

**international
VIEWPOINT**

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**DON'T DESTROY THE
CLIMATE TREATY!**

ECOLOGY AND SOCIALISM

**ISRAEL / PALESTINE:
DOSSIER**

**EUROPE: RADICAL LEFT
MEETS**

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Anti-capitalist left meets

A EUROPEAN conference involving a series of parties and movements of the radical left was held in Paris on December 4-5, 2000, to coincide with the European Union (EU) Summit under French presidency. Following a first meeting of this kind in Lisbon in Spring 2000, this one was convened by the Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International).

FRANÇOIS VERCAMMEN*

THE following groups replied to the invitation: the Red Electoral Alliance (RV, Norway), the Red-Green Alliance (RGA, Denmark), the Scottish Socialist Party (SSP), the London Socialist Alliance (LSA) and the Socialist Alliances (England, Wales), the Socialist Workers' Party (SWP, Britain), La Gauche (Luxemburg), the Left Bloc (Portugal), Zutik (Euskadi), Espacio alternativo (Spain), SolidariteS (Switzerland), OeDP (Turkey), and the Movement of Patriotic Unity (Turkish Cypriot community). Zutik, Espacio Alternativo and the OeDP could not be present, but indicated their agreement with the goal of the meeting and the proposed declaration.

The MPU, whose office had just been blown up by the Turkish army, was represented by a comrade from the Cypriot Left from the Greek community. The Socialist Party of England and Wales, (the former Militant Tendency) which forms part of an international organization, the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI), sent an observer. Lutte Ouvriere (France) turned down the invitation.

The objectives of the meeting and the criteria for invitation had been set by the comrades of the Portuguese Left Bloc at their counter-summit in Lisbon: to seize the occasion of the EU summit to take a position starting from the concrete policy of the EU, and contribute to the emergence of an anti-capitalist current clearly distinct from social democracy, the Greens and the Communist Parties which support a policy of social neoliberalism. To give strength and credibility to this approach, it was necessary to begin on the basis of bringing together parties and movements which are

representative electorally or influential on the trade union and social levels.

Hinted at here there was also, of course, the idea of a broad pluralist recomposition, breaking radically with sectarianism and involving the coming together of currents and organizations whose origin, history, programme and practice have long diverged but who have understood that it is by their unity that they can occupy the political space opened up by the neoliberal degeneration of social democracy and the collapse of Stalinism.

Pluralist aspect

A closer examination brings out this pluralist aspect very well. The ex-Maoist currents are very strong in the Norwegian RV, the Portuguese Left Bloc (the UDP) and the Turkish OeDP. In Denmark, the CP undoubtedly contributes the most militants to the RGA, and in Luxemburg, it is by far the strongest element in La Gauche. The strong visibility of the organized currents should not obscure the role of "unorganized" militants and personalities in initiating or cementing unity. This is the case for example in England where the likes of Ken Loach or Tariq Ali have contributed strongly. It was all the more indispensable because what is at stake is not unifying revolutionaries, but winning entire layers of the militant left (trade union, social and political) still attached to neoliberal social democracy, and also the Greens and the social democratized CPs.

Remember also that the Trotskyist international current is for its part very diversified, with the International Socialists, the CWI and the Fourth

International.

The concrete agenda of the Paris meeting was aimed at coming up with a political declaration and a common press conference. But the LCR, as host, had tried to broaden the agenda in terms of the coming events in the struggle against capitalist globalization, such as the World Social Forum in January 2001 in Porto Alegre and a debate on the Charter of Fundamental Rights in which the European Federation of Trade Unions (EFTU) was deeply involved; it had initially refused to support any text which was regressive at the social level only to fall into line subsequently. This debate found a notable echo in the French trade union movement, heavily mobilized on the streets of Nice.

Common declaration

The most essential thing, the real step forward, was the common declaration (see page 4). Political will allowed agreement on such a declaration despite the debates which marked the meeting.

First, the very heterogeneous construction which the EU represents — grouping national states under the aegis of a supranational proto-state — weighs differently in each country on society, the social movement and the political currents. The anticapitalists and revolutionaries are no exception. Internationalists in general, they also have to practically resolve the big strategic questions and problems which stem from two centuries (or more) of development of the bourgeois state.

For the radical organizations of the Scandinavian countries (and in part Britain), the struggle against the EU passes through the dissolution of the latter, with a succession of "nos" and a final exit of each country creating a vast crisis in the EU opening the horizon of a broader international cooperation.

An opposite strategy is advanced by organizations in countries currently outside the EU (such as Cyprus, Switzerland, Turkey): they propose the entry of their countries into the EU, not for the advantages that it will bring for their population and working class, but so as to join the common struggle with the social movement mobilized inside the EU.

In the countries situated at the "heart" of the EU, a fight for complete withdrawal would simply not be understood: there, it is about fighting the EU through a united



The LCR at the Nice summit

struggle for common European demands on the social, economic, environmental, political, cultural levels. Which also involves alternative institutional propositions. The opening of a crisis of the EU will take place through this common struggle and a radically democratic approach which takes the constituent process away from the governments.

The second discussion at the meeting focused on the formulation of a democratic demand for self-determination: who will decide — the peoples or the working classes — whether it is a question of entry in the EU (the countries of Eastern Europe) or the case of a major institutional crisis of the EU?

It is not a question of coming up with an abstract and eternal response, but rather the political dynamic at work and in the current phase of the class struggle, the relationship of forces, the situation of the workers' and social movement.

On these two basic strategic and burning questions the meeting opened the discussion without reaching any conclusion. We did not seek slapdash compromise formulae. The absence of any democratic proposal of self-determination allowing a common activity in Europe is certainly the big weakness of the document. From this fact, the strongly critical analysis of the EU — genuinely shared by all — remains, for the moment, suspended in midair, without political and practical perspective.

Nonetheless, we are not talking about Euroscepticism or a nationalist drawing back. Indeed the press communiqué came out in favour of a Europe which was social, democratic, and based on values of peace and solidarity — a democratic socialist

society — and gave form to this perspective by sketching out an anticapitalist social programme. Thus this Conference is in step with the left wing of the social and trade union movement in Europe. This is the first very positive point. The second is that faced with the decisions of the Nice summit, other areas of common action are sketched out, such as the struggle against Euro-militarism, for the free circulation of persons (immigrants) and their full citizenship, and against the EU as active factor of capitalist globalization.

Unanimous

The discussion, at the end of the Conference, revealed a unanimous desire to continue. How? With what short and medium term objective? Through what methods of work? Should we speed up the pace? Deepen and strengthen the organic links?

Let's learn to walk before we can run! said one participant. Another replied, Yes, but let's decide to walk immediately and in the right direction. The "balance sheets and perspectives" of the parties which participated will weigh heavily on the orientation to be taken. The next summit of the EU (at Gothenburg in Sweden) offers a new opportunity.

Afterwards will come Brussels (January 2001) which, through its geographical situation in the EU, will create the possibility of forcefully affirming the existence of a European pluralist anticapitalist current fighting to break the workers' and social movement from the dominant social neoliberalism. ★

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European Conference of the Anti-capitalist Left: Press Communiqué, Paris, December 5, 2000

TEN years after the Maastricht Treaty, the EU is preparing, at the meeting in Nice, under the French presidency, for a new stage: a European "Super-power".

1. In ten years, the European Union has shown to what point it is an anti-social and anti-democratic construction, a war machine against the working and popular classes of Europe and the world. Compared with the national member States, the EU institutions are a genuine democratic regression. The Council of Ministers (and the European Council, made of the Prime Ministers and heads of state) is the sovereign organ: it votes the "laws" and decides on the current policy, adopts and amends the Treaties - all behind closed doors, without publicity of the votes and the debates, without any accountability. The Commission, also beyond any democratic control, is elected and mandated by the same Council; it is the watchdog of the "national" application of the Treaties and of the current policies decided by the Council. On the social level, the free circulation of capitals, services and commodities, organized by the Single Market, has dramatically sharpened the competition between the workers of the different member-States. The result is a systematic social dumping of all the working and living conditions: wages, working time, labour contracts on hiring and firing, relocation of factories inside and outside the EU, undermining of the social rights and laws in each of the member-States. The Monetary Union (the Euro managed by a European Central Bank also functioning beyond any control and accountability), based on monetarist convergence criteria and the neoliberal "stability pact" is used as a tool for attacking social protection (unemployment fees, pensions), for massive privatizations and against the cohesion of the working class (the so-called "reform of the labour market"). Moreover, the EU behaves like a fortress against the "Third World" and the poorest populations on earth, as well as against the countries of Eastern Europe.

2. The EU continues to lack desperately popular support and political legitimacy, even after having spent millions of euros on so-called "information campaigns"; the Danish "no" is the latest example. As are the recent European-wide struggles against the neoliberal policy of the EU. As is shown by the growing resistance against capitalist globalization, embodied by the IMF and the World Bank, of which the European Commissioner of Free Trade (Lamy) is one of the hottest defenders. The responsibility for this deeply reactionary offensive does not lie on some unknown or hidden European authority. It is the national governments that take the decisions on the national as well as on the European level. The Social Democratic Parties have played a key role, helped by the Communist Parties and/or the Greens in some countries (France, Germany, Italy): instead of fighting the neoliberal policy, they have applied it with more efficiency than the conservative bourgeois parties. They have been followed by a large part of the European Trade Union movement. The EFTU, instead of developing a militant trade union activity, has aligned behind the European Commission in the name of "the lesser evil".

3. We, anticapitalist Parties and Movements of Europe, struggle against the EU, its institutions and policy. We struggle in favour of another Europe-social, democratic, peaceful and based on solidarity. We struggle for a radical change of policy, perspective and society. And to begin with, we struggle to stop immediately the war machine of the EU. We struggle to stop the autocratic machinery of the Council of Ministers, the permanent Intergovernmental Conference! We have a radical democratic proposal: it is up to the peoples of the whole of Europe to decide how they want to live together: what kind of state institutions, on which social and economic foundations, and in what kind of society! We need a broad public debate, organized by the modern means of communications, where all opinions can be expressed. And we need women and men to be elected by universal franchise and mandated to decide democratically in each country and in Europe.

4. The new Treaty and the other decisions "they" prepare for the Nice Summit, will prolong and undoubtedly worsen this evolution of the EU. Nice opens a new stage in the history of EU that shows openly its imperialist ambitions "defending its interests all over the world"; The conclusions drawn from the Balkan wars will be put into practice.

First, by creating a European army, intervening inside or outside NATO; but its priority is to stabilize and hegemonize its own periphery: the Mediterranean area and the East European countries. With all its practical consequences: a radical rise in military expenditure, a reorganization of the research and development and investment in military technology, and a coordinated financial and diplomatic support for the big corporations of the sector (EADS, BAE, Dassault). This policy of remilitarization can only succeed if it is combined with a "Euro-militarist" ideological offensive. We will fight against the rise of the EU's military power, as we have fought before the militarism of NATO and our own governments.

Secondly, by the economic conquest of Eastern Europe, imposing the neoliberal rules of the EU upon these countries. There is an obvious link between the needs of a military "arm" of the EU (Rapid Deployment Force) and the painful transition to capitalism with its predictable series of social explosions, national conflicts and local wars, as well as big migration movements. For us, Europe goes well beyond the EU. We are in favor of uniting our continent, but through solidarity and cooperation. It is not up to us, who are in the EU, to decide in place of the peoples of the East. We propose to them a joint struggle against the actual policy and institutions of the EU.

Third, by playing a vanguard role in the WTO in a growing inter-imperialist competition with the US and Japan (and some countries of the Third World). The EU has chosen to strengthen its effort to defend, on a world scale, its commodities, its investments and its access to raw material and cheap labour. That is why the EU governments want to reform the Treaty (art 133) and give a free hand to the Commission. It is clear that our struggle against the EU is part of the rising struggle against capitalist globalization and in favor of internationalist solidarity with all the oppressed and the exploited in the world.

Fourth: the reform of the EU institutions (enlargement of the qualified majority vote instead of veto right; a smaller Commission; reweighting of the countries in the Council of Ministers, giving more voting rights to the Big Three; the freer use of "enhanced cooperation" between some governments in some fields) paves the way for a "directory" of Germany, France and Britain and a much stronger executive leadership. It is the indispensable tool to lead this imperialist Europe in the coming economic, political and military battles on a world scale.

Fifth: The announced Charter of Fundamental Rights is a radical regression of the rights that the labour movement has won, in each of our countries, during the last 150 years: the right to have a job is replaced by "the freedom" to work at any condition; the right to a decent wage and the right to a viable minimum income is replaced by "social help"; and philanthropy. The right to strike is not recognized on the European level. This draft Charter is in retreat of national and some international legislation, notably the Human Rights Declaration of 1948, and the European Social Charters as adapted in 1961 and 1989. This new reactionary Charter might become European law, prevailing over national laws! The European Commission might have the right to force its application! The European Court of Justice would have the sovereign power to judge! Anyway, this Charter will be a powerful lever for the bosses and governments to undermine the rights of the working classes on a national level, opposing them, country by country.

5. Each of us struggles in our country, and all together on a European scale, to reverse this neoliberal policy, in favour of the principle: social needs before profit! This means: a stable and "full" job for everyone; a decent wage; social protection (in case of unemployment, illness), healthcare, housing, education and professional training. This will not go without: redevelopment of the public sector and reorganization of the state budget, a massive redistribution of wealth from capital to labour, and all the necessary anticapitalist measures to change private property into social property. ★

Nice: the key decisions

THE summit agreed to extend Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) in the Council of Ministers — the lawmaking body of the EU — into 29 new areas. Currently about two thirds of the Council's decisions are subject to QMV.

Fortunately attempts to make trade, education, cultural, and audio-visual services subject to QMV failed. But trade in services and intellectual property rights were brought under OMV. This is a major development. The proposal is to modify Article 133 of the Amsterdam treaty, where QMV already exists for trade in goods, to include trade in services and intellectual property rights.

This could open the door to the liberalisation and deregulation of services throughout the EU within the framework of the World Trade Organisation and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). What could not be achieved in the form of the OECD's Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) can now be smuggled in via the EU.

Once this change is carried through, multinational and other companies from anywhere within the EU will be able to bid for local services with no local restrictions or preferences. It will also open the EU to liberalisation in trade in intellectual property rights, including the wider privatisation of natural resources, including human genes, through the patenting process.

Radical

The summit also agreed a radical reallocation of votes between the member states on the Council of Ministers, for implementation once the process of enlargement starts. Under this the biggest four — Germany, France, Italy and the UK — get 30 votes each and Spain 28. After that Holland gets 12, Greece, Belgium and Portugal 11, Sweden and Austria 9, Denmark, Finland and Ireland 7, and Luxembourg 4. Consequently any four of the biggest five can out-vote the rest.

Of the applicant countries Poland will join the big league with 28 votes. Of the rest Rumania will get 13, the Czech Republic and Hungary 11, Slovakia 7, Lithuania 5, and Latvia, Slovenia, Estonia, Cyprus 4 and Malta with 3. These changes tripled the votes of the big coun-

THE European Union's intergovernmental Conference (IGC), held in Nice from December 9-13, 2000, was successful in its principal objectives.

ALAN THORNETT

tries, and mean that after expansion the big six will be able to out-vote the other 21 EU member states.

These changes in voting allocation go alongside a change to the "qualified" part of the majority voting — that part which is weighting according to population. Under these changes a vote on the Council of Ministers would have to represent 62% of the EU's population before it is valid.

Clout

This gives the big countries considerable clout beyond their voting allocations. It means that any three of them could block a proposal by the rest of the 27. It was the introduction of this rule which persuaded Germany to drop its demand for additional votes to reflect its huge 82 million population. The weight of the big countries was also increased by changes proposed in the allocation of Commissioners.

After 2007 the size of the Commission will be capped at 20, and not all countries will have a commissioner: it will be the smaller countries which lose out. The allocation of seats in the toothless European Parliament was also changed towards the big powers. Germany gets 99 seats and the other big powers 74. The rest are on a scale down to Malta with 5.

So it was mission accomplished. Power in the EU would now be concentrated in the hands of the biggest and most powerful countries, most importantly Germany, France and the UK the key European imperialist countries, who can run it in their own interests. The perspective is to create a political leadership which can operate on the basis of its own European and global political and imperialist needs.

The other issue on the agenda at Nice was the proposed Charter of Fundamental Rights. Its provisions fall short of the existing situation in many of the member states,

and it does not include key rights such as the right to a job, to housing, to a pension, to a minimum income, or protection against sacking or redundancy.

The significance of the Charter, however, is in its role as a fore-runner of a EU constitution — another essential requirement for the development of the structures of a super-state. Fortunately, the Charter was blocked from becoming a part of the treaty.

Unfortunately this was due to the opposition of Blair, who opposed it from the point of view that it gave too much away to the working class! He also succeeded in removing from it any reference of the right to strike or protection against unfair dismissal.

EU army

The proposed European Rapid Reaction Force was not on the formal agenda at Nice, but it was dealt with just the same. It is linked to the development of a European police force and a European prosecution service. One hundred thousand personnel (army, navy, air force and special forces) are to be made available, along with 400 aircraft and 100 ships, by the member states to be used under the command of the EU. Germany, Britain and France will provide the bulk of the personnel and equipment.

Alain Richard, the French defence minister, made it clear that he saw it as the first stage towards a fully-fledged EU army. Creating an armed force on behalf of a political entity of 500,000 people is clearly a highly strategic decision. The US is divided: it wants to reduce its share of the costs of European "security", but a European armed force is ultimately a challenge to NATO. Chirac explicitly called for the force to have a command structure independent of NATO.

Ultimately, however, the Defence Force will be established and developed since it is difficult to have a super-state without an army, and thus the ability to wage war in defence of its own interests. Particularly when it is a super-state which, after enlargement, will have external borders in the east stretching from Lithuania to Belarus, and Ukraine to Turkey and the Balkans. ★

Two horses, one owner

THE most striking fact about the November 2000 elections is that they were a statistical tie (for Congress as well, virtually). The most interesting question is what this shows, if anything, about the state of functioning democracy.

NOAM CHOMSKY

FOR many commentators, the fact that the presidency "is hinging on a few hundred votes" reveals the extraordinary health and vigor of American democracy (former State Department spokesperson James Rubin). An alternative interpretation is that it confirms the conclusion that there was no election in any sense that takes the concept of democracy seriously. Under what conditions would we expect 100 million votes to divide 50-50, with variations that fall well within expected margins of error of 1-2%?

There is a very simple model that would yield such expectations: people were voting at random. Of course, more complex models can be constructed, and we know that the simplest one is not strictly valid. Voting blocs can be identified, and sometimes the reasons for choices can be discerned. It's understandable that financial services should overwhelmingly support Bush, whose announced plans included huge gifts of public resources to the industry and even more commitment than his opponent to the demolition of quasi-democratic institutions (Social Security in particular).

No surprise

And it is no surprise that affluent white voters favored Bush while union members, Latinos and African-Americans strongly opposed him ("supported Gore," in conventional terminology). But blocs are not always easy to explain in terms of interest-based voting, and it is well to remember that voting is often consciously against interest. For example, in 1984 Reagan ran as a "real conservative," winning what was called a "landslide victory" (with under 30% of the electoral vote); a large majority of voters opposed his legislative pro-

gram, and 4% of his supporters identified themselves as "real conservatives." Such outcomes are not too surprising when over 80% of the population feel that the government is "run for the benefit of the few and the special interests, not the people," up from about half in earlier years. And when similar numbers feel that the economic system is "inherently unfair" and working people have too little say, and that "there is too much power concentrated in the hands of large companies for the good of the nation." Under such circumstances, people may tend to vote (if at all) on grounds that are irrelevant to policy choices over which they feel they have little influence. Such tendencies are strengthened by intense media/advertising concentration on style, personality, and other irrelevancies.

