — like the PPS — who say that the second stage of the economic reform is anti-labor and call on the masses to wage a determined economic struggle.

Commenting on the leaflets distributed by the PPS after the outbreak of the Nowa Huta strike, *Polityka* wrote that "this current carries a...deadly threat to the reform, to say nothing of a threat of political destabilization."

On April 30, Deputy Premier Zdzislaw Sadowski, the father of the reform, suddenly advised Wielowieyski that the "anti-crisis pact" scheme was constructive and could provide a basis for discussion. At the same time, he issued an invitation to "all those who want to discuss moving toward positions in favor of the reform, including Walesa as one of those citizens who have a different point of view but want to discuss and seek an understanding." (According to Jerzy Urban, the government's spokesperson, at a press conference on April 31.)

The outbreak of the strike at the Gdansk shipyard and the fact that Walesa joined the strikers upset the plans of the ruling team. "In response to the offer of the deputy premier, Walesa gave an aggressive speech in front of Saint Brigitta's church in Gdansk....Actions mean more than words, and Walesa's whole conduct has created a new situation....Today negotiations are scarcely imaginable." (Jerzy Urban, May 17 press conference.)

This does not mean, however, that the regime has given up the idea of luring some circles of the opposition into the trap of an "anti-crisis pact." For example, in *Polityka*'s comment on the strikes (No. 21, 1988), we find the following statement: "In Poland, it is impossible not to make historical comparisons, and so many commentators make analogies between the present situation and that of 1976. At that time, the alarm signal, represented by local strikes, was drowned out by the hoopla of mass

meetings and the abandonment of the fruitless attempt at reform. We paid a high price for this show-business victory." (This refers to the rallies in support of Gierek that were organized throughout the country in 1976 to demonstrate the isolation of "a few hooligans," as the Radom and Ursus strikers were called.)

Today, the regime's tactic has to be different, and it wants to find some hope in the fact that, as its press has noted, "a number of the opposition leaders did not support the strikes, but opposed them." (*Zycie Warszawy*, May 18, 1988.)

This, however, is only one side of the coin. In fact, the strikes led to a retreat from the "anti-crisis pact" strategy among a section of leaders of the democratic opposition. In December 1987, the Warsaw Regional Executive Commission (RKW) came out in favor of such a pact "in the name of higher reasons." At the same time, it considered it essential that Solidarnosc activists involve themselves in the work of the official institutions, especially so-called self-management local institutions.

"We are not going to reject participation in local self-management when the elections come." (These were the elections that took place on June 19, 1988, which were marked by the highest rate of abstention registered in Poland since the war.) Shortly after the end of the recent strikes, Jan Litynski — along with Jacek Kuron, one of the main authors of the Warsaw leadership's new orientation, called "new evolutionism" — admitted that this path was a fiasco.

The word "reform" evokes only price rises

"The reform has become the main word in 'newspeak'. It evokes only price rises. In this situation demanding reforms sounds almost abstract; it becomes a magic formula, a pious wish, a plea to the regime to change. The government's reaction to the strikes is a sufficient experience, a new proof, that this team cannot and will not change....A few months ago, it seemed reasonable to think that the government wanted some changes. The sense of the December 1987 RKW statement, which provoked such discussions, was that in order for these changes to have a genuine and deepgoing character, it was necessary not only to take part in various initiatives but also to promote them yourself and organize a social movement around them.

"The announcement of the reforms was a maneuver designed precisely to avoid changes. Instead of economic reform, price rises; instead of a democratic election law, the appointing of candidates; instead of local self-management, all power to the administration; instead of freedom of association, the halting of any independent initiative....

"For Rakowski, pluralism is bringing bishops into county councils and parish priests into local ones. But the fate of the RKW statement testifies to a much more important phenomenon than simply opposition to the regime, which would be quite banal in the last analysis. It is the rejection of social activity in institutions tied in any way to the state apparatus....Even those activists most committed to this perspective think that their efforts to achieve a limited improvement have only a very slim chance of success. In any case, the state apparatus, administration and the groups linked to them will be able to destroy everything, to strangle it and distort it. Refusal to take part thus appears the only solution." (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 251, 1988.)

There is no doubt that the April and May strikes set in motion a deepgoing process of recomposition in Solidarnosc. This has been clearly indicated by a well-known leader of the Warsaw union, Henryk Wujec: "In my opinion, we have entered a very interesting period for Solidarnosc. After the stagnation in recent years, a breach has been opened up.

"This, I would say, is the end of the period of the first Solidarnosc, the one that began in August 1980. The movement will continue to exist and develop, but in a different way. Over these last two years, at least since the amnesty of 1986, there seemed to be something wrong with Solidarnosc's image. Officially the structures existed, from the national leadership down to the regional structures and the underground enterprise committees. But this tidy picture did not correspond very well to the reality.

"A section of the activists, moreover, said that it was a fiction. The strikes have shown what Solidarnosc really is, what is living in it and what does not exist. In the events of these last weeks, the underground enterprise committees and the higher structures played practically no role. New activists have come to the fore, not individually but en masse, as a phenomenon. Although formally they are often not members of Solidarnosc, they feel linked to the idea of Solidarnosc. They are young, radical; they are demanding their social and political rights, and do not want to wait any longer. The activists in the structures, including this writer, were not surprised by this situation. They were working at a stabilized tempo. They had their tasks. And the strikes disrupted them, disturbed their habits, upset their routine.

"For example, the Nowa Huta strike was initially looked on suspiciously by the official structures in the region, and their attitude to its organizers was distrustful, because it did not happen as they had planned...After the last wave of strikes, the role of the Solidarnosc leadership and its known members will be reduced. The important things will not happen because of what they decide or say. They will remain respected people, people with authority, but they will recede into the movement's history rather than be the real actors in its activities.

"The process of the formation of new elites in the enterprises has begun. The role of the known activists should be more of an educative one than a leading one, in order to help these young people come into the movement, to build bridges between the present ossified structures and the new ones that will be created from top to bottom."

In Nowa Huta, three historical leaders of the local Solidarnosc steelworkers' committee — Stanislaw Handzlik, Mieczyslaw Gil and Jan Ciesielski — joined the strike and were elected to the strike committee. But it was headed by a new activist, Andrzej Szewczuwaniec, who had never been a member of Solidarnosc. He joined after the strike.

"A new generation is coming onto the scene"

"It would not be a good thing," Wujec wrote, "if the old leaders tried to hold onto the leadership no matter what. A new generation is coming onto the scene. It proclaims its allegiance to the same ideals but it is founding a new movement. Little by little, the reins have to be passed to them." (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 251, 1988.)

