

International VIEWPOINT

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Philippines: Prospects for the Aquino government
Defeat for the right in Portugal **Sweden** **Ireland**
FEATURE: Debates in East Europe peace movement

INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT

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Comeback for the right

THE FOLLOWING statement was issued by the national leadership of the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire [LCR], French section of the Fourth International, on the morning of March 17, following publication of nearly complete results of the March 16 parliamentary elections. According to these returns, the Socialist Party and its Left Radical allies got 32% and 210 seats; the two 'respectable' bourgeois parties, the Rassemblement pour la Republique (RPR, right Gaullists) and the Union pour la democratie francaise (UDF, Union for French Democracy, liberal Gaullists) got together 42.2% and 289 seats; the Communist Party got 9.8% and 36 seats; and the National Front got 9.8% and 33 seats.

* * *

The right and the extreme right have gained a majority. The National Front, based on racism and demagogy, now has a group of deputies in parliament. These unfortunate results are the consequences of a policy — the

right and the extreme right have harvested what the left in power sowed.

By playing on the argument of "make your vote count, vote against the right," to an extent that made a mockery of the most elementary principles of democracy, the Socialist Party may think now that it has saved its own bacon.

However, the SP vote cannot make up for the setback of the left as a whole, the new drop in the Communist Party vote, and the record abstention rate, which reflect the demobilization of a section of the masses.

Recovery for the left cannot come via "cohabitation" maneuvers [that is, deals between the SP-held presidency and the right or sections of it in parliament]. That would amount to continuing, in a different form, the policy of conciliation with the right and the bosses.

Today, we need a policy that can be useful against these enemies and a new fighting left to pursue it. We need a policy based on mobilizing the working people to fight back against the capitalist attacks and open the way for real change. More than ever, it is going to be necessary to "see red" [the LCR election slogan]!

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The murder that shocked an entire people

ON THE Sveavaeg in the center of Stockholm on March 10, thousands of people gathered around the mountain of flowers and the gas flame on the site of the murder of Olof Palme, as people have done ever since the fateful morning when the country learned of this brutal act by a skulking killer. At the stroke of noon, the time set to honour his memory, this sea of people turned into a united demonstration of restrained anger.

TOM GUSTAFSSON

STOCKHOLM — A quiet but deep tremor has gone through the country. It will never be the same again. The murder of Olof Palme touched the deepest nerves in the Swedish people. There was universal shock, the feeling that this just could not happen, at least *not here*.

The country is still gripped by emotion. Most people were shocked by the killing of the most prominent leader and symbolic representative of the Swedish workers' movement. Many were jolted because they felt that the values that Palme was associated with, or seemed to be associated with, had also been struck down when the fatal bullet was fired. Others were moved because, while not necessarily supporting the Swedish social democracy's political orientation, they shared many of Palme's basic values.

No Swedish politician in the twentieth century has placed such a personal stamp on political life, or so polarized it.

Palme was a thorn in the flesh of his bourgeois opponents, and this was truer the further right you went. No social democratic politician in modern times was so hated by the aggressive right. Partly, it was as a leader of the workers' movement that he attracted their hatred. But it was also because they saw him as an obstacle to a radical right turn in defense and foreign policy.

For such circles, Olof Palme came to be seen virtually as a threat to the "survival of the Swedish nation."

For example, in the last elections, some young conservatives used his picture for a dartboard. Of course, this is an extreme example. But it is not hard to imagine that the murder could have come out of the brown-fever swamps of the far right.

On the right of the Social Democratic Party, some let it be known that they would prefer a more placid, more traditional "Swedish" style of

work. But they talked about that in subdued tones.

The sort of opposition to the social democracy that came from the left, and more and more in recent months from local union organizations, of course was quite different in form and nature. Inevitably Olof Palme came to symbolize many of the things people were critical of, such as the austerity policy and government support for the exploitative policy of Swedish capital in the Third World. But this was not necessarily an obstacle to sharing in a broader community of interest.

Much of the foreign comment has taken as its starting point the idea that Sweden has seemed to be an island of relative stability and peace in the stormy seas of world politics. Many have also pointed to relatively strong impulses of humanitarianism and egalitarianism deeply rooted in the Swedish mind.

There is a basis for such views. Historically, these impulses can be credited to the Swedish workers' movement, which also enjoyed unusually favorable conditions in its struggle. Such undercurrents in the minds of Swedish people obviously influence the framework of official policy. In the past days, many of these undercurrents have come to the surface. The wave of outrage and solidarity would be incomprehensible except against this background.

Within days of the murder, demonstration after demonstration started up, most of them spontaneously and without any interconnection. At the funeral in Stockholm on March 15, hundreds of thousands of people joined the cortege, and tens of thousands filed past the grave in a cemetery filled with memorials of the Swedish workers' movement.

These massive demonstrations, marked by a spirit of humane and collective protest, also helped to

forestall the racist attacks that might have been feared against the scapegoats among the immigrant population.

The police picture of the suspected murderer aroused fears among the country's immigrants and political refugees, since it did not portray a "classic Swedish" type. But in many quarters attempts were made to check what could have been an incitement to reactionary hatred. The whole workers' movement and many other personalities warned against such developments.

Dozens of immigrant organizations called a mass demonstration in the center of Stockholm with the message "Swedish born and immigrants, side by side in this grave hour." About 7,000 people came out on short notice. Foreign Minister Sten Andersson made the same point forcefully, reading a message from Olof Palme's widow, Lisbeth, that it was now more important than ever to close ranks in defense of the values that the murdered premier fought for his entire life.

Nonetheless, we have seen some sinister attempts to take political advantage of the murder. A series of employers have issued "appeals" for general restraint in the aftermath of the tragic event, implying naturally that the workers should exercise such restraint in the coming contract negotiations.

For their own part, the capitalists have not shown any such restraint. We saw another example of the capitalist way of operating days after the murder, when the Stockholm stock market registered its highest index in history, along with a record volume of trading. This paralleled speculations in the business press that the new premier Ingvar Carlsson might be gentler than Palme and inclined to foster a more pro-management economic policy.

In the unions also we have seen attempts to stifle the criticism that had been growing against the policy of concessions and class-collaborationism of the top officials. This is being done in the name of "The need for national unity around values more fundamental than real wages."

However, as life returns to normal, the concrete realities will reemerge. If, out of misdirected hope that in so doing they can foster a respect for life, the workers take a step backward, the bosses will only take a corresponding step forward.

The result of that could only be greater antagonisms in society, greater poverty, greater unemployment, bringing with them a more embittered and violent society, a society whose hallmark would be precisely a lack of respect for life. □

After the fall of Marcos

A NEW political situation has been opened up by the fall of Ferdinand Marcos. While a good many elements of the old regime still remain, the system of government established during the martial law period (1972-1981) has now been shattered.

A new configuration of forces is emerging. The respective place of the various sectors of the Philippine bourgeoisie and elite is changing profoundly, along with the mechanisms of government on the national level.

The anti-imperialist left in the country has to take this turn of events into consideration, all the more since for the moment at least it has lost the initiative.

The first beneficiaries of the overthrow of the Marcos regime are the political forces that most directly led Corazon (Cory) Aquino's campaign. That includes both reformists (although anticommunist) and conservatives, as well as those who jumped on the bandwagon at the last minute, such as the perpetual minister of defense Juan Ponce Enrile.

PAUL PETITJEAN

The situation in the Philippines remains fluid. At least in the Metro-Manila area, the population has had the experience of "people's power," of the might of a mass upsurge. Tomorrow, the revolutionary left may gather the fruits of this experience.

The new regime has to assume control of the provinces. It is divided between a reformist pole attached to the president's office and a conservative one entrenched in the government. It may be torn by conflicts of interests and personal ambitions. Above all, it is going to have to confront an economic and social crisis without parallel in the region — vital, urgent demands from the masses.

Likewise, relations with American imperialism and negotiations on the US bases established in the archipelago are going to put contradictory pressures on the new regime. More important still, because of the dynamic of the mass mobilization, a new democratic opening has emerged in the country; the repressive vise has been loosened. The mass movements can take advantage of this opening to advance their own political and social demands.

The new administration and the new government enjoy real mass support. Corazon Aquino has won everybody's respect, both by what she represents — as Ninoy's widow — and by the way she continued the fight after the February 7 elections. The new government has acquired a real legitimacy, forged in the democratic uprising and sanctified by the Roman Catholic church. However, it remains a pro-imperialist bourgeois government, as attested by the composition of the government and the support extended by Washington.

The stakes in the period now opening are very great. The success of a bourgeois transition to the post-Marcos era is far from assured. In fact, the orderly transition long hoped for by the key sectors of US imperialism and of the Philippine ruling classes was scuttled by Marcos' intransigence, the dynamic of the mass mobilization and the contradictions of Reagan's policy.

Since the end of the 1970s, the Philippine bishops and elements in the US administration have been ringing the alarm bell. The incompetence of the Marcos regime was becoming obvious. In the economic

sphere, the country was sinking deeper into crisis. On the political front, the Marcos clan was driving growing sections of the elite into opposition, and a Communist insurrection gained weight and substance with the growth of the New People's Army.

However, it was only after the assassination of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino in August 1983 that Washington began to really get worried. After a period of indecision, the United States opted for a policy of reform within the regime. Marcos was part of the problem; he was also to be part of the solution. He was to open up the regime by dumping the harder-nosed elements, including General Fabian Ver, the chief of the General Staff. This was to make it possible to bring the oppositionist Philippine bourgeoisie back into the government and reunify the Philippine elites.

The ultimate objective was to create the conditions for a more effective counterinsurgency campaign. (1)

Here we can see a coherent imperialist project. It involved relying on a reformed army to control a limited democratic opening, restoring legitimacy to the neocolonial government, at least in the eyes of the bourgeoisie and the middle classes and acting in concert with the Church hierarchy, as the irreplaceable moral authority.

Nonetheless, this project failed, and the United States came to the brink of a real political disaster, a bloody military confrontation between Marcos' loyalists and the forces that went over to Cory. This failure had deepgoing causes.

The first of these causes has to do with the nature of the regime that had been established with the direct and decisive help of the United States in the period of martial law. It was not just a dictatorial government. It was a clientelist and nepotistic one.

The state was coalesced nationally under Marcos, but it became the instrument of a clan that enriched itself and broadened its own patronage base through its control of the repressive forces, the public funds and government contracts. The state, as an instrument in the hands of a clan, became finally a key element in consolidating a political dynasty, that of the Marcos-Romualdez family and of its intimates, military men such as General Ver, or businessmen such as Eduardo Cojuangco.

The development of such a regime

1. See in particular Walden Bello, "Les Etats-Unis et M. Marcos, ou comment s'en débarrasser," *Le Monde diplomatique*, February 1985; and Naya Chanda, "Reagan's fence-sitters finally welcome Aquino," *Far Eastern Economic Review*, March 6, 1986.

has grave consequences from the standpoint of the long-term interests of imperialist domination, even if initially the Marcos state was able to carry out the infrastructural and social and economic reforms, as well as the repression that Washington wanted.

The army, the police and the state administration became identified with the presidency, which in turn came to be seen as the one big enemy, a unifying focus for mass struggles that were diverse and heterogeneous. The Marcos regime created conditions favorable for the formation, for the first time in the archipelago, of a coherent revolutionary movement on the national scale and a united guerrilla struggle.

As the private property of a clan, the state aroused the opposition of growing sections of the bourgeoisie. And, with the economic crisis aggravating the situation, it gradually lost all legitimacy in the eyes of the middle classes.

As a dynastic regime, it preempted the future. Even the prospects of the death of an ailing dictator in itself opened no reformist perspective for the oppositionist bourgeoisie.

Within the regime, the intimates of the president and his wife consolidated their power more and more, pushing out those who did not belong to this circle of cronies. A key figure in the regime such as Juan Ponce Enrile, known for his political cunning, his ruthlessness and his ambition, gradually lost control of the armed forces to General Ver, a former bodyguard of Marcos, a brute, but a friend of the family. After the end of the 1970s, the regime's social base shrank steadily.

Despite the American pressures, a regime such as that of the Marcos clan proved incapable of compromise, since self-reform was quite alien to its forms of internal functioning. Thus, the assassination of Ninoy Aquino in 1983 was seen by the Church and the oppositionist bourgeoisie as a declaration of war from a regime that had shut the door to any significant liberalization, to any sharing of power.

The reinstatement of General Ver, who was accused of having engineered Aquino's murder, in his post as chief of the General Staff; and the fact that Marcos kept him, despite everything and everybody, as head of the armed forces, finally showed Washington that the dictator could not be a part of a solution to the crisis of the regime.

Thus, the pro-imperialist reform policy advanced by the US State Department ran up against Marcos' intransigence. But the American administration was itself divided. The Pentagon and above all Reagan

personally wanted at all costs to avoid a break with Marcos. There was a long-standing friendship between Reagan and the Marcos family. They had known each other for 20 years, and the Philippine president had helped, by financial contributions, to get his American friend, the former governor of California, elected president. But there was more to it than this.

The division in the American administration up to the eve of the denouement of the crisis shows that the cleavages that appeared recently and on other occasions have not been definitively overcome. The dilemma is always the same: Should the United States hang onto an allied dictatorship that, although in crisis, is "reliable," or must it take the risk of ambitious reforms that could have dangerous consequences.

In this case, the stakes were particularly high, given the presence of immense US military bases in the islands. Marcos was aware of the divisions in the US administration and Reagan's positions, and he was able to play on them with considerable cunning.