Credibility

Public opinion studies lend further credibility to the simplest model. Harvard's Vanishing Voter Project has been monitoring attitudes through the presidential campaign. Three-fourths of the population regarded the whole process as largely a game played by large contributors (overwhelmingly corporations), party leaders, and the PR industry, which crafted candidates to say "almost anything to get themselves elected," so that one could believe little that they said even when their stand on issues was intelligible. On almost all issues, citizens could not identify the stands of the candidates — not because they are stupid or not trying. It is, then, not unreasonable to suppose that the simplest model is a pretty fair first approximation to the truth about the election, and that the country is being driven even more than before towards the condition described by former President Alfonso Lopez



Michaelson of Colombia, referring to his own country: a political system of power sharing by parties that are "two horses with the same owner."

Furthermore, that seems to be general popular understanding. On the side, perhaps the similarities help us understand Clinton's great admiration and praise for Colombian democracy, and for the grotesque social and economic system kept in place by violence. And the fact that after a decade in which Colombia was the leading recipient of US arms and military training in the hemisphere — and the leading human rights violator, in conformity with a well-established correlation — it attained first place worldwide in 1999, with a huge further increase now in progress (Israel-Egypt are a separate category).

Meaningless

When an election is a largely meaningless statistical tie, and a victor has to be selected somehow, the rational procedure would be some arbitrary choice; say, flipping a coin. But that is unacceptable. It is necessary to invest the process of selecting our leader with appropriate majesty, an effort conducted for five weeks of intense elite dedication to the task, with limited success, it appears. The five weeks of passionate effort were not a complete waste. They did contribute to exposing racist bias in practices in Florida and elsewhere — which probably have a considerable element of class bias, concealed by the standard refusal in US commentary to admit that class structure exists, and the race-class correlations. There was also at least some slight attention to a numerically far more significant factor than the ugly harassment of black voters and electoral chicanery: disenfranchisement through

incarceration.

The day after the election, Human Rights Watch issued a (barely-noted) study reporting that the “decisive” element in the Florida election was the exclusion of 31% of African-American men, either in prison or among the more than 400,000 “ex-offenders” permanently disenfranchised. HRW estimates that “more than 200,000 potential black voters [were] excluded from the polls.” Since they overwhelmingly vote Democratic, that “decisively” changed the outcome. The numbers overwhelm those debated in the intense scrutiny over marginal technical issues (dimpled chads, etc.).

Swing states

The same was true of other swing states. In seven states, HRW reported, “one in four black men is permanently barred” from voting; “almost every state in the U.S. denies prisoners the right to vote” and “fourteen states bar criminal offenders from voting even after they have finished their sentences,” permanently disenfranchising “over one million ex-offenders.” These are African-American and Latino out of any relation to proportion of the population, or even to what is called “crime.” The academic researchers, sociologists Jeff Manza (Northwestern) and Christopher Uggen (Minnesota), conclude that “were it not for disenfranchised felons, the Democrats would still have control of the U.S. Senate.” “If the Bush-Gore election turns out to be as close as the Kennedy-Nixon election, and Bush squeaks through, we may be able to attribute that to felon disenfranchisement.”

“Neither party seems interested in addressing the issue, Manza said. Republicans feel they have little to gain because these voters are thought to be overwhelmingly Democratic. And, he added, ‘Democrats are sufficiently concerned about not appearing to be weak on crime that I’m sure they would not be jumping up and down on this.’” The last comment directs attention to a critically important matter. For the past eight years, Clinton and Gore disenfranchised a major voting bloc that would have easily swung the election to Gore.

During their tenure in office, the prison population swelled from 1.4 to 2 million, removing an enormous number of potential Democratic voters from the lists, thanks to the harsh sentencing laws.

Clinton-Gore were particularly devoted to draconian Reagan-Bush laws, Hutchinson points out. The core of these practices is drug laws that have little to do with drugs but a lot to do with social control: removing superfluous people and frightening the rest. When the latest phase of the “war on drugs” was designed in the 1980s, it was recognized at once that “we are choosing to have an intense crime problem concentrated among minorities” (Daniel Patrick Moynihan, one of the few Senators who paid attention to social statistics). “The war’s planners knew exactly what they were doing,” criminologist Michael Tonry wrote.

Twenty years ago, the US was similar to other industrial countries in rate of incarceration. By now, it is off the spectrum, the world’s leader among countries that have meaningful statistics. The escalation was unrelated to crime rates, which were not unlike other industrial countries then and have remained stable or declined. But they are a natural component of the domestic programs instituted from the late Carter years, a variant of the “neoliberal reforms” that have had a devastating effect in much of the third world.

Deterioration

These “reforms” have been accompanied by a notable deterioration in conventional measures of “economic health” worldwide, but have had a much more dramatic impact on standard social indicators: measures of “quality of life.” In the US, these tracked economic growth until the “reforms” were instituted, and have declined since, now to about the level of 40 years ago, in what the Fordham University research institute that has done the major studies of the topic calls a “social recession” (Marc and Marque-Luisa Miringoff, “The Social Health of the Nation”; see Paul Street, *Z* magazine, November 2000). Economic rewards are highly concentrated, and much of the population becomes superfluous for profit and power. Marginalization of the superfluous population takes many forms.

Some of these were the topic of a recent *Business Week* cover story entitled “Why Service Stinks” (Oct. 23). It reviewed refinements in implementing the 80-20 rule taught in business schools: 20% of your customers provide 80% of the profits, and you may be better off without the rest. The “new consumer apartheid”

relies on modern information technology (in large measure a gift from an unwitting public) to allow corporations to provide grand services to profitable customers, and to deliberately offer skimpy services to the rest, whose inquiries or complaints can be safely ignored. The experience is familiar, and carries severe costs — how great when distributed over a large population, we don’t know, because they are not included among the highly ideological measures of economic performance. Incarceration might be regarded as an extreme version, for the least worthy. Incarceration has other functions. It is a form of interference in labor markets, removing working-age males, increasingly women as well, from the labor force.

Unemployment

Calculating real unemployment when this labor force is included, the authors of an informative academic study find the US to be well within the European range, contrary to conventional claims (Bruce Western and Katherine Beckett, *Am. J. of Sociology*, Jan. 1999; also *Prison Legal News*, Oct. 2000). They conclude that what is at issue is not labor market interference, but the kind that is chosen: job training, unemployment insurance, and so on, on the social democratic model; or throwing superfluous people into jail.

In pursuing these policies, the US has separated itself from other industrial countries. Europe abandoned voting restrictions for criminals decades ago; in 1999, the Constitutional Court of South Africa gave inmates the right to vote, saying that the “vote of each and every citizen is a badge of dignity and personhood.” Prior to the “neoliberal reforms” and their “drug war” concomitant, the US was heading in the same direction.

Without continuing, the Clinton-Gore programs of disenfranchising their own voters should be understood as a natural component of their overall socioeconomic conceptions. And the elections themselves illustrate the related conception of the political system of two horses with the same corporate owner. None of this is new, of course. There is no “golden age” that has been lost, and this is not the first period of concentrated attack on democracy and human rights. Insofar as the November 2000 elections are worth discussing, they should, I think, be seen primarily from these perspectives. ★

Clinton's fraudulent plan

PALESTINIAN leader Yasser Arafat has come under intense pressure from the European powers, President Mubarak of Egypt, and Arab and Russian leaders to accept the "mediation plan" drawn up by US President Bill Clinton.

MICHEL WARSCHAWSKI

ONCE again, the international community is unanimous in saluting the "enormous compromise" accepted by Israel thanks to Clinton's mediation, and acts as if it cannot understand how the Palestinians can reject such a generous proposal. In fact, obviously, it is nothing of the sort. The US proposal is unacceptable, and rejected by all Palestinian political currents.

In an editorial published by the Palestinian daily *El Ayyam*, its chief editor Akkram Haniyeh, who is close to Yasser Arafat and had traveled to Camp David last July, explains why this mediation cannot win the support of Palestinians. First, because it is not a plan, but rather a second declaration of principles which "creates more problems than it resolves. Such general principles will require dozens of supplementary accords to be implemented... Ten months of difficult negotiations were needed on a subject as minor as the street of Martyrs in Hebron (an accord which, five years later, has still not been implemented by Israel!). Imagine then how many years would be needed to reach agreement on the frontiers between the various zones in Jerusalem, or between the settlements and the neighboring Palestinian villages..."

For, contrary to what some journalists would have us believe, the Clinton plan includes no map, but general ideas and percentages: in Jerusalem, the Jewish quarters will be Israeli, the Arab quarters Palestinian; 5 to 8% of the West Bank will be annexed by Israel; there will be

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exchanges of territories; three blocs of settlements will be annexed by Israel and so on. Nothing is said on the mechanisms of arbitration in cases where, once again, Israel will attempt to impose a maximalist reading of the agreement, or to delay things indefinitely.

Veto

In the Clinton plan, as after the signature of the declaration of the Oslo principles, the Palestinians are at the mercy of the Israeli veto, but this time they have understood the trap, and are not ready to be tricked a second time. The second reason for the Palestinian rejection is that this plan, in accepting the

principle of annexation of the occupied territories, legalizing the settlements, rejecting the right of return for the refugees, contravenes international law as expressed several times by UN resolutions. "Innumerable Palestinian declarations according to which any agreement should conform to international legality are the expression of a position of principle, not declarations made for the media."

On the question of Jerusalem, Haniyeh says: "In suggesting Israeli sovereignty underneath the Haram el Sharif, the Americans show that they have drawn no lesson from the setback at Camp David and the Intifada. Such suggestions fan the fires and could provoke a war of reli-

gions." More unacceptable still is the rejection of the right of return for the refugees. "The proposal concerning the question of the refugees – which is at the heart of the Palestinian problem – violates resolution 194 which explicitly recognizes the right of return to their homes, and replaces it by a return to the Palestinian state and financial compensation". There is no doubt that the major purpose of the Clinton mediation is to force the Palestinians to renounce the right of the refugees to return to their country and to recover their homes.

Crazy dream

To do this, Clinton is ready to ask Israel to renounce its crazy dream of Jewish sovereignty over the whole of east Jerusalem and above all the Haram el Sharif.

But from Yasser Arafat's point of view this is as if his two children had been kidnapped and he had to sign an agreement which would return one with an arm amputated on condition he agrees to kill the other with his own hands. The editor of *El Ayyam* concludes: "For the Palestinians, what is important is to reach a final agreement which really has a final character. That is, an agreement where all the details are settled, including with maps, an agreement which does not require a dozen supplementary agreements to be implemented in practice, and contains no traps... The bitter experience of the last seven years dictates that any final agreement should really be final." Well said, and the right conclusion to draw from seven years of manipulation and trickery.

But will the Palestinian leadership have the strength to impose this position, which is in fact only the expression of good sense? The guerilla war which is little by little replacing the Intifada gives them the means to do so. And even if it is not sufficient to defeat the enemy, it has at least a capacity to wear down Israeli society (the signs of it are becoming increasingly obvious) which sooner or later will oblige the new Barak-Sharon government to revise its demands downwards. ★



Al-Aqsa Intifada: The Refusal to Surrender

THE present Intifada is based on a number of political realities that form a framework within which we can understand more fully the events of the past five weeks in the Palestinian occupied territories. Before beginning an analysis of these realities, however, it must be clearly stated that the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is solely responsible for the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

DR. MAJED NASSAR AND NASSAR IBRAHIM*

THE same occupation has been carrying out a policy of terror for years toward the Palestinian people, including arrests, deportations, killings, and robbery of the national economy, in addition to confiscating lands and building settlements. This same occupying force still refuses to acknowledge the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, namely, the right for self-determination, the creation of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right for all refugees to return.

The spark that ignited this Intifada, moreover, was the provocative visit of Ariel Sharon, accompanied by hundreds of Israeli soldiers, to Al Haram A-Sharif. Any attempt to minimize this fact, or to explain the events in any other way would be a deception.

A Refusal to Surrender

There has been an increasing loss of confidence in the peace process designed according to the American-Israeli vision, which implies the exclusive implementation of Israeli terms. These terms include: sundering the geographic and demographic unity of the Palestinian people into cantons A, B, and C, divided in concrete by bypass roads that consume thousands of dunums of Palestinian lands; the building and expansion of new settlements; the continuing siege of Palestinian cities, villages, and camps; the policy of house demolitions; the rejection of Palestinian basic human as well as national rights; the use of Palestinian prisoners as bargaining chips for more concessions.

In addition, Israel consistently refuses to comply with UN resolutions, replacing

them with its own self-serving terms of reference, reinforced by creating "facts on the ground." Israel depends exclusively on biased American support which whitewashes Israel's practices against the Palestinian people. The United States, moreover, continues to threaten to use its veto power against any attempt to condemn Israeli crimes.

The recent events, as well as the results of seven years of the Oslo Agreement fiasco and all the subsequent "agreements" are nothing but devices intended to neutralize and deny the rights of the Palestinian people. None of these agreements constitute an effective means for achieving a just peace in the region. The extreme violence employed by Israel against the Palestinian uprising is nothing but another attempt to dictate by force a peace based on surrender.

Israel's Intransigence

Although Israel presents itself as a party willing to make compromises, in reality the "facts on the ground" illustrate clearly its complete intransigence with respect to any and all negotiations. Barak went to Camp David, which he saw as the beginning of the final status negotiations, bringing with him the following conditions: no withdrawal to the 6 June 1967 borders, in violation of UN resolutions 242 and 338; insistence that most of the settlements should remain and be annexed to Israel — also in contradiction to both UN resolutions and internal law which consider all settlements on the West Bank and in Gaza illegal; denial of Palestinian rights to East Jerusalem, and dealing with Jerusalem in toto as the eternal capital of

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Israel; refusal to allow Palestinians to return to the homes from which they were expelled in 1948, also in contradiction to UN Resolution 194; refusal to allow a "foreign" army west of the Jordan River. The meaning of all this is clear: if Israel ever does accept the creation of a Palestinian state, it would be a dependent, non-viable entity without any means of defending itself.

It is important to understand the significance of these conditions for Palestinians, and especially the main "facts" on the ground: the settlements and the growing network of Israeli highways. The settlements are an Israeli political project aimed at nothing less than defeating Palestinian aspirations for freedom and independence. Any realistic discourse focused on the creation of a Palestinian state with the coexistence of the settlements and bypass roads would imply a state without sovereignty. This has always been a main cause of conflict and confrontation. Israel's vision of annexing the already-existing settlements translates into annexation of an additional 15% of Palestinian lands. At present, there are approximately 200,000 settlers in more than 140 settlements throughout the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem. In Hebron, to take a dramatic case, 400 Jewish settlers live in the midst of 140,000 Palestinians but control 20% of the city.

The refugee problem is another basic issue at the heart of the Palestinian cause. Refugees were created as a direct result of the Zionist project in Palestine. Seventy-eight percent of Palestine was occupied in 1948, and as a result, approximately one million Palestinians were made refugees. During the 1967 War, another half a million refugees were added to this number. Today there are approximately four million refugees living in Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and elsewhere, as well as in Palestine itself.

These are the facts and the foundation upon which the present Intifada broke out. The only conclusion to be drawn from all this is that while Israel speaks eloquently about its desire for peace, it acts on the ground as a brutal occupying intending to maintain its control forever. Oslo only aided the Israeli occupation army in tightening its grip on each and every Palestinian city and village. Plans for redeployment as laid out in Oslo have only served to improve Israel's strategic military position rather than actually facilitate its withdrawal.

The recent summit at Sharm a-Sheikh on 17 October with Clinton, Mubarak, Annan, Solana, Arafat, and Barak, was yet another step in perpetuating the deception that has dominated all attempts to deal rationally with the conflict. The Sharm-a-Sheikh Summit and its results were clearly dictated by the American view of "peace" in the region — a vision that would crush the Palestinian Intifada, block the Arab national movement and hinder the broadening of solidarity movements in Europe and elsewhere in the world.

Unprecedented Palestinian Unity

The present Intifada is distinguished by a unique unanimity of intent and motivation among all sectors of Palestinian society. Palestinians on the streets of Gaza, Jerusalem, and the West Bank are using similar slogans to express their state of despair and their loss of confidence in the peace process. They have united for the first time with the Palestinians living inside the Green Line, as well as with those living in refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

Since 1948, Israel has tried to isolate the Palestinians inside the Green Line from the rest of the Palestinian people, treating them as "Israeli Arabs". Nevertheless, Palestinians from 1948 have entered fully into the present Intifada (and one of their number, MK Mohammad Barakeh, is facing trial for his call to support the uprising). Their participation in the Al-Aqsa Intifada is an acknowledgement of their belonging to the Palestinian people. The wide Intifada is also theirs, a means for them to fight for their own rights.

Palestinians throughout the world are committed to reaffirming their inalienable, national rights. Sharon's intention, with the blessing of the Israeli government, was to create yet another "fact on the ground". This alone is sufficient to explain Israel's violent reaction toward the Palestinian demonstrators protesting Sharon's visit. Barak's government wanted to deliver a clear message to the Palestinian people: that Israel is ready to do everything necessary to protect its own political interests as defined by Barak at Camp David. The Palestinians must either kneel in submission and accept Israeli terms, or to be subject to Israeli terror and killing.

Israeli army tactics — use of utmost force as quickly as possible in order to crush resistance — has thus far been suc-

cessfully (though not completely successfully) "hidden" under claims of political and "security" considerations.

Four elements define Israel's strategy in dealing with the Intifada: maintaining Israeli superiority through tactics that ensure the highest possible number of Palestinian losses and the least among the Israeli army; tightening the siege over Palestinian cities and villages, as well as severely restricting freedom of movement through the Israeli army's complete control of all roads; encouraging settlers throughout the West Bank and Gaza to attack Palestinian villages; attempting to portray the confrontations as one with a truly armed and dangerous Palestinian force, although Israel knows very well that the Palestinian police possess only small or limited arms. Israel, nevertheless, has used this argument as a cover and an excuse for its disproportionate use of combat helicopters, rockets and tanks.

The Bottom Line

Confronted with this reality, Arafat has found himself in front of yet another closed door. Any further compromise on the basic points of the final status negotiations would mean defeat in the struggle toward gaining recognition of the legitimate rights of Palestinians. No Palestinian would stand for it. The demands of the Palestinian people remain simple and clear: a complete end to the occupation; the dismantling of all settlements; the granting of freedom and true independence to Palestinians in a sovereign state, with Jerusalem as its capital; and the right of return to all refugees.

The Palestinian people seek a just political solution, not a new creative form of occupation. This is the reason that the conflict continues and resistance becomes stronger. And this is the reason that the Israeli occupation, with all its tactics of terror and aggression, will never be able to crush the Palestinian spirit and longing for justice. The Intifada is popular political resistance with a political program and clear goals. It will continue until those political goals are achieved. ★

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Thus an apartheid regime develops

WITH regards to the Security Forces' pattern of treatment, the Green Line has been blurred. The police forces have clearly institutionalized two different ways of oppressing demonstrations, as well as two different forms of imprisonment and detention. Hand in hand with this is the entire Israeli media which has been mobilized for the benefit of the security forces to incite the Jewish community against the Arab — defining it as the enemy. The representatives of the Left are tongue-tied. The majority of the Israeli public (as revealed by the polls) express understanding with mobs that attack Arabs, this creating the conditions for the establishment of an apartheid regime.

All at once, the secondary contradictions within Israeli society, together with its party divisions, became irrelevant. All have withdrawn to the background because of the 'Arab problem'. It turns out that when the state is not a state of all its citizens — namely, when citizenship is not at the center of the state — equality becomes a mere illusion and maybe, even a fraud. When a policeman or a border guard policeman is confronted with an Arab demonstrator, he does not use 'discriminating means' with him; he simply behaves towards him as an enemy.

Murder

The fact is that every time Arab citizens were murdered in Israel, the Left or what is so-called 'the Left', was in power and the 'Right' was in opposition: the massacre at Kufr Qassem [1956], Land Day [1976], together with the recent events all took place under Labor governments. This so-called Left has always backed the security forces, strengthening them and abandoning the Arab citizens. For years Arab citizens have been complaining about the conduct of Police Commander of the Northern Districts, Alic Ron, but nobody in the Left will listen. The Minister of Interior Security, Professor Ben Ami embraces him and gives him his complete backing.