In the local and regional elections, according to the official figures, 44 per cent of citizens did not go to the polls. In this way they refused to give legitimacy to the usurper government, its anti-labor economic reform and its pseudo-democratization. The government admitted that in the main urban and industrial centers, abstention exceeded 50 per cent, and in Gdansk it reached 72 per cent. It is clear that the workers' strikes and the students' mobilizations had a big influence on this result.

This increasingly massive rejection front is still in its great majority passive. It does not see struggle as offering a credible possibility for improving the fate of the workers and citizens. However, the relationship of forces between those who are ready here and now for struggle, and those who are still hesitating, has clearly begun to shift in favor of the former. On the other side of the barricades, the opposite is happening. More and more cracks are beginning to show up in the ruling apparatus.

Barely a few months after the launching of the "second stage" of the economic reform, which the regime sees as its last chance, *Polityka* (No. 21, 1988) admitted that in these circles "the conviction prevails that the whole thing is proceeding too slowly, with too much difficulty, and that it is losing its content."

The parliament's voting of special powers for the government in order to enable it to take "shortcuts" in establishing the economic reform testifies that the regime's room for maneuver is narrowing. "Without these [the special powers] the economy will get completely out of control and provoke a new series of disturbances and explosions." (*Polityka* 12, 1988). This admission that the lifeline is so fragile speaks for itself. ★

In reply to my detractors

ONE OF the most influential advisors of the Solidarnosc leadership, Jacek Kuron wrote the following article for *Tygodnik Mazowsze* (No. 247, April 20, 1988), the central journal of the independent union, in order to clarify his position.

JACEK KURON

RECENTLY, I made the following statements in this publication (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 240):

● A spontaneous explosion of social anger is increasingly likely.

● In the present conditions, Polish society will not benefit from this. Our situation will, perhaps, be made even worse, and that is certainly going to cost us dear.

● These conditions are probably going to be modified by developments in the USSR and the other Eastern countries. This is why an explosion must not be precipitated today. Rather, we must prepare ourselves for decisive confrontations in the future.

My document aroused numerous challenges. But on the fundamental question, none of my critics said clearly what they expect from such an explosion today. That makes the discussion difficult. As we know, if the reality does not fit our schemas, we try to adjust it to them. In my article, I directly confronted at least three such schemas: 1) any explosion is beneficial for the society; 2) we should never trust the reds; 3) the USSR's interests are contradictory to the national interests of Poles. I frankly opposed the first schema, which pained many of my readers, although it was hard for them to say that they favored a bloodbath.

By referring to *perestroika* as a process of disintegration of the regime and an awakening of social opposition in the Eastern countries, I upset the two other schemas. However, and I have been repeating this for at least two years, the question is by no means what objectives the Soviet Communists set for their reforms, but the fact that these reforms will lead to a weakening of the central government and to increased pressure from the society. Anyone who does not see this today is blinded by a schematic perception of things.

"The threat of popular anger"

David Warszawski has written (*Tygodnik Mazowsze* 243): "An opposition can fight and negotiate effectively only if it bases itself on the threat of popular anger." I like that formula because it demonstrates a political way of thinking. The effectiveness of a policy depends in fact on the relationship of forces. But a spontaneous explosion is not the appropriate way to pose this threat to the established power, because such an explosion can neither be turned on or turned off, and the government is well aware of that.

You can only push for such an explosion, thereby making it more probable. Or else you can explain to people, in particular to activists, how ineffective it would be, the risks that it involves and — more importantly — propose other forms of action, thereby making it less probable.

I say that we are not able today to launch a general strike. But conditions can change quickly, and such an action could prove effective. A premature explosion can deprive us of that chance. That is why I am speaking out. But I am by no means saying by this that it is necessary to wait, because a social movement cannot wait.

Mobilizations have to be organized behind wage demands. The January 31, 1988, statement by the National Executive Committee of Solidarnosc (KKW) played an important role in this regard. Throughout the country, people are now fighting for a 12,000 zloty increase. However, the defence of living standards obviously has to be taken up in a general way — the problem cannot be resolved by particular actions.

We may be forced to call for a boycott of the municipal elections. I take no pleasure in that, because we need this school of democracy in the cities, towns, at the local level. But the government has done everything possible to discourage the society from taking part in these elections. So, let the society take part now in this boycott demonstration. It is necessary to organize the fight to defend the environment, for better working conditions, for the right to organize independently of the regime. Solidarnosc organizing committees can take on most of these tasks and at the same time build the movement.

The problem is, through these reformist activities, which are not very effective in present conditions, to organize the social movement. The existence of this movement in itself makes it possible to avert spontaneous explosions. If things take a bad turn, it makes it possible to limit the damage. Finally, it makes it possible to take advantage of every opportunity that turns up. ★

A new generation

ARRESTED on May 5, when he was involved in an attempted strike at the Dolmel factory in Wroclaw, Jozef Pinior was charged — along with comrades Czeslaw Borowczyk, Jolanta Skiba and Aleskandra Sarata — with obstructing the police. His trial began on July 4. After a day-long hearing, the tribunal postponed further hearings to July 29.

Pinior gave the following interview by telephone to Cyril Smuga the night of the first court session.

HOW DID the trial go?

It is still going on. Today we went through the second round. The judges let us talk — Borowczyk, Skiba, Sarata and me — without interrupting us when we explained the reasons why we were in the Dolmel grounds that day.

We said that we were members of the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), which was founded to defend the interests of the economically and socially oppressed, and which aspires to become the force that will lead Poland out of the totalitarian system to political democracy. We managed to to say all that without being interrupted by the presiding judge by referring to our "Principles of Action" (see *IV* 137), which stipulate that the PPS recognizes workers' rights of self-defence.

Then, the tribunal heard witnesses for the prosecution, that is members of the Dolmel factory police. On leaving the tribunal, we unfurled a big banner saying "Stop the political trials." It was signed by the PPS and the Warsaw Solidarnosc Workers' Interenterprise Committee (MRKS). Immediately the police went into action and arrested me, along with two other PPS comrades. We were held for an hour, and our banner was confiscated.

■ At the previous hearing, on June 27, the police did not intervene against the protesters?

That is why we were surprised today, although the police action was restrained. On June 27, Alternative Orange — a surrealist counter-culture movement — organized a "happening" in solidarity with us. As usual, the action had a large ingredient of surrealism. For example, they carried portraits of Marx, Engels, Borowczyk and myself!

What was impressive is that the initiative group immediately gathered more than 3,000 people, passers-by who joined in. They felt free, and expressed this feeling of freedom by shouting "PPS, PPS! Solidarity, Solidarity!" The pressure to transform this event into a political demonstration in the strict sense was very strong. But neither Waldemar Fydrych, who directs Alternative Orange, nor we were ready to lead such a demonstration. The police were not prepared to intervene either.