A week before the February 7 elections, the White House was still refusing to face the facts and dump its Philippine protegee. Republicans and Democrats in congress had to create a *fait accompli* by supporting the generals going over to Cory to get Reagan to yield. Even then he gave the ousted crooked dictator an almost triumphant reception in Hawaii.

Reagan is turning a grave personal setback, the failure of his policy in the Philippines, into a diplomatic success, refurbishing the United States' image as a democratic power. But the recent divisions can appear again tomorrow, since some US services are supporting the reformist project of Cory and the presidential lobby, while others are relying on the conservative elements in the government and the army.

Cory's cards

Corazon Aquino is clearly not the naive and green little mother that she was believed to be. Since the end of 1985 and the start of the election campaign, she has demonstrated considerable political sense, a sense of how to maneuver and also how to make compromises. Her first moves as president show that she is definitely a factor in the new system of rule, and not just a symbolic moral figure.

Just before the electoral slates were closed, she was able to make

a compromise with Salvador Laurel whereby she agreed to run under the label of his party, the United Nationalist Democratic Organization (UNIDO), while remaining the candidate for president.

She managed to thwart Marcos' post-election maneuvering by declaring herself the winner on the basis of the first results. She was able to resist those who advocated compromise in the face of Marcos' intransigence.

Moreover, she was able to sidestep the sudden offer of patronage from Enrile when he "rebelled" and took refuge in Camp Crame and invited her to set up her government in General Fidel Ramos' police headquarters. At the same time, she agreed to take on board these dubious last-minute allies.

Above all, throughout the weeks of open crisis, she was able to keep in touch with the democratic mass upsurge and give it impetus. She is using the momentum of this movement today to force through some initial radical measures, such as the release of all the political prisoners.

Behind Cory, therefore, there is a project, if not a program, and a political milieu that constitutes a foundation stone of the new government. The history of the Philippines is different from that of the other countries in Southeast Asia, and the present situation is unprecedented.

A lot of unknowns remain, in particular the evolution of an army that never got a taste of power before the martial-law regime, as well as of the Church and certain sectors of the Catholic hierarchy.

Such sectors of the hierarchy, and then the bishops as a whole when the crisis became too serious, played a considerable role in Corazon Aquino's campaign. Already a moral and institutional power, the Roman Catholic Church has now gone into politics. It is a *de facto* participant in the new government.

In the new regime, thus, we find what were very traditional elements in Philippine political life before martial law, such as the big families and their regional power; more modern elements, such as the commercial bourgeoisie, as well as more unusual components — the army and the Church. This is in fact part of the legacy of Marcos. He made the army a central axis of the regime and forced the Church to intervene as an arbiter in order to respond to the major crisis that was opened up by the activity of the army itself.

The institutional Church has been the main formative influence on Cory. As the wife of a politician long imprisoned by Marcos, she was marked by the moderate wing of the defenders of human rights. A member of

The new government

THE NEW government's center of gravity is quite conservative, despite the inclusion of some reformer and liberal elements.

— *Salvador Laurel, vice president premier, minister of foreign affairs.* He broke with Marcos only late in the game, taking the leadership of UNIDO, a coalition of "moderate" opposition groups often associated with the traditional landholding oligarchy.

— *Juan Ponce Enrile, Minister of defense.* He held this post under Marcos. Came over to the opposition at the last minute. He was the guiding spirit of the martial law policy initiated in 1972. Was considered one of the most intelligent figures in the Marcos regime. His position weakened after the end of the 1970s because of the rise of the faction of General Ver and Imelda Marcos.

— *Jaime V Ongpin, minister of finance.* Head of one of the country's main mining companies, the Benguet Mining Corporation. Represents the big-business bourgeoisie identified with Makati, the "City" or "Wall Street" of Manila.

— *Jose Conception Jr., minister of commerce and industry.* A businessman who was president of the Namfrel, the independent movement to monitor the elections which played such an active role in the exposure of the election frauds.

— *Aquilino Pimentel, minister of local administration.* Mayor of Capagayan de Oro in the northern part of the island of Mindanao. President of the PDP-Laban, linked

to the "Social Democratic" current. A reformer.

* * *

The government also includes a half dozen other ministers.

Around the government and the president's office are other figures known for their defense of human rights, as well as many personalities belonging to Church circles and the so-called social democratic current. They include the following:

— *Jovito Salonga, chief of the president's Commission for Good Government.* A former senator who lived long in exile in the United States, president of the Liberal Party (progressive wing).

— *Joker Arroyo, the president's executive secretary.* A lawyer known for his defense of political prisoners.

— *Rene Saguisag, Spokesperson of the president.* Also a lawyer known for his defense of political prisoners.

* * *

In the institutions of the state, the key figures have been kept in place to assure continuity. They are the following:

— *General Fidel V Ramos, chief of the General Staff.* Former assistant chief of the General Staff, moderate adversary of General Ver. Came over to the opposition at the last minute. Very close to the Pentagon. Expert in "counter-insurgency."

— *Jose B Fernandez, governor of the Central Bank.* Veteran of negotiations with the International Monetary Fund.

the country's social elite, she has never broken her class ties. Her political options are polarized on one side by the figure of Cardinal Jaime Sin, the archbishop of Manila, the pivot in a conservative hierarchy but today resigned to reforms; and, on the other side, the currents linked to the "social democrats" and Catholic Action.

These currents have been around for a long time. Already at the beginning of the 1970s, they competed for influence in the student milieu with Marxist currents. But they were paralyzed to a considerable extent by the martial law regime. Only the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was then able to organize multi-form resistance to the dictatorship.

It alone was able to build an underground apparatus rooted in sections of the masses, able to act on a national scale, to absorb the blows of the repression, to extend progressively an armed struggle movement, to combine legal and semilegal struggles with clandestine activity.

The martial-law regime did not leave much space for political "third forces," either of the right, the center or the left. The 1970s were a period of growing bipolarization. However, the government did leave certain semidemocratic openings that allowed various marginalized currents to survive.

The Church could not simply be brought to heel in a country where 85 per cent of the population is Catholic. An army-Church commission, in fact, was established to negotiate the fate of members of the religious orders threatened by the repression.

It was only at the end of the Marcos regime — when formally martial law had been lifted — that the "red" priests and nuns became the target for liquidations. Church social activity could not be eliminated by decree. It was the crucible for very extensive mass work.

The anti-Marcos lobbies established in the United States were powerful, and the regime had to respect a minimum of formal rules in order to

forestall criticisms, especially in the universities. The local governments could not be made to march in step in a country that had never known a centralizing regime. Some provinces remained oppositional.

So, the "social democratic" current maintained itself, although marginally. But it diversified. Its traditional wing, unlike the Marxists, advocated nonviolence. This is true today of the Reverend Father Jose Blanco, a Jesuit priest (2), who was denounced as a "clerico-fascist" as late as September 1985 in a communique of the National Democratic Front (NDF), for his divisive activity within the opposition forces. (3)

Another Jesuit priest, the Reverend Father Intengan, founded the underground Social Democratic Front. But a left wing of this movement involved in mass work, opposed the anti-Communist orientation of the national leadership and often advocated the principle of an alliance with the CPP.

Members of the social democratic current were arrested for conducting armed actions and planting bombs in urban areas.

In the hierarchy, since the end of the 1970s, the bishop of Bukidnon, Monseigneur Francisco Claver, gained a reputation for his defense of a "third way" between the dictatorship and the guerrillas. While recognizing the primary responsibility of the government, he denounced the army and the NPA as two twin forces of militarization. (4)

The social democrat positions corresponded to the concerns of many of the bishops, who were worried about the radicalization of the Church base and convinced that liberation theology was an instrument for subversive penetration, manipulated by the Communists.

Socially, the Jesuits have had a considerable influence among members of the Philippine elite, in particular through their running of the Ateneo University. Now, the Jesuits and the "soc. dem." personalities have gained an important political weight. They influence a party such as the Philippine Democratic Party Combat (PDP-Laban) and Corazon's brother-in-law, "Butz" Aquino. They are well represented in the presidential lobby. They advocate reform to forestall revolution.

2. See Reverend Father Jose Blanco, "Vers une revolution non-violente?" in 'Non-violence actualite,' March 1986.

3. 'Liberation' (organ of the National Democratic Front [NDF], Special Issue No. 2, September 11, 1985, "In unity, our struggle will flourish; in division, our struggle will perish," p. 3.

4. Francisco Claver, "Philippines le termoignage de Mgr. Claver," 'Croissance des Jeunes nations,' No. 257, January 1984.

Despite the obvious reluctance of the military, the president obtained the release of all the known political prisoners, including Jose Maria Sison, a historic figure in the CPP; and Bernabe Buscayno, accused of being the legendary Commander Dante, who symbolized the link between the Huk guerrillas in the 1950s and the NPA, which was formed in 1969. (5)

The conflict between the "reformers" and the "conservatives" is developing today on other terrains, starting with the extent of special powers to be granted to the "revolutionary" presidency and the institutional reforms to be pushed through.

The conflicts that continue to shake the new regime can offer the anti-imperialist left in the Philippines the opportunity to regain a field of independent mass action.

The left's tactics

The entire left, even that part that backed Corazon's candidacy, has noted with concern the presence in the new government of a figure such as Enrile. Ed Garcia, representative of the Movement for National Sovereignty and Democracy (KAAKBAY), which is led politically by Jose Diokno and also includes independent Marxists, argues that the "popular will" that brought Corazon Aquino to power has been deflected by the military.

But the entire left, including the part that advocated a boycott of the elections, recognises the popular character of Cory's victory.

In 1985, the Philippine left had begun to prepare its intervention in the 1986 regional and local elections. All the components of the left — including the CPP — were thinking of participating directly or indirectly in the electoral confrontation in a series of regions. But the announcement of the presidential elections confronted the anti-imperialist movement with a difficult tactical choice. Because it was divided it was difficult for the left to intervene rapidly enough to change the opposition candidates. The Aquino-Laurel ticket was bourgeois. But it raised great hopes among the people. The minority currents of the anti-imperialist left got involved in the election campaign. On the other hand the majority, represented by the CPP and the NDF, defended the principle of a boycott. (6)

Bayan, a mass coalition organization influenced by the NDF, theoretically justified the boycott by putting forward three non-negotiable preconditions for its participation in the elections: the resignation of Marcos (which was constitutionally necessary),

the lifting of the decrees permitting arbitrary arrests and the release of political prisoners and the simultaneous organization of local elections. The CPP and the NDF generally denounced the February 7 elections as a farce without significance, if not thoroughly reactionary. In a statement dated January 15 the CPP applauded Cory Aquino's courage. But it predicted that "the 'snap presidential election' ... will be no different from the US-Marcos dictatorship's past bogus election ... But it has the making of being the biggest political swindle ever attempted by the US-Marcos clique upon our people." (7)

For the National Democratic Front also, these elections could only serve the interests of the regime. In a solemn appeal the NDF declared that: "The snap election is a farce that will only serve the interest of the Marcos regime and its US patron. This is the message that we impart in this manifesto." At the end of a lengthy analysis the NDF concluded that whatever the good will of Cory or of those who supported participation, "to participate in (this election), therefore, is tantamount to supporting the US-Marcos dictatorship and its bankrupt schemes. To participate in it is to give the ailing regime a new lease of life and further entrench tyranny. Far from securing the desired basic changes in the present system, participation in the snap election will only prolong the life of the entire oppressive ruling system and intensify the sufferings of the broad masses of our people." (8)

This boycott policy was applied only cautiously. The CPP did not try to oppose the course of the elections physically, and in several provinces movements that officially advocated a boycott helped the NAMFREL [National Citizens Movement for free Elections] during the vote. Many members of Bayan, the radical coalition of mass organizations that advocated a boycott, joined in Cory's campaign.

It is likely that within the CPP divergent opinions have appeared. From his prison cell, Jose Maria Sison himself criticized both too hard a boycott policy and an uncritical policy of participation. He maintained that there could be cooperation between the supporters of a "minimum boycott," — that is, a position in principle, nothing more — and the supporters of "critical participation." (9)

However, it seems that in some groups of activists, which were divided about what attitude to take toward the elections, there were sharp polemics between left elements engaged in "critical participation"

and supporters of the boycott, who were convinced that the reelection of Marcos would be the signal for a new wave of radicalization among the masses who had seen their hopes dashed.

That in fact was the prognosis on which the boycott call was based. Marcos could not lose control of the electoral operation; the United States would not drop its protegee on that occasion. In these conditions, the opposition could only give the operation credibility. The CPP clearly had not gauged the democratic people's movement whose force turned the tables on Marcos. This error of perspective in fact extended even beyond February 7.

In an interview given on February 13, Antonio Zumel, a member of the Political Bureau of the CPP, and chair of the NDF, congratulated Corazon Aquino for the way in which she was continuing the struggle despite Marcos' electoral fraud.

While presenting a sober judgement on the forces of the revolutionary left in the country and discussing the conditions for a ceasefire in the event of an Aquino victory, Zumel announced that the political and social polarization of the country was going to accelerate still more.

The role of the moderate opposition was going to decline more and more: with "this revolutionary situation that we have ... it is logical that the moderate opposition will tend to contract as forces go to one side or the other." In fact, "today there is hardly any room for reforms." (10)

CPP activists today admit that this error of judgement led them into a blind alley in these crucial weeks and that they now have to reevaluate their tactic. In early March, a debate was in progress in the CPP leadership over adopting a new tactical orientation, while Corazon Aquino was leading a rip-roaring ideological offensive, calling on the guerrillas to lay down their arms. At the same time,

5. In 1942, the Communist Party of the Philippines (PKP), which became pro-Moscow, and from which the founders of the present CPP broke in 1967, launched a guerrilla movement against the Japanese occupier, a movement known under the name of the Huks. See 'IV' No. 38, October 17, 1983.