IT seems that recent events are leading to the implementation of an Apartheid regime in the State of Israel, and the completion of a comprehensive Apartheid reality within the borders of Israel and in the Occupied Territories.

AZMI BISHARA*

The recent demonstrations inside Israel, in which 14 people were killed and hundreds of youngsters were wounded are not the first in which shooting took place in recent years. There have been demonstrations in Al ruha, Um-Al-Sahali, and other places. Though hardly any demonstration in the Arab sector manages to pass without shooting, all remains quiet in Israel. The recent events are not a turn-about, but a case in which quantity has changed into quality. All this time the Israeli Left did not exist. There was complete silence at the time of the shooting in Lydd, where I personally was wounded. Furthermore, no sound was uttered when Alic Ron used violence to implement the policy of house demolition.

It is the paternalism of the Israeli Left that leads it again and again into extreme conduct. Not only does it hold the wrong positions, but — and here as opposed to the Right — it also expects the Arabs to accept these positions. That is why the Left becomes disappointed and angry, and that is why they look for "agitators" and for

those to put the blame on. We, who support equal citizenship and liberal position such as opposing an identity policy and struggling for a civil-democratic line of equality, have suddenly become extreme agitators in the state of Israel.

Last year I tried to interest three prominent Israeli newspapers on the subject of increasing violence on the part of the Police, but nobody was interested enough to follow up the subject. Israeli liberalism is shocked only when a Right wing mob sets out to kill Arabs. It so happened that the Left only awoke after the massacre in Nazareth, which started with a Jewish mob from Nazareth-Ilit [Upper Nazareth] running wild but ended with brutal violence against Arabs on the part of the Police. The only thing that the Left did was to organize a delegation to visit the bereaved families. But it is forbidden and unacceptable that the Left becomes one clan that comforts the other clan.

Brutal

The brutal behavior demonstrated towards Arab citizens reflects the same values which enable such unrestrained brutality in the Occupied Territories. The same goes for the absolute silence and even the explicit support of the Israeli Left, of all the steps taken by the Security Forces — a silence that continues even in the face of more than a hundred killed and thousands wounded in the recent demonstrations in the Occupied Territories. Also there, the events started in the wake of the Police action when they fired without any justification at people who were praying at the Al Aqsa mosque.

These unprecedented brutal steps, to which the use of helicopters and tanks was later added, won general agreement among the Israeli public — fully accepting the Israeli version concerning the Peace Process ("We have no partner for peace") and the behavior of the army in the Occupied Territories.

Both inside and outside the Knesset we said that Barak's program, which was celebrated at the time of his victory in the



last elections, cannot be a basis for peace. We reiterated that before Barak left for Camp David and naturally after it. So why does the Left seem so surprised? What is indeed surprising is the surprise of the Left that continues to be addicted to the wrong information, and to images of images.

But nobody wanted to listen because everybody was so pleased that Netanyahu had been beaten in the elections. Thus the Israeli Left strengthened the anti-Arab line. The Israeli Left gambled on a peace based on the existing relation of forces and did not set up principles of justice and equality. That is the reason it did not confront the Israeli public opinion on the terms for a just peace, and instead of criticizing Barak's initiative, supported and aided the accusation of the Palestinians who opposed an agreement based on an apartheid state, divided into cantons. That is also why the Left stood not only by Barak's program, but also backed the schedule that he set up in order to find out if 'there is a partner for peace' or not. The Left, with the Security argument written on its flag, brought militarists to power and did not give one thought to the significance of the 'political' steps taken in the last months. Today we are witnesses to the results of this attitude. And all this after no voice was raised throughout the previous year against the policy of massive settlements, against house demolition, against the deportation of people from their homes and against continuing restrictions on movement and labor. These processes were beyond Barak's governments' areas of interest in its first year. That also was the case with the Syrian and Lebanon questions: it was possible to withdraw from Syria and Lebanon with a peace agreement. But the Israeli Left celebrated the unilateral retreat instead of exerting pressure on Barak to achieve a comprehensive agreement while he constantly ignores any moral criticism of his program.

I view the war that Israel declared on the Palestinian Authority as the continuation of the same politics executed by different means. That has been the political trend of Barak from its beginning. It boils down to the ultimatum that Barak gave the Palestinians: either everything or nothing — either Arafat immediately puts his signature to Barak's conditions, concerning the 'Four Nos' as he had presented them since his election campaign — or nothing, namely war. The non-'moderate physical pressure' now being exerted on the



Palestinians, including threats on the life of Arafat, is a continuation of the diplomatic pressure that began after the Camp David summit. Very few joined us during those months when we tried, time and again, to make it clear that no Palestinian would accept such an ultimatum, and that this was a dangerous policy that would lead to war.

Barak and his supporters paid no attention to the ominous danger and were convinced that they would be able to force an agreement on the Palestinians. Barak was pleased with his diplomatic achievements and with his success in presenting Arafat as a recalcitrant person who refuses to accept his 'generous' offers. Barak remains linked to the same principles which he declared before the elections; 'The Four Nos': no to Palestinian sovereignty over East Jerusalem, no to a withdrawal to the 4th of June borders, no to the dismantling of settlements (with 80% of the settlers under Israeli sovereignty) and a definite no to any debate concerning the Right to Return, or any just solution to the refugee question. That is the reason that the popular uprising was so predictable.

Sharon's visit

Sharon's rush to the Al Aqsa mosque is only a small detail in these happenings and is part of larger Israeli moves. It is difficult to decide whether Sharon's visit was the direct cause, or whether it was Barak agreeing to the visit. It is most plausible that it was the massive presence of the police surrounding the mosque and the massacre of the people praying in Al Aqsa the day after. We must remember that Sharon did not try to provoke the Palestinians. He just came to test if Barak really meant to preserve Israeli sovereignty in that area. Barak and Ben Ami sent thousands of policemen to escort Sharon and on the following day they surrounded the mosque, preparing for the shooting that was to lead to the death of seven men and

dozens wounded. Thus, they passed the test set by Sharon for a unified national government, but failed completely in the peace test. The unity between Ben Ami's police and Sharon in the break-in to Al Aqsa is the only basis for the present emergency government. It has no other basis.

Israel had hoped that the Palestinian police would be a kind of militia on its behalf, whose role would be to keep order for Israel in the Occupied Territories. Israel held negotiations with the Palestinian Liberation Organization, but expected to receive their help against the Palestinian people. Israel expected Arafat to behave like Anton Lahad [the Head of the collaborating South Lebanon Army during the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon], and that he would be instrumental in guarding the interests of Israel in the Occupied Territories. It seems that Palestinian policemen were expected to join the shooting against their own people and not to react when demonstrators were attacked with lethal firearms.

When it became clear that in moments of crisis the PLO would unite with its people and would not turn its guns on them, and that the victims of Israel would not send the victims of the occupation to jail — the moment this dream was shattered, Israel again returned to use full force. But unlike the first Intifada, and because a separation of forces between the Israeli army and the Palestinian people actually had taken place, it is not manifested at present in broken bones but in shooting and bombing from afar — a minute Gulf War. And Israel pretends to be surprised that the Palestinian policemen did not shoot their fellow men, but tried to defend the demonstrators who were being attacked by the Israeli army.

Now the only meeting places with the Israeli army is in Jerusalem and at checkpoints at the time of demonstrations. Since the army has not decided to re-conquer the cities and villages, it bombs them. When there is direct friction as at Al Aqsa, it becomes obvious that Occupation remains Occupation and Israel remains Israel. It doesn't matter if the minister is named Ben Ami or Sharon. The place where the greatest friction took place was at Al Aqsa immediately after Sharon's visit. The Israeli police behaved there the same as they have behaved since '67 — shooting and killing. Nothing has changed.

We have always said that there are

Did the Israeli left disappear?

three possibilities for an agreement; the first, a two-state solution, namely, the establishment of a Palestinian state within the borders of '67, including Jerusalem, without the settlements. The second possibility is that of a comprehensive solution of living together in one democratic state. The third is an Apartheid reality. Anyone who refuses to accept one of the first two solutions, consequently leads to the third — Apartheid. The Israeli Left did not accept the principle of two states, but supported an agreement based on cantonization of the Occupied Territories. They are still shocked by the very possibility of one shared democratic state, based on national and citizenship equality. Therefore, they themselves are leading to Apartheid, namely — they support the third solution.

Self-criticism

The obvious conclusion that the Left has to draw from these recent events is not to indulge in a kind of hypocritical and beautified despair, but to begin a real soul-searching self-criticism. In this context, we call upon the Israeli Left to regain control and express determinedly their objection to the government's policy, to struggle against Apartheid, against the systematic oppression of the Palestinian population and against Barak's 'peace plan'. The principles of this policy will only worsen the situation and bring about its escalation. It is not enough simply to call 'the two sides to the discussion table'. The Left must clearly declare the set of morals and values needed for any agreement.

Not only will the Left have a lot to do. Both in the Arab world and in Arab society, many missions await us. The declaration of war on a whole nation has left us with scorched land which enables an irrational political discourse to take over, sometimes that of a religious war. This discourse has not yet chosen the colors with which the national uprising will be painted, but such a danger is looming, mainly in public opinion and in parts of the Arab media. The national and democratic forces in Arab society must not ignore these phenomena. Difficult as it may well be, we must tackle them even during the most painful process of de-colonization. ★

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THE silence of the Israeli peace camp during the last month has been widely reported in the international media, as well as the return of many of its main spokespersons to the bosom of National Unity and uncritical support to the criminal acts of the Israeli army and the Labor government.

MICHEL WARSCHAWSKI*

THE Palestinians too have been aware of this trend, and many political activists and intellectuals have expressed their disappointment and even anger. Yesterday's friends have become again enemies, offering their peace medals to try to legitimize the propaganda machine of war criminals. The Palestinians have the right to be angered by the behavior of these hypocrites and to denounce their total lack of moral backbone. They even have the duty to reevaluate their cooperation with the so-called Israeli peace camp, and to put new and more drastic conditions for its eventual renewal.

Together with the anger expressed by the Palestinians, one can also identify a huge disappointment, as if such a behavior on behalf of the great majority of the Israeli peace camp was not predictable. This disappointment, however, is a result of a confusion which has developed during the last decade among numerous Palestinians and activists.

Confusion

This confusion started already, in 1982, when many Palestinians have been fascinated by the hundreds of thousands of Israelis who demonstrated against the massacres in Sabra and Shatilla. "In no Arab capital were such big demonstrations against the Israeli aggression in Lebanon" used to state Palestinian activists, expressing simultaneously their disappointment from the lack of solidarity in the Arab countries, and their positive surprise towards the newly emerging Israeli peace camp. No doubt that such a mass phenomenon couldn't be ignored by the Palestinian National Movement, and had to be integrated in their political strategy.

But without illusions and idealization.

There were however both idealization and illusions, especially at the beginning of the Oslo process. Every Israeli who supported the so-called peace process was perceived by many Palestinians as a friend and an ally. The more these Israelis were close to the center of the political map, the more they were considered valuable. Little attention was put on the motivations of most of the Israeli supporters to the peace process, of the partners of "people to people" programs, and the price they were ready (or not ready) to pay for peace. The gap was huge between the Palestinian demand for freedom and self-determination, and the Israeli dream of separation; between the demand for rights, and the Israeli conception of percentages; the demand for respect and reciprocity, and the Israeli patronizing and dictating behavior. But some Palestinian intellectuals and activists have been blinded by these new "Friends of the Palestinians", which became for them THE Israeli peace forces and their privileged allies. Now they are asking "where are the Israeli peace forces, where is the left?"

Let me tell you, the left didn't wait one day to strongly denounce the crimes of the Israeli army and to blame in a clear voice the full responsibility of Barak and his government. In fact this part of the peace movement never stopped its activities against the continuing occupation, even for one single day. Already in September 1993, the Peace Bloc demonstrated for the immediate dismantling of the settlements, the release of all the political prisoners; throughout the last seven years Bat Shalom and the Peace Bloc launched systematic campaigns for Palestinian sovereignty in East Jerusalem; since two years the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions

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and Rabbis for Human Rights have been active against the ethnic cleansing policy in C Areas. While Peace Now and Meretz supported the closure — under the false argument that closure=separation=peace — all the real peace organizations denounced it as a huge violation of Human Rights as well as a violation of the Oslo agreement. To these peace organizations, one should add the systematic campaigns of B'tselem, Physicians for Human Rights, the Public Committee Against Tortures and several other Israeli Human Rights organizations for the defense of the individual and collective rights of the Palestinians. They didn't stop their mission, under the pretext that a peace process is on the way, and though many among them invested many hopes in the Oslo process, at least at its beginning, they never stopped to relate to the reality, the reality of occupation and oppression.

For all these organizations, and the few thousands of activists behind them, the Palestinian uprising was not a surprise, and who is to blame was not difficult to find. And they reacted, as strongly as they could: dozens of demonstrations, sometimes with a dozen, sometimes with few hundreds; they wrote courageous articles in the mainstream media (Tanya Reinhart, Uri Avneri, Haim Hanegbi, Yitshak Laor, and others); they organize petitions and solidarity visits to the families of the victims. For more than a month, they are mobilized, days and nights, to denounce Israeli violence, to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and to defend its legitimate rights.

Solidarity and unconditional defense of what is right, is what has motivated the real Israeli peace forces, the moral as well as political rejection of any form of oppression and occupation has been their struggle for decades. For them peace is the complete end of occupation, not peace parties financed by the USAID or the Norwegian Foreign Ministry, while the closure is dismantling the Palestinian society and the liberation fighters are still behind bars. This is why they were on the streets from the very first day of the Israeli offensive.

While we were continuing our struggle against occupation, the rest of the Israeli peace camp, however, was busy in normalization. Prisoners, settlements, house demolitions and closure didn't bother it. The basic motivation of the great majority of the Israeli peace activists has never been either solidarity with the Arabs or values

like the right of people to resist foreign aggression, but keeping the interests of Israel, the way they understand it: not to be involved in a war with no chance to win, keeping a good international image and good relations with the US, keeping the Jewish and democratic nature of Israel etc.

First day syndrome

Only when these objectives are in danger, will the mainstream Israeli peace movement mobilize itself. Otherwise, it will rather prefer to keep on-line with the national consensus, and support the policy of the government. This is why, at the beginning of a crisis, one will never see an immediate mobilization of the mainstream Israeli peace camp: neither in 1982, nor in 1987, nor after the massacre on Haram el Sharif in 1990. A Palestinian activist from Kafr Kar'a, Jamal Zahalka, once called this reaction "the First Day Syndrome": the first reaction is a reaction of support to the official policy; only later, when the price to be paid for such policy is becoming more and more clear, starts a process of disconnection and dissidence. During the last weeks, we have been witnessing the same pattern, and we can predict that the continuation of the crisis, international pressures, more casualties on the Israeli side, will gradually push more and more Israelis to return to a more critical stand.

Peace is not a party, but the end of a struggle, a long and difficult struggle for liberation and freedom. In this struggle the Palestinian people do have allies in Israel, not too many, but dedicated, and motivated by moral integrity and the drive for justice. They don't look for peace celebrations and awards, and they don't ask anything in exchange for what they are doing. They only want to be able to look in the eyes of their children and grand children without shame, and to be able to tell them: injustice was committed in our name, and we did our best to stop it. ★

* This article, which has been shortened slightly, is taken from *News from Within*, vol. XVI, number 8, November 2000*. Alternative Information Centre / News from Within, PO Box 31417, Jerusalem (annual subscription rate \$US60)



The Tantheem wildcard

SUNDOWN Saturday, October 7. Doha neighborhood, just south of Bethlehem.

TOUFIC HADDAD*

DROVES of people have been making their way up this dilapidated hillside to pay their respects to the family of Mustapha Fararjeh. Fararjeh, 22, was killed two days earlier, assassinated by an Israeli dum-dum bullet that exploded in his chest on the neighboring hillside of Beit Jala. Some say he was just in the wrong place at the wrong time. Others account that he was throwing rocks at settlers' cars using the main North-South by-pass road that passes via a tunnel, literally beneath Beit Jala. Dead now, his family receives the convoys of many of the 30,000 well-wishers who participated in his funeral procession the day before.

A group of 25 masked men march into the funeral tent. Some are dressed in army fatigues, while others wear vests with military accoutrements. Most brandish M16 automatic rifles while some carry less traditional sawed-off automatic weapons. They pay their respects to the family and make a short but fiery speech about how the martyr's blood has not been spilled in vain, and whose death shall be avenged. This is the Tantheem, the Fateh based paramilitary group whose Arabic name means "the Organization". Much of the recent gun battles the '67 Occupied Territories have witnessed and which the international media has been keen to report (as though there were a semblance of equal forces squaring off) has been attributed to them. Israel has repeatedly laid blame on the Tantheem for the "cycle of violence" and called upon the Palestinian Authority to disarm them. Yet these demands are little more than bluff: Israel knows as well as the PA that this is impossible as they com-

pose the rank and file of Arafat's only constituency. Furthermore, it could also be claimed that Israel is indirectly responsible for the creation of the Tantheem given their insistence upon a "strong police force", to use the Oslo agreement's phrasing.

Who are the Tantheem?

The presence of the Tantheem on the Palestinian scene is quite recent, dating back only to the 1995 arrival of the Palestinian Authority in the Occupied Territories. It was then that the establishment of the Palestinian Authority came hand in hand with the establishment of an elaborate security and intelligence network — a precondition Israel made in the Oslo Accords. During an August 30, 1993 Knesset speech, Yitzhak Rabin called upon the creation of "a reality whereby internal Palestinian security will be in the Palestinians' hands". "They will rule by their own methods, freeing, and this is most important, the Israeli army soldiers from having to do what they will do." (*Haaretz*, Yediot Aharonot 7 September 1993.)

Had Rabin lived longer, he would have been proud of his own forethought when it was fully actualized. The Palestinian Authority gladly collected the Intifada-tested ranks of the West Bank and Gaza Fatah movement into its myriad security services. In fact, PA security services comprised 70% of the public sector jobs. Needless to say, as journalist Graham Usher put it "the PA does not need a 30,000 strong police force to facilitate the economic, social and political development of its 2.6 million people. A police force of this size is only needed to keep the lid on the people in the absence of such development."¹

The security services themselves were dominated by Arafat-loyal strongmen, among whose infamous names include Jibril Rajoub (head of Preventative Security, West Bank), Mohammed Dahlan (Preventative Security, Gaza), Toufic Tirawi (Intelligence, West Bank), Amin El Hindi (Intelligence, Gaza), Musa Arafat (Military Intelligence) Haj Ismail (West Bank Chief of Police) and Ghazi Jabali (Gaza Police). Furthermore, their horizontal positioning vis a vis one another endorsed a system of perpetual elbowing between the factions for influence, power and territory, which occasionally erupted into violence.

The role of the security services involved several tasks, most important of which was the maintaining of the political (largely Islamic) opposition in check. But their work also involved following up on known Israeli collaborators, monitoring the black market arms trade and keeping tabs on criminal activity. The Fatah cadre newly inducted into PA security services were prime candidates for accomplishing this task, given their knowledge and experience of the local scene, not to mention Fatah's particular liking for liquidating collaborators during the Intifada. Occasionally however, the nature of their work, together with the lack of serious accountability within the Fatah family, led to many of their personnel becoming involved in the arms and stolen-car trade themselves.



Things began to dramatically degenerate with the slow but visible decline of the peace process, beginning during the tenure of Netanyahu. Fatah cadres found it increasingly difficult to defend themselves against popular accusations that the Palestinian Authority was performing poorly at the negotiations table, and at the same time was becoming perceived as corrupt abusers of power on the street. Furthermore, the national conscience of many Fatah cadres was becoming infused with a sense that there was something drastically wrong with the political trajectory of the Palestinian Authority. During the Jebel Abu Ghneim /Har Homa settlement crisis in March 1997, an emergency session of Fatah's Higher Committee was held in the Bethlehem village of Beit Sahour. Fatah General Secretary in the West Bank, Marwan Barghouti, commented after the meeting that "Many Palestinians — including from inside Fatah — are questioning whether we made the right choice of peace with Israel....At the Beit Sahour conference, some Fatah cadres called for a return to the armed struggle. This was not the majority view —

but there were voices, and we cannot ignore them."²

But this was not the extent of Fatah's consternation. Barghouti himself was calling for drastic changes in Palestinian Authority tactics as early as this same crisis: "We are demanding that the PLO cease all negotiations with Israel. We are also calling for an end to all security cooperation between Israel and the PA. We cannot and will not defend Israel's security unconditionally."