■ Do you think that what happened on June 27 in Wroclaw reflects a change in the political climate and attitudes after the April-May 1988 strike wave?

For some time, I have had the impression that there is a change, owing to the appearance on the scene of a new opposition, a young opposition. Today, my presentiments seem to have been confirmed. The PPS, for example — I hope you won't think this is megalomania — today seems to be getting impetus from this new dynamic. We gained a lot during the strike wave by our presence and our role. The fact that Alternative Orange is able to mobilize several thousand people is part of the same phenomenon.

We are seeing a new landscape of the Polish opposition take shape under our eyes. Today, the various opposition groups, such as the PPS, the counter-culture movements and many others are acutely aware that what is at stake is getting out of the totalitarian system. This is a fundamentally different option from the vicious circle that the idea of "Finlandization" leads to....

I think, based on my experience, that today we are at a turning point in the situation. This does not mean that in two or three months we are going to see things turned upside down. This system has to change its nature, it has to open up, or it will have to go backward and pay the price of retrogression toward the "Albanian model." But it does not have the means for either course.

A radical self-reform is not possible. In order for this to be envisaged, there would have to be a force on the government side that could lead it or at least accept it, relying on a social dynamic to carry it through. But in the regime, in the nomenklatura or in the apparatus in the broad sense — that is, where the foundations of this regime lie — I see no interests that could push in favor of a real reform. You can't reform something if it is against your interests. That is why, in my opinion, any opposition thinking that stays in the framework of the "Finlandization" schema will not only not lead to anything, but even be conservative.

■ In some new independent publications, such as *A Capella* in Gdansk, which is linked to the Freedom and Peace Movement (WiP), there are new themes for the Polish opposition: a rejection of the authority of the state, both in the East and West; a critical and unintimidated tone toward the sacred cows of the Polish opposition; and an identification with counter-culture movements, as well as with libertarian and egalitarian aspirations.

In many respects, these themes recall the values advocated by the PPS. In your opinion, is this sort of position representative of the new landscape of the opposition that you mentioned?

There is no doubt about that. *A Capella* could be a symbol of it, because very young people are involved in this project, students and young workers. In Latin America, for example, we have seen such phenomena, a whole social layer excluded from the society, which has nothing to lose, whose future is blocked.

In Poland, this young generation is in a comparable situation, with all due regard for the limits of such comparisons. Groups of young people adopting the same politico-social outlook, who have the same reference points as *A Capella* are more and more numerous. In the same way, Alternative Orange in Wroclaw (which because of its success has already been able to win acceptance in the opposition) is part of the same movement.

What is important is not just that these movements are young and dynamic but that they are increasingly conscious of their specificity, including on the political level, and of their own aspirations. In my opinion, in the future a part of this generation will turn toward strictly cultural activity. But I have no doubt that another part will join political movements, such as the PPS or the WiP.

■ Has this new rebel generation coming on the scene led to a revival of activity on the part of the Solidarnosc generation?

I would put it differently. This must have an influence on the trade-union structures in the enterprises. During the recent strike wave, I had an opportunity to observe the symptoms of this. Before being arrested by the police in the Dolmel factory, we had time to go through the factory.

Those who stopped the machines immediately, without any argument, were the very young workers. All you had to do was walk toward their machine, and it was shut off. I hope that after this wave of strikes, the Solidarnosc structures that remain will be led by this new generation. For our part, we are working toward that.

■ In Nowa Huta and Gdansk, the active presence of these young people in the strike was noted by everyone. In Nowa Huta, the strike committee transformed itself into a Solidarnosc organizing committee, and there is already talk about several thousand people joining in the steelworks. At the University of Warsaw, when the Independent Student Association (NZS) started recruiting, in a very short time more than 2,000 students publicly joined it. Do you think that this is a foretaste of what will happen tomorrow on a larger scale?

In any case, that is what we are orienting our activities toward. The precondition for this is that the committee that serves as the center for rebuilding the union on a mass scale prove itself in one way or another.

The experience of the Solidarnosc organizing committees that we have helped set up in various places indicates that it is not enough to have a few brave activists who take the initiative. What is necessary is for such a committee to arise naturally, as a result of real activity in the workplace. I would like to prevent such committees from being formed "from above," by a regional structure.

In other words, in order to have authority and thus help to reorganize a mass trade-union structure, such committees have to be made up of the natural leaders who emerge from the heat of a struggle. This is easiest when it is the result of a strike, but a different sort of action may also have this effect. An example is what happened at Dolmel with the publication of a pamphlet on working conditions for women in the enterprise. Otherwise, when the push comes from above, I am afraid that it will get nowhere.

■ It seems that among the founding committees of Solidarnosc, those whose main activity was gaining legalization did not manage to play a major role in the recent strike wave.

From the start of setting up such committees, I pointed to two barriers that they would have to clear. The first was organizational. The second — and that is the key to their success — is that they would have to serve as a center for real trade-union activity. The second barrier is quite obviously the hardest to overcome. And, in my opinion, as a general rule, it was not surmounted before the April-May strike wave. This is what has to be done today.

If at least these committees managed to publish texts around the concrete problems in each enterprise — working conditions and so on — and organize actions around these problems — even limited to a shop, a department, a workplace — then we would be close to our goal. I think that we partially achieved that in Dolmel, and to a lesser extent in the Polar factory in Wroclaw and in the Lubin copper mines.

However, we have to be aware of the very limited character of such successes for the moment. In all, in my opinion, this is the direction we should go in. ★

A spring that will not end:

68-88 CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Twenty years after the Warsaw Pact invasion

THE INVASION of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 was a landmark in the breakdown of Stalinism. Among other things, it provoked the onset of the acute crisis of the major Western Communist parties, which has become chronic and is continuing to accelerate. It also revealed the impasse of the bureaucratically-run collectivist economies that has now forced Gorbachev to undertake *perestroika* in the Soviet Union.

With all due allowances, Czechoslovakia might be called the first laboratory for such reform from above.

Its lessons therefore are even more important now, 20 years after the "fraternal" tanks rolled into Prague.

ANNA LIBERA

AFTER sharp clashes at the beginning of January 1968, the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party appointed Alexander Dubcek first secretary. It was only on March 4 that a detailed transcript of the CC Presidium meeting began to circulate confidentially. Among other things it said:

"In the course of the discussion, deliberations on implementing the party's policy were marked by a conflict between the old and the new. An initial tendency emerged that to a greater or lesser extent failed to take account of the stage already attained in the socialist development of our society, and which insisted on defending outworn forms of the party's work.

"In its eyes, the causes of our failings were primarily difficulties encountered in the functioning of the economy, inadequacies in ideological work, lax and liberal attitudes on the ideological front, the effects of the West's ideological diversion maneuvers. For this tendency, there was enough democracy both in the party and in the country. One speaker even expressed the opinion that there was 'too much democracy' in our country.