6. See 'International Viewpoint,' No. 92, February 10, 1986.

7. "Boycott the snap election, advance the revolution," 'Ang Bayan' (organ of the CPP), editorial statement, special release, January 15, 1986.

8. 'Liberation,' Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1986, "Our liberation lies in people's war; a call to boycott the snap elections," p. 4.

9. An interview given on December 26, 1985, extensive excerpts of which were reprinted in 'Intercontinental Press,' Vol. 24, No. 5, March 10, 1986, p. 128.

10. Interview given to Guy Sacerdoti, 'Far Eastern Economic Review,' February 27, 1986.

she offered the NPA a six-month truce to discuss the possible legalization of the CPP. (11)

For the time being, and in the absence of anything coming from the Philippines, the international office of the NDF, based in Europe, issued a statement on February 26, 1986, welcoming "a people's victory over the US-backed Marcos regime." It said, "In toppling the Marcos regime, the people have cracked the imperialist hold of the US over the Philippines" following a long and hard struggle. But there is a very great danger that the United States would seek to reestablish its control. "The NDF takes this occasion to congratulate Corazon Aquino for her role in the ouster of the US-backed Marcos regime. We are prepared to give our support to her positive efforts to fulfill such democratic demands as the release of political detainees and the restoration of press freedom." But the NDF notes that the struggle must be continued and it calls on the "Filipino people to defend their gains" and to "advance democratic and patriotic gains." It is simply a matter of taking the first steps to dismantle the apparatus of the former regime. (12)

The NPA claims to have 32,000 full-time or part-time fighters. The American intelligence services credit it with about 16,500 members. These figures are not contradictory, since the first includes part-time fighters. The NPA has acquired strong roots in many regions of the country. There seems to be no question of its laying down its arms. But it is possible that there will be a suspension of military operations to give the new government time to demonstrate to the masses what it is going to do and to give time to study Corazon Aquino's concrete proposals.

Today, the left forces, progressives and revolutionaries, have to operate in a new context. They have to reconstitute their unity in order to intervene in the coming months so as to take the initiative on the social and political fronts.

During this watershed period, it is very important to make sure that international solidarity does not flag. It is in fact very likely that the present situation is going to be seized on by anticommunist currents in international Church and social democratic circles in an attempt to isolate the Philippine anti-imperialist left.

Such attempts must be blocked. Today, as before, the independent people's movements need our help. □

11. See in particular the article by Philippe Pons, 'Le Monde,' March 5, 1986, p. 6.

12. Declaration of the National Democratic Front published in 'Liberation,' Special Issue No. 2, February 26, 1986.

Presidential elections show surprise victory for Soares

IT WAS undoubtedly the engagement by the left against the right-wing candidacy of Freitas do Amaral between the two rounds of the election which guaranteed Mario Soares' victory in the presidential elections.

After the first round, which took place on January 26, the margin in favour of the right-wing candidate was large with a 46.3% majority as against 26% for Mario Soares, the runner up. (1) In the second round, which took place in mid-February, the results were reversed and Mario Soares got 51.35% of the votes cast.

His electoral victory is thus clearly the result of a mobilisation of left voters at a time when most political commentators were claiming a victory for Amaral.

FRANCISCO LOUCA

The campaign for the presidential elections constituted an important event in Portuguese political life. Already for several years the problem of a successor to Ramalho Eanes had been seen as an essential factor in the political stability of the country. Eanes was the general who commanded the troops at the time of the November 25, 1975 coup d'etat and, having already served two terms as president, was constitutionally barred from serving a third.

It was a long wait and the election campaign had, in reality, been launched months before. Mario Soares was the first candidate to enter the lists. As prime minister for most of 1985, and leader of the Portuguese Socialist Party [PS], until the parliamentary elections on October 6, 1985, he led the coalition government with the main bourgeois party, the Social Democratic Party (PSD), wielding a large parliamentary majority. His plan had openly been to stand in the presidential elections as the candidate of the PS and the PSD, and this plan was backed by the main bourgeois political leaders and advisers to the US embassy.

In order to get the support of the bourgeois parties for his candidacy, Soares also got the PS involved in the construction of electoral pacts with the PSD and the CDS (Right Christian Party), which represented about 10 per cent of the electorate, during the municipal elections last December. The aim of this was to

dislodge the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) from the town halls where they were dominant. In general these electoral coalitions did not achieve their objective.

During the last year two factors had combined to disrupt Soares' plans.

First, popular opposition to the austerity measures imposed by the government. Even if this was not translated into huge struggles this period nevertheless saw the beginnings of a generalised sentiment of discontent that was expressed clearly in the October 6 general elections when the PS vote declined from 36% to 20% of the votes cast. (2) A rush of scandals like the one over delayed payment of wages when some firms were refusing to pay their workers even though they were still working, also contributed to the fall in popularity of the PS-PSD coalition government.

The second factor, which brought the general elections forward to October, was the internal crisis of the second party in the government coalition, the PSD. As a party of the

1. Apart from the three candidates of the left mentioned in this article, the PCP did originally field a candidate, a member of their Central Committee, Angelo Beloso. At the beginning of the election campaign the latter announced his intention to stand down in favour of Zenha in the first round. Zenha was considered by the PCP as "the only democratic candidate who would fight the right".

2. See 'International Viewpoint' No. 89, December 23, 1985.

bourgeoisie since April 25, 1974, the PSD now saw a revolt of its base against its marginalisation in relation to the PS, both within the coalition government itself and in the framework of Mario Soares' candidacy for the presidency.

The death of the PSD president, who supported Mario Soares' candidacy, opened the way for the discontent within the PSD to come to the surface. The party congress brought a change in the composition of the leadership. The new leadership of the PSD broke immediately with the coalition government which tied it to the PS, and this provoked the calling of the general elections on October 6, in which the PSD got 36 per cent of the votes. It was the advent of this new leadership of the PSD which brought about the appearance of a bourgeois candidate competing with Mario Soares in the presidential elections and this was the Christian Democrat, Freitas do Amaral.

The candidates of the left

The first round of the presidential elections in January 1986 was a triumph for the united candidate of the right, Freitas, who mustered an absolute majority of 46.3%. For the left there were three candidates — Soares, Salgado Zenha and Lourdes Pintasilgo and they were fighting amongst themselves for the chance to participate in the second round of the elections in which only the two top candidates would stand.

Salgado Zenha, was, until the eve of the elections, still a member of the PS and was Soares' number two before he broke with him in 1980. This was good enough reason for him to get the simultaneous support of the PCP and General Eanes, who were both seeking to undermine Soares' role in the political life of the country.

The third candidate, Lourdes Pintasilgo, has had a more checkered political career. She was a functionary in the diplomatic corps in the last year of the dictatorship, involved in confidential work for the government, notably in the United Nations where she scrupulously followed the policy of the regime.

On April 25, 1974, she was to be found amongst the new democrats and President Eanes nominated her as prime minister in 1979 for a short period. Since then she has been tied in with small left-wing Catholic groups.

When in government she established certain basic rights for women, and she uses pacifist rhetoric and is vaguely



Mario Soares (DR)

critical of NATO and the EEC (European Economic Community). She was very popular at the end of the 1970s, to the extent that the opinion polls were tipping her as the favourite for the presidential elections.

She was also clearly the favourite of militants and voters supporting the PCP and among Eanes supporters, the latter having recently set up a political party, the Party of Democratic Renewal (PRD) which got 18% of the votes in the general elections in October 1985. Pintasilgo's success is tied in with her extraordinary capacity to draw the sympathy of large sections of the electorate, unhappy with the political institutions, with the functioning of the regime and with the social crisis.

Despite the fact that Pintasilgo supports the current system and the options available within that framework (defence of private property, the church etc) the radical nature of her political rhetoric led sections of the far left to support her. This created certain difficulties also for the PCP leadership in convincing their electorate to vote for Salgado Zenha, the candidate officially supported by the PCP in the first round.

In every case the candidacies of the left constituted a challenge to the tradition of the revolution of the carnations. Ranged against the right-wing candidate, Freitas, the heir apparent of the former dictator, were three candidates who had either been involved in compromise with the dictatorship like Pintasilgo or had tried to create consensus in the name of the struggle against anarchopopulism, against revolutionary initiatives in the period opened up by April 25 and for the political stabilisation of the regime.

Soares and Zenha, both champions of the current regime of which the PS was a cornerstone, waged a campaign against "extremism of the left and right", putting forward vague promises

for "democratizing public life".

Slightly ahead of Zenha and Pintasilgo in the first round, Soares found himself with 26% of the vote as against 46.3% for the right-wing candidate. The PCP then called for a vote for Soares in the second round. It was the massive left vote in the second round which, with a unanimity that was not foreseen a few months earlier, brought him his final victory.

This result has to be seen fundamentally as a vote to stop Freitas from winning. The popular masses feared that a victory for Freitas would deepen the policy of attacks on democratic rights and the offensive against the workers. This explains the explosion of popular joy on the evening of the announcement of the results, in which all the left parties were involved.

Soares' victory will not prevent the PSD government from carrying out its functions. According to the Portuguese constitution, it is the government which controls most political functions and can therefore govern without much interference from the president (unlike in France, for example). The defeat of the right is thus more important on the political and psychological level than in terms of the real capacity of the government to act. It is nevertheless a sufficiently important factor to create certain internal tensions within the bloc supporting the government and it will give greater encouragement to sections of workers to struggle against, for example, the austerity measures which they have hitherto tolerated.

The successive elections in recent months — the legislative elections in October 1985, the municipal elections in December 1985 and the two rounds in the presidential elections in January and February 1986 — reveal a series of political contradictions which we will quickly run through.

Free Otelo Carvalho

IN JULY, 1984, along with several dozen members of his party, the United Popular Forces (FUP), Otelo Carvalho was imprisoned in Caxias. The prison has sinister memories since it was used for political prisoners under the dictatorship as well. Carvalho is still in jail and it is expected that he could remain there for some time.

The trial in the "case of the FP-25" began about six months ago. (1) But up to now only three of the accused have been heard and there are about 40 more, with over 700 witnesses.

The slowness of the procedure is in itself illustrative of the way in which the judicial system operates. Several observers, jurists and defence lawyers have seen fit to denounce the judicial procedure as stemming from a police-organised plot with very precise political motives. It represented an attempt to undermine the influence of an important figure who retained popularity because of his role in the "revolution of the carnations". The underlying aim of the operation seems more probably to rest in a campaign for the adoption of a new law on security destined to usher in a new organised political police which, legally at any rate, has not existed since April 25, 1974. To back up this theory there exists the heavy police infiltration of the terrorist organisation, FP-25 which has been confirmed by the recent actions perpetrated by this organisation. These activities have contrived to prejudice the defence case or to present the right in a favourable light as with the assassination, on the eve of the second round of the presidential elections, of the director general of prisons.

Because of the confused nature of the situation, made worse by the portrayal of the ex-leaders of the FUP as police provocateurs and because of the defence argument that there was a plan to create an armed wing but that it had not yet been put into action, the solidarity movement and the fight against repression is extremely underdeveloped inside the country. It has even developed in other countries, like Greece, however.

Carvalho has now been held for one year and a half without any decision being made or any real evidence being brought forward and it is becoming urgent to build a protest movement against police repression and for his release.

1. The Popular Forces of April 25 (FP-25) is the terrorist organisation which Otelo is accused of belonging to.

The first point relates to the development of two distinct patterns which, on the electoral level, give us important indications as to the political structure of the country.

The first of these movements tends to predominate in periods of greater political stability when, for example, the government consisted of the PS-PSD alliance or when these two parties were alternating in government. This trend is characterised by a very slow homogenisation of the electorate at a national level, under the banners of the main parties of the left and the right. This was marked by the growth of the PCP in the rural areas of the North where it is usually weaker and of the PSD vote in the urbanised South. It was also expressed in the process of industrialisation and growing unionisation in the North of the country along with increasing vacillation on the part of important sectors of the petty bourgeoisie and urban population between the PS and the PSD.

The second pattern we can see appears in times of great instability and political confrontation. Despite everything, it usually shows a continuing division between the areas where the left and right predominate.

But the second problem stems from the crisis of political leadership of the bourgeoisie which this presidential election has highlighted. The PSD and the CDS with their presidential candi-

date (and even during the time when they supported Mario Soares) were proposing to change the electoral law in order to guarantee parliamentary stability and hence, governmental stability. (3) At the same time the new law on security, to which the prelude was the arrest and imprisonment of Otelo Carvalho (see box) will establish more rigorous and repressive norms of operation than those which were formally in place under the dictatorship. And what is already at stake is the construction of a political police.

It is obvious that the election of Soares and the support which he finally obtained from the PCP against the right-wing candidate has rather disrupted these plans. Nevertheless to the extent that the workers' movement remains subordinate to certain bourgeois figures for whom compromise with these plans is always possible, it will have very little power to intervene in the debates concerning democratic rights and the electoral system.

The third issue raised by the cycle of elections relates to the mind-boggling decline in the PS vote in October 1985 (from 36% to 20%) and its subsequent rise in February 1986 with the victory in the presidential elections. The symbol of the phoenix rising from the ashes has been very useful to the social democrats even at the cost of a change in political

direction which went from a government and electoral alliance with the parties of the right (the price of which was the loss of votes in the October and December 1985 elections) to an appeal for a vote for the left, "against the conservative candidate and his fascist past", during the presidential elections. The fact that this change in direction had the desired effect sheds a lot of light on the contradictions that the PS faces and on its links with the working class.