This was the nest within which the Tantheem was born. The Tantheem became the populist front of the Fatah rank and file, many of whom constituted the PA security services, but also many of whom had budding concerns that the PA strategy impeded rather than progressed Palestinian national interests. By projecting a radical image as the defenders of national rights, and armed with the guns that they had at their disposal (largely 'illegal' (M16s) rather than legal (Kalashnikovs)), the Tantheem was able to strike a wedge between the popular perception as Fatah being indivisible from the Palestinian Authority. Along the way they were able to resuscitate to certain degrees, popular faith in their loyalty to the Palestinian cause as opposed to the defenders of the Palestinian Authority corruption. Their participation in demonstrations — be it during local non-violent events, or more recently as active participants in armed clashes with Israel — has gained a cautious respect from the Palestinian masses. Still however looming in the back of popular consciousness was the understanding that Fatah was also responsible for the tragedy of Oslo. In this sense, the demonstrations raging throughout the Occupied Territories are Fatah's redemptory trial by fire, in an attempt to realign themselves in the camp of the Palestinian masses. In this, the PA structure has little to say (or do), except to tag along behind the Tantheem and the Palestinian street, trying to avoid accusations of culpability for the 'disturbances' from the American and Israeli establishments.

The Leader of the Pack

The Tantheem is officially lead by Marwan Barghouti, though it is well know that the fractious nature of the security services is also reflected in its own organization. All of the PA strongmen have their own following within the Tantheem seeing

★ Dossier: Israel / Palestine

as they see it within their interests to appear populist as well. Yet the overwhelming majority of the Tantheem cadre fall behind Barghouti himself, or local intifada-born heroes within areas where Fateh has been historically strong: Ramallah (al Ama'ri Refugee Camp, and Old Ramallah), Nablus (Balata Camp and the *Casabeh*/Old city) and Gaza. The important distinction to be made here is that the Fateh rank and file prefer to give their allegiance to local, well-known leaders from the Occupied Territories, as opposed to those who returned with the PA.³ It is also important to note that because of the loosely knit nature of the Tantheem, it is not as though they can be turned on or off as Israel implies when it demands the Palestinian Authority "stop the Tantheem." One leader in Ramallah might call for a calming of the situation, while another in Gaza might call for its escalation.

Explosion

The current explosion of violence across the Occupied Territories brought the Tantheem to a crossroad. When Marwan Barghouti confirmed in 1997 that there was "not a majority" of "voices" within Fateh who called for armed struggle, he was speaking in an age when wide swathes of the Palestinian people were beginning to awaken to the inability of Oslo to address their justified historical rights. Three and a half years later, that popular consciousness has solidified and brought with it the imperative of finding alternatives. The Tantheem is part of that alternative, and it is extremely significant that it emerges from perhaps the last but significant remaining constituency within Palestinian society that defended the peace process. The popular outrage sparked by Sharon's visit to al Aqsa forced reactions from all Palestinian factions. The PA was forced to choose to quell demonstrations as Israel demanded (thereby solidifying popular perception as Israeli collaborators) or to at least pretend to support it and stand behind the Palestinian masses. The Tantheem, ripe for resistance from their own humiliation as the former defenders of the 'Peace Process', discovered themselves as the lynchpin which took legitimization from the PA and gave it to the street.

This more than anything explains why the demonstrations have continued to for so long. The PA lacks the power to squelch

One Final Remark

ON October 13, Israeli helicopters bombed five Palestinian cities after two undercover Israeli soldiers were lynched in Ramallah. The military maneuver was largely symbolic knocking-out token Palestinian Authority targets: PA police stations, communications towers and the Gaza port. One of the targets however was the Tantheem office in Beit Lahiya in Gaza. The bombs were supposed to be a clear message to the Tantheem that Israel is prepared to use any force necessary to liquidate armed resistance to their hegemony. It was also meant to convey that Israel found it very threatening that the Tantheem was swerving from the PA's tack. Indeed, Minister of Internal Security Shlomo Ben Ami was quoted in an interview as saying, "If he [Barghouti] acts independently, we have the means to confront him." The PA, as the embodiment of Israel's long-sought autonomy plan for the Occupied Territories, is being forced to change its entire national agenda so that it be in line with the Palestinian street, or to lose all legitimacy. If Israel were to completely 'lose' the PA, and particularly Arafat (whose power, symbolism and pliancy have been indispensable assets for Israel throughout the past 7 years) it would be very difficult for Israel to find another 'partner in peace'. In the mean time, the remaining competing strongmen within the PA are not likely to resign power so easily. In this sense, the basis for converging interests between PA elites and the Israeli government draws closer. And indeed, throughout the latest Intifada, top PA security personnel (particularly Mohammed Dahlan) have repeatedly met with their Israeli counterparts (as the Sharem declaration stipulates), within the presence of CIA representatives who have actually moved onto the street as "observers". One must wonder what they talk about. ★

demonstrations particularly because their own constituency (Fateh and the Tantheem) has taken that power away from them. Without hesitation, Barghouti has been at the forefront giving interviews as the self-appointed spokesperson of the Intifada. He has called for the escalation of the Al Aqsa Intifada, advocating the observation of a general strike (which is in effect on a half-day basis), a boycotting of Israeli products, an end to joint Israeli-Palestinian patrols, popular participation in solidarity demonstrations and a blocking of settler by-pass roads.

His ascension to the forefront reflects his own acumen in reading the Palestinian political map in the Occupied Territories. One such realization is that in the light of final status negotiations, the Palestinian people will not accept a return to the humiliating cycle of negotiations before the Al Aqsa Intifada broke out. A second (perhaps no less important) realization is that Barghouti recognizes the vacuum of power that exists in the succession of the aging Arafat, now a ripe 72. The Barghouti family (which comprises several thousand members) derives from the peasant-based villages of Ramallah, lacks an aristocratic air, and has deep roots in Palestinian national resistance. His lineage, together with his fire-brand rhetoric during the latest events positions him well as a Palestinian leader, especially when compared with the coterie of Arafat sycophants despised even amongst Fateh.⁴

More than anything the emergence of the Tantheem during the al Aqsa Intifada is

an indication of a trend of internal questioning within Fateh. What once was the PA's subcontracted strong arm, has now evolved into a wild card that threatens Israel, the PA and indeed the unity of Fateh. Barghouti knows that when he calls for a boycott of Israeli products, it has been the PA who has been the foremost importer of such products through its private monopolies. Israeli political commentators have recognized such splits, and bicker about whether the situation is part of a larger Arafatist plan, or whether Arafat is in powerless opposition. In many senses, whether Arafat supports or opposes the radicalization of the Tantheem is irrelevant: for him or anyone else to attempt its subduing would mean political suicide. ★

* This article, which has been shortened slightly, is taken from the monthly Israeli-Palestinian magazine *Between the Lines*, published by Tikva Honig-Parnass and Toufic Haddad, POB 681, Jerusalem (annual subscription rates \$US45)

1. "The Politics of Internal Security", Graham Usher, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Winter 1996. The actual figures of the Palestinian security forces combined are estimated to be 45,000, a number which was able to swell beneath Israel's watchful gaze.

2. Interview with Marwan Barghouti, March 1997. Quotation from Graham Usher's "Dispatches from Palestine: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process" Pluto Press 1999, p. 137.

3. This distinction however is a little deceiving, given the fact that many Tantheem leaders today, including Barghouti himself were Fateh leaders who were deported by the Israelis. The inside-outside tension refers to the traditional diasporic "Tunisian" returnees (who lack a popular base) as opposed to those expelled from the Occupied Territories (who have popular bases).

4. The main reference here is to Abu Ala' and Abu Mazen who have become the lightning rod and personification of popular disgust over Oslo. Rajoub and Dahlan are in a different category. As former West Bank and Gaza symbols of resistance to the Israeli Occupation in the pre-original-Intifada days, they are able to command some respect, though are generally mistrusted as corrupt and too close to the CIA.

Ecology debate opened

AT its November 2000 meeting the International Executive Committee (IEC) of the Fourth International discussed a draft resolution on "Ecology and Socialism" which will be debated at the 15th World Congress of the FI. This draft was prepared by a commission set up following the IEC meeting of February 2000.

THE IEC decided that this debate should take place publicly in the press of the International, and that all those who wish to participate should write contributions which we would also hope to publish.¹ The publication in *IV* of this document in its current provisional form, like the account below of the oral debate at the IEC, is intended to promote this broad and open debate.

As the resolution's reporter explained, the draft has a programmatic significance: it is intended to contribute to the renewal, in an essential aspect, of the revolutionary Marxist programme. It seeks to make up for the considerable delay that our movement has suffered from in its theorizing on the question of ecology. The draft was drawn up on the basis of a document which had been prepared in 1990 but which, because of insufficient time for discussion, was not approved at the 13th Congress of the International. In the opinion of the reporter, this text was an excellent starting point, but it was necessary to update it, render it more readable and, in particular, transcend a certain Euro-centrism, by stressing the increasingly significant role of the socio-ecological movements of the Third World (the expressions Third World or South, used in the draft to refer to the countries of dependent or peripheral capitalism, have no scientific value and are used only for convenience). The 1990 document also suffered from a certain work-erism and it was necessary to correct this

Meeting of the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International

THE International Executive Committee (IEC), which is the leading body of the Fourth International (the worldwide organization of revolutionary socialists) between world congresses, met at the end of October in Europe, for the second time in 2000. Around fifty members and observers took part in the meeting. In its content as well as the number and quality of its participants, this IEC meeting reflected the involvement of the organizations within the Fourth International in the renewal of social mobilizations and the political reactivation of radical left currents around the world.

Debate was largely devoted to the preparation of the 15th World Congress, which the IEC has called for Autumn 2001. The IEC adopted the agenda of the world congress, whose debates will concern the evolution of the world political situation, resistance to capitalist globalization, the statutes and tasks of the International, lesbian and gay liberation and ecology. The IEC also debated the balance sheet of Stalinism and the current stage of capitalist restoration in the former Soviet bloc and adopted a resolution which will be pursued in the internal bulletin. On the question of ecology, the IEC decided to call for contributions from all those who wish to be associated with developing the International's position and as a consequence to carry publicly, in the press of the International, the debate around the draft resolution adopted.

The other resolutions adopted (world political situation, resistance to capitalist globalization, lesbian and gay liberation, proposed statutes) will be debated internally and published after the world congress.

We hope that the debates at our next world congress can benefit from the participation of other revolutionary organizations, who we intend to invite to actively participate in our work. The next IEC in February 2001 will debate these invitations.

The IEC also discussed and adopted resolutions on Plan Colombia, the Estrada regime's all out war in the Philippines and the new Palestinian Intifada; all of these were published in the last issue of *International Viewpoint*. ★

through reference to the significant participation of peasant and indigenous movements in the struggle to defend the environment.

In the view of the reporter, the draft is an attempt at a Marxist analysis of the ecological crisis, which puts at its center the link between the latter and the productivist/destructive logic of the capitalist system. It also differs from the usual ecological texts by a radical proposition for the solution of this crisis which threatens the future of humanity: against the commodification of the world, for an economy based on other criteria than those of exchange value and the law of profit — social needs and the preservation of the environment. This implies a change in social relations and socialist/democratic planning. The text seeks also to promote convergence

between the social movements and the ecological movement around demands of common interest.

Weaknesses

The reporter admitted that the draft could be improved and contains weaknesses, repetitions and omissions, and he invited IEC members to contribute, through discussion, to its improvement.

Many comrades from a number of countries — Luxemburg, Quebec, Holland, Germany, the Spanish state, Ecuador, Britain, the Philippines, Italy, France, Brazil, Puerto Rico, Portugal — participated in a frank and amicable oral debate in the plenary session. Most recognized the urgency for the International of grasping this problematic, and the programmatic implications of the debate opened. They also praised the work of the commission and recognized the importance of the draft proposed, which they compared to other programmatic documents approved in the past, like those on women's liberation or socialist democracy. Nonetheless, there were quite a few criticisms and proposed corrections put forward.

Many of these were recognized as legitimate by the reporter, who expressed the desire to integrate at least some of them in the revised version of the document, to the extent that this was possible — that is,



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within the current word limit of the text (necessary to allow its translation).

Here, grouped by themes, are some of these remarks:

■ It is not enough to talk about capitalism; it is also necessary to talk about the existing technique in our societies and of the productivist model in the relationship of society to nature.

Moreover, it is not enough to speak of democratic planning: we must emphasize the preservation of the environment as one of the essential objectives of any planning.

■ We should bring out more clearly the links between capitalist globalization and the environment, the ecological damage resulting from structural adjustment and deregulation.

■ There is no reference to the ecological damage caused by imperialist (or reactionary) wars, whether in Europe – NATO's bombing of Serbia – or the countries of the South (Philippines, East Timor and so on).

■ We are against the capitalist mode of production, responsible for the destruction of the environment, but we are not advocates of zero production, particularly in the countries of the South, which need to develop their productivity to satisfy the elementary needs of their population.

■ The critique of the cultural dimension of capitalist societies, as well as their way of life and consumption, needs to be developed. In particular, a greater place needs to be given to the critique of the car society (or the dictatorship of the car) and the analysis of the huge ecological problems brought about by the individual car system – promoted by the marketing of the car industry, bourgeois individualist ideology, as well as the urban structure of the big cities, which obliges workers to make long journeys.

The question must be posed of a complete reorganization of the transport system – for example, trains rather than lorries, collective transport rather than cars – and a new urban planning.

The role of the road lobby and the oil multinationals must be addressed. Oil, source of so much pollution and slicks will in any case run out in the coming decades: hence the urgency of the search for new renewable sources.

■ To strengthen the alliance between the workers' movement and the ecological movements, the questions which link the two must be stressed: health at work, new sources of employment created by renew-



Direct action: Britain's Reclaim the Streets movement

able energies, and so on. It is also necessary to set as an objective an ecologization of the workers' movement and the Fourth International itself.

At the same time, let us be clear: we do not defend all currently existing jobs, for example in the nuclear industry or cars. A fight is needed to guarantee a job and an income for all, but not necessarily in one's current post.

■ Our self-criticism, as Marxists, on the ecological question, should be accompanied by a critique of the ecological NGOs, which are often apolitical and/or hostile to Marxism.

In the resolution's analysis of the currents of the ecologist movement there is a lack of reference to the so-called direct action current, of libertarian inspiration, composed of very combative youth, which has played a significant role in the anti-neoliberal mobilizations.

■ The ecological struggle often has links with the struggles of national minorities (for example, African-Americans in the USA) or indigenous communities, which are victims of particularly brutal forms of pollution and destruction of the environment.

■ Whatever one's opinion on the future of nuclear energy, technical solutions are needed to the problems of nuclear waste which have already accumulated to a formidable degree and which must be neutralized.

■ The 1990 document contained a list of ecological demands supported by our movement: abolition of nuclear energy and so on. This has vanished in the new version, and this is regrettable, inasmuch as these demands are consensual within the International.

Doubts

On other questions, however, the

reporter remained sceptical, or doubtful, either through disagreement or because these questions needed further debate in the movement or were not indispensable to the document:

■ The document is over critical of Marx and Engels. Recent Marxist works show that there is a strong ecological dimension in their writings.

■ A more critical attitude is needed towards the Green parties, which are no longer radical in any way. Their evolution is towards increasingly rightist and moderate positions.

They are institutionalized and embourgeoisified, as shown by their position on NATO's war against ex-Yugoslavia.

■ The demographic question, which is a key given (albeit a complex and difficult one) of the ecological debate, must be taken up.

■ We need to polemicize against the conservative "small is beautiful" ideology, fairly influential in the ecological movement.

■ A position needs to be taken on the eco-taxes debate (to support them in certain cases, argued some comrades, while others maintained they should be rejected).

■ A fundamentalist position on genetically modified organisms should not be adopted. They can be useful from the point of view of the production of food or fighting disease. What we should criticize is the private appropriation by the capitalists of genetic discoveries.

Unacceptable

Finally, some criticisms or proposals were not accepted by the reporter:

■ Some sections of the document should be dropped, for example the chapter on the Fourth International and ecology.

■ The document is too marked by anti-technical and anti-scientific prejudices of romantic inspiration.

■ It would be better to abandon the concept of productivism, which might lead to our being confused with the partisans of zero production.

■ We should fight for an ecological dual power, which gives workers in the places they work or live the right of veto on installations which present a danger to their health. ★

I. Contributions should be sent to Inprecor, PECEI, BP 85, 75522, Paris Cedex 11, France or preferably e-mailed: 100641.2324@compuserve.com They will be forwarded to the commission set up by the IEC and may be published (the editors reserve the right to adapt texts to avoid repetition or possible pseudo-debates).

I. Forward

HUMANITY has faced ecological problems at other times, but these have taken on a new urgency nowadays due to their scope and gravity. Damage to the environment often has an irreversible impact on man and nature and the ecological crisis on the horizon at the dawn of the 21st Century is endangering the lives of millions of people.

Contrary to the prevailing currents in the workers' movement, which have tended to ignore or downplay environmental issues, ecological movements and Green parties can be credited with putting these decisive questions on the agenda.

However, the solutions they put forth are often ultimately false ones, as they overlook the inherent link between environmental destruction and the profit logic of capitalism. To seriously deal with ecological dangers, we must break out of the framework created by the profit motive, within the perspective of a democratically planned socialist society.

II. Elements of the ecological crisis

The ecological crisis, as an outcome of human impact on nature, has reached a point that could threaten the very survival of humanity. In keeping with the economic interests of a small minority, new production forms be implemented faster and faster, with no prior evaluation of their ecological consequences.

These minority interests also require maintaining production techniques recognised as harmful. This is going on while technological progress is increasing the possibility of acting upon nature, and hence upsetting or destroying it.

The industrial revolution linked to the rise of 19th century capitalism greatly increased the rate at which waste was released into the atmosphere, severely damaging the health of workers and city dwellers. Overall, ecological shock waves of human origin have come fast and furious.

And yet, the ecological crisis as we know it is not the linear outcome of industrial development since the 19th century. It is the outcome of a qualitative leap, the massive generalisation of petroleum use and the phenomenal development of the car, the chemical industry and its use in all economic sectors, in particular in agriculture via fertilisers and pesticides.

Ecology and Socialism

DRAFT submitted to the World Congress of the Fourth International, 2001.

This is an updated and significantly revised version of the draft developed in 1990.

Since the 1970s, this qualitative leap has become more spectacular following the crisis of bureaucratically planned economies and above all, in a particularly dramatic way, following the combination of economic crisis and free-for-all industrialisation in the "Third World".



Climate changes

Human activities, relying on fossil fuels (energy production, transport), using firewood for household purposes in the Third World with the ensuing dramatic deforestation, as well as farming activities, make up an essential cause of the current global warming. These activities are releasing around 7 billion tonnes per annum of greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere (CO₂, CH₄, N₂O, and CFC). Half of this amount is not recycled by oceans or forests. As a result, the greenhouse effect responsible for the maintenance of temperatures suitable for life on the Earth's surface has spun out of control, leading to grave a disturbance of the planet's complex climactic system. Global

warming is just one aspect of this. In many regions, the consequences will be catastrophic for the economy of huge human communities. Disturbances in the atmospheric water cycle are the greatest cause for concern, as they alter the system of rains and evaporation, increasing the number and brutality of tropical cyclones. Rising sea levels are probable. Depending on their scale, these imperil specific island and coastline areas.

Based on forecast trends, these climatic disturbances will combine with the continuing drop in stratospheric ozone and the correlating increase in carcinogenic solar ultraviolet rays reaching the ground. The destruction of the ozone layer is caused by the effects of Organo-Halogen Compounds; chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) primarily used in refrigeration and aerosol sprays.