"Against this view, very marked tendencies emerged...which called for a new course....They spoke of the need for raising political action to a level corresponding to the evolution of our society today and taking account of the effects of the scientific and technical revolution.

"The development of the economy and its new forms of management unavoidably required a change in the party's methods of leadership in order to offer a broad enough field for initiative and public activity by social groups as such." (Reported by Jiri Hajek in *Ten Years After*). The heterogeneous second camp found its spokesperson in Alexander Dubcek. The Prague Spring had begun. On April 5, 1968, with the publication of the Czechoslovak CP's Action Program, it began to heat up.

Effects of Khrushchev's "de-Stalinization"

One of the features of the Czechoslovak reform, a factor that partially explains its mass character and its acceleration, lies in the fact that the Communist Party, and by extension the society as a whole, was barely touched by the "de-Stalinization" unleashed by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in 1956.

Relative to Poland and Hungary, the Czechoslovak CP (CzCP) still enjoyed support in broad strata of workers, and therefore was not forced by popular pressure to change its Stalinist practices and leadership. A few political prisoners had indeed been released, but timid attempts at debate launched by intellectuals in 1956 were quickly repressed. Drawing the lessons of Poland and Hungary, Novotny, the main leader of the CzCP, reinforced party discipline and stepped up the "anti-revisionist struggle."

This preventative hardening up was ultimately to increase the discontent. This occurred first of all in the intelligentsia, which saw it as in profound contradiction with the policy of "peaceful coexistence and opening" advocated by the USSR at the time, as well as with the new denunciation of Stalinism opened up by Khrushchev at the Twenty-First Congress of the CPSU in October 1961.

The discontent expressed by the intelligentsia was gaining an echo in the early 1960s with the deepening of the economic crisis. For some years, the rate of growth kept on dropping, until it hit zero in 1962 and become negative in 1963 (-3%). Young party economists, including Ota Sik, quickly put the blame on too servile copying of the Soviet model of industrialization, the hyper-centralization of planning and the incompetence of plant managers, appointed for their submissiveness to the party rather than for their skills in management.

At the start of the 1960s, these various elements of crisis were to deepen and reinforce each other, making these years a time of more and more public debates, more and more open criticisms.

Economic reforms linked to political change

Faced with the failure of its economic policy, the CzCP leadership could not avoid opening a debate at its Twelfth Congress in 1962 with those who were proposing a deepgoing reform of the economic mechanism. While a discussion did take place, no measures were adopted at this congress.

The debate was then pursued in the following months in the economic press (mainly *Hospodarské Noviny*). Ota Sik, the leading reformer, long upheld the fundamental idea that economic reform could not be carried through unless adequate changes were made in the country's political and economic structures.

He came out against all the taboos and for an open discussion of all the problems. For him, the plan should respond to needs of the population (and not vice-versa!) — collective ownership was a means and not an

end. He called for decentralizing planning, relative autonomy of production units, for applying the law of supply and demand in setting prices and for "efficient" management of enterprises. This meant, among other things, the right to fire workers.

It was not these last elements that set off the conservatives in the CzCP. (At the same time in the USSR, Lieberman and Trapeznikov were proposing the same recipes without arousing negative reactions). Their reflexes were triggered by the insistence with which the economists questioned the monolithism of the party and its absolute monopoly on economic and political life.

Sik repeated endlessly that it was impossible to stimulate economic initiative without this spilling over into the political domain. The conservatives were also afraid that their jobs would be threatened if chiefs were to be chosen on the basis of their competence and not their adherence to the party's line.

Reform obstructed by party apparatus

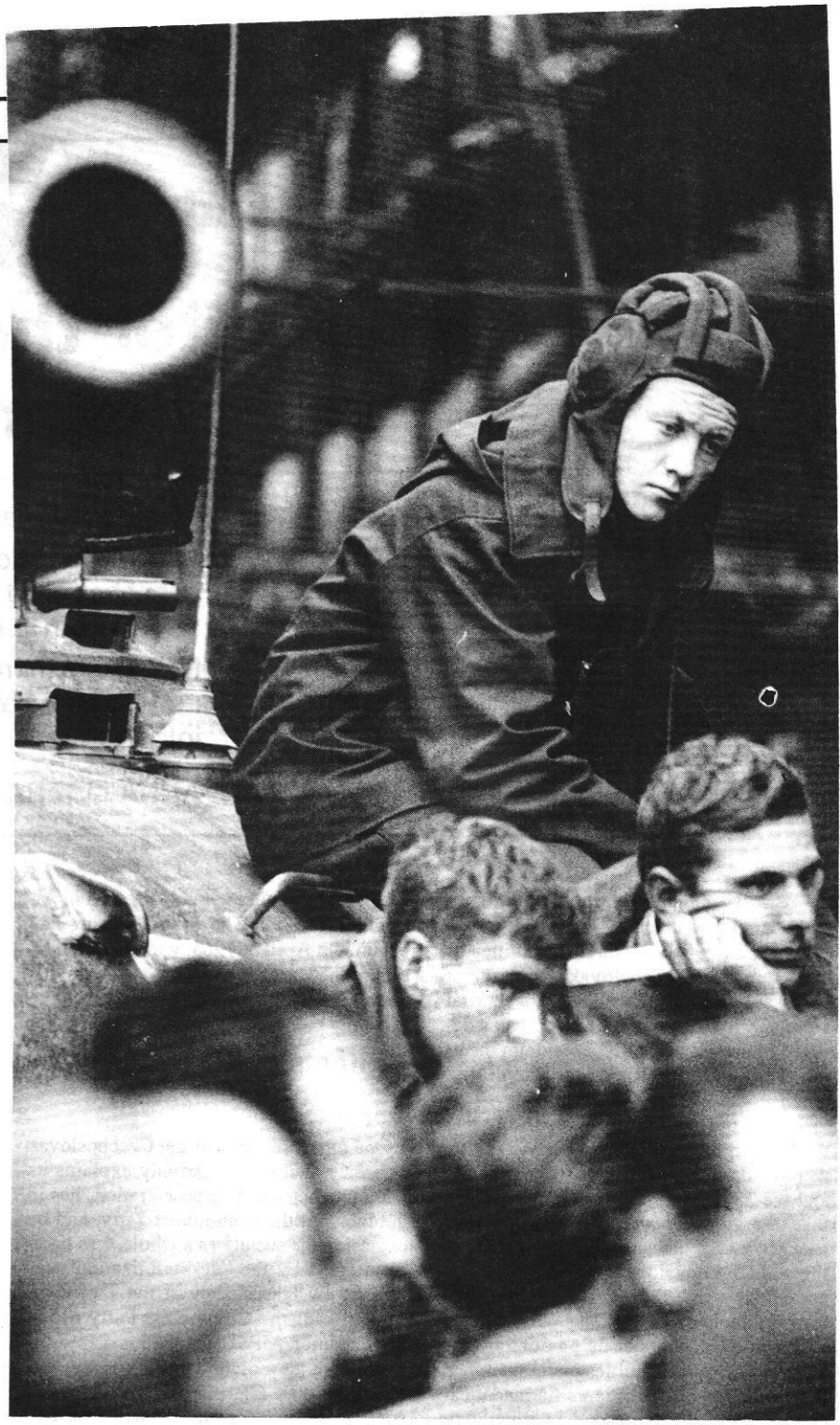
However, they were disarmed. The economic crisis could only encourage debate, and it was difficult to respond by hailing past policy. The reform was thus proclaimed in principle in 1964, but only adopted at the beginning of 1967. However, its application was totally obstructed by the party apparatus, which carried on a demagogic campaign in the enterprises about the effects it might have (which would be real for the workers). It also tried to counterpose the workers to the intellectuals.