But the most important thing to understand now is that the victory of Soares has enabled him to whitewash the record of the government under his leadership in relation to alliances with the right, the austerity policies and the corrupt system of patronage. For revolutionaries who fight for the emergence of a political alternative to the reformist parties this is the fundamental issue which confronts them after the presidential elections, now that the candidate of the right is defeated, a fact which they can only applaud.

The final question which has to be raised relates to the debate opened up amongst an important section of the mass movement about the clear failure of the policies of the PCP which they have been engaged in since 1980 and which aimed to promote General Eanes' party and to undermine the influence of the PS. This strategy did not prevent Soares from getting into the second round of the presidential elections as the representative of the left. The PCP leadership, to a large degree because of its anti-fascist reflexes stemming from its history, was forced to call a four-day extraordinary congress in order to change its previous orientation which prohibited any vote for Soares and they eventually called for a vote against the right in the second round.

The PCP now calls for the establishment of a government of the left, a policy which it will rapidly abandon to return to one of exposing the Soares' leadership. This means that today, as compared with previous years, the PCP is finding itself with no real goal outside of the psychology of the "beleaguered fortress", which by definition is a defensive and fragile position. Any analysis of the failure of its orientation, of its sectarianism and its sharp turns in direction, will be an important element in the development of the political debate within a significant section of the workers' movement. □

3. The current electoral law established a system of proportional representation by district on the basis of electoral lists. All the lists are entitled to equal access to all forms of communication including television and radio, during the election campaign.

The debates around the Prague Appeal

FOR SOME TIME the question of the division of Europe has become increasingly important in the internal debates of the peace movement. It is principally around this theme that the dialogue between the peace groups in the East and the West has begun. The place accorded to this question at the last four conventions of the European Nuclear Disarmament campaign (END) attests to the sensitivity to it in the ranks of the movement. After the international meeting in Perugia, Italy, in 1984, a Network for an East-West Dialogue was set up at the initiation of Dieter Esche, the German Greens' deputy to the European Parliament. This Network organized an initial forum on the theme "Europe and peace, 40 years after Yalta," in West Berlin, in February 1985, and is preparing a second one for this coming April in Milan to be called "The Helsinki Accords: a mirage or a hope for Europe?" The following article outlines the debate that has ensued on this issue.

JACQUELINE ALLIO

The problem of the division of Europe has been highlighted since the Western peace movement, in spite of the breadth of its mobilizations, began to suffer successive reverses in a series of countries with the deployment of US missiles. These defeats have entailed more profound questioning of the strategy put forward up until now. The inability to make the governments of the NATO countries retreat from the demented arms race has shown what weight the policy of the status quo, established by the Yalta agreements in 1945 and ratified by the Helsinki Accords 30 years later, bears in the maintenance of the respective hegemonies of American imperialism and the Soviet bureaucracy on the two parts of Europe. The massive mobilizations last autumn in Great Britain, the Netherlands and the Spanish state demonstrate that the peace movements in these countries have not been defused but that they have recoiled is undeniable. (1) Moreover, the question of alliances — with the organized workers' movement or with independent peace groups in the East — is being posed all the more sharply in face of the need to conquer the enemy and create a new relationship of forces on the national and international scale. The ability of the movement to set forth perspectives for action while taking into account

their combined political problems has also been an important advance.

A difficult dialogue

Dialogue with the independent groups of Eastern Europe has not always been easy and a number of obstacles and misunderstandings have had to be overcome. First of all there are difficulties in communicating directly because of the risk of repression which independent peace activists in the East run by holding meetings in their own countries and in the light of the obstinate refusal of the authorities to grant them visas necessary to attend international forums held in the West. Also, the projection of a favorable image of the Western peace movements put forward by the bureaucracy in most of the Eastern European countries is sure to provoke an understandable mistrust.

There is also the problem that certain organizations in the West, anxious to maintain a good relationship with the official committees in the East even to the point of sacrificing their relationship with independent activists who have suffered repression, are seen as traitors. Even aside from the basic differences in

the manner of approaching the question of peace, the immediate stakes are not the same in the West and in the East. (2) In the former, the movements have stressed above all the fight against missile deployment. They have centered their demonstrations around this question and have demanded measures leading to unilateral disarmament. In the latter countries, the peace activists have posed first of all, and sometimes exclusively, the problem of democratic rights of expression and of organization, without which all discussion and proposals for action for peace sound like pure abstractions.

Charter 77 [Czech human rights group] has played a not insignificant role in this debate, even though it is not defined as a peace organization. Although Czechoslovakia has no peace movement comparable to that in East Germany, the signers of the Charter have on several occasions addressed open letters to the antiwar movement in the West. By their having taken such a position, no matter what the disagreements they may have had in this regard, the Charter's authors have given impetus to the debate among peace activists of other countries in Eastern Europe. Their address to the END convention in Amsterdam in July 1985 (called the Prague Appeal and centering on the question of the Helsinki Accords) elicited responses by the dozens, as many from the East as from the West. These contributions revealed more than just slight differences with the point of view expressed by the authors of the Appeal as to the true meaning and implication of the Helsinki Accords.

The authors of the appeal reproach the antiwar movement for not having made more of a document that they see as representing a peace pledge on the part of the signatory states. However, many people in the debate, skeptical of the peaceful intentions of the present governments, did not hide their doubts about the worth of international treaties that, by simply not being applied, can become worthless scraps of paper. That is one of the reasons given by the Polish KOS [Committee of Social Resistance] — a clandestine organization linked to Solidarnosc — for refusing to sign the Prague Appeal. Most people rebelled at the idea that the status quo should just be accepted since that runs completely counter to the perspective of dissolution of the military blocs.

1. On the situation in the Netherlands see the article by Wineke 't Hart in 'International Viewpoint', No. 78, June 17, 1985. On Great Britain and the Spanish State see 'IV' No. 79, July 1, 1985.

2. See 'IV' No. 79, July 1, 1985.

On the question of democratic freedoms, the Prague Appeal is sufficiently ambiguous to give rise to quite contradictory commentaries. Those, particularly in the East, who entertain illusions about "Western democracy" and in whose eyes the United States is all-virtuous, reproach the authors of the Appeal for not acknowledging that the only military aggressor is the Soviet Union. (In the following dossier see the text of *Politikus* with Peter Uhl's sharp response.) Others, like the activists of the East-West initiative of West Berlin, or we ourselves, feel the need in their responses to stress the daily violations of democratic rights in the West, best illustrated by the scorn with which the elected governments treat the opinions of the majority of the population, particularly in the realm of military policy.

Nearly all the contributions insist on the total absence of democratic freedoms in the East, a point that is not explicitly confronted in the Appeal.

The question of the unification of Europe

Another theme — for us an essential one — on which the text remains silent is that of the social, economic and political transformations without which there can be no question of an independent and democratic Europe. The East German contribution, which we are publishing in the dossier that follows and which is signed by leading individuals in the independent peace movement of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), has the merit of confronting this problem head-on. For the signatories of this text it is a prerequisite and decisive question for the unification of our continent on a peaceful basis. How can we imagine putting an end to the division if we do not attack the roots of the evil? If we do not strike at the logic of an economic system in the West that is the cause of all social and political injustice, of unemployment, of poverty, of the destruction of the environment? And in the East, if we do not attack the maintenance of a totalitarian regime in which a bureaucratic minority, monopolizing the management of the means of production, denies the most elementary needs of the masses in order to preserve its own privileges, goes one better than the imperialist military policy and imposes an absurd economic policy, which is catastrophic for the development of the country and for the standard of living?

It is in this context that the debate over the division of Europe and the historical, political and social context

in which that division occurred assumes such importance. We hope that the forum which will be held in Milan on April 11-13, will push forward the debate on the various problems that are raised in the extracts we are publishing and particularly on the question of the division of Germany, to which we have not been able to grant the space that it merits in the dossier that follows.

For our part, we are convinced that the antiwar movement can only exist as a mass social movement if it is articulated around slogans of a simple and immediate nature, comprehensible to everyone. In this sense, the demands for unilateral disarmament addressed to governments remain absolutely current whether they turn on the withdrawal of the deployed nuclear missiles or

on any other aspect of a military policy that we are challenging. But to simply say that is not enough to resolve the crisis the movement is undergoing, a crisis both of strategy and leadership. In order to overcome this crisis it will be necessary to define an orientation that takes into account the realities of the economic and social systems on both sides of "the Iron Curtain" and the necessity for their radical transformation in order for the perspective of a united, democratic and peaceful Europe to become a reality. It is because the debate launched by the publication of the Prague Appeal helps to proceed along this road that we have decided to publish important extracts from it. We begin our dossier with the text of the Appeal itself. □

The Prague Appeal

THE PRAGUE appeal was signed on March 11, 1985, and presented to the END convention in Amsterdam the following July. The document was made available by Palach Press and translated for them by AG Brian.

Dear Friends,

It is 40 years now since there was a war on European soil. Notwithstanding, Europe has not been a continent of peace. Far from it! As Europe has been one of the main points of friction between the two power blocs, tension has been a permanent feature throughout the period, thereby posing a threat to the entire world. Were a war to break out here, it would turn not only into a world conflict but most likely into one that would prove fatal for the entire planet.

The reason Europe has played this baleful role is the divided state of our continent. Our common hope, therefore, lies in overcoming this division. This can only be achieved through a conscious decision by all to gradually transform the very political realities which are responsible for the present situation.

A shaky status quo

One reason why the state of non-war has lasted 40 years is the fact that both sides have respected the situation created when the spheres of military operations agreed on at Yalta degenerated into military and

political blocs. What governs the continued efforts to maintain, defend and strengthen the status quo are fears about destabilisation of the balance that has been achieved. For this reason, a process of change will call for great sensitivity. It cannot be accompanied by threats of achieving superiority on either side. On the contrary, it will require guarantees and assurances, as well as an evaluation of the present situation in all its component aspects. It will be essential to acknowledge the present state of affairs as the basis for change to dispel fears of a revival of the old dangers which have led to catastrophe twice in this century already. However, the chances of moving beyond the present situation are not altogether as unfavourable as they might seem.

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and its Final Act signed in Helsinki, are, like the subsequent talks and the final document of Madrid [follow-up conference to Helsinki] not just an acknowledgement of the status quo, but also constitute a programme of European and Euro-American cooperation. Throughout this process, the negotiations have not been conducted between the blocs but between equal

partners, a fact which has underlined the independence of all participating states and established in principle the sort of relations which, if implemented, would open the way to the unification of Europe. Furthermore, the principle of the indivisibility of peace, a legacy of European culture, has been embodied in relations not only between states, but also between the state and society, and between citizens and governments.

The requirement that governments should fulfil all their undertakings and obligations has not been made full use of by the peace movement. Such binding agreements sanctioned by international law constitute a framework whereby citizens may not only exercise public scrutiny of governments but also find imaginative ways of loosening ossified positions. Because of the great variety of conditions in the different countries, there has been a tendency to stress the dissimilarities. However, these must be fully grasped and respected if a common approach and European solidarity are to be achieved.

A democratic and sovereign Europe is inconceivable so long as individual citizens, groups of citizens or nations are denied the right to take part in decisions affecting not only their everyday lives, but also their very survival. Within a framework of cooperation and dialogue among those who genuinely seek to overcome the present dangerous situation, it should be possible to come forward with different disarmament initiatives and proposals: the creation of nuclear-free and neutral zones; the encouragement of relations between individuals, groups and states; support for agreements on non-aggression, as well as the renunciation of the use of force or nuclear weapons; and, finally, regional treaties of all kinds, including, for example, rapprochement between the EEC [European Economic Community] (1) and the CMEA [Council for Mutual Economic Assistance]. (2) Within this framework citizens would be able to campaign against the in-

sensitive treatment of the environment and, taking governments at their word, analyse government policies and their likely effects. In short, it is necessary to support all actions by individuals, groups and governments seeking the rapprochement and free association of European nations while rejecting any measures which might postpone or thwart the achievement of this ideal.

The German question

In our pursuit of these aims we can no longer avoid those issues which have so far been taboo, one of which is the division of Germany.

If our aim is European unification, then no one can be denied the right to self-determination; and this applies equally to the Germans. As with all other rights, though, this must not be enforced at the expense of other peoples, nor by way of ignoring their fears. Let us therefore declare unequivocally that no solution shall be sought through a further revision of European frontiers. In the process of European rapprochement, frontiers should gradually lose much of their significance, but even this should not be regarded as an opportunity for the revival of nationalistic backsliding. While appreciating this fact, let us acknowledge openly the right of the Germans freely to decide if or how they wish to unite their two states within their present frontiers. Following Bonn's agreements with its Eastern neighbours and the Helsinki Accords, the signing of a peace treaty with Germany could become one of the most important levers for a positive transformation of Europe.

Another taboo subject has been the withdrawal of foreign troops. Let us therefore propose that NATO and the Warsaw Pact enter forthwith into negotiations on the dissolution of their military organisations, on the removal of all nuclear weapons

either sited in or aimed at Europe, and on the withdrawal of US and Soviet troops from the territories of their European allies. Part of such an agreement should be the scaling down of armed forces in all countries of the European continent to a level eliminating the risk of aggression from any quarter.