Although these have been virtually outlawed, the destructive impact of CFCs already emitted is far from over; it is predicted to last until 2060.

Global changes in regulating mechanisms within and among the primary components of the Earth's environment (atmosphere, oceans, and biosphere) will have repercussions throughout the 21st century. The time frame will vary, but in general it will far exceed the timetables used by the human activities causing them. This fact underlines the urgency of integrating ecological imperatives into the overall organisation of societies.

Air pollution

Industry, transports and the breakdown of more or less durable consumer goods release a great variety of toxic substances into the air. The unbridled and apparently uncontrollable growth of motor vehicle traffic makes this the primary source of sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide, far ahead of household and industrial heating. Formic aldehyde, mercury and asbestos, for example, are industrial pollutants. These are also found to a very significant extent in everyday consumer products, such as building materials in the case of formaldehyde and asbestos, and mercury in batteries.

City air can contain 1,000 times the level of these toxins found in country air. Air pollution has become a serious blight in major urban centres, both in wealthy countries and in the particularly sprawling, anarchic cities found in poor countries. In

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the urban setting, this pollution has led to an alarming increase in respiratory ailments: asthma, bronchitis, and lung cancer. European studies have revealed that pollution in Western Europe's major metropolitan areas can be blamed for several thousand deaths per year.

Asbestos gives rise to many fatal forms of cancer among shipyard and building workers. Because these cancers have a latency period, the annual death toll is increasing by leaps and bounds, revealing the extent of the problem. More than 100,000 asbestos-related deaths are predicted in France alone in the first quarter of the 21st century. Protests against asbestos hazards have brought about a sharp reduction in its use in rich industrialised countries, and a search for replacement materials. However, its use in the "Third World" is still on the upswing.

Sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide are the cause of acid rains, a major cause of damage to the Northern Hemisphere's temperate forests.

Water pollution and soil deterioration

Waste, of household, agricultural or industrial origin alike, is carried off in the world's waters, turning them into gigantic sewers. Continental waters, rivers and lakes are the hardest-hit, but pollution is reaching the sea more and more, via rivers and coastal cities. The direct consequences are the accumulation of heavy metals; mercury, cadmium, etc, and highly toxic organic compounds, in sediment on the ocean floor, riverbeds and lakebeds. Above all, fertiliser buildup, involving nitrates and phosphates, has led to an unbridled proliferation of algae and water plants. Their breakdown then exhausts the oxygen dissolved in the water: resulting in a massive death of aquatic life.

The state of the oceans is rapidly growing worse, all the more because they are directly polluted by the astronomical quantity of petroleum seepage from underwater drilling sites, vessels outgassing, and even dumping toxic, chemical and radioactive waste.

Water pollution is linked to soil pollution, which is both a cause and effect of certain forms of water and air pollution. This is a consequence of agricultural practices imposed by market pressure: intensive farming (misuse of fertiliser and pesticides) monoculture, crops unsuited to

local ecosystems and climates, etc. This means massive soil destruction on a global scale; a toxic soup of pollution, exhaustion, desertification, massive erosion, all bound together with the economic and social causes of hunger affecting 800 million people in the Third World.

Forest destruction

Among the most dramatic manifestations of the ecological crisis, the destruction of the world's forests is among the most disturbing, because of the extent of its consequences. In 50 years, one third of the world's woodlands has disappeared. This has hit tropical countries the hardest. In the industrialised countries, the wooded area has remained relatively stable, but forests are slowly dying from air, oil and soil pollution. However, in the "Third World", deforestation is at the heart of the ecological crisis. Deforestation is the outcome of a vicious cycle of poverty and depletion of arable land. Another cause is the over-harvesting of tropical woods, with no concern for sustainable management. This destroys biodiversity the tropical forests are home to over 50% of the plant and animal species of our planet and the forest population's resources, in order to provide a cheaper product for Western building and furniture markets.

Moreover, since 1997, Amazonia, Central America, Russia and Southeast Asia have been hit by increased outbreaks in forest fires. In Indonesia, giant forest fires, which destroyed 10 million hectares in 3 years, have had an impact on 70 million people and cost over 4.5 billion dollars. On the planetary level, deforestation is aggravating the greenhouse effect.

Threats to biodiversity

The existence of tens of thousands of species is menaced by the countless attacks on ecosystems. One quarter of the Earth's biodiversity could disappear within the next 25 years. In certain cases, these attacks could eventually destabilise the environmental balance, with incalculable consequences on human living conditions.

Biodiversity must be defended, not for sentimental or aesthetic reasons, but on behalf of our own species. Failing to master the consequences of the irreversible changes that it can cause to the environment, humankind must be careful to go about its activities while respecting the ecological balance of nature.

Anyone wishing to protect the ecological balance must attack the very basis of capitalism.

Capitalism cares nothing about pollution, exploiting resources with the single objective of short-term gain even if this threatens the very existence of tropical forests, a treasure house of animal and plant species, or marine life.

Likewise, it seeks to take hold of technological innovations such as GMOs, whose spread into the environment is an irreversible and potentially dangerous process.

Instead of remaining a laboratory technique, the production of genetically modified organisms has become of the key biotechnologies capitalism is using to find new markets. Capitalism is seeking control over the most intimate level, heretofore outside its scope: reproduction and the genetic control of plant and animal species.

Industrial disasters and nuclear risk

The disastrous ecological consequences of capitalist production also take the form of wide-scale accidents, or the potential risk of such accidents, in industrial complexes such as chemical plants and nuclear power plants. The Bhopal disaster, its 15 000 deaths and the sufferings of the many methyl isocyanate victims who are still dying by the hundreds every year, was one of the most tragic examples, along with Chernobyl.

Nuclear power's very nature, the incalculable extent of its possible adverse effects, and especially its very long-term lasting impact, and along with the existence of alternative solutions, quite rightly represent a particularly alarming example of the (aberrant) choices made in terms of development of the productive forces.

Radioactive risk does not only mean the threat of major accidents. After 40 years in existence, the atomic industry has still not found a solution to the nuclear waste storage problem. Threatened with decline, it is now promoting its ecological virtues to promote new electro-nuclear programmes, now at a standstill. The atom is claimed to be a way of reducing CO₂ emissions. This claim downplays radioactive pollution hazards (authorised or accidental dumping) and the fact that vehicles are by far the main cause of CO₂. Moreover, such a relatively inflexible energy system, based on huge production

units and building hundreds of new power plants, would monopolise investments at the expense of other systems (energy saving, renewable energies). Moreover, production over-capacity and loss over distribution systems would encourage power wastage. It would also perpetuate a development model that is harmful in the long run.

Far from creating new emergencies pushing traditional economic, social and political problems to the margins, on the contrary, all the elements of this ecological crisis are closely tied to these concerns.

The ecological crisis has become a dramatic and spreading phenomenon, leading to local and partial disasters. In certain cases these are irreversible, in others they can be reversed in the short or medium term or only over 2 or 3 centuries (the age of many trees). This depends on the conscious choices made by human communities.

III. Structural causes of the ecological crisis

Although it cannot escape the laws of nature, in various ways the mode of capitalist production comes into fundamental contradiction with nature and the natural evolution process. For capital, only the quantitative aspect is decisive, determining the relation between labour time and money in the framework of the law of value; qualitative and global relations cannot be taken into consideration.

Capitalist production is based on carrying out cyclical processes in the shortest possible time to get a return on capital invested. Thus, it must impose a rhythm and framework on natural processes that is foreign to them. The exploitation of natural resources cannot take the time needed for their formation or their renewal into account. The spread of commodity production cannot respect pre-existing modes of social organisation. Occupying the space needed for a smooth production process, energy supply and distribution must go ahead without taking the natural environment, fauna and flora into account. It is not capitalism's lack of wisdom that brings about environmental destruction, but the very logic underlying the system. This is why the social democrats calls for "qualitative growth" are stymied by capital's logic: qualitative growth and the law of value are mutually exclusive.

Capitalist rationality determines the



A tragic example: Chernobyl

movement of individual capital. However, competition among capital makes the system as a whole irrational. The intelligence brought into play to improve production or save on raw materials stops at the company door. The environment foots the bill wherever "nobody" feels responsible- for example, in the case of water, air and soil pollution. Moreover, competition leads to periodical overproduction crises, revealing that a considerable quantity of energy and materials has been invested in commodities that don't sell. Furthermore, the market promotes the production of superfluous products in use-value terms (advertising, various drugs, arms, etc.) but with an exchange value that makes for big profits. Competition and the race for profits and super-profits are the ultimate reason behind criminal behaviour, recognised as such by capitalist legislation itself: non-respect for environmental regulations, use of toxic substances, inadequate quality testing, falsifying content listings, unauthorised dumping of waste, etc.

The ecological crisis in the imperialist metropolises

The most advanced economic exploitation, i.e. the process of economic quantification of pre-existing natural, social and historic substrata, is found in the developed capitalist countries. Nowadays, commodity production governs all sectors of social life, while the social process of production has become more and more fragmented. Property relations have become more and more centralised competition among owners of the means of production keeps them from becoming entirely frozen.

This has led to the same major ecolog-

ical problems in all imperialist countries. Here is yet more proof that these problems cannot be viewed as "breakdowns" or "system failures"; they correspond to this system's logic throughout the world.

The virtually complete exploitation of the last cubic centimetres of land for use as industrial zones, shopping centres, bedroom suburbs, theme parks or administrative zones has greatly increased commuting time and traffic, while the structure of needs has remained essentially unchanged. Transport policy, based on private cars using petroleum fuel, has resulted in chronic traffic congestion, threatening all major metropolitan areas with paralysis and asphyxia.

Particularly in the energy field, centralised property relations have dictated the building of huge fossil fuel or nuclear power stations. This choice is detrimental to air quality and completely irrational from the standpoint of an economical use of energy.

Market irrationality and the profit motive play a decisive role in the problem of waste. It is more and more "advantageous" for each firm to throw away, flush out or burn what is useless for production. Hence, mountains of waste, in particular toxic waste, have practically become a symbol of the society of capitalist overabundance.

The consequences of these basic ecological problems are: destruction of natural sites and urban sprawl, over-congestion of the road system, air pollution caused by the private car, poisoning by the chemical industry, radioactive pollution due to nuclear energy, ever-growing mountains of waste. Capitalism is not capable of correcting these "failings". If natural resources, such as water, wood, soil, are "freely" available, under capitalism they are used up, wasted and polluted, most often without control. They are and not only in the economic sense "exogenous factors". They remain conditioned, that is they are objects of the search for private profit. In other words, the limited nature of resources is only seen by those who must purchase them. Their sellers have a basic interest in expansion and oppose any attempt to safeguard them.

All attempts at control run counter to capitalists' current push for greater deregulation. If not, they can only be contemplated on the basis of the false premise that the law of value can distinguish between "good" (environmentally friendly) profits

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and "bad" profits. Hence, imperialist countries are resigned to trying to patch up problems after the harm is done. At most, this can only result in very limited or partial remedies such as mandatory filters to purify water and air, etc.

Capitalist production also reshapes its own consumers. Thus, individuals' behaviour is a factor aggravating the ecological crisis and hampering a solution to it. However, individual changes in behaviour can only exert a minimal influence on the fundamental environmentally destructive nature of capitalist production.

Ecological crisis in the dependent countries

A study by the United Nations agency for the environment has drawn the lucid conclusion that the ecological problems of the "Third World" are problems of poverty. This would be perfectly just keeping in mind that this poverty is not the outcome of fate, but of the imperialist countries' economic policies and actions. By twisting the facts, it might be possible to present the environmental crisis in the imperialist countries as the consequence of an affluent society and not the outcome of a market economy. However, in the dependent countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the relation between economic crisis and ecological crisis comes into sharp focus. For millions of human beings, the growing destruction of the environment and biosphere and the everyday struggle for survival are facets of the same direct experience. Over 800 million people are malnourished, 40 million die every year from hunger or diseases caused by malnutrition. Almost 2 billion do not have regular access to clean drinking water; 25 million die as a result every year. One and a half billion human beings suffer from an acute lack of firewood, their only source of energy. In this part of the world, there is a grave shortage of food, water and fuel, the three essential elements for people's very lives. The UN estimates that approximately 500 million people are "environmental refugees", forced to leave their regions of origin in the wake of drought, floods, soil erosion, the extension of export-oriented agriculture, etc. The fact is that the ecological crisis in these parts of the world is not a "time bomb", or a problem for the future, but an existential crisis here and now.

The primary cause of dire poverty and



In the front line: indigenous peoples

ecological crisis is the capitalist mode of production. The well-known structures of imperialist dependency and the world market it dominates have subjected the natural environment of dominated countries to far more direct and brutal economic exploitation than is the case in imperialist countries. Environmental destruction according to the world market's needs and multinationals' interests comes into even more flagrant contradiction with the social structures and ways of life handed down through history. In all these countries, imperialism has shaped their territory by imposing an infrastructure almost entirely built up around centres of economic activity dependent on the world market. It is on this basis that "natural resource centres", business centres, and holiday zones, plantations and grazing lands are chosen, for export-oriented production. This puts enormous pressure on people who fall victim to these processes, pushing different ways of life and "outmoded" social functions are pushed towards a country's peripheral regions. The impact has been and continues to be far graver than in the capitalist metropolises, subject as these countries are to processes set in motion by others.

We can also observe the fatal effects of the law of "combined and uneven development" in the dependent countries from an ecological standpoint. The world market carries its environmentally destructive dynamics and its most agonising contradictions into the most "backward" corners of the world. Its action here is incomparably more devastating, the forces opposing it incomparably weaker. We can set forth a series of structural characteristics of this mechanism:

Direct exploitation of raw materials for the world market (minerals, wood, cotton, rubber, etc.) and the parallel development of infrastructures, roads, railways,

power plants, etc.;

The transformation of land into farmlands or pasture reserved for export production, via a land-clearing policy involving heavy use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides with the resulting pollution.

These two processes make the land question the great burning issue in most of the dependent countries. The rural population is pushed into regions unable to sustain permanent settlement or agriculture. These people have no choice but to clear the land and use farming methods that only speed up the exhaustion of land and its erosion. Clear-cutting hillsides, burning tropical forests, settling arid or flood-risk regions, the destruction of fertile soil layers, etc. compound the risk of long-term climate changes and "natural disasters".

An urbanisation brought about by a specific economic structure and the land question. According to UN estimates, cities in the dependent countries are growing three times faster than in the industrialised capitalist countries. In these cities, the usual urban problems are even more catastrophic for the environment and living conditions. Air pollution caused by motor-vehicle traffic and household heating is an acute threat. The quality of clean and purified water is the second problem facing cities in the dependent countries.

Waste disposal is the third. In most major cities in Asia, Africa and Latin America, rubbish is simply piled up or burnt in the open air. For most of the population of dependent countries, energy supply is a problem of everyday survival. 1.5 billion human beings are short of firewood. The annual working time devoted to gathering firewood (or other fuel sources such as manure, plant residues, etc.) has increased fourfold, sometimes reaching 190 to 300 working days yearly. Especially in rural areas near cities, but also in many other regions, forests are clear-cut because of the energy shortage.

The problem facing dependent countries most spoken about these days is the debt to banks and imperialist governments. This has an impact on ecological crisis because the debt requires stepping up the priority on export production, in turn increasing acute poverty and the rural exodus. In the 1990-1995 period, deforestation in 33 African countries ranked among the poorest and most indebted was 50% greater than forest destruction in other African countries, and 140% greater than the average rate of world deforestation. At

the same time, there are no resources to finance conservation measures. International financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, exact a higher and higher toll on man and nature for the consequences of debt.

All of this is cynically rounded out by a series of direct acts of destruction of nature and ecological crimes committed by imperialist multinationals.

Hazardous production units (especially in the chemical industry) are transferred to the dependent countries. There they not only benefit from cheap labour but also can pollute the environment with impunity.

The governments in most dependent countries are powerless in the face of ecological crisis. Their connection to imperialist interests and their own privileges or class interests extend economic dependency and ecological crisis.

Even certain international aid programmes (to fight hunger, to fight ecological disasters or recent plans for a partial cancellation of the debt in exchange for environmental protection measures) often merely contribute to enriching elites in power.

Solving the ecological crisis in the dependent countries is unthinkable without breaking dependency on imperialism. Seeking "modernisation" through credits and debt to solve urgent social problems has been an error that only compounds the situation. This is truer still for the ecological crisis. Poverty and economic dependency force millions of people take part in behaviour causing dire harm to the environment, but without which they could not even survive. This means the process of anti-imperialist revolution, "permanent" revolution, in the dependent countries must consciously take up ecological issues and make them part of their programme of struggle against capitalist plunder. This is the condition for successfully building alternative, socialist production relations.

Ecological crisis in the former bureaucratized societies

Despite the disappearance of the USSR and most societies patterned on the Soviet model, it is necessary to briefly examine their environmental policies. The ecological track record of the USSR and countries with a bureaucratic central planning system is as bad, if not worse, as the imperialist metropolises, especially in terms of air,

water and ground pollution, and nuclear power (Chernobyl!) and problems facing major metropolitan areas.

One of the reasons for this situation is the fact that these societies only partially succeeded in overcoming the capitalist law of value and the objective restrictions on production it entails. In many key production sectors, dependency on capitalism and the world market was still present. Exploitation of natural resources for an export economy and dependence on products and technologies derived from capitalist industries also led to an inevitable destruction of the environment in these societies too. This happened in a way comparable what we see in dependent countries.

The planned economy was an attempt to develop a directly social economy. Contrary to capitalism where the usefulness of labour is based on the market alone, that is, the ability to sell products, non-capitalist societies attempted to determine and plan social needs before production. It is obvious that this attempt can only succeed if all human needs and specific interests are brought into an overall process of democratic deliberation and decision-making. When an actual shortage must be shared out, democracy becomes even more essential. However, the bureaucratization of transitional societies completely eliminated democracy. The multitude of social and national, cultural and economic needs of different people became standardised, and forcibly inserted into a plan dictated from above. As all qualitative aspects were buried along with democracy, the determining characteristics of the plan could only be quantitative standards and rates of growth. Thus, transitional societies put the accent on quantitative increase in growth, sometimes even more than capitalist societies. These rates were set forth by decree and enforced with repression. Protecting resources and the environment were at best included in such plans in quantitative terms (number of purification stations, filters, certain budget outlays, etc.). This planning was from the outset beset with errors and huge oversights in planning (with a corresponding misuse of resources). Without social controls, these were only rectified when they were finally recognised "higher up".

Furthermore, the different parts of the plan corresponded to the interests of different fractions of the bureaucracy that set them. This is how the gigantism that was

so typical of the USSR and other bureaucratic states came into being. The bigger, larger-scale and more centralised the projects were (example: changing the course of Siberian rivers), the more power it meant for the bureaucrats. Since the 1970s, bureaucrats concerned with environmental issues did come on the scene, but they lacked clout and remained stuck in small, low-level departments.

Optimism and faith in progress were a tenet of the bureaucracy's ideology. Bureaucracies put forth the prospect of "competition between the two systems" and "overtaking" capitalist societies. From this standpoint, the capitalist consumer and modernisation models that caused such environmental harm were valued and taken up as ideological values playing a part in framing the plan.

The bureaucracy only used models based on quantifying natural resources (namely, models comparable to those used by conservative bourgeois economists).

It goes without saying that the ecological crisis can only be exacerbated in the context of economic pillage and free-for-all capitalism now reigning in Russia since the fall of the USSR, with the blessing of Western powers and the IMF.

IV. Workers' movement and ecology

Ecologists accuse Marx and Engels of productivism. Is this accusation justified?

No, to the extent that no one had spoken out with such force as Marx against the capitalist logic of production for production's sake, capital accumulation, wealth and commodity production as an end in itself. The very idea of socialism contrary to the pathetic bureaucratic caricatures of it is producing use value, goods necessary for the satisfaction of human needs. The supreme aim of technical progress in Marx's eyes is not an infinite increase in goods ("having") but a shorter working day, and more leisure time ("being").