Parallel to this, the intellectuals, encouraged by the Twenty-Second Congress of the CPSU, went on the offensive on the question of the balance sheet of Stalinism. In the April 1963 Central Committee Plenum, Novotny was obliged to present a report on "the violations of the party's principles and of socialist legality in the era of the cult of the personality."

This meant reopening the Slansky trial after eight years. But the report was considered so explosive that only a greatly expurgated version was distributed to the members. Even this watered-down version aroused violent reactions.

It was questions more directly affecting the national culture that were to mobilize the intellectuals, in particular, the rediscovery of Kafka, one of Czechoslovakia's greatest writers, who was banned in his own country because he was judged to be pessimistic and decadent. In February 1963, Edvard Golstücker wrote an initial article in Kafka's defence in *Literarni Noviny*, the writers' union magazine.

In May, an international conference on Kafka was held in Prague. His writings were drawn on to criticize the bureaucratic system. The congress of Slovak writers that took place in April 1963 revealed the leading role played by the intellectuals in exposing Novotny's bureaucratic dictatorship.



Thrown on the defensive by the combination of criticism from economists and intellectuals, the dictatorship responded with the only means it understood — repression. The Central Committee stepped up its warnings, and a violent campaign was launched against the intelligentsia. Some publications, such as *Tvar*, were banned. Finally, on January 1, 1967, a very strict law reinforcing the censorship was adopted. Far from having the expected effect, this attitude was to radicalize the demands of the intellectuals and to unite them and the liberals in the CzCP leadership.

The Fourth Congress of the writers' union, which was finally authorized in June 1967, offered a good picture of the situation, and in fact marked the opening of hostilities. Cultural and political debates were mingled. The censorship was denounced. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's letter to the Soviet writers' union was read (it had not been distributed to the writers in the USSR). But, most of all, there were a growing number of accusations against Novotny and his personal regime.

Once again, Novotny's only answer was repression. The new leadership of the writers' union was not recognized by the party. The magazine *Literarni Noviny* was taken out of its hands. Leading intellectuals such as L. Vaculik, A. Liehm and P. Klima were expelled from the party. But the violent campaign waged in the press against the writers' union only helped to spread the news about what had happened at the congress.

Despite appearances, the Novotny leadership was on the defensive. It had no solu-

tion to oppose to that of the reformers, except repressive measures. Liberals and conservatives were now clashing openly in the Central Committee. The spokesperson of the liberals, Alexander Dubcek (the Slovak party head) challenged Novotny's personal power and his accumulation of posts (he was both party secretary and president of the republic).

Dubcek's "palace revolution"

The Central Committee plenum that met at the end of 1967 and the beginning of 1968 was to take a stand on accumulated posts. But no one was fooled by that. The main issue was the reform and the fight for the leadership of the party, which everyone saw as the essential instrument for carrying it through. In the face of the violent attacks directed against him, Novotny resigned as party secretary, hoping by this tactical gesture to rally a conservative majority.

However, the maneuver failed, and, on January 5, the Central Committee accepted Novotny's resignation and appointed Alexander Dubcek to head the CzCP. Novotny remained president of the republic, and his supporters continued to be thick on the ground in the leading bodies of the CzCP. Nothing in the outcome of this plenum gave any forewarning of what was to unfold in the following months.

It was a palace revolution of the usual sort in bureaucratic regimes. There was no better indication of this than Brezhnev's reaction. When Novotny appealed to him in Prague to come to the rescue, he limited himself to saying "This is your business." But he stopped off in Bratislava on his way back to take stock of the prospective new secretary, Dubcek.

In the aftermath of its victory, the new CzCP leadership did not envisage making any radical changes. It intended to transform the party gradually from the inside, using the intellectuals to shake up the conservative apparatus a little. At the conclusion of this gradual process, a congress at the end of 1969 or the beginning of 1970 was to institutionalize the changes effected.

However, in accordance with its conceptions, the new leadership was to let a debate open up on the country's problems. The writers' union protesters were reintegrated into the party, and the union got its weekly publication back. Under the new name of *Literarni Listy*, this journal was to take the lead in the debate (at the end of February/beginning of March, more than a half million copies of this publication were being sold). The press, radio and television were to become vehicles for expressing the questions, fears and hopes of the population.

These fears and hopes were given impetus by the continued presence of Novotny and his supporters in the leading bodies and by Alexander Dubcek's statements. After General Sejman's defection to the West, it was learned that when Novotny saw that his cause was lost at the beginning of January 1968, he tried to organize a military putsch. From then on, it was impossible to block debate about the positions of the conservatives in the party and the country.

In mass meetings in March, the party leaders were able to sound out the population. It was with them, but it demanded that the changes undertaken and promised be consolidated by getting rid of Novotny and all his supporters in the party.

All sectors of the society were affected. The unions demanded the reestablishment of the right to strike. Students created an independent student parliament. Embryonic political parties and various sorts of clubs were formed. Even the censors organized and came out for the abolition of censorship! Facing this popular pressure, on March 21, 1968, Novotny resigned, and was replaced as president by Svoboda.

Attempt to please both bureaucracy and masses

However, Dubcek and his friends were well aware that the problem went beyond the personality of Novotny. The dynamic of the mass movement was breaking out of the bounds that they had set. It was threatening to upset their plan for transforming the party and society gradually, from above. Many people in the CzCP and in the mass organizations did not believe that the post- January policy could be followed in company with the conservatives and demanded an "institutionalization" of this policy by a special congress of the CzCP.