These and other aims should be part and parcel of an interlocking process serving the ideal of mutual rapprochement and therefore offering no possible threat to any party. We do not seek to turn Europe into a third superpower, but instead to overcome the superpower bloc structure by way of an alliance of free and independent nations within a democratic and self-governing all-European community living in friendship with nations of the entire world. The freedom and dignity of individual citizens are the key to the freedom and self-determination of nations. And only sovereign nations can transform Europe into a community of equal partners which would not pose the threat of a global nuclear war, but instead serve as an example of real peaceful coexistence.

Perhaps this ideal sounds like a dream. However, we are convinced that it expresses the desire of a majority of Europeans. It is therefore an ideal worth striving for; all the more so, in view of the fact that today's world will hardly surmount its crisis unless Europe also takes the path its citizens desire.

We believe that our views will meet with your understanding, and we wish you every success in your proceedings.

Signed: Jarmila Belikova, Vaclav Benda, Tomas Bisek, Daniela Biskova, Petr Cibulka, Jan Carnogursky, Albert Cerny, Jiri Dienstbier, Lubos Dobrovsky, Karel Freund, Jiri Hajek, Milos Hajek, Vaclav Havel, Ladislav Hejdanek, Oldrich Hromadko, Marie Hromadkova, Jirina Hrabkova, Jozel Jablonicky, Vladimir Kadlek, Eva Kanturkova, Bozena Komarkova, Jan Kozlik, Marie Rut Krizkova, Ladislav Lis, Jeromir Litera, Vaclav Maly, Anna Marvanova, Jaroslav Meznik, Pavel Murasko, Dana Nemcova, Radim Palous, Milos Rejchrt, Jakub Ruml, Jan Ruml, Jiri Ruml, Jan Sabata, Jaroslav Sabata, Anna Sabatova jr., Anna Sabatova sr., Libuse Silhanova, Jan Simsa, Petruska Sustrova, Petr Uhl, Vera Vranova, Josef Zverina.

Prague, March 11, 1985



Peace protest in East Berlin, July 1985 (DR)

1. Members of the EEC are France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Greece, Spain and Portugal.

2. Members of the CMEA, also known as Comecon, are the Soviet Union, East Germany, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Cuba, Mongolia and Vietnam.

GDR reply to Prague Appeal

THE FOLLOWING text is the reply of some of the most prominent members of the East German peace movement to the Prague Appeal. (1)

To the signatories of the Prague Appeal.

Dear friends,

Your Appeal of March 11, 1985, has met with a great response from amongst us. As you know, for some time we have also been discussing the problems — and their possible solutions — to which you address yourselves in the Appeal. We greet and support your aim of starting a common discussion and give our support to the Appeal.

We also believe the division of Europe and the superpower tensions which have resulted from it to be a major threat to peace. We believe that this threat to human life has a pernicious influence and that it prevents constructive thinking on present and future problems (hunger, social injustice, the environment etc.)

Against the military blocs

As far as the main points of your Appeal are concerned, we agree with you on the demands for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Europe, for the dissolution of the military blocs and for the creation of a European peace order which gives all states equal sovereign rights. We formulated our suggestions on these matters in the letter we wrote to the US Congress on the anniversary of the liberation from fascism [English text of this letter is in *Disarmament Campaigns*, June 1985.]

You are right to say that up to now the peace movement has not paid much attention to the CSCE [Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe] process. A major reason for this is perhaps that we find it difficult to accept that the Helsinki negotiations took place between states which were really independent of their superpowers and whose alliance loyalties were suddenly no longer of consequence. Of course there have been successes since Helsinki. A series of bilateral treaties have improved

relations between the states involved. But what changes have actually taken place in both our countries? There has been no progress in the democratisation of our societies, nor has either state made a decisive contribution to ending the arms race, for instance with unilateral disarmament initiatives.

Helsinki did not challenge the existing political and military status quo in Europe in the detente era. There would basically be nothing wrong with this if it were taken to be the starting point for the transformation of the status quo. Our goal should be to push for such a transformation. In doing this we of course should not nor could not act as if there were no governments or politicians who could set such a challenge in motion. To do so would also be to ignore political power as it exists. We should examine and support every move which encourages the political developments we desire. For this reason we agree with you when you say that we should use the CSCE Final Act more than we have previously as a means of taking our governments at their word. Your work in recent years has demonstrated the possibility of doing this.

For us a more important element of your Appeal is its position on the German question. Because this question arouses strong resentments in many European states we are glad that it is you who have taken up a position on it and that you call for a discussion of the issue. Germany's significance in the European arena means that we, as Germans, have a special responsibility. We believe that a solution of the European question is not possible without a solution of the German question. German history, however, urges us to proceed cautiously and with respect for the fears of those countries which suffered at Germany's hands. All possible solutions to the German question must be discussed if the division of Europe is to be overcome. The Germans should do this together with all the peoples of Europe, for today self-determination can only contribute to detente and to an overcoming of the division of our continent if it respects the interests of all other European peoples. The solution to the German question can therefore only play a role if it is part and parcel of a treaty encompassing all of Europe. The question of a conclusion of a peace treaty with both German states will be of significance in the framework of such a process. Key points would be the fulfilment of the Potsdam Treaty, where it refers to the demilitarisation of Germany, and the final ratification of the German borders in existence since 1945.

We regard the transformation of social and political relations in our countries as an important precondition for the attainment of all the goals which all the European peace move-

1. See IV No. 67, January 14, 1985.



"After armament comes war"

ments are pursuing with the aim of creating a peaceful and undivided Europe. These efforts can only be successful if they are based on an overcoming of the military and economic status quo. On the one hand weapons of mass destruction and offensive conventional weaponry must be abolished and the production of so-called defensive systems, which in reality perpetuate the arms race (SDI, [Strategic Defense Initiative]), must be prevented. On the other hand, we must question existing value systems, change our ways of life, replace out-of-date ideologies with concrete utopias, and we must make it possible again to think about the future instead of always devising new models of growth. Powerlessness and resignation, fear and prejudice, intolerance and aggression, the fatalistic attitude of the silent majority — all these can be overcome by the "gentle power of reason" (Lombardo-Radice). We see these as tasks of the peace movement and their accomplishment as just as important as its many concrete suggestions for disarmament and new political directions.

An emancipation movement

The peace movement must be an emancipation movement in the widest sense. Ecology, Third World and women's groups belong to it, as do movements which work for democratic renewal of society, the establishment of human rights and for an alternative culture, as do social and national minorities. Many goals of the peace movement are also identical with those of the workers' movement: the elimination of stupefying work and the extension of self-determination at the workplace. The classical relations of dependence and exploitation still exist, although new dangers have been superimposed on them. A form of democratic socialism, freed, by means of socialisation and decentralisation, from the system of growth at any price and oriented towards an ecological humanism, is conceivable in our two countries.

We are aware there there is much to be done before these ends can be reached. We must address everyone, even those who because of their institutional position are opposed to any change of the status quo. Those changes necessary for our existence and for human dignity can only be set in motion as part of a free and public discussion. The length of time necessary for changes of such a scale to be effected demands of us a special respect for the generations to follow. A precondition for peaceful social coexistence is

the complete development of one's individuality. As well as making the obvious demand for free access to all educational institutions, a task for us is also to make possible education independent of all existing institutions.

In order to strengthen itself the grassroots emancipation movement requires both free access to information and communication of all forms, across borders and in solidarity against any form of oppression and manipulation. We see in your Appeal the beginning of intensive cooperation between you and us, and we look forward to it.

"We must begin to act as if a

united, neutral and pacific Europe already existed" (from the Appeal of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation).

Gabi Bechtle, Baerbel Bohley, Werner Fischer, Rainer Fluegge, Monika Haeger, Rene Hill, Ralf Hirsch, Almut Ilse, Martin Koenig, Martina Krone, Irena Kukutz, Gisela Metz, Lutz Nagorski, Gerd Poppe, Ulrike Poppe, Ruediger Rosenthal, Jutta Seidel, Reinhard Schult, Wolfram Tschieche, Mario Wetzky, Rainer Eppelmann. □

Berlin, June 8, 1985

Helsinki, diplomacy and the peace movement

THE FOLLOWING are major extracts from a document written in response to the Prague Appeal by the West Berlin group of the European Network for East-West Dialogue. This contribution deals with the question of what attitude to take toward the Helsinki Accords, and examines critically the possibilities for, and the limitations of, official action by the governments in both parts of Europe.

In the preamble of your appeal, you call on us in the West to respond to it. The urgency, as you quite rightly see it, of such a demand reveals the fact that dialogue between the independent movements in the West and in the East is not yet something that can be taken for granted. We hope that our public response will prompt others in the peace movement to take part in the discussion.

Can the CSCE point a way forward?

The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) aroused very little interest in the Western peace movement. The reason for this is that it put aside the question of military disarmament. In the meantime, there was the Conference on Disarmament in Stockholm in 1984. But there also they did not deal with real disarmament.

There have only been discussions on arms control, in which the United States and the Soviet Union negotiated virtually on their own. The European allies only got crumbs from the negotiating table. The dominant role of the United States and the Soviet Union is explained by their nuclear supremacy and

by the fact that the Europeans regard nuclear weapons as the decisive element for their security. In our peace movement, there is little interest in such negotiations.

You say that the CSCE is a forum of equal partners. That is formally true. But the loyalty of the countries in each European bloc to their respective dominant power is very strong, and would have led to the failure of the subsequent conferences, if the neutral countries had not each time rebuilt avenues of dialogue.

The CSCE has been built on the basis of the division between blocs and it is always in danger of being used to counter the phenomena of the breakup of the blocs, or as a guarantor of the division of Europe between US and Soviet spheres of influence, as well as of the immutability of social relations.

The CSCE process was able to have a dynamism in the 1970s because of a partial convergence between the interests of the Soviet Union and the United States. These powers were also pushed along this path by their European allies. In the present period, the proposal for turning to the leaders and denouncing their failure to respect their commitments flowing from the CSCE seems, quite simply, too general.

Bloc loyalty will not allow any big advances. It seems to us, however, that it would be sensible for the peace movement to undertake a constructive dialogue with the neutral countries in order to arrive at a promising way forward for the CSCE process.

In West Germany, the question arises whether the policy of the SPD [Social Democratic Party of Germany] toward the CSCE might not be a useful prop for the peace movement. In opposition the SPD has come out against some American arms projects and developed a policy to suit European and German interests.

However, the SPD imposes three conditions on the CSCE: the blocs are necessary for the stability of Europe; the internal political stability of the Warsaw Pact governments is necessary; East-West relations can only be influenced politically through official channels.

In the last analysis, this leads to endorsing all the decisions of NATO, to the SPD taking its distance from movements such as Solidarnosc and to its excluding all dialogue between the independent peace groups in the East and in the West. This rigid framework leaves us little room for intervening in the discussions that have taken place in the framework of the CSCE.

Your appeal prompted us to re-read the documents of the CSCE. It is astonishing to see what the governments themselves committed themselves to. And despite all the positive promises, such as for example, openings for journalists to work, openings for meetings of professional groups at the time of East-West conferences and so forth, the fact remains that the reality is not in line with the fine words of Helsinki, far from it.

In the third part of the Helsinki Accords, we read "the possibilities for extensive trips ... for professional or personal reasons" must be widened. You know as well as we do that you cannot travel freely and that we are often prevented from going to the East.

The states participating in this conference also claimed to want "to promote a freer circulation of periodical and nonperiodical material coming from other participating countries ... Such publications will also be available in reading rooms." Today, as before, political literature is still being excluded, including your document and ours.

It is no coincidence that the examples cited apply to relationships in the East. By comparison with the brutal oppression you face, conditions differ considerably here in the West. But even for us, we have to continually renew the fight over the

relationship between citizens and the state. We live under parliamentary democracy, and nonetheless the parliament has come out for the deployment of new missiles on our territory, while two-thirds of the population was against it.

Our governments and NATO have to more and more impose their concept of security by high-handed moves, as is shown by the recent installation of the missiles an hour after the decision in parliament. Another example is the numerous judicial proceedings against the participants in blockades of military installations.

Why have we presented these examples? It is because they should make it clear that the CSCE as an instrument of state diplomacy is hardly likely to lead to positive developments in the short term and that what was good for the peoples in the Helsinki Accords will be partially reversed. If we reflect, as we began to do with respect to the CSCE process, we then have to distinguish the different levels of diplomacy, to see the possibilities that exist for the independent groups active in the East and in the West.

More decisive is what the CSCE could mean for our work right now. As far as its demands go, the new peace movement in West Germany is no different than the one in the 1950s. But it is new because it is working in new socio-historic circumstances. Security policy must be wrested from the control of the military and diplomatic apparatuses that have gone out of control by the intervention of the citizens themselves. Such a process of democratization is being accomplished in West Germany, for example in the women's movement or the ecology movement.

In this respect, we see our East-West dialogue as a start in democratizing East-West relations through the development of a "citizens' power," which can exert an influence on the institutional power without replacing it. We must test still more precisely what meaning the CSCE could have in this context.

East-West "Citizens' power"

There are certainly possibilities in cultural, youth and scientific exchanges. But the institutional framework must be assessed as accurately as possible.

The second taboo you touch on [after German Unity] is the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the Eastern and Western European countries. This is inseparable from a new

peaceful order in Europe. How could this peaceful order emerge as long as there is no peace treaty with the Germans. The troops of the victorious powers are present without any fixed time limit, until there is such a treaty (cf. Article 3 of the treaty of the stationing of troops from the three Western allies in West Germany and the corresponding arrangement between the Soviet Union and East Germany).