However, it is true that sometimes we find in Marx and Engels and even more in later Marxism a tendency to make "development of productive forces" the main vector of progress, and a relatively uncritical stance towards industrial civilisation, especially in terms of its destructive relationship to the environment. The following passage of the *Gründrisse* is a telling example of Marx's too uncritical admira-

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tion for the "civilising" mission of capitalist production, and its brutal instrumentalisation of nature:

"Thus capital creates the bourgeois society and the universal appropriation of nature as well as of the social bond itself by the members of society. Hence the great civilising influence of capital; its production of a stage of society in comparison to which all earlier ones appear as mere local developments of humanity and as nature-idolatry. For the first time, nature becomes purely and object for humankind, purely a matter of utility; ceases to be recognised as a power for itself; and the theoretical discovery of its autonomous laws appears merely as a ruse so as to subjugate it under human needs, whether as an object of consumption or as a means of production".

On the other hand, we also find texts by Marx explicitly mentioning the ravages Capital has wrought on the natural environment bearing witness to a dialectical vision of the contradictions of "progress" brought about by productive forces for example, in the famous passage on capitalist agriculture in *Capital*:

"the increased productiveness and quantity of the labour set in motion are bought at the cost of laying waste and consuming by disease labour-power itself. Moreover, all progress in capitalistic agriculture is a progress in the art, not only of robbing the labourer, but of robbing the soil; all progress in increasing the fertility of the soil for a given time, is a progress towards ruining the lasting sources of that fertility. The more a country starts its development on the foundation of modern industry, like the United States, for example, the more rapid is this process of destruction. Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the labourer."

Even in Engels, who so often celebrated man's "mastery" and "domination" over nature, we can find texts that call our attention more explicitly to the dangers of such an outlook. For example, we can mention the following passage in the article, "The part played by labour in the transition from ape to man" (1876)

"Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victo-



Guilty of productivism?

ry, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture, they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. (...)

Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people; like someone standing outside nature but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly".

It would not be difficult to find other examples. The fact remains, however, that Marx and Engels lack an overall ecological outlook. The ecology question is one of the greatest challenges for a renewal of Marxist thought at the dawn of the 21st century. It demands of Marxists a thorough critical reappraisal of their traditional concept of "productive forces" and a radical break with the ideology of linear progress and the technological and economic paradigm of modern industrial civilisation.

Parallel to the development of reformism in the ranks of the workers' movement, Marx and Engels' critical reflection on the threat capitalist civilisation poses to nature was downplayed. Reformism took up the productivist concepts/outlook of bourgeois society just as it was becoming an integral part of it by

accepting its major institutions (State, army, legislation, etc"). For example, early in the 20th century, the Deutscher Metallarbeiterverband (DMV), the metal workers' organisation, dominated by social democracy, explained in a telling statement: "The faster technical development is, the faster the capitalist mode of production will have reached the point where it will block by itself and will have to be replaced by a higher mode of production,"

Social democracy and Stalinism, despite their disagreements on many questions, shared a productivist concept of the economy and a profound lack of sensitivity to environmental questions. We must recognise that revolutionary currents in general and the Fourth International in particular were very late in integrating the ecological question

The persistence of ecological disasters, the growth of environmental protection movements, these movements' partial victories, and their attempts to structure themselves politically ("Green" parties, etc.) have led to differentiations within the workers' movement. In a series of countries, entire unions or at least strong minorities within their ranks oppose the "peaceful" use of nuclear energy. CGIL in Italy, British miners and are displaying a heightened sensitivity to ecological questions: CUT in Brazil, SUD in France, the Workers' Commissions in Spain, IG-Metall in Germany, etc.

At present, we can distinguish among four currents in parties and unions that claim to speak for the workers:

a) The "hard-core" fraction that wants to keep on as if nothing has changed. Even this fraction has had to make some adjustments, in light of the catastrophic developments for the environment. This current is now calling for emission standards and new regulations, but advocates continued use of nuclear power. Without revising its shortsighted positions, it has declared its agreement with "patching up" the ecology, especially if it opens up new markets.

b) A technocratic current that thinks it can solve ecological problems via high-tech solutions. Indeed, most often these would only shift the problems round: for example, what to do with the enormous quantities of filtration residues, purification sludge and other waste? Peter Glotz of the German SPD is calling for co-operation with the "end of the pipe technology" fraction of major capital. Through an alliance among "the traditional left, techni-

cal elites and critical minorities of capitalists with a sound outlook in terms of growth", socially directed innovation could be achieved. He expressly rejects any challenge to private property over the means of production.

c) The third current that could be called "reformist-ecologist", also refuses to speak about production relations. Once again, they claim it is possible to rid capitalism, or as they put it delicately, "industrial society", of its sins against the ecology. Erhard Eppler, as chairman of the German SPD's "Fundamental Values Commission" explained: "More than ever, the task of social democracy is to proceed, through a new policy of reforms, with democratic, human and ecological corrections to industrial society."

d) The fourth current, in the minority, but far from negligible in numbers, is eco-socialism, integrating the fundamental achievements of Marxism while ridding it of its productivist dross. Eco-socialists understand that market and profit logic (as well as the authoritarianism of the defunct "people's democracies") are incompatible with ecological demands. While criticising the ideology put forth by the leading currents of the workers' movement, they understand that workers and their organisations are an essential force for transforming the system.

Eco-socialism is the current in the workers' and ecology movements most sensitive to the interests of workers and peoples of the South. It breaks with the productivist ideology of progress in its capitalist and/or bureaucratic form (so-called "actually existing socialism") and opposes the infinite expansion of an environmentally destructive mode of production and consumption.

It understands that "sustainable development" is impossible within the framework of the capitalist market economy.

As revolutionaries, our objective is to join forces with this current and convince workers that partial reforms are totally inadequate. Micro-rationality must be replaced with socialist, ecologist macro-rationality, calling for a genuine change in civilisation. This is impossible without an in-depth technological reorientation, seeking the replacement of current energy sources with other, non-polluting and renewable ones, such as solar energy. This means the first issue at hand is the question of control over the means of production, and above all over decisions relating to

investments and technological change.

An overall reorganisation of the mode of production and consumption is needed, based on criteria foreign to the capitalist market: people's real needs and environmental safeguards. In other words, an economy in transition to socialism, based on the peoples' own democratic choices of priorities and investments and not the "laws of the market" or an all-seeing politburo. A planned economy, able to find lasting ways of overcoming the tensions between satisfying social needs and ecological imperatives. A transition leading to an alternative way of life, a new civilisation, beyond the reign of money, consumer habits artificially fuelled by advertising, and the endless production of environmentally harmful goods (the private car!).

V. Achievements and limits of the ecology movement

The ecology movement's fundamental achievement, which has brought about an in-depth change in public awareness of environmental questions, has been and remains the understanding of the extent to which late capitalism has destroyed the environment. Destruction of nature has reached a point that imperils all humanity. Here, as in the case of a world nuclear war, it is a question of survival. However, contrary to the danger of nuclear destruction, it is a question that is always "new" and more and more obviously becoming more and more serious. The ecology movement's fundamental achievement is at the same time its basic limit. Since this movement views the environmental question as vital to all humanity, it seeks out interclass solutions and consequently, fails to call upon adequate means (class struggle against capital).

Another achievement of the ecology movement is the way it questions the concept of "progress". It has demonstrated the shortcomings of the Marxist analysis of late capitalism. We can no longer speak as during the beginning of capitalist development of a positive development of the productive forces, only trammelled by private ownership of the means of production or developed at the expense of the proletariat. More and more, capitalism, having survived much longer than historically necessary for the development of the productive forces, is transforming productive forces into destructive ones. But this also means that these forces cannot be liberated as

such, that is, used in a socialist system on behalf of all. They will have to be vetted and critically analysed. This is not merely a theoretical question, but also a very practical one, involving a criticism of the idea of "overtaking capitalism", so typical of Stalinist bureaucratic thought. Moreover, a more elaborate analysis of the material side of production (use value) is being made for the first time, by asking which products are desirable from an ecological and social viewpoint etc.

After the setbacks following the 1968 movement, the ecology movement has once again brought a utopian dimension into politics. Discussions about a fundamental change in the social system, another way of living and producing, are re-introduced on the basis of ecological demands. The aforementioned debate about use value of products also encompasses a discussion of socially useful production. New utopian ideas about a different society are being voiced, and concrete "reconversion plans" sketched out.

The ecology movement first developed in Europe. It involved mass mobilisations, even in countries where the workers' movement was on the defensive, such as Austria, Switzerland and Germany. Militant and concrete forms of struggle, such as demonstrations, blockades, and occupations of sites gave rise to a "culture of resistance". At first these struggles focused on the nuclear question above all, but the movement takes up and mobilises around other questions, such as air and water pollution and GMOs. Scandals such as the "mad cow" crisis have raised public awareness about "junk food" and the dangers arising from the logic of the capitalist market. In France, the Confédération paysanne (Small Farmers' Union) was the catalyst of a radical dynamic. Starting out from a symbolic action (dismantling a McDonald's) in retaliation against US sanctions based on France's ban on importing hormone-treated beef, the struggle widened to take on the WTO with support from trade unions, ecological organisations and left-wing parties, and strong sympathy in public opinion. Strong support was shown in June 2000, at the rally in solidarity with the small farmers facing trial in Millau (France).

Major ecological mobilisations have also taken place in the USA, and given rise to a complex, heterogeneous movement, ranging from "deep ecology" which claims to give priority to plant and other

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animal species over humans, to eco-socialism. The recent Spring 2000 mobilisations in Seattle displayed this movement's strength and the willingness of several of its components—for example the major environmental association "Friends of the Earth"—to join forces with unions and the left in the fight against the WTO and an increasingly commodified world. Seattle also allowed for an initial convergence in the struggle among movements from North America, Europe—the Confédération Paysanne was represented by its spokesperson, José Bové—and the Third World.

It would be very mistaken to think ecological issues only concern the countries of the North—a luxury for wealthy societies. More and more, social movements with an ecological dimension are emerging on the periphery of capitalism, the "South".

These movements are reacting to deepening ecological problems in Asia, Africa and Latin America, a consequence of imperialist countries' deliberate policy of "exporting pollution", and the unbridled productivity demanded by "competitiveness". We are witnessing the appearance of popular mobilisations in the South in defence of peasant agriculture, communal access to natural resources, threatened with destruction by the aggressive expansion of the market (or the State). Other struggles are arising to fight the damage to the immediate environment brought about by unequal exchange, dependent industrialisation and the development of capitalism (agribusiness) in the countryside. Often, these movements do not define themselves as ecological, but their struggle still has an essential ecological dimension.

It goes without saying that these movements are not opposed to improvements made by technological progress. On the contrary, the demand for electricity, running water, proper sewage and more medical dispensaries ranks high in their list of demands. What they are refusing is the pollution and destruction of their natural surroundings in the name of "market laws" and the imperatives of capitalist "expansion".

A 1991 text by Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco (of the Fourth International) is a remarkable expression of the meaning of this "ecology of the poor". "At first glance, defenders of the environment or conservationists seem like nice, rather eccentric fellows, whose main goal in life is preventing the extinction of blue whales

or pandas. The common people have more pressing concerns, for example where their next meal will come from. (...) However, in Peru there are a great number of people defending the environment. Of course, if you told them 'you are ecologists', they would probably answer, 'ecologists, my eye' (...) And yet: who can deny the inhabitants of the town of Ilo and surrounding villages, struggling against pollution caused by the Southern Peru Copper corporation, are defending the environment? And isn't the Amazonian population totally ecologist, ready to die to defend their forests from pillage? Or the poor population of Lima, protesting tainted water?"

Brazil is among the countries where the link between social and environmental issues has been made on a mass scale. We can see the Landless Peasants Movement (MST) mobilising against GMOs, in a



Chico Mendes

direct confrontation with the major multinational Monsanto. Municipalities and provinces governed by the Workers Party (PT) are attempting to make ecological aims a part of their participatory democracy programme. The Rio Grande do Sul provincial government, close to the MST and the PT, wants to ban GMOs from the region. Wealthy landowners in the region are indignant, going on record against what call an "archaic outlook".

They view the struggle against transgenic seed as a "conspiracy to impose agricultural reform".

Indigenous peoples, living in direct contact with the forest, are among the primary victims of the "modernisation" imposed by agrarian capitalism. As a result, they are mobilising in many Latin American countries to defend their traditional way of life, in harmony with the environment, against the bulldozers of capitalist "civilisation". Among the countless manifestations of the Brazilian "ecolo-

gy of the poor", one movement has stood out as particularly exemplary, by its social and ecological, local and planetary, "red" and "green" scope. Namely, the fight of Chico Mendes and the Coalition of Forest Peoples in defence of the Brazilian Amazon region, against the destructive appetites of major landowners and multinational agribusiness.

Let us briefly recall the major events in this confrontation. Chico Mendes was a trade-union activist, with ties to the (CUT) and the Brazilian Workers' Party (PT). Explicitly referring to socialism and ecology, in the early 80s, Mendes organised land occupations by the *seringueiros*, peasants who lived by tapping rubber trees, against latifundistas who were sending in bulldozers to cut down the forest and replace it with grazing lands. Afterwards, he succeeded in bringing together peasants, farm workers, *seringueiros*, trade unionists and indigenous tribes with the support of rank-and-file Church communities—in the Alliance of Forest Peoples, that was able to thwart many clear-cutting attempts. International awareness of these actions warranted him the Global Ecological Prize in 1987. However, a short time afterwards, in December 1988, latifundistas exacted a heavy price for this ecological struggle by having hired killers murder him.

Given the links forged between social and ecological struggles, peasant and indigenous resistance, survival of local populations and safeguard of a global imperative (protection of the last major tropical forest), this movement can become a paradigm for future popular mobilisations in the "South".

In certain countries—especially in Europe—the ecology movement has succeeded in winning many reforms, partly slowing down the breakneck pace of environmental destruction. For example, practically no new nuclear power plants are being built, the production of certain chemical products (CFCs, fertilisers, etc.) has been limited, and stringent standards have been enacted for certain factories, motor vehicles, etc. A capitalist environmental industry has emerged, and ecological reforms have even found their way into bourgeois party policy platforms.

And yet, despite all attempts at reform, despite the environmental industry, destruction on the global level has become more serious than ever before.

Pollution of the seas, clearing of tropical forests and climate changes all show

that the global dynamics of ecological crisis remain unchanged. From this standpoint, this crisis shows the need for a fundamental change in our society; above beyond any reforms that may see the light of day.

As the ecology movement has no coherent revolutionary programme and fails to see the workers as a revolutionary subject, it is a long way from fulfilling its aspiration to become a new social force that can occupy or inherit the place of the workers movement. Nevertheless, if we leave out explicitly bourgeois or reactionary groups, small in numbers, the ecology movement remains an important ally of revolutionaries in the overall struggle against the capitalist system.

VI. Environmental problems and bourgeois domination

Due to the impact of capitalist production on the environment, destruction of the natural basis for human societies has reached a new level. This has become a problem in and of itself for bourgeois order and ideology.

■ The ecological crisis is world-wide and, in the competitive context inherent to capitalism, can only be viewed only as a common evil;

■ Certain causes of the ecological crisis go back many years, others are the products of the combined development of various separate factors. For this reason, it is difficult to establish and date their temporal and physiological causes. In the same vein, mastering the ecological crisis calls for time and investments that would be the undoing of all bourgeois concepts of input/output cycles.

■ Finally, contrary to what is observed in classical economic crises, in capitalism's harmful social consequences and even in the aftermath of military conflicts, dominated and exploited classes can only be made to foot part of the bill for ecological crisis. However, it is undeniable that oppressed classes bear the brunt of the burden, especially in dependent countries. This is truer still, given the interaction between social and economic crisis and ecological crisis.

The growing awareness of ecological crisis and the ecology movement developing since the early 1960s, have represented a vigorous attack on one of the key concepts in bourgeois ideology the idea that the bourgeois social and economic order is

capable of guaranteeing continuous "progress for all", and that harnessing nature is inherently positive and that all problems pertaining to it could be solved.

Up against this ideological challenge, there have been attempts at updating bourgeois ideology. The first, known throughout the world, was the Club of Rome report ("The Limits to Growth", 1972). This report documented the rapid progress of environmental destruction and put forth a supra-national policy against demographic growth, wastage of natural resources, environmental destruction, etc. This study, and others following, were a double-edged sword.

On the one hand, science and bourgeois ideology retook the initiative on environmental questions and undertook a discussion on the prognosis and the solutions to be put forth. On the other, these studies shored up pessimistic views on the world's future and were a further impetus to the ecology movement.

The capitalist world economy's existing order lost its aura of superiority; its finality and its mechanisms were questioned from within. At the same time, these analyses led to catalogues of demands that tended to promote world planning and a political regulation of the economy. Thus, they came into direct conflict with the capitalist market economy, economic liberalism and government deregulation offensives on the agenda throughout the world at the time.

No later than the mid 1980s, a second bourgeois offensive on the environmental terrain proved necessary. Thereafter, it became necessary to provide solutions, especially in terms of concrete policy, to these contradictions. The Brundtland report ("Our Common Future") adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1988, was an expression of this. It is already entirely marked by the bourgeois conviction that although capitalism unfortunately harms the environment, it is also in a position to make the necessary corrections. Thus, it claimed to bring together the elements for a more balanced form of growth ("sustainable development"). The 1990s saw a deepening of the contradiction between promises of new international regulations of globalised capitalism and this very system's brutal social and environmental impact. The Rio Declaration, which came out of the Earth Summit (1992) certainly set forth certain principles, such as the precaution principle, which did represent

progress in awareness about the elements of the ecological crisis. Neither Agenda 21, a giant mixed bag of 2500 measures, nor the international conventions on biodiversity and climate change have led to the radical solutions needed. With the birth of the WTO further subjecting the environment to the effects of liberalised international trade, these conventions have had very little effect. Proclamations in defence of biodiversity are powerless against ongoing damage to the natural environment.

On the political level, they run up against the interests of agrochemical and pharmaceutical multinationals that seek to take hold of living organisms by increased use of GMOs and patenting genomes. The Kyoto Protocol (1997) on the greenhouse effect does not put any onus on rich countries to implement measures aimed at meeting the very modest objective of reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. 125 billion dollars over 10 years had been announced in Rio for environmental defence policies on the world scale. In 1996, only 315 million dollars had been invested. Between the reformist ideas put forth by the Brundtland report, and again in Rio, and the dominant ultra-liberal imperialist model, the latter has won the day for the time being.

Today, a practical approach to environmental problems is part of every bourgeois government's programme. In general, there is an attempt to set limits to air, soil and water pollution. To these are added gradual plans to reduce the dangerous effects of production-process residues. When all is said and done, these are band-aid measures that do not counteract the real destruction taking place. Economic programmes and policy orientations concerning the "ecological market economy" have also taken on importance. Up until now, attempts to re-orient the capitalist economy to an environmentally friendly functioning have not got off the drawing table.

However, in the context of capitalist globalisation, a vast offensive is underway to impose a system of "marketing the right to pollute" on the world level in order to reduce the quantity of greenhouse gases. Advocated by the United States, this mechanism was accepted by the European Union. This is a dangerous development that must be fought. Firstly, it opens the way to strengthening under-developed countries' dependency on the North. In a mechanism assigning each country an exchangeable pollution quota, the deci-

★ Ecology

sion-making power belongs to those who hold financial power to trade in pollution as they see fit. The highly indebted countries of the South and the East would run the risk of selling their quota to the Northern countries, though the latter pollute the most by far.

Moreover, the system aims to make pollution a commodity, hence a source of profit. How could we imagine under such conditions that this would lead to an effective reduction in pollution?

Finally, it must be emphasised that the purpose of this mechanism, the key element of the liberal offensive in the environmental field, is to defuse the subversive power of the ecological critique, which raises a challenge to the overall functioning of the capitalist system. It aims at restoring credibility to the idea that the market is the best instrument in the fight against pollution, that more capitalism would make for intrinsically "cleaner" capitalism.