At the April Central Committee plenum, Dubcek addressed himself to two different publics — a reticent Central Committee, and a public opinion far in advance of it. He reassured the first by rejecting the idea of a special party congress. He tried to calm the second by appointing well-known liberals to important political posts. Frantisek Kriegel was appointed to head the National Front (a group of recognized and controlled parties and organizations officially independent of the CP). Jozef Smrkovski was appointed to the presidency of the National Assembly, and Cernik to the post of premier. In addition, he got the Action Program adopted.

As often happens, this compromise satisfied no one. The conservatives blocked implementation of the Action Program (which was in fact very moderate). As for the intellectuals and the people at large, they saw the conservative apparatus remaining in place. Becoming distrustful, they stepped up the pressures for a special congress.

The formation of the Cernik government, however, was not a formal gesture. It was going to apply an extensive program of liberalization — a law on the right of assembly, freedom to travel, a law on rehabilitations and compensation, independence of the judiciary, a restrictive definition of the powers of the Ministry of the Interior and a law on workers' councils. A number of these measures were to be used to accelerate and widen the debate on the necessary transformations.

Within the post-January leadership, divisions appeared. In response to the obstruction of the conservatives, a group led by Smrkovski and Cisar took more radical positions, which were increasingly echoed in the working class. Many of the regional party conferences that took place at the end of April called for a special congress.

Finally, an inadvertent alliance between the conservatives and the progressives led to the calling of such a congress. At the CC plenum at the end of May, Dubcek sought again to temporize. But Novotny stepped up his attacks, drawing a violent response from the more radical wing of the new leadership. The CC expelled Novotny. His followers then came out for calling a congress quickly. They wanted to take advantage of the positions they still held in the apparatus to win over delegates to their ideas. So, at the end of the plenum it was decided to convoke the congress at the beginning of September and to hold democratic elections of delegates by regional congresses.

While all energies were now concentrated on preparations for the regional congresses, the publication of a long document, *Two Thousand Words*, written by Ludwik Vaculik, reflected an important evolution of a part of the intelligentsia and a part of public opinion. The document hailed all the positive initiatives taken by the party leadership since January. But it warned against blind confidence in it, and called on workers and young people themselves to take the leadership of the struggle for transforming the society.

Threats from the Warsaw Pact countries

The document reflected the frustration at all of the Dubcek team's evasions and the fear of seeing some gains threatened if the "democratization" was not institutionalized. It was to be at the center of the debate in the election of delegates to the September conference. The conservatives held it up as a confirmation of all their fears. The liberals tried to downplay it, stressing the good intentions of the authors. They decried only the "unfortunate forty words," that is, those that called for independent action by the masses.

This document was to be the main pretext used by the "brother countries" for offering their "internationalist" aid to the Czechoslovak party, which was supposedly being threatened by an "offensive of counter-revolutionary forces." By late June, the situation in Czechoslovakia began to be conditioned by growing pressures and threats from the Warsaw Pact countries against the CzCP leadership.

The Soviet leaders had watched the change at the top of the Czechoslovak party

without any concern. Dubcek was a faithful ally of the USSR, and his project was, after all, quite moderate. By March, this attitude had changed in response to the rise of the mass movement and the freewheeling debate developing in the country, and what the Soviet chiefs considered an excessive sensitivity on the part of the post-January Czechoslovak leaders to pressure from below.

The decision to call a special party congress was to speed things up. The party's loss of control was, in fact, considered a point of no return. At the beginning of July, the USSR, Poland, East Germany, Hungary and Bulgaria sent a letter to the Presidium of the CzCP expressing their concern about the way in which the situation was evolving. The Presidium said that it was favorable to bilateral meetings with the brother parties to inform them of the situation. But the Five wanted to "summon" the Czechoslovak party to appear before them, hoping in that way to be able to take advantage of the divisions that existed within it. The Presidium refused to meet them.

The Five met, nonetheless, in Warsaw on July 14-15, and sent a letter to Prague in which they drew the attention of the CzCP leaders to "the offensive conducted by the reactionaries, with the aid of imperialism, against the party and the bases of the socialist system." They expressed their lack of confidence in the Prague leaders who failed see these dangers, and raised a hue and cry about counter-revolutionaries in the CzCP leadership itself. The situation was supposedly so grave that it was no longer something that concerned the CzCP alone but required the intervention of the entire socialist community.

Dubcek announces Soviet "understanding"

In its response the Czechoslovak Presidium rejected these accusations and defended the line followed since January. A vast movement developed within the country against what was seen as intolerable interference. The Presidium's letter was endorsed by all the party bodies and mass organizations. Preparations for the special party congress went ahead according to schedule. At the beginning of July, delegates were elected by the regional congresses. More than 80 per cent were aligned with the progressives (and 10 per cent of these were considered "radicals").

In order to reassure the Soviets, a bilateral meeting was held on July 29 on the border between the USSR and Czechoslovakia. The tenor of the discussion is not known. But on his return, Dubcek informed his friends of the Soviet's "understanding." Perhaps he was trying to convince himself of that. At the same time, he refused to listen to some generals who pointed with concern to unusual movements by Warsaw Pact troops. They were to enter Prague on August 21, 1968.

Up to the end, Dubcek hoped to reconcile what in the bureaucratic world could not be reconciled — democratization and the party's "leading role," its monopoly of power, national independence and the acceptance of subordination to the interests of the Kremlin bureaucracy. In this way, he both aroused the hopes of the Czechoslovak workers and left the door open to those whose only goal was to crush them.

Massive Soviet military invasion

The massive Soviet military invasion was designed to stun, to paralyze the population. Insofar as no section of the Czechoslovak army would have mounted any resistance and the masses had not in the course of their previous struggle achieved the means for self-defence, there was little likelihood of a "Hungarian-style" confrontation. Therefore, what the Soviets wanted in the first phase was to use the presence of the troops to reestablish bureaucratic control over the political institutions so that in the second phase these institutions could defeat the popular movement. The Dubcek leadership of the CzCP was, unfortunately, to prove a pliant instrument for carrying through this project.

The spontaneous mass movement of unarmed resistance to the occupation showed the profound attachment of the masses of workers and youth to the Prague Spring's ideals of freedom. But its very breadth was soon to show the full consequences of the delay in the emergence of an independent leadership before the intervention. Despite the remarkable resistance activity of many left communists, they did not manage to set up such a leadership in the underground conditions that existed after August 21. This, along with Dubcek's capitulation, opened the way for the triumph of the "normalization" in the course of 1969.

The Soviets' task was not easy. They did not want a purely military solution. They wanted to use military pressure to "resolve" the crisis politically. They needed to reestablish the legitimacy of a subordinate Czechoslovak Communist Party. But what personnel was available for that? Novotny was far too discredited. Other conservatives, such as Indra and Bilak, enjoyed no support among the workers. There was no alternative to the Dubcek team. It had to undo the movement that it had called up.