Moreover, the four (!) allies in 1972 reciprocally reconfirmed in the Berlin accord [on relations between the two German states] their right of occupation as conquerors. This limited sovereignty of the two German states and the occupation of Berlin would be incompatible with a peaceful order organized on familiar lines.

We hold this view not only because the present situation does not permit the right of self-determination but also because it serves as the justification for the military pacts, for the presence of Soviet troops and their nuclear weapons in the East European border countries, as well as for the corresponding presence of the Western allies, at least of the Americans.

To this extent, the treaties between West Germany and the Soviet Union, Poland and Czechoslovakia, like the ones between East Germany and the Soviet Union, are ersatz peace treaties.

We think that the two taboos you touch on [German unity and withdrawal of foreign troops] have to be broken simultaneously in order to overcome the partition of Europe. As a first step on the military level, certain measures could be taken, in particular troop reduction, monitoring of chemical and bacteriological weapons and nuclear-free zones.

On the economic level, our objective could be attained through intensive East-West trade involving a simultaneous exchange of technologies. Because of our daily experience with an ultrabureaucratized superstructure such as the EEC, we are less inclined than you to see a rapprochement between the EEC and COMECON as a propitious sign for a peaceful evolution in Europe.

We see the enlargement of the EEC as too closely linked to extending NATO for us to be able to see in it a positive sign for the future of Europe. Does it not rather represent an enlargement of the West European economic and military bloc? Would it not have been more significant for the future of a united Europe if Spain and Portugal had joined the group of neutral European countries instead of increasing one of the blocs?

The EEC has helped little to eliminate poverty on the peripheral areas of Western and Southern Europe. No one talks any longer about the

hope for a democratic evolution in this economic bloc. In the shadow of the Brussels EEC bureaucracy and the decisions of the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament has hardly any significance. We also are apprehensive about the new developments in the framework of the West European Union (WEU). (1) Building a common arms industry does not favor the political emancipation of West Europe but corresponds rather to the desire to make it into a third big military power.

We think that rather your vision of Europe suits our conceptions and hopes:

"The freedom and dignity of individual citizens are the key to the freedom and self-determination of nations. And only sovereign nations can transform Europe into a community of equal partners which would not pose the threat of a global nuclear war, but instead serve as an example of real peaceful coexistence." □

1. The members of the WEU are France, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, West Germany, the United Kingdom and Belgium. The aim of the WEU is gradual European integration in the fields of economics, politics and military matters. The organization has a standing committee on arms.

Letter from KOS to Charter 77

WE PUBLISH below the response of the Polish Committee of Social Resistance (KOS) to the Prague Appeal. This organisation produces a weekly journal, *Kos* (blackbird), which has a circulation of approximately 20,000 copies. This makes it one of the major publications of the underground movement. Although not calling itself socialist, it is seen as representing a left current. One could say that it constitutes the right wing of the Polish left. KOS was the first Polish group to make contact with END.

Dear friends,
We read the text of your Appeal with great interest. Many of the opinions expressed on the actual international situation and the way that this could be changed according to the aspirations of the peoples of Europe are similar to our own.

We share your ideal of a Europe free from external and internal violence, a Europe of freedom and peace, as we stated in our Perugia Declaration. We explained our standpoint in detail in the KOS declaration 'Peace is indivisible'.

However we believe that in order

to achieve this ideal we must include all the controversial problems that exist on our continent nowadays. While we support your standpoint on the unification of Germany and the inviolability of European borders — the KOS message to the Berlin Conference — we must point out that the fate of free peoples deprived of their independence by the Soviet Union is an equally important problem. A new Europe cannot be built without the participation of the Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Belorussians and Ukrainians. We believe that this matter should be included in such an important document as the Prague Appeal.

Neither do we share your completely positive opinion on the negotiating process of Helsinki. In spite of its pretensions this process has reinforced the bloc-logic instead of overcoming it.

These reservations, together with other minor ones, make it impossible for us to sign your Appeal in its present form.

However, we think that such controversial matters can be overcome in a dialogue, in which this actual exchange of views could be the starting point. Such a dialogue is vital to our organisations, both of whom share the same values and are engaged in fighting the same evil.

At the same time we want to assure you of our complete solidarity with you and to express our gratitude for the numerous times you have shown your support for our society's struggle against coercion and violence, problems that brutally affect life in your society also.

We hope that the dialogue begun here will be a step on the way to victory in this struggle. □

KOS, Warsaw, June 11, 1985

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Peace and European unity

THE AUTHOR of the following article is the editorial writer of the underground Polish journal *Robotnik* and a member of the *Robotnik* political group. He also works with the magazine *Naprzod*, the organ of the Wola political group. In the monthly publication *Vacat*, he wrote a detailed presentation of the debates in the peace movements in the West, in which he mentioned very favorably the European Network for East-West Dialogue (see document above).

In a contribution entitled "Not only peace," written in November 1985, he undertook a balance sheet of the Western peace movement and explained the perspectives of a part of the Polish opposition that wants to participate in the debate with peace forces in both parts of the continent. The following are major excerpts from this article, in which the author gives his opinion on the Prague Appeal.

IGOR LEWY

It was no coincidence that the most important document at the convention [the fourth convention of END, held in Amsterdam in July 1985] was the Prague Appeal from Charter 77. (1) This document expressed quite pertinently the mood and the ambiance that prevail at the moment in the West European peace movement.

It was, in this sense, a document written by Europeans who are watching attentively the growth of the movement, rather than representing the point of view of the opposition in East Europe. The Prague Appeal contains some penetratingly formulated questions posed at the best possible time.

The objective of the appeal was to "overcome the division into blocs through an alliance of free and independent nations, in the framework of an autonomous democratic community, fully European and living in friendship with all the nations of the world."

It is not surprising that such an attractive vision elicited several responses during the convention, and that other responses to it are being drawn up.

It was a vision of a united Europe in which "freedom and dignity for citizens" opens the way for the freedom and autonomy of Europe, where frontiers would no longer be important, even if there was no reason to alter them, and where, in fact, they should be guaranteed.

A way to achieve this objective was the resolution of the German question through the reunification of

Germany within the present frontiers of both states, the dissolution of the military blocs, and a reduction of the arms level sufficient to exclude the threat of aggression from either side.

These aims were generally accepted. The convention was to define the initial paths to pursue to achieve them. It is on the basis of its responses to this problem that the Amsterdam meeting will be judged.

In order to put into practice the ideas of the Appeal, these independent social movements and citizens initiatives would have to exercise a growing influence over the actions of the governments.

The proof that such a situation does not exist in the West is the defeat the movement has suffered on the question of the intermediate-range missiles. The proof that it is not possible in the East are the empty seats at the Convention set aside for delegates from the independent movements beyond the Iron Curtain.

Our presence in Amsterdam was not only symbolic. The peace activists already understand that we are indispensable, just as the support of allies in the West is indispensable for us. The import of the Prague Appeal does not come simply from its rich content but also from the standpoint from which it was written.

The Appeal reflects virtually no national particularism. In this sense, it could just as well have been written by someone who had never visited East Europe. It is a document written from a European point of view, in the broadest sense of the term. The

acceptance of such a European outlook is certainly going to enable Charter 77 to establish closer links with the peace movement.

The original East-West dialogue has gradually changed into an inter-European dialogue, which is a step in the right direction. The authors of the Prague Appeal refer to the work of the Helsinki Conference, to its Final Act. They think that signing such a document highlights the formal independence and sovereignty of the contracting parties. The Czechs have concluded that standing by the letter of international law is enough to begin having it respected in deed.

The Helsinki Accord, which was signed in the period of "detente," formally ignored the division into blocs and maintained the fiction that the signers were independent of the blocs. However, the blocs have not ceased to exist, and that is why this magnificent document has remained a dead letter.

In its enthusiastic responses to the Prague Appeal, END explains its reservations about the Helsinki Accords, maintaining that "Quite often accords and other international agreements have simply been pushed aside when they were no longer useful to our leaders." And that is the fact of the matter.

If the English complain that their government has not implemented the measures called for in the Final Act, what can we Poles, Czechs and Russians say.

It is time to banish this much vaunted Helsinki spirit, if we want to envisage seriously acting not just in the name of justice but with effectiveness. The fundamental reason why such documents have not pushed us forward, and will not, is the limited or non-existent representativeness of the people who sign them.

If, in fact, we want East-West dialogue among citizens, there is no reason to keep matters on the official level in approaching the questions involved in treaties.

Mient Jan Faber, the leader of the Ecumenical Peace Council (IKV) in the Netherlands, and Rainer Eppelman, an East German peace activist, concluded an individual peace pact between themselves. This symbolic gesture is part of a large-scale plan.

It seems that a system of such pacts can have more meaning than propaganda. A personal contact between individuals of both blocs can increase confidence and eliminate the fears growing out of the frictions among nations. Indeed throughout history, war psychosis has been the

1. More precisely, it was from a series of prominent individuals representative of Charter 77.

principal factor making war possible.

If through the signing of such individual nonaggression pacts, accords are concluded between independent social movements, and if these accords give rise to practical cooperation to realize a common political vision that goes beyond particular national interests, then we will be able to talk about a real system of guarantees, not only of peace, but also of European unity.

The coordination of political activity at an international level was, until now, the domain of the big powers, especially the Soviet Union. There is no reason why the European movement for social emancipation, for peace and integration should not be able to apply an equally effective pressure.

The culmination of these activities should be the convening of a conference on security and cooperation in Europe. The delegates to such a

conference could be representatives of social movements, unions, autonomous groups, ecologists and from political organizations. That is, it should be made up of ordinary people and not of professional politicians.

In order to apply the Final Act contained in the Helsinki Accords governments could use the whole power of the state machine. They do not do so because they are hypocritical about the commitments made in Helsinki because for them it was just a propaganda exercise. The signatories of an eventual Helsinki II will have many fewer resources at their disposal. Their means will lie in the willingness to cooperate between the different organizations and independent groups who would sign such an accord. The significance of the Final Act will depend on the number and the strength of such organizations. □

How can our common goals be realised?

THE FOLLOWING article was written as a contribution to the debate around the Prague Appeal by comrades of the Fourth International.

JACQUELINE ALLIO and ERNEST MANDEL

Your letter to the last END convention held in Amsterdam in July 1985, has raised a debate which has been the subject of several contributions. We would like to underline the importance that we attach to the dialogue which has started up in the last few years between peace activists in the two European blocs. The fact that a text like the Prague Appeal exists, is circulating, sparking off debates and forcing people to take positions — especially in the East — is testimony to the internationalist character of the peace movement and to the willingness to have the debate which exists. This does not, by any means, exclude differences developing. The point of view which you express on a whole series of questions is far from being unanimously supported but the important thing is that the debate is opening up. We would like to contribute to that debate by making a few remarks.

In relation to the division of the European continent, you declare yourselves convinced that the establishment of an independent and democratic Europe will mean that

the people will have to take their destiny into their own hands; it will mean the dissolution of NATO and the Warsaw pact and the withdrawal of all nuclear arms installed in Europe or directed against Europe and the withdrawal of US and Soviet troops from the territories of their respective allies. We are in complete agreement with such a perspective, which in fact incorporates many of the demands put forward by the peace movements of both the West and the East. Moreover we would add that the nuclear disarmament of France and Great Britain should also be undertaken in the same way since they are also imperialist powers.

Where we differ, however, is precisely on the means which you put forward for achieving these ends. And this relates to the importance which you attach to the Helsinki Accords adopted ten years ago by the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). You see in this nothing more or less than "a programme of European and Euro-American cooperation" ratified by

equal partners. In your view the equality and independence of all the signatory states of this treaty will naturally open the way to the unification of Europe. In the face of such assertions we do not know what to think. Do you really believe that states such as the GDR, Poland, Czechoslovakia are the equals of the USSR? When have they ever stopped being under Soviet tutelage either before the Accords or afterwards? Is it not the case that they have always accepted the diktats of Moscow come hell or high water? And do you really think that adding a paragraph here or there to such a document could make Belgium or the Netherlands equal to the United States in determining NATO policy? Is it not obvious that US imperialism enjoys an economic and military balance of forces which allows it to brush aside objections by European governments who fear the mass reactions to deployment of cruise and Pershing missiles in their countries?

You say it is a shame that the peace movements in Europe have not taken up the commitments of the European states made in Helsinki, stressing that, in your view, this treaty gives ordinary citizens the opportunity to exercise a public scrutiny over their governments and to find solutions which would bring about positive change at the continent-wide level. We would not insult you by supposing that you would give equal value to the section of the Accords on Czechoslovakia and the other countries of the East. But you seem to think that it is different with regard to the West and that it should have been possible to use this document as a step along the road to peace and democracy. The events of the last few months and of the last few years are there to belie your optimism.

What can we expect from governments?

The peace movement in the Netherlands, for instance, decided to use the traditional instrument of democracy by organising a referendum against deployment of nuclear weapons in their country. They got 3.7 million signatures, which in terms of numbers, is equivalent to the social weight of Solidarnosc in Poland in 1980-81. This did not, however, prevent the Dutch government from, in the last instance, complying with the wishes of the NATO powers and deploying the missiles, against the wishes of the people who elected them.