This idea must be fought, just like the thesis whereby environmental protection could become the motor behind "a new modernisation of the capitalist economy". A great gap separates the rich States from the poor States. While in wealthy imperialist countries, some progress has been made in stemming some of the most problems of pollution and destruction, in the poor countries, even the slightest necessary measures fail due to lack of funding or in the face of the interests of a handful of firms that succeed in making a profit precisely by damaging the environment.

VII. Experiences in the political organisation of the ecology movement

In a growing number of countries, Green parties are developing. In Western Europe, they have gained parliamentary representation in countries as different as Germany, France, Austria, Belgium, Sweden and Portugal and constitute a significant European Parliamentary group with 47 Members. They now take part alongside left-wing coalitions in governments in three countries in the Union: Germany, France and Belgium. Green parties are even found in dependent countries (Brazil, Turkey, etc.) In the United States, Ralph Nader's candidacy in the presidential race symbolises the political emergence of a front uniting environmentalists, youth and trade unionists, on the basis of

anti-globalisation struggles.

Of course, the development of green organisations and parties over the past twenty years or so can be explained by the emergence of ecological crisis on a global scale. However, it cannot be understood without supplementary political factors, such as the lack of overall perspectives by traditional leaderships of the workers movement or the absence of revolutionary breakthroughs in capitalist Europe since 1968.

It is completely wrong to put all the different "Green" experiences in the same bag. Depending on the countries, political cultures, their concrete historical origins, they have specific characteristics. Their palette ranges from a strong influence of bourgeois and petit bourgeois forces to the coexistence of leftist, alternative and eco-socialists, and includes reformist Green currents.

We can say in general and with all due caution:

- these are attempts at organising within the reformist left, most often somewhere to the left of the traditional leaderships;

- although 75% of their social base is made up of salaried employees, these currents do not view themselves as a part of the workers' movement;

- while they often began as informal electoral structures based on ecology-centred platforms, Green movements have taken critical stands in other areas too (social policy, arms race, Third World, etc.);

The Greens' activity bears the stamp of a combination of frequently correct criticisms of sectoral social injustices alongside illusory reformist "strategies". In most cases, government or parliamentary activity virtually stifles Green Party grassroots activism, fosters the appearance of traditional forms of power delegation, and by so doing tends to undermine the radical nature of its movement. Worse still, the German Greens, for example, are in the process of losing all the utopian power embodied by the ecological critique, and are becoming a simple "party of reform" among others. When the Grünen entered the government in late 1998, this brought about a veritable political earthquake in their ranks. The shock waves continued with a difficult compromise on the nuclear issue, the war in Kosovo and the intensified neo-liberal course of government policy. Just the same, it is fruitless to speculate

on the rhythms and forms of changes ecologist parties may undergo and to what extent the very nature of the Greens will be transformed by the choices and policy shifts they make.

Revolutionary Marxists judge political actors first of all not on the basis of their claims, their programmes or their awareness of their own role, but on the basis of their actual function in the class struggle. In general, we can affirm that the appearance of Green organisations and parties has not been a step backward. On the contrary, in many cases, it has broadened the left's action.

The Greens must not be ignored, on the contrary, an active policy must be developed in their direction: common actions, debates on their theoretical positions, etc. In certain countries, protest parties and ecological movements have arisen, forming electoral coalitions and harnessing a segment of critical opinion. It is up to each section of the International to concretely decide the best form of co-operation with such parties or movements.

VIII. The Fourth International and the ecological crisis

As we have seen in Chapter 4, we find the premises of a radical ecological criticism of capitalism in the original Marxist texts. But, as was the case for most parties in the workers' movement, our International failed to take it up in the first years of its existence. For example, it would be useless to look for it in the Transitional Programme, the basic programmatic document of the 1938 founding congress. In the period following the Second World War, revolutionary Marxists did not ignore environmental destruction or air and water pollution. However, these phenomena were seen as one of the negative consequences of an exploitative, inhuman system and not viewed as a global phenomenon threatening to destroy the very basis of all life.

This has changed since the early 1970s, when capitalist society's self-destructive tendency became a widely discussed subject, a subject of debate for such bourgeois ideologues as the Club of Rome in 1972. Articles and studies written by members of our movement appeared.

But the real test for organisations of the workers' movement was the birth of a popular movement against nuclear energy, especially in Japan, Western Europe and

the United States.

Practically all the sections of the Fourth International have been involved in these mass movements, although very few sections found ways of consolidating their ecology work when the anti-nuclear movement went into decline. The experience of these movements did make its way into our discussions for the World Congresses. In the 10th Congress's texts, ecology and related problems were not even mentioned. However, at the following congress, in 1979, the struggle against the nuclear industry was viewed as a "question of survival for the working class" and it declared that the task of the International and its sections was to "strengthen the movement by bringing industrial workers" into the struggle. At the 1985 congress, the positions were further developed. The documents provide a more detailed analysis for each of the three sectors of the world revolution. The main resolution called on the International and its sections to put far greater emphasis on the ecology question in their propaganda and their activities and organise common actions alongside ecology movements. In 1990, a commission made up of different sections of the International drew up a draft resolution on ecology, which was presented during discussions at the 13th Congress, but it was decided to hold further debates before adopting a resolution.

Today, the Fourth International views environmental destruction as one of the main threats to humanity, a problem giving a new meaning to the Rosa Luxemburg's famous formula: Socialism or Barbarism. It sees a commitment by the workers' movement and its organisations in the struggle against planetary destruction as its primary task in this area. It is striving to pave the way for co-operation between the social movement and the ecology movement, not only against different forms of destruction, but also against the system causing them in the first place. It wants to contribute to discussions in these movements and tries to counteract widespread illusions on the possibility of "clean" capitalism.

In many countries, the International is taking an active part in ongoing struggles, such as the struggle against GMOs and the destruction of the Amazonian forest in Brazil. The European sections are increasingly involved in ecology movements in their own countries. In our analyses, the ecological issue is one of the most impor-



tant poles around which the workers' movement must reorganise.

All of this does not mean that there have not been problems bringing these "new issues" into our movement's activities. Many comrades have continued to look upon ecological problems as one contradiction of capitalism among many others.

They have not seen them as problems closely linked to everyday struggles for the survival of the working class, against sub-human living and working conditions and the threat of war. Most of the sections only started pondering ecological questions when they made the headlines in the news following actions by other forces. As a result, the debate within the International has taken shape rather slowly. While other currents and individuals have been discussing the question of ecology and socialism for many decades, revolutionary Marxists have remained relatively silent. It is becoming clearer and clearer that Marxists must make a special effort to apply their method to the real issues at hand. It is no longer possible to simply take a few elements of ecological thought and give them a dab of red paint.

The Fourth International does not wish to simply take part in discussions on concrete ecological policy. It also wants to take the political and organisational steps forward necessary for mass actions. Only through the action of mass movements can current conditions be changed.

IX. Action Programme

Today, throughout the world there is a broad range of initiatives and movements against the pillage and destruction of nature. The Fourth International supports these initiatives and these movements and takes part in them, sometimes critically, because the general outlook of certain ecologists is at times rather confused. The experiences of the ecology movement prove that only broad mobilisations and mass protests make it possible to win over public opinion and obtain real results.

To a large extent, ecological crisis and

social crisis are stoked by identical mechanisms. The interests of major economic lobbies, the ever-more exclusive dictatorship of 'the markets', the world order incarnated by the WTO, IMF, WB and G8, etc., are combining to bleed humans and nature dry. Common factors are at work in the contemporary ecological and social crises, common remedies can and must be put forth. It is essential to break the stranglehold of "economic liberalism" and put human needs and ecological imperatives at the forefront.

This is why there is community of ecological and social struggle, and common terrain for convergence.

1. Defence of Public Services

The example of transport is a clear example of the extent to which public policy is required for an adequate response to social and ecological imperatives. In Europe, the logic of the markets requires cutting the railway system to "profitable" technologies and routes, relying on roads and highways as the solution for everything else. Social needs (economical public transport, a complete system serving the entire territory, decent salaries and working conditions) and ecological ones (reducing the most polluting, physically-destructive and energy-intensive forms of transport) requires the development of public transport, in a public service logic. The same goes for other areas.

But this observation does not close the debate on how public services must be organised in the modern world. In fact, State monopolies tend to develop their policies on the basis of non-democratic objectives. (In the energy field, we can mention links between petroleum producers and imperialist interventions in Africa, or links between civil and military nuclear uses). They use narrowly capitalist management approaches and productive models, applying profitability/efficiency standards copied from private monopolies.

2. The struggle against pollution

We have become more and more aware of the human costs (damage to health, rising prices, etc.) and natural costs (attacks on biodiversity) of pollution, as well as the role played by many entrenched economic interests in aggravating this problem. The dominant place of the car, the resulting air pollution and growing health problems in urban centres. The power of agribusiness,

★ Ecology

brutal pollution of water systems, and almost irreversible pollution of ground water. The weight of the nuclear lobby and the accumulation of radioactive waste over very long periods, in France and other countries. The role played by major private interests in the socially unacceptable increase in the cost of drinking water in the North and massive lack of access to drinking water in the South. In each of these areas, ecological and social struggles require counterpoising an alternative logic to that put forth by the dominant economic forces.

The gravity of pollution and public health problems has led to increased public awareness. It has become more difficult to present so-called ecological issues as marginal questions, as unrelated to social questions, or as elitist concerns, and petit-bourgeois luxuries. In Europe, the "mad cow" crisis probably marked a sea change, analogous to Chernobyl in the area of nuclear power. It cast a light on the serious threat posed by the agribusiness mode of production.

It is also necessary to combat illusory strategies such as a market for the right to pollute that Northern countries are attempting to impose on the planet. Pollution should be eradicated, not sold to the highest bidder.

3. In defence of employment

An environmental protection policy would create new jobs in many fields. It is also essential to point out that the dominant economic logic, which overexploits the natural environment, also gives rise to unemployment. This is clearly the case with agribusiness, which is emptying the countryside both of its natural (drastic reduction in the variety of landscapes and biodiversity) and human features (drastic loss of employment and rural exodus). This is also the case of the automotive industry, which massively reduces its labour force while increasing its production capacity and whose word has become law in terms of modes of transport, town and regional planning and urban development. An alternative socio-economic logic would make it possible to develop a means of production that is less predatory of nature and our way of life, while creating more jobs.

4. The struggle for land

This is one of the most essential vec-

tors of the convergence between social and ecological movements on the international scale. It is no accident that the most radical farm movements from a social viewpoint are also those with the most advanced environmental consciousness. They are up against polluting agribusiness, with its GMOs, its fertilisers and pesticides poisoning the environment; they take a stand against capitalist agriculture that destroys soil and forests. In the countries of the South, this struggle is inseparable from the struggle for radical land reform, against the latifundistas' monopoly over land ownership, and for land redistribution. But the struggle for an alternative agriculture, respectful of the environment and based on small farmers' work, co-operatives, rural communities or indigenous communities is a planetary challenge, concerning both the Third World and capitalist metropolises. One of the most important forces in this battle for land is "Via Campesina", an international network of the agricultural left, made up of movements as important as the Brazilian MST or the French Confédération paysanne. These social movements promote another outlook on agricultural production, aiming to satisfy the population's social needs rather than those of the global capitalist market, and respecting peoples' right to feed themselves.

5. Eliminating the debt system

"Development through debt", got its initial impetus from financial powers in the North, and led to a system of control over debtor countries' economic policies (above all in the South) and strengthened powers for the IMF and WB (including in the North). The diktat of debt interest charges and the WTO's ultra-liberal hard-liners have dire consequences for human societies (destruction of the social-safety net, of subsistence farming), and of nature (destruction of natural resources for export purposes). This means the fundamental mechanisms of this system of domination must be fought from both the social and ecological standpoints.

The trade rules brought in by the GATT, followed by the WTO, reinforce domination by major multinationals in the North. By forcing local markets to open up to their products, these institutions have increased dependency (even in terms of food), undermined social equilibria and led to an irrational increase in international

trade, which feeds the energy and ecological crisis.

6. Long term and democracy

The ecological question requires that we take very long-term consequences into account, as natural rhythms have a very different time frame from the necessarily short one of the market. Many social needs (education, health, etc.) also demand a longer timetable than the "almighty market" does to achieve their aims and this is one of the main reasons they are public services in the real sense. Ecological consequences and human needs both require that our alternative policies take these long and very long term time frames into account. This means thinking in terms of solidarity among generations. After the defence of social needs, ecology has given a new legitimacy to the concept of planning. What is planning, if not taking long-term effects into account?

But ecology has also played a part in the development of an in-depth critique of the bureaucratic experiences of the former Eastern Bloc countries. Is this indispensable meeting between ecological, democratic and social issues and forces possible? Yes, because contemporary ecological and social crises share a common origin in capitalism. Common causes call for common solutions.

Anticapitalism is not a set of "negative" ideas. Indeed, it makes it possible to foresee a common ground between ecological and social struggles. It also helps to set forth shared alternatives, in a positive spirit of solidarity. It enlightens us as to causes and solutions. On the other hand, should political ecology fail to integrate/bring in a critique of capitalism, it runs the risk of adapting to the mainstream, losing its radical edge and falling back on elitist, ultimately anti-democratic solutions that are socially inegalitarian, and at once impotent and unjust.

This calls for true links, not merely identifying ecology with its social impact. Ecologist thought has indeed brought in a major dimension, not found as such in social thought an analysis of the relation between human societies and nature. This is its original contribution and its specific terrain. So we can say that we must neither prune back the ecology question to the social terrain alone nor ignore social antagonisms in the name of planetary ecological imperatives. ★

Women lead the way

CHANTING and cheering, tens, hundreds and thousands of women demonstrated in 159 countries during the second and third weeks of October.

SUSAN CALDWELL

THE World March of Women Against Poverty and Violence was a huge success — although ignored by the media of almost all countries. On October 15, in Washington, 20,000 people marched, including some 2000 women and men from countries other than the United States. In New York, about 10,000 women and men from many nations rallied at the United Nations and then marched to Union Square. They joined the March and represented women all over the planet taking part in the World March of Women. Close to 100 countries were represented.

Notable among the delegations were the large European contingent, energised by the success of the March of European Women, held earlier in Brussels on October 14 which brought together almost 35,000 women. There were also 250 women from Mexico, who arrived in a motorcade that set out from Chiapas. Some 50 Japanese women also attended, as well as a large number of Native women and vibrant groups of women from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Continuation

These women represent both a continuation of the wave of women's liberation movements from the 1970s and new generations of young women fighting against the poverty and violence created by the neo-liberal globalisation. There are two major new features of this Women's March 2000 against Poverty and Violence: those joining agreed to a radical anti-neoliberal globalisation and anti-patriarchy platform, and, almost all were part of a four year

organising process that generated the simultaneous actions in each country as well as the march in New York.

Focusing on the 'female face of poverty', the platform of the Women's March 2000 calls for the abolition of the third world debt as well as rejection of the IMF and World Bank's structural adjustment programmes. While noting the link between poverty and violence against women, the platform also notes that many rich countries maintain patriarchal laws and policies that treat women as 'less than human' and thus perpetuate and reinforce the violence that women suffer. The World March of Women demanded from the UN and its member States concrete measures to put an end to poverty and the different forms of violence against women. It demanded genuine respect for the rights of all women regardless of their origin, their



sexual orientation or their social or cultural affiliation.

And this raises a weakness of the Women's March 2000. While the platform is quite radical, the strategy is one of lobbying governments and the various institutions of national and international governments. This flows from the origin of the call for the World March of Women by the Fédération des Femmes du Québec (FFQ) after the UN Beijing Conference on Women in 1995. With the original contacts being those women-based NGOs that had been at Beijing, the lobbying strategy was maintained.

The FFQ was able to get the funding for a conference in Montréal, Canada, in 1998 to develop and adopt the platform. While the conference was exciting, conflict arose over the style of decision making (consensus versus vote-taking) and the inclusion of lesbian rights in the international platform when this would preclude the involvement of many women's organisations from non-American or non-European areas of the world. This concern with the non-representativeness and the sometimes bureaucratic functioning con-

tinued throughout the preparations for the World March.

Broad response

But the very impact of ongoing neo-liberal globalisation lead to a broad response:

- from women in the 'first world' who had seen their gains of the 1970s and 1980s eroded as well as the cutbacks in social services causing both job loss and increased work load

- from women in the 'third world' who saw the devastation of the IMF and WB's structural adjustment on educational and social services

- from women in war-torn areas who were both victims of violence by enemy soldiers and were further victimised as refugees in camps in nearby areas.

In all women from 159 different countries organised and acted within the framework of the World March of Women 1000 Against Poverty and Violence. Roughly five million signatures were collected from all over the planet in support of its two demands — to eliminate poverty and violence against women — and were presented to the UN. The actions in each country sought specific changes — whether to the minimum wage laws or to increased funding for women's centres or for education for girls, etc.

The decision has already been made to continue the organisational network set up for the Women's March and to begin discussing both a balance sheet and the prospects for future actions. Socialist-feminist organisations need to be part of this in order to develop a more explicitly anti-capitalist analysis, including going beyond lobbying and a misplaced faith in the national and international institutions. The organising also needs to include more grass-roots women's organisations in all countries which will raise again the question of the need for truly representative decision making structures.

But with the recommitment of feminists from the 1970s and 1980s and the involvement of young women of the 'Seattle generation' now taking place, there are grounds for hope. The resurgence of a women's liberation movement is back on the agenda. Our slogan of the 1970s remains to be realised: "No socialist revolution without women's liberation and no women's liberation without socialist revolution". ★

The dirty deal

IN a dramatic political move, ex Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif has been allowed to leave Pakistan by the military regime to proceed to Saudi Arabia with 19 family members. He had been sentenced to 21 years in prison on the charge of hijacking a plane on October 12 1999.

FAROOQ TARIQ*

THE deal between the military and Nawaz Sharif and his sudden departure from Pakistan raises many serious questions about the nature of the ruling classes of Pakistan, the future of the Muslim League, the effects on the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy¹ and above all on the future of the military regime.

There is nothing "humanitarian" in this episode as has been claimed by general Rashid Quereshi, the chief spokesman of the military regime. The decision is an outrightly political one, on a class basis. Both the parties have taken safe refuge, external or internal, through this unprecedented outrageous deal.

The Nawaz camp has played dirty capitalist tactics, first by joining the ARD last week and hosting the first meeting of ARD at their supporters house in Rawalpindi. By joining ARD alongside with the Pakistan Peoples Party, the Muslim League pressurised the military regime to come to a deal which they must have been offering for sometime. It was the potential power of ARD to launch a mass movement that terrified the military regime. And the core commanders agreed to what was unthinkable few months before.

Primarily, the decision to let Nawaz Sharif go into exile represents a retreat of a weakening military government. In fact this is its second decisive retreat during the last few months. Earlier, the military regime had to abandon its plan to build a controversial Kala Bagh Dam.

The military regime has earned tremendous hatred from the masses by bowing to the conditions imposed by the IMF and World Bank. That meant a large-scale retrenchment of the public sector and unprecedented price rises. The military has lost what it had gained in terms of "a sense of relief" felt by the masses when

it overthrew the unpopular authoritarian kingdom of Nawaz Sharif in October 1999. The release of an instalment of the IMF loan last week only allowed the regime to draw a quick breath when they heard of the formation of the new alliance.

Corrupt

The military had been building its case against Nawaz Sharif as a corrupt leader who had looted and plundered the wealth of the state in an unprecedented manner. The so-called accountability process had produced thousands of pages proving the corruption of Nawaz family. But a weakened military regime sought an internal refuge by getting rid of its main enemy by pardoning his sins and sending him abroad. By this action, the whole process of accountability has become a cruel joke. It was and will be seen as a tactic to prolong the military regime.