The Prague Spring leaders, therefore, were taken to Moscow and put through the wringer, as one of the participants, Zdenek Mlynar, has recounted in memoirs. Nonetheless, it was not these pressures that explain why they capitulated and signed the Moscow Protocol accepting the "temporary stationing" of Warsaw Pact troops on the territory of the Republic of Czechoslovakia. After all, one member of the leadership, Frantisek Kriegel, refused to sign.

The principal cause of this surrender lies in Dubcek's conception, in his commitment above all to the interests of the bureaucratic apparatus of the CzCP and the "international Communist movement" subordinate to the Kremlin. This loyalty took precedence over the interests of the Czechoslovak masses. Of course, the CzCP had differences with Moscow. But in the eyes of Dubcek and his associates they were of a tactical nature, and they never envisaged that these differences could lead to a break. Dubcek's attitude in Moscow, but above all on his return to Prague, shows quite clearly that he never at any time envisaged repudiating the Moscow Protocol and basing himself on the resistance movement that embraced the overwhelming majority of the Czechoslovak population.

As soon as the signing of the Moscow Protocol was announced, on August 27, the new Central Committee rejected it. But on its return to Prague, the Dubcek leadership declared the Fourteenth Party Congress null and void. It restored the 1966 Central Committee. A few members elected on August 22 were added. But they were overwhelmed by the mass of conservatives and had no chance of influencing events, even if, despite the pressures, they did not hesitate to speak out against the occupation at the August 31, 1968, CC meeting (Jaroslav Sabata in particular).

Qualitative leap in self-organization

The immediate result of this Central Committee meeting was to put a brake on mass mobilization, because the Dubcek leadership was the only one with authority. Among the population, a wait-and-see attitude prevailed in September and early October in the hope that Dubcek would succeed anyway in rescuing the essential reforms of the Prague Spring.

While the atmosphere was no longer favorable to street demonstrations against the occupiers, the mood was not one of blind confidence in the party leadership either. It was in this period that the self-organization of the masses took a qualitative leap, in particular in the election of workers' councils in all the enterprises. This election was provided for by the Workers' Council Law, but now it took on a directly political dimension that it probably would not have had in other circumstances. Likewise, the students reinforced their independent organizations.

Very quickly the timid hopes placed in the post-invasion Dubcek leadership started to dissipate. At the end of October, demonstrations resumed. On October 28, the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Czechoslovak state, thousands of demonstrators marched in Prague demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet troops. The demonstrations were even stronger on November 6 and 7 at the time of the official celebrations. The response of the leadership was to ban the three publications in the forefront of the resistance — *Politika*, *Literarni Listy* and *Reporter*.

The students were the first to understand that it was necessary to relaunch action against the occupation and set up a leadership independent of the Dubcek team. They decided to take an initiative on the eve of the November CC plenum, which was considered a test of the real intentions of the CzCP leaders. They formed an action committee representing all the schools and in December transformed it into a student parliament.

At the urging of Karel Kovanda, Petr Uhl and Jiri Muller, the action committee called for a demonstration on November 17. It was banned, and was immediately transformed into a two-day sit-in in the universities and high schools throughout the country. The students then issued a "Letter to worker and peasant comrades," which said, among other things:

"We cannot accept a verbal sovereignty, when in reality constant pressure is being put on us from the outside....We cannot be satisfied with a few vague statements about the need for a policy open to the inspection of the people, when in reality we have less and less information about the activity of our leaders...The working class is brave, wise and diligent. It does not panic. It does not give up. It wants peace and friendship with all countries, justice, democratic socialism, socialism with a human face. It hates violence and injustice, humiliation, oppression..."

There was nothing remarkable about the document, except that it existed and forthrightly declared the weariness with the Dubcek leadership's maneuvers that was beginning to spread among the workers. The letter was in fact the signal for a relaunching of the activities of the mass organizations. It was telexed from factory to factory. The students were invited to speak in the shops. Delegations of workers went to the occupied universities.

Many factories pledged to strike if the students were attacked. The workers' assembly at the Skoda factory in Plzen came out for the election of a new leadership that "would commit itself to implementing the process of political and organizational democratization." The 22,000 workers in the Kladno steelworks demanded the resignation of those leaders opposed to democratization.

Similar positions were adopted by the Ostrava miners and the workers in the CKD factory in Prague. The latter even staged a warning strike on November 22, when the Prague students defied an evacuation order. The intellectual community threw itself completely into the movement.

Confronted with this movement, the Dubcek leadership itself put an end to all the hopes that it might have aroused. It reinforced police presence in Prague. It decided to censure all information about the student strike, and launched a campaign denouncing the "irresponsible people" who were supposed to be behind it.

However, at the time workers' confidence in the Prague leadership was breaking down; the mass movement had not seen the emergence of a new leadership with a broad authority. The students themselves acknowledged this when they decided to end their strike on November 21: "The events took on a scope and gravity that we had not envisaged....During this crisis we realized how badly prepared we were....no one had foreseen that events would take on such a character."

A broad vanguard developed in action around a united front between the students and trade-unionists in the big workplaces. A pact was signed between the powerful metalworkers' union and the student union in Prague. It was designed to be a real action program. And in the words of the president of the normalized National Front, it made the *Two Thousand Words* look like a nursery rhyme.

Similar pacts were signed between many other unions, and this coordinating body continued to function up until the spring of 1969. However, a mobilization of such breadth could not be maintained indefinitely without a political project. But the cadres capable of transforming this powerful resistance action into a political offensive that could have divided the party leadership and thus undermined the occupiers' political instrument remained dispersed. Very active in the resistance, they were submerged in the mass organizations. They had no links among themselves, and were unable to define a project. This first experience was too brief.

Two events were to contribute to the demoralization of the resistance at the beginning of 1969. Since the autumn, differences had been appearing in the Dubcek team. Husak and Strougal were beginning to line up openly with the Soviets and step up the pressures for accelerating the normalization. In December, Husak began to call publicly for ousting Smrkovski from his post as president of the National Assembly.

Numerous resolutions of support for Smrkovski came from factories throughout the country. But on January 5, he appeared on TV to denounce those who were defending him. Two days later, he was removed. This was the sign that the most popular leaders of the Prague Spring were deserting the battlefield. It was also the signal for many still hesitating party cadres and functionaries to choose their camp in time and line up alongside Husak.

The suicide of Jan Palach, who immolated himself in the center of Prague on January 16, was to show symbolically that while the population was still ready to mobilize en masse, it had lost any hope of having its demands taken up by the CzCP and of being able to win.

On January 21, 100,000 demonstrators marched through Wenceslas Square. For the first time, the flag of the 1918-1939 Czechoslovak republic replaced the red flag at the head of the march, marking the changed attitude of the population in response to the betrayal of the CzCP. At Palach's funeral on January 25, a million people marched in silence through the streets of the capital. They no longer had any demands. They no longer had any rights, except that of silence.