In a statement in March 1985, the Polish group, "Liberty and Peace"

from Cracow, declared that "There is no peace when the existing state system oppresses, imposes its ideology or where individuals are denied their own free will, where all initiative is forbidden, where all traditional liberties are denied." This is true but we can see that even in a country like the Netherlands, where such freedoms do basically exist, the perspectives for peace are still no brighter, and those in power do whatever they like. And when these pacifists get to be too much, some governments even go as far as to get special agents to plant bombs as was shown in the *Greenpeace* affair. The French government, which is conducting the military policy of a big power, is not above recourse to state terrorism to sink a ship full of ecologists who were simply observing the programme of nuclear tests in the Pacific in order to expose them to the world's media.

In light of all this, how can we expect that these same governments will take concrete measures to bring about peace?

Your text stresses the importance you attach, not only to the Helsinki Accords, but to treaties between states in general and to the negotiations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact countries in particular. We cannot agree with you in this regard and we cannot disguise the fact that we share the scepticism expressed by the Polish and East German comrades in their replies to your Appeal. Have not the recent Geneva negotiations proved once again to be a lot of hot air? Nothing was to be expected from US imperialism since it has made plain its determination to pursue a policy of aggression and impose its rule in all four corners of the globe. It is determined to carry on with the arms race, in particular maintaining the running in the area of nuclear weapons with the launching of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI - Star Wars) programme.

Nobody could consider that the proposals put forward by Gorbachov in Geneva represent a radical change in the USSR's military policy. It is true that the Soviets are concerned to put a brake on the arms race and above all on Star Wars, which puts an intolerable strain on their country's economy. But to conclude from that that the speeches of their leader on defence systems limitation represent anything more than diplomacy or that they could open up a new era in negotiations on arms control is going too far.

The proof of this is that the oh-so-generous offer to reduce the nuclear arsenals was accompanied by a thinly veiled threat that if the United States did not put an end to Star Wars, it would be useless to think that there

could be any limitation on production of strategic nuclear weapons. This is a long way away from the demands for unilateral nuclear disarmament put forward by the Western peace movements. The meeting of these demands would, however, be a step, however limited, in the direction of disarmament and peace. If Gorbachov had really gone along this road, this could have helped Western peace activists in their struggle to force their own governments to take steps towards disarmament.

How to change the status quo in Europe

But this was not the case, because Moscow (no more than Washington) has no intention of upsetting the status quo established by Yalta and reinforced by the Helsinki Accords. This is a status quo which allows each of the major powers to pursue its own policy on the international level and which, in the case of the USSR, allows it not only to control those countries in its sphere of influence but also to dominate the peoples of that huge state of the Soviet Union, relying on the presence of troops and weapons to better suppress any possibility of revolt. That is why the Helsinki Accords have remained a dead letter. We do not have to teach you - hounded, isolated, attacked and condemned as you are for merely saying out loud what most of your fellow-citizens feel - the fact that the undertakings made by the signatories of this accord on respect for democracy are not worth the paper they are written on. But the same is also true in the West with regard to promises for the right to work or economic equality for all. The tens of millions of unemployed people in the countries belonging to NATO are in a good position to understand the cost of the militarist policy of their governments. Because when these governments have to choose between producing more butter or more cannons, between spending more money on social

policies, on arms programmes, it is always cannons and armaments that they choose.

But for all that we agree that it is important to fight for the realisation of a series of goals set by the Helsinki Accords and that governments should be taken at their word in pressing for initiatives which are aimed at the establishment of nuclear free zones, as you suggest in the appeal, and which would encourage different sorts of relations and dialogue between the groups, organisations and individuals in the different countries. In this we are fully behind you. But we are convinced that the political changes which you, like us, would like to see in Europe have to be linked, in the first instance, to the activity of the mass social movements capable of fighting against the policy of existing governments and that they will depend on the establishment in both parts of Europe of democratic, peaceful, self-managed societies based on the abolition of private ownership of the means of production and their socialisation. In other words, as the signatories of the contribution from the GDR point out, what is needed is a form of democratic socialism where political power would really be in the hands of the workers. You say nothing about this in the Appeal. As far as we are concerned there is no doubt that the realisation of the aims which you put forward is not possible in the framework of a society managed for profit as in the West or dominated by a minority which monopolises the means of production as in the case of the East. The existence of a united and democratic Europe depends on the determination of all the social and peace movements to effect radical reversals in the balance of social forces. It does not depend on treaties that the present governments might circulate amongst themselves.

We hope that the debate on these questions can be continued among all those who are involved in the fight for the peace movement, for equality, for social justice and for democracy. □



East Berlin (DR)

In defense of NATO

IT WAS IN response to the Prague Appeal, which expressed a clearly pro-Western point of view, that the following article was written. Its author, who uses the pseudonym of "Politikus," rejects the idea that there are two military blocs in Europe, dominated respectively by two superpowers, and directs criticism against the Soviet Union alone. The text has been taken from the fall 1985 issue of the journal *Gegenstimmen* published in Vienna. It has been shortened.

POLITIKUS

Of course, Europe is not a continent of peace, although it has lived for 40 years already in a state that the Prague Appeal calls "a world without war." However, I learned to my astonishment that this situation arose when the "the military operational zones defined by the Yalta Accords degenerated into politico-military blocs."

I have never heard such a singular interpretation of the emergence of the Cold War. It is as if some unknown, nameless force "changed" something that was originally intended to be quite different. Is it not absolutely clear that the Cold War was a process that from the outset was conducted in pursuance of perfectly clear strategic interests?

Nowhere in the Prague Appeal does it explicitly say so, but it is not hard to divine the conception of the authors, who see the roots of all evils in the existence of the two blocs, and see their task as "overcoming the division into blocs."

I have lived for some decades on this continent, and I can say with all responsibility, that in Europe there is only one real military bloc that pursues a great-power policy. It is the one that was formed after 1945 by the Soviet Union to defend

its strategic interests and has been maintained since, often through the use of brutal methods. Yes, for 40 years Europe has been in a situation of no war. But it is often forgotten that the only real military operations in Europe since 1945 have been carried out by the Soviet Union.

It was the Soviet Union that suppressed the Hungarian insurrection in 1956 and 12 years later intervened in Czechoslovakia. In both cases, this was absolutely clear aggression and has to be defined as such by any expert in international law. In both instances, the intervention was prompted by the fear that the bloc in question could break up.

And on the other side? In 1949, after the Berlin blockade and the February coup in Czechoslovakia [by which the Communist Party took power in 1948] — when it was clearly seen what course Soviet policy was taking — the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was formed in an effort to erect a barrier against this expansionism. It was an association of free and independent states with elected parliaments and governments, under which human rights were respected.

There were, of course, exceptions. Greece in the years 1967-1974 and Portugal up till 1974 were not democratic states, and the present regime in Turkey is far removed from real democracy. But are not the first two cases precisely evidence that in the framework of NATO there is a road away from authoritarian systems to democracy, while in the Warsaw Pact we are still waiting in vain to see anything like that?

When France decided in 1966 to withdraw from the military structure of NATO, the Americans only asked a few months waiting period and departed discreetly for Belgium. If

today or tomorrow a government is democratically elected in any Western European country whose program calls for withdrawal from NATO, the Americans will again politely pull out. So, where are there two blocs?

According to the thinking of the author of the Prague Appeal, a precondition for seeking an acceptable solution is recognition of the present state of affairs as the point of departure for a more profound change. I would like to know what the Estonians, Lithuanians and Latvians think of that point of view. Their countries, which never threatened anybody, were occupied treacherously in the summer of 1940 by the Soviet Union. It confiscated power in these countries and brought them under subjection.

After 1945, the Soviet Union was able to hold onto its territorial gains because it had won World War II. No European with genuine democratic feeling can get around this fact. Would it not be better if we went back to the old principle of self-determination of nations?

Already as I write these lines, I know that people are going to respond by saying that I am not enough of a realist, that such proclamations are indeed admirable and true but that they lead nowhere. This would, of course, be so if the document in question were designed to provide the bases for a practical political course. But the Prague Appeal is not such a document and cannot be. It is a declaration of principle, and therefore if it is to have a real value it has to start from the real conditions and not take account of tactical possibilities. Any equating of NATO with the Warsaw Pact, as is implied in the phrase "overcoming the division into blocs," conflicts with my experience and cannot satisfy any thinking person who lived through 1968 in Czechoslovakia.

I am also thinking of those to whom the Prague Appeal was addressed. I have studied the history of diplomacy for a long time, and I am deeply distrustful of all peace conferences, as well as of disarmament negotiations. They have never solved anything, and the history of the world would probably have proceeded on this course unperturbed without them. Look at how much negotiating there was in the 1930s. But people kept rearming. Hitler built concentration camps, and Stalin slaughtered the kulaks as if they were nothing.

I am still more distrustful of the peace movement in West Europe today. The French president Mitterand was right when he said, "In the East there are missiles, and in the West, the fight for peace." □



'We will clarify NATO's love of peace'

THE POSITIONS defended in the preceding article were answered in a contribution written by Peter Uhl, which was published in the same issue of *Gegenstimmen*. Uhl criticized the analysis made by "Politikus" of the respective responsibilities of the Soviet Union and the imperialists for the dangers threatening humanity. The following are major excerpts from Uhl's article.

PETR UHL

The apology for NATO offered by Politikus disconcerts me by its simplification and the selectiveness of its facts. Debating with people who share such views would certainly be very difficult. But I am an optimist.

I would like to think that description and analysis of the general situation in the Western bloc — including economic and social relations, the politico-military alliances of the past 40 years, as well as cultural and national relationships and the like — would be more comprehensible to people in Czechoslovakia than an exposition of the relationships in Soviet-type bureaucratic dictatorships for the peoples of Latin America, a large part of Asia, the bulk of Africa or even for the people of West Europe and the United States.

In passing, it should be noted that the inhabitants of West Europe and the United States can find consolation for the daily problems in the fact that — unlike the 90 per cent of the rest of humanity who bear the cost of the relative well-being of the Western societies — they live in "an association of free and independent states with elected parliaments, under which human rights are respected."

Even these people in West Europe and the United States — I am not talking now about the peoples of the so-called Third World — are sometimes so ungrateful that they fail to appreciate this fact and impudently demand solutions to their problems. Sometimes, they even point to violations of human rights, restrictions of democracy and freedom, a dubiousness of national independence, and so forth.

So, I remain an optimist — Bohemia has always been a melting pot of cultures — and I would like to think that if we continue the discussion with a modicum of honesty, in which Politikus has been lacking up till now, we will clarify NATO's love of peace and the American politeness, of which we have accumulated so much bitter experience over the past 40 years.

After all, Politikus' opinion is worthy of mention that the Prague Appeal — while not doing this in so many words — implies an equation of the Warsaw Pact and NATO. Politikus proffers the argument that this contradicts his (sic) experience of life and cannot satisfy any thinking person who lived through the year 1968 in Czechoslovakia.

For my part, if I signed the Prague Appeal, it was also because it did not put such an equals sign. My experience in life contradicts such a point of view, which I exclude as Eurocentrist, simplistic and politically wrong.

A comparison of the economic and military potential of the two big blocs (in terms of area and population), as well as analysis of the political and social systems of these blocs in their historical development and finally a study of their "aggressiveness" — dynamics as well

as concessions in the governmental sphere — all convince me of the supremacy of American imperialism and international capital over the Soviet bloc.

It is precisely the capitalist productive relations prevailing in these countries, combined with their great military power extending virtually through the world, that represent a fundamental obstacle to the harmonious development of humanity.

The obstruction of Stalinism in the Soviet Union, which must be removed in a revolutionary way, plays second fiddle in the orchestra of world politics.

The misfortunes humanity has suffered and the dangers to which it has been exposed because of Stalinism have always been less grave than the conflicts engendered by world capital and imperialism.

I think that in the near future it will be necessary for me to analyze the positions I hold by testing them against the facts, if only because my point of view is not at all widespread in this country nor at all popular. If I back up my views in all honesty, they may no longer be considered demobilizing.

Indeed, I have always said that it is our duty to criticize publicly above all the social contradictions (errors, injustices, illegality) that we see in our immediate environment, and I have tried to live in accordance with this principle. But I have always been concerned also about the general context of our action, the direction in which we are moving in this country, in Europe, as well as throughout the world. □



"Women for peace" workshop in Summer 1983, East Berlin (DR)

The fight for peace and workers power

THE FOLLOWING is from *Przelom*, No. 2, 1985, an underground publication of the antibureaucratic opposition in Poland.

In our times, the fight for the liberation of wage labor cannot fail to be waged parallel to the fight for peace. The military means of destruction in the hands of the monopolist bourgeoisie and the totalitarian bureaucracy give them the power to kill every inhabitant of the planet several times over, to destroy totally all higher and intermediate forms of life on earth.

Therefore, the fight for full individual, social and national liberation of the industrial workers and all people working for wages and, through that, the fight of all humanity for progress and development must be accompanied by a fight against the preparation and possible unleashing of total genocide. The fight for progress and the fight for peace have become identical.

It has been and remains a delusion to think that in conditions of conflict within societies and conflict over the division of the world, in conditions where the rivalry of geopolitical blocs leaves the earth balanced on the brink of world war, it is possible to achieve real — that is, lasting — peace and security in the world. As long as social and political forces exist that have an interest in maintaining conflicts within individual nations and in relations among nations, peace will be threatened. This follows, in fact, from the very nature of the interests of classes or groups that monopolize economic and political power and carry out exploitation and oppression, and in line with that, incite to war and are ready to unleash it.

The momentary balance of forces between the United States in the West and the analogous structure dominated by the Kremlin in the East is only a temporary truce, which is insecure and very shaky. Only a lasting elimination from social life both in the West and in the East of groups that could become instigators and initiators of war can offer a guarantee of real peace. The road to this peace leads mainly through revolutionary struggle but also through combating today the processes of the Cold War, such as the arms race, the war psychosis or the spread of hatred among peoples.