Nawaz Sharif was in jail for over a year. The military was becoming more unpopular day by day. The formation of ARD had raised the hopes of many as the only alternative to the military regime. A momentum was building up for a confrontation with the regime. The sudden capitulation of Nawaz Sharif will give the military some more breathing space. But it is he and his Muslim League that will bear the burden of unpopularity more than any one else. The Muslim League is a traditional conservative party of the rich in Pakistan. It has a long history of compromises with every ruling class and mili-

LOCAL Elections were held in Pakistan on December 31 in the first of four phases covering four provinces. The other phases will take place over the next six months.

After a long debate the LPP decided to participate. They stood 50 candidates in only two provinces, Punjab and Sind. In Larkana, home town of the Bhutto family, 12 of their candidates were elected. In Liah, a town in Punjab a comrade was elected who is also a trade union leader from a sugar factory of the town. Other results are still awaited but what has been achieved thus far is a major step forward for the

LPP. ★

tary regime.

The military will be boasting that any politician who will dare to fight with them will be subjected to such humiliation as Nawaz has undergone through this deal. "No one can challenge the supremacy of military" will be the main lesson that military will want us to learn. But it will not be a dirty deal of any rich corrupt politician that will strengthen the military. It is the weak economy with no prospect of picking up that will make sure that the military regime will not last long. It cannot repeat the history of decade of military rules, under General Ayub Khan in the Sixties or Zia ul Hague in the Eighties.

The dirty deal is a temporary blow for the recently formed ARD. But it will pick up some support if the PPP does not repeat history. Benazir Bhutto's husband, Asif Zardari, has been in jail for four years. If PPP make the same dirty deal for his release as was made over Nawaz, it could lose another opportunity to regain some of its lost support in the days to come.

The Labour Party Pakistan has opposed the military regime from day one. We will continue our campaign for the restoration of democracy linking it with the need to change the capitalist system with a genuine democratic socialism. ★

*Farooq Tariq is General Secretary of the Labour Party Pakistan.

1. An alliance of bourgeois parties for the restoration of democracy.

ON January 4, the paper *Mazdoor Jeddohud* ("Workers Struggle") celebrated 21 years of publication. *Workers Struggle* was first published in 1980 from Amsterdam as a six monthly paper in Urdu and English, then going monthly during 1984. During the military dictatorship of Zia Ul Haq it became the largest opposition paper in exile. When martial law was lifted in 1986, the Struggle started its publication from Pakistan as a book series. In 1989, it became a monthly, and then in 1997 took the important step of becoming a weekly.

Today the paper appears only in Urdu. You can subscribe for 260 Rupees annual within Pakistan or abroad \$50. Please send your checks and drafts on the name of Weekly *Mazdoor Jeddohud* Sufi Mansion, 7- Egerton Road, Lahore, Pakistan. ★

A good Germany?

SINCE its exit from the SED¹ at the end of 1989, the PDS' public expression, the elaboration of its thought and positions as well as its process of decision taking carried the imprint of a small number of people: Gregor Gysi, Lothar Bisky, André Brie and Dietmar Bartsch.² At the preceding congress in Münster there was a rupture³: Gysi and Bisky announced their retirement, Bartsch did not become, as predicted, the new president of the party and André Brie, who sat in the European parliament, became a rare sight among the circles of party strategists in Berlin.

The congress at Cottbus represented above all an enlarged recomposition of the leading circle of the PDS. What happened there related to the previous setback to those who wanted to transform the PDS into a "proper" party, integrated into the official political field of the greater Germany. In 1995, when Sarah Wagenknecht⁴ was elected to the management committee of the party, there were ultimatums and blackmail. At Cottbus, on the contrary, when Gabi Zimmer⁵ was asked if she would cooperate with Sarah Wagenknecht in the event of the latter being elected, she said she would collaborate with any democratically elected member of the management committee.

Success

After the electoral success of the PDS at the elections for the Bundestag in 1998⁶ the party leadership intended to rapidly present it as an acceptable coalition partner at all levels. To this end a project was established at the end of 1998, during a behind-closed-doors meeting of the parliamentary group, defining the PDS as a "transitional party", a candidate without prior conditions for entry into federal government from 2002. Essentially, two "external" factors have until now stopped the implementation of this orientation:

1. The classic dynamic of capitalism has pitilessly broken the illusions of the PDS leadership in the "social reformist policy" of the new federal government constituted by the SPD and the Greens. As in past decades, the SDP in government has shown itself "modern" to the extent that it efficiently satisfies the demands of the movement of capital. It was already the case at the end of the 1960s under Willy Brandt with the grand coalition,⁷ when the SDP imposed laws worthy of a state of

IN broad terms, the congress of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) held at Cottbus on October 14-15, 2000 had three main results. First, it allowed a consolidation of the leading personnel in the PDS leadership bodies. Secondly, a worrying "patriotic" trend in the political development of the PDS received a new vigour. Thirdly, this congress was the expression of an "armistice" inside the party, announced unilaterally by the leadership. So the debate on the political orientation of the PDS remains open. That is why the socialist fight for the PDS is today more important than ever, whether one is a party member or not.

WINFRIED WOLF*

emergency and professional blacklists. It was again the case later when SPD chancellor Helmut Schmidt proceeded to a global dismantling of democratic rights. It is still the case today when — as Sarah Wagenknecht pointed out at Cottbus — the SPD uses its trade union influence to pursue the dismantling of taxes on companies, the partial privatization of retirement funds and the accelerated deregulation of the economy. The new orientation of the PDS proved mistaken.

2. NATO's war against Yugoslavia also stayed the hand of the PDS leadership. An "anti-militarist" party in the eyes of its members and the overwhelming majority of its electors, the PDS could not follow the path taken by the Greens.⁸ The attempt to make a decisive step in this direction at Münster failed: the great majority of delegates opposed the resolutions from the party managing committee and the parliamentary group seeking to examine wars carried out under the mandate of the UN "case by case" to decide if the party should support or oppose them — and this despite the fact that Gregor Gysi had presented these resolutions as crucial for the "political capacity" of the PDS, letting it be understood that his remaining chair of the parliamentary group and his candidature as head of the list were linked to their confirmation by the congress. Moreover, Lothar Bisky had declared a little before the Münster congress that he was no longer a candidate to the chair of the party, not wishing to serve as a "dustbin".

Nonetheless, it was differences between individuals rather than the vote to oppose wars under UN mandate that led to

the PDS' crisis of the leadership. After Münster a feverish personal recomposition took place in the leading bodies of the parliamentary group and the party.

Dietmar Bartsch was rejected as chair of the party in favour of Gabi Zimmer, who many (including myself) thought capable of an inclusive approach, rallying and unifying the party in its diversity. As a supplementary sign of the desire for an opening, Roland Claus was chosen as head of the parliamentary group.

Particularities

The election of the leadership of the parliamentary group (which took place before the congress, on October 2), like the election of the party leadership bodies at the Cottbus congress, had four particularities:

■ There was no candidate opposed to the single proposal of the leadership. The election for the post of spokesperson, where Petra Pau (78 %) and Kirsten Radüge (8 %) were candidates,⁹ was an exception.

■ In the whole of the leadership of the parliamentary group and among the new leaders of the party (president, three vice-presidents, general secretary and treasurer) nobody supported the decision of the Münster congress against wars under UN mandate.

■ The integration in the leadership of the parliamentary group of even so much as one of the seven deputies elected from the West was explicitly ruled out.

■ An attempt was made to encircle the new president of the party, Gabi Zimmer, by "strong men" who were previously par-



PDS leader Gregor Gysi

tisans of a course of normalization and purging of the party. We have Bartsch as general secretary and Porsch as one of the vice-presidents; the candidature of Helmut Holter as deputy vice-president was rapidly withdrawn and he was presented “only” as a “simple member” of the managing committee. He was moreover elected to this function with the second highest score.

The new cadres in the leading posts of the parliamentary group and the party often combine several functions. For some that means they work day and night in the service of party in the cities, towns and villages. Others could see it as a sign of a siege mentality. Porsch, Holter and Pau each have three responsibilities of leadership at the levels of the regional party, the parliamentary group and the federal party.

We should also mention that Dietmar Bartsch with 76.3% and Peter Porsch with 67.9% of votes cast — given that they were the only candidates — registered mediocre results. But “elections are elections”, as they say, and this could be the epigram for the congress as a whole. The leading duo quickly showed how little fundamental debate mattered in this congress: the TV programme “Heute” on ZDF¹⁰ on the Saturday night of the congress showed short extracts from Gabi Zimmer’s speech and quickly moved on to the football stadium opposite the congress hall, where Gregor Gysi and Lothar Bisky were present as supporters of “Energy Cottbus”.¹¹

Debate

During the preparation of the congress there was a debate provoked by my amendments to the general motion on orientation, which, according an increasingly reduced place to the critique of capitalism, bore witness to a tendency which runs the risk of making the PDS no longer distinguishable from the parties of the right. This debate should be pursued with the greatest

“Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus” or “Sozialistische Volkspartei”

The main article of the daily *Neues Deutschland* of Berlin, de facto newspaper of the “Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus” (PDS), presents thus the congress of October 14 and 15:

“The PDS came out of its congress of last week-end at Cottbus with a clear orientation towards an opening towards society and cooperation with the SPD. The new president of the party, Gabriele Zimmer, elected with 93.3% of the votes, received the mandate for his plan to develop the PDS as a ‘sozialistische Volkspartei’ (Popular Party).”

To understand the meaning of the term “Volkspartei” in German political culture, it is necessary to be familiar with the debates inside West German social democracy before the adoption of the famous Programme of Bad Godesberg (abandonment of all reference to Marxism in 1959). There was a polemic on the definition of the party: “Arbeiterpartei” (workers’ party) versus “Volkspartei” (people’s party). For the right of the SPD of this time, faced with the decline of the number of industrial workers, it was necessary to orientate towards white collar workers as well as engineers, technicians and managers, equated to the “middle class” rather than defending the “narrow and corporatist” interests of the working class. [Fr. D.]

seriousness after the Congress.

Many delegates and guests who entered the congress building were indignant at the slogan decorating the room. The banner said in big characters: “that a good Germany flourishes” and in smaller letters “Bertolt Brecht”. Several speakers — and not minor ones — stressed how much it mattered to them to be able to use freely words which in this country have been confiscated by the right, indeed by the Nazis. Gabi Zimmer said in her speech: “Germany is beautiful. I love it and I hate at the same time the things which make it appear hateful. I fight that which does not allow a good Germany in the sense meant by Brecht to flourish. Georges Marchais ended every congress speech with the slogan: “Vive la France!” “Vive la France!” I agree with him here also.”

I know that such words are not meant in a “nationalist sense”. They represent however a wrong political direction which renders the PDS interchangeable with the parties of the right and will cost it dear at the elections.

Firstly, a congress slogan should be unambiguous. This is not the case here. The half phrase “that a good Germany flourish” could be adopted by other parties, including by those of the right. The reference to a (dead) author changes nothing. We never forget that images of the left like those of Che Guevara and Karl Marx have today become advertising images.

Secondly, out of its context, a half-phrase poses still problems. Few delegates and still less television viewers will seek

out the complete works of Brecht to read what the author wrote a few lines further on: “that facing Germany the peoples no longer shrink as before a brigand”. The poem in question, which dates from 1950, was a proposal for the national anthem of the GDR, founded in 1949, which presented itself then as the alternative to the imperialist and militarist Germany. It was a time when, in the West, Konrad Adenauer wanted the division of Germany and the SED and KPD pursued a national line which posed many problems — even taking account of the conditions of the time. This example should precisely be a lesson: the KPD then followed the directives of Stalin and an extremely Stalinist regime applied inside the party. It thus isolated itself and in the following elections in 1953 did not succeed in crossing the threshold of 5%, losing its parliamentary representation. It was then possible to ban it without raising protests among democrats and social democrats.

Thirdly, France is precisely not Germany. The slogan “Vive la France” is linked to the French Revolution, whereas “Long live Germany” recalls the Nazis. The PCF also has, moreover, a past of “national unity” that we should criticize and not borrow. For example it had a timorous attitude during France’s colonial war against the Algerian revolution and accepted both the French nuclear programme and the notion of a “force de frappe”.

A new and very professional advertising film for the PDS — shown twice during the congress — also goes in this direc-

tion, showing the transports of joy of German unity in 1990 and the mass emotions accompanying it.

The first reaction of the PDS leaders after the Münster congress was to urge the party to revise immediately the decision on NATO wars. The cadres were advised in different conferences that “good” delegates should be elected to the next congress. For this congress all delegates received a book-present which explained the programme of the PDS as exclusively as possible from the point of view of the “reformers”. In some federations, like Saxe, the regional managing committee mailed all delegates a list of the candidates to the leadership that they should support at the congress.

In short: Brecht’s famous poem on the insurrection of 1953¹² could be read today in the following manner: “After the insurrection of Münster, the secretary distributed tracts and e-mails, in which one learnt that the people of the party had lost the confidence of its leadership and that it had to be recovered through a redoubled submission. Would it not have been simpler for the leadership to dissolve the party and elect another?”

Dissolution

The dissolution of the party — or rather its self-destruction — is not on the agenda, at least for the moment. A little before the summer holidays the strategy was modified in an obvious manner. Michael Brie¹³ was had recognized that a purge would be unproductive for the projects of the “reformers”. Hence a new strategy, based on the following elements: Münster becomes a blank spot in the history of the PDS; the decision taken then is stigmatized as taboo; the “phenomenon” encountered at the Münster congress is identified as “a problem of communication”; and above all, what is at stake primarily is clarifying questions of personnel and putting off until later questions of content, including that of a new programme.

Thus was developed the manipulation at Cottbus. As if nothing had happened there, the speeches of the leaders referred openly to Münster. There was no time for a serious debate on fundamentals. The congress began on Saturday morning and only lasted a day and a half. On Saturday evening unusual concern was shown for the beauty sleep of congress delegates. The debate on orientation was relegated to the

Sunday morning and thus shortened. Some dozens of contributions presented were removed through an overall procedural resolution and without the least debate. Many other contributions were purely and simply put off as “material” to party organs.

Faced with such procedures some hundreds of members of the PDS and dozens of sections and other structures should be discouraged. They had invested their energy in contributing to a debate which, it is now obvious, had ended up in the wastepaper bins.



Brechtian allusions

The absence of a left opposition at the congress relates to the fact that such a ‘left’ is only at its beginnings as well as the organization of the general debate in which less than half of those down to speak were in the end called to the rostrum. At the end of the day there was not the least coordination or cooperation among the delegates critical of the leadership.

The Communist platform had in my opinion put forward too few motions and proposals on the current policy of the PDS. Yet Sarah Wagenknecht’s speech presenting her candidature to the managing committee of the party, which was greeted with great enthusiasm, made it obvious that a frankness of expression still survives among many delegates.

That was also shown by the result of the votes: Wagenknecht was elected to the new committee with 61.6% of votes cast — the best result for a candidate from the Communist platform since the existence of this current.

In the advertisement for the PDS mentioned above, Gregor Gysi makes a short statement in which he says, in measured fashion, that the PDS could risk “political incapacity”. Here is another example of the political style Brecht had alluded to in

1953: the reference is taken from a speech by Gysi at the end of the Münster congress, in which he criticized the resolution against UN wars and attributed to two thirds of the delegates such a “political incapacity”. ★

* Winfried Wolf is a PDS deputy in the Bundestag, and a former editor of *SoZ-Sozialistische Zeitung*, the bimonthly edited by the Union for Socialist Politics (VSP). This article appeared in the Berlin daily *Junge Welt*.

1. SED (Sozialistische Einheitspartei — United Socialist Party) was created in 1946 by the merger in the Soviet-occupied zone of the Stalinist and social democratic parties (the KPD and the SPD). It was the party of the ruling bureaucracy in the GDR until its disappearance in 1990.

2. Gregor Gysi, lawyer, Bundestag deputy, president of the PDS group in the Bundestag until the Cottbus congress; Lothar Bisky, president of the party until the Cottbus congress; André Brie, PDS deputy in the European parliament, one of the “chief ideologues”, protagonist of a “modern socialism”, anti-Stalinist and moderate; Dietmar Bartsch, treasurer of the PDS, member of the managing committee, belonging to the apparatus hard core.

3. The Congress of Münster was held in April 2000. It has been interpreted by the media as the beginning of the end of the PDS, an irresponsible party with too many nostalgics and leftists. Some left sectors on the other hand saw it as a victory against the rightwing tendencies inside the PDS. To the great astonishment of the leading nucleus around Gregor Gysi, the majority of the delegates rejected the motion of the managing committee on peace policy, which would have overturned the radical and principled pacifism of the PDS and created the possibility of a future approval by PDS deputies of the sending of German troops in the framework of UN operations. For Gysi this vote would have served as a “sign of responsibility” opening the door to the entry of the PDS in a SPD-Green-PDS government, the medium term desire of the modernizing and rightist current dominant in the party.

4. Sarah Wagenknecht, spokesperson of the Communist platform inside the PDS, reelected to the managing committee at Cottbus, was made popular by *Der Spiegel* and the mass media. The Communist platform is a grouping within the PDS of around 2,000 members, above all intellectuals, with nostalgic tendencies, often without alternatives at the level of political orientation (link to the social movements, governmental participation).

5. Gabriele Zimmer is the new president of the PDS.

6. See *IV* September 1998.

7. At the end of the 1960s the SPD participated in a “grand coalition” with the CDU and the Bavarian CSU in the federal government, with the former Nazi Kurt-Georg Kiesinger as Chancellor and Willy Brandt as foreign minister and vice-chancellor. It was the time of the extra-parliamentary opposition, cultural protest and the political radicalization of student and working class youth. The professional bans (“Berufsverbote”) date from 1972 (SPD-FDP coalition with Willy Brandt as chancellor).

8. Entering the government with the SPD, the Greens (“Grünen”) abandoned their pacifist tradition.

9. Petra Pau, president of the party and the PDS parliamentary group in Berlin; Kirsten Radüge, member of the Landesverband Hamburg of the PDS, split before the congress, belonging to an ultra-left wing which had been a big scapegoat for the leading nucleus of the PDS.

10. Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, second television channel, non-commercial.

11. “Energy Cottbus”, a football club who played Bayern München on the Sunday of the Congress.

12. After an increase in work norms of 10% on May 13 1953 which cut workers’ monthly wages by 10%, a strike and demonstrations broke out in East Berlin on June 16. It was crushed by the Soviet Army and the East German police force (25 dead officially, more than 400 according to dissident sources, 4,000 imprisoned, 22 condemned to death). Parodying the official speeches of the time, Bertolt Brecht wrote a satirical poem (published only after his death in 1956) advising the SED leaders to dissolve the people and elect a new one.

13. Michael Brie, academic, brother of André Brie, member of the leadership of the Rosa Luxemburg-Stiftung, a foundation linked to the PDS, theorist of a ‘modern socialism’.

ASIA PACIFIC PEOPLES' SOLIDARITY CONFERENCE "Fighting Neo-Liberalism in the Asia-Pacific." Jakarta, Indonesia 7-10 June, 2001

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Conference themes

Some of the specific themes of the conference will include: * The nature of the current crisis in liberalism * Why is neo-liberalism the capitalists current preferred solution * The nature of the international financial institutions * Relations between (a) Europe and Asia-Pacific and (b) the US and Asia-Pacific * The impact of neo-liberalism in developed as well as developing countries * The role of the military in defending neo-liberal regimes * Strategies for fundamental social change: democratic revolution; popular power; socialism etc * How to achieve international collaboration in struggle * The role of feminist struggle * The social economic crisis and the environmental impact * Trade union organising and worker mobilising * Peasant union organising; land issues; and peasant campaigning * Political strategies and mass mobilising * Culture and struggle

The conference will be an open, public, live-in conference. The agenda will be decided by the INCREASE conference organising committee, in consultation with partner organisations. INCREASE is, of course, interested in hearing suggestions for additional themes and topics. There will be a strong cultural component in the conference programme.

We will consider possibilities for protest mobilisations as part of the conference closer to the date.

Registration for international participants

Costs for international participants at the conference are US\$225 waged/US\$125 unwaged. This includes registration fee, conference keynote papers, accommodation, and three meals per day during the conference.

Registration and payment methods:

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