At the end of February, Dubcek told an assembly of police: "We have succeeding in overcoming the most acute phase of the January crisis." He was right. He no longer had any usefulness for the occupiers. On March 28, a Friday, the Czechoslovak hockey team defeated the USSR four goals to three. Demonstrations multiplied in the cities against the occupation.

The Kremlin then instituted the second part of its intervention. Generals Grechko and Semyonov installed Husak and removed Dubcek. The latter was to be sent to Turkey as ambassador, where he kept silent. Recalled in January 1970, he was expelled from the party. That was his reward for loyalty.

It took the expulsion of hundreds of thousands from the party, firings, threats to wreck the education of children, forced exile and imprisonment in order to break the mass movement.

The path of normalization in the shadow of Soviet tanks was also smoothed by economic concessions, mainly in the area of consumer goods.

Unlike Poland in the 1980s, Czechoslovakia in the 1970s experienced relative economic growth. But the strength of the opposition to the regime, regrouped in Charter 77, still testifies 20 years later to the breadth and depth of the movement that shook Czechoslovakia in the spring of 1968. ★

Elections destabilize regime

MORE THAN 300,000 people marched on Saturday, July 16, through the streets of Mexico City to protest against fraud in the July 6 elections. The vote was for the president of the republic, as well as for all senators and deputies. As usual, the official results of the election were announced only 10 days after the vote. That left the local and national representatives of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), which has held undivided power for 60 years, plenty of time to adjust the outcome to suit their needs.

ARIANE MERRI

HOWEVER, this year the fraud took new forms. Up until now, it has consisted mainly of stuffing ballot boxes with votes for the official candidates. This time, it was mainly effected by removing ballots for the other candidates, especially the PRI "dissident" and leader of the National Democratic Front (FDN), Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas.

Cárdenas is officially credited with 31.12% of the vote. The PRI's official candidate, Carlos Salinas de Gortari, is supposed to have won by a razor-thin majority of 50.35%. Thus, even with the fraud, he ended up far from the comforting predictions that gave him more than 60% of the vote.

Likewise, the rate of participation, which on the evening of July 6 was supposed to be one of the highest in the history of the country, nearly 80%, fell to about 51% when the results were announced. On election night, the minister of the interior and the president of the elections commission (the grand master of the fraud), Manuel Bartlett, hailed the "exceptional civic spirit of Mexicans" on the evening of the elections, at the same time as he announced the "smashing victory" of Salinas de Gortari. Subsequently he has preferred to enthuse over this "demonstration of pluralism unprecedented [sic!] in the history of Mexico."

"Salinas cannot win, but the PRI cannot lose." This pithy sentence by an PRI official says a lot. But despite the efforts of the experts in election-rigging, these results were a terrible rebuff for the policy followed by the ruling party, as well as for its methods of domination, which are based on patronage and corruption.

Compared to the 70%, 80% or even 98% scored by his predecessors, Salinas' 50.35% make him look falsely elected, and he will have a lot difficulty living that down.

Cárdenas playing with dynamite

If the official results are examined in greater detail, the PRI lost the presidential elections in four of the country's 32 states, including the Federal District. Mexico City is located here and it includes 20 million people and more than a quarter of the voters. For the first time, the opposition got into the Senate (the most important of the two chambers), with the election of four representatives of the FDN.

With regard to deputies, the results are more complicated, given the mode of election for this House — 60% of deputies are elected directly, 40% on a proportional basis. The PRI elected 249 deputies by "direct" vote, as against 31 for the National Action Party (PAN, the right-wing bourgeois party) and 20 for the FDN. But according to the estimates (the official results of the proportional vote has not yet been announced) the PRI should have a total of slightly more than 250 deputies, the rest being divided between the two big opposition parties. However, in order to make the constitutional reforms to which Salinas is committed, he needs two thirds of the House, which he will now only be able to get by negotiating with one or the other of the two parliamentary opposition parties.

By voting for Cárdenas, the daily *La Jornada* wrote, Mexicans "wanted to express their rejection of a policy that has aggravated social inequalities. They censured corruption and arbitrariness."

Will Cuauhtémoc be able to "take advantage" of the formidable movement that crystalized around his name in an often spontaneous way? That appears doubtful. Cárdenas wants to be seen as a statesman, and he knows that he is playing with dynamite. The army voted massively for him, and when the minister of defence, General Juan Arevala, announced the day after the elections that the military would support the victor, whoever he was, it was not for nothing.

Moreover, after announcing his victory over the PRI candidate, Cárdenas finally accepted the official result of the elections, declaring that it was necessary to pursue the struggle against the fraud in the strictly legal channels, in other words not by pressure in the streets. As the Madrid daily *El Pais* noted, "the son of the socialist general [Lázaro Cárdenas] now holds a part of the responsibility for the future stability of a country that shares a 3,000 kilometer frontier with the United States, and which is considered one of the potential major centers of conflict in the world."

PRT also suffered from electoral fraud

The Fourth Internationalists of the Revolutionary Workers' Party (PRT) also suffered the consequences of this fraud. When it turned out that Cárdenas had to be "granted" more votes than expected, the PRI had to take them away from somewhere else. The PRT was credited with 0.42% of the vote, or 80,000 votes, as against its official vote of 1.7% and 300,000 votes in 1985. If you count all those who came to the rallies and meetings organized by the PRT, the official results mean that less than half those attending voted for them. Since the official PRT vote is less than 1.5% it has lost representation in parliament and its legal registration.

A few days before the vote, 50,000 people attended the rally concluding the PRT's campaign. As soon as the fraudulent official results were proclaimed, the PRT took up the fight, meeting with the two other opposition candidates and calling for demonstrations against the government's abuses.

Rosario Ibarra de Piedra, the PRT's presidential candidate, held a press conference on July 9 together with Cuauhtémoc, in which she said: "Our presence in this press conference reflects our profound democratic conviction that only truth is revolutionary. For two days, we have been pointing out that according to the data in our computer center, Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas was winning the elections. This view has been confirmed with the passage of time. We consider Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas the president of our country.

"We take this position despite our ideological differences — in fact, because of our ideology, since we are firmly convinced that the only way to achieve socialism is through a clear commitment to democracy. And today in Mexico the fight for democracy involves precisely defending the sovereignty of the voters. We think that those Mexicans who voted for Cárdenas did so in the firm conviction that it was necessary to defeat the PRI. We share this view entirely, although we do not agree with the governmental alternative represented by Cárdenas. We say explicitly that if Cárdenas were president, we would be part of the intransigent opposition to him, outspokenly supporting a socialist alternative." ★