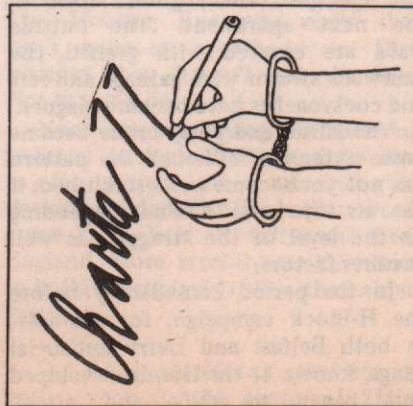
The only real and overall alternative to World War III is international, world revolution to overthrow the rule of capital in the West and the South and the governments of the nomenklatura [bureaucracy] in the East. Today this end is served by the fight for limiting the arms spiral, for international detente and for the ability of society to place limits on exploitative and dictatorial regimes. At present, this is indeed the fundamental immediate task of the revolutionary workers' movement, in particular here in Europe.

It is the historic and human duty of the revolutionary left in the broad sense to conduct an active policy in defense of the existing state of peace and to prevent it from being undermined by tendencies threatening to unleash war. Without losing sight of the strategic aim, which is lasting and genuine peace based on the transformations to be laid after the revolution, it is necessary today to take part in the struggle to eliminate forces and situations that foster war.

Just as the fight for freedom and social and national equality is at the same time a struggle for lasting peace, so the fight for peace, to prevent the ruling classes and castes from unleashing national conflicts, and thereby also from undermining class struggles, is a factor contributing to the revolutionary liberation of labor.

Peace in the service of revolution, revolution in defense of peace — that is our slogan.

We cannot give way to the pressure of Cold War blackmail from the



Western imperialist circles or let ourselves be taken in by cynical declarations about peace from the bureaucratic regimes in the East. In Poland, the peace movement is a farce and a facade, behind which the totalitarian bureaucracy of the People's Republic of Poland and the Kremlin want to hide their actual antiworking-class and militarist face.

For example, at the head of the Ogólnopolski Komitet Obroncow Pokoju [All-Polish Committee of Defenders of Peace] is the likes of Jozef Cyrankiewicz. He shares responsibility — as chief of state of the People's Republic of Poland at the time — for the repression against the workers in 1956, for the repression against the students and the participation of Polish troops in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and finally for the massacre of the Baltic Coast workers in December 1970. Nobody believes that this hangman of the Polish working class and dependable stooge of the Kremlin suddenly transformed himself into a dove of peace.

However, because of such propagandistic manipulation, in Poland, the other East European countries and the USSR, the theme of the defense of peace has become identified en bloc and incorrectly in the eyes of the societies of these countries with the policy of the regimes, and therefore is not all that popular. This state of affairs must of course be changed as soon as possible. And it can be changed only by independent, genuine peace movements opposing both the militaristic policy of the monopolistic bourgeoisie and the totalitarian bureaucracy.

Therefore, we declare that we will participate in working and struggling to build an independent genuine peace movement and we appeal to all forces in the antibureaucratic opposition in Poland — who do not divide up nuclear warheads and arms of mass destruction into "good" and "bad" ones depending on whether they are held by the West or East — to do likewise.

To the slogan "Down with the militarist policy of the US and imperialism," which we support totally and without reservation, we add the complementary slogan, "Down with the militarist policy of the Kremlin and totalitarianism."

We appeal for international solidarity in the fight for peace!

War on governments, for the people's peace. □

Czestochowa, July 1985
Komisja Wykonawcza Porozumienia
Prasowego Opozycji Robotniczej
[Executive Commission of the Press
Alliance of the Workers Opposition]

Sixteen years of resistance in Belfast's Lower Falls

THE DIVIS FLATS complex in nationalist West Belfast is like an extension of Long Kesh concentration camp. The prison itself, where thousands of nationalists have been held, is a huge assemblage of poorly built temporary structures outside Belfast, overlooked by guard towers and with military patrols on the ground and helicopters in the air swarming around it.

The Divis Flats are much the same. There is a high tower building in the center, with a British electronic surveillance post at the top. There are rows of flats, about three stories high, surrounding it, like cell blocks. The area is heavily patrolled by helicopters and British army units.

GERRY FOLEY.

Divis is a good example of the fact that the prison-house society that British imperialism has constructed in Northern Ireland is something more fundamental than even the massive repressive system, whose culmination and heart is the Long Kesh concentration camp.

The old Lower Falls Road community that the Divis complex replaced was the politically most conscious and tightly knit part of nationalist Belfast. Therefore, it was the best organized. And in the early period of the present struggle mass mobilizations and organization were centered there.

In 1970 only the central tower building had been erected. In the summer, it was gassed for the first time by the British army, who claimed that youths had been throwing stones at soldiers from the windows.

In the middle of the night (I think I remember that it was around 1:00 a.m.), a cortege of women marched through the neighborhood and brought out a huge demonstration of women to hold back the soldiers while the building was evacuated. This was also the area where the women's vigilante groups that organized in the wake of the internment roundups to counter military raids were centered.

The old Lower Falls consisted of rows of small brick houses, with two rooms down and two rooms up, with tiny backyards and outdoor toilets. It was the sort of housing that was built for mill workers in the nineteenth century.

Crime was virtually unknown.

There were practically no cars. Toddlers played securely in the middle of the streets. The houses were poorly furnished but carefully kept. It was a largely self-contained neighborhood with many small back-room shops.

In 1970 there was a fight to stop construction of the flats and prevent the demolition of the old neighborhood and the scattering of its people. It was unsuccessful. This project was part of a general housing policy.

In ten years, the British planners succeeded in shattering a close-knit community and replacing it with an urban jungle. The flats complex is almost unbelievably badly designed, unless its architects explicitly had a prison in mind. The walkways around the rows of flats are on a higher level than the dwellings, so that anyone walking by in the middle of the night is thunder over your head.

The construction is card-board-like. It deteriorates rapidly, and you can hear the slightest noise in the next apartment. The outside walls are covered with graffiti, the stairwells strewn with garbage and rats and cockroaches have become plagues.

Vandalism and petty crime became quite extensive, although the pattern has not yet become well established; it has its ups and downs, depending on the level of the struggle, as well as other factors.

In the period immediately before the H-Block campaign, for example, in both Belfast and Derry antisocial gangs, known as the Hoods, developed and began to defy and attack

republican activists. The rise of the mass movement helped to isolate them.

Despite the complete uprooting of the old Lower Falls community, both the fight against the British prison housing for the nationalist population at large and the republican tradition continue. Within the Divis complex new forms of organization have grown up, and so this area remains the best organized part of the nationalist ghetto, although it is one of the most deprived, perhaps the most deprived.

You run into 16-, 17- and 18-year-old youths around the Sinn Fein advice center and the Divis Residents Association office who would have been babies and toddlers playing safely in the old Lower Falls, of which they have no memory. But the struggle is continuous. After all, English colonialism and British imperialism have completely transformed the face of Ireland several times without breaking the continuity of the resistance.

In the spring of 1981, during the H-Block hunger strike, I spent an entire afternoon watching children from four to ten years old stone a patrol besieged in an entrance way to a courtyard of the flats. I remember in particular one of the children, a child of about four, with a ball in one hand and a rock in the other, trying to decide which he would rather throw.

Now there is a Sinn Fein advice center at the other side of the same courtyard. One of the released H-Block prisoners I interviewed in 1980, Fra McCann, is one of the leading community organizers. He was jailed in 1976 for possession of a firearm. He became one of the most prominent spokespersons for the H-Block prisoners, doing a number of international tours in 1980 and 1981. In the accompanying interview, I asked him about his road from the H-Blocks to organizing the fight in the Divis Flats. □



Fra McCann (DR)

From the H-Blocks to community organising

THE FOLLOWING interview was given to Gerry Foley in the Divis Flats in West Belfast, Northern Ireland, in late January by Fra McCann, secretary of the Divis Residents Association in Belfast.

Question. How did you become involved in community organisation in the Divis Flats?

Answer. I was in the Lower Falls Sinn Fein cumann [cell]. Divis is part of the area it represents. I have lived all my life in this area. Before I went into jail, although I knew that there were a lot of problems facing people in Divis, I did not really understand the nature of them. It was only after being released from prison that I started getting involved in running the advice centre and building it, that I started to realise the problems that the people here face daily.

Q. Did you start this work while the H-Block campaign was going on?

A. No. Then most of people's energies were directed toward the hunger strike. Before the hunger strike, there were several campaigns, in particular for the demolition of the Divis Flats. They were unsuccessful. It was about a year after the hunger strike ended, in 1982, that we really became involved in the politics of this place.

When we opened the advice centre, we started to deal with complaints. It took a while to learn how to do this. It was a new thing for us.

We had supported the campaign for demolition. And from that I joined the Divis Residents Association. And from that I have become involved in most of the other committees that exist in the place.

Q. What's the relation of the Residents Association to the other committees?

A. The main aim of the Divis Residents Association (DRA) would be the full demolition of the Divis Flats. Along with the DRA, we have a few other groups, the likes of the Divis Education Project, which was started four years ago.

There was a problem here of young people being expelled from school. So, you had a lot of young kids running about here who were not getting any education. So, this education project was started up by a group of people who began taking these

young kids in and teaching them. The project has developed from there.

You have the Divis Drop-In Centre, which was started up to deal with the joy-riding and glue-sniffing situation, and other petty-crime problems in Divis Flats, because the kids were either barred from the local community centre or the local youth club.

You have the Divis Play Project, which is for five- to ten-year olds. It's probably one of the best of its kind anywhere.

Also, we have the Divis Environmental Health Project, which does surveys. At the moment, we are trying to get a survey of the environment and people's health to prove that living in Divis damages people's health.

There is an umbrella group, the Divis Joint Development Committee, to which all the committees send a representative. That committee includes a local social worker, a probation officer, and a couple of other interested people.

Q. So, the Residents Association is just one of the committees represented?

A. Yes. Most of my time now is taken up by the Residents Association, whose aim is the complete demolition of this complex, and the building of decent housing for the people who live in it.

Q. How can you agitate for both at the same time?

A. Once you agitate for demolition, you have to agitate for rehousing. The Housing Executive claim they can't rehouse everybody in Divis because they haven't got the land. But that is a lie.

Now we are trying to build up political contacts in England, because as far as we are concerned, the decision to demolish Divis Flats won't come from here. It will come from England. More recently we have tried to build up contacts within the Labour Party.

Q. What about the problem of petty crime in this complex? There

have been stories that it was fairly bad.

A. Yes. It was. You're talking about break-ins on a wide scale. I would say that the RUC [Royal Ulster Constabulary] would be using things like this there to try to discourage people from supporting republicans. It's the same with joy-riding. I would say that they actively encourage the likes of joy-riding, and that is probably one of the worst blights around the place, because when kids are driving about in cars, most people won't even go onto the street. And there is never an effort made by the RUC to try and stop it.

Q. But they have shot some of them.

A. Yes. But I would say that, getting the chance, the RUC would shoot as many people around here as they could.

I would say that petty crime has lowered a lot. I would put that down to the Drop-In Centre, which has catered a lot to kids. When we were talking about opening the Drop-In Centre in the Residents Association, we realised that we probably couldn't reach everybody. So, our concern was focused upon the younger kids, who stood at the corner and watched the cars coming in and thought it was great excitement. I think this has been fairly successful.

Q. Can you control this petty crime without physical coercion of some sort?

A. The only thing you can really do, and that is what we do, is approach the people involved in it and ask them to cease it, or approach their parents. A lot of times that works. But there are some we probably never could reach.

Q. I remember that when I first came here in July 1970, there was very little petty crime. Of course, there has been a lot of social breakdown since, but the important thing then was that people thought that things were going to change, change soon and in a big way. What sort of attitude would people have now?

A. I would say that in 1970 everybody thought that things were going to change rapidly. I imagine that a lot of people would have thought that the Brits would have been out by now, with the way everything was going then. But I think now everybody would have probably settled themselves down for a long struggle. You are right to say that there was very little crime here in 1970 and that conditions have changed a lot since. I did not really see it happening because I was in jail a lot of the time in the 1970s. But I would say now that crime is on the decline.

The mood always goes up when Sinn Fein have an election victory, then there is the period in between elections. But in general now crime is going down. One factor is community organisation. The involvement of republicans in it would add a lot. With respect to joy-riding, we initiated a Concerned Parents Committee. It would be made up of women throughout the area whose kids were probably involved in it. The only people who can deal with crime are the community itself.

Q. What about the level of political interest among the kids here? Is that a factor?

A. I would say that 90 per cent of the people here vote for Sinn Fein. Most of the kids would support the ideals and aims of the republican movement. I would say that would be a factor. Whenever there are marches and demonstrations, a lot of the kids who would be involved in joy-riding and things like that there would always be attending marches. I would say there deep down most of them would have a commitment to the struggle. Through our involvement in community work, we try to explain things to them. I am quite open, I sit and talk to kids. Kids can come to me with problems, and I would try to point out how the RUC are trying to use joy-riding and things like that to turn people against the republican struggle. It's a constant process of education.

Q. What percentage of them would want to be organised one way or another?

A. It's hard to say. There are always people wanting to join Sinn Fein. If we are organising something in the area, you can always get kids to give a hand.

Q. Is there much interest in studying Irish history or the Irish language, or reading republican works?

A. You would find republican posters in a lot of their homes. But for most kids here, school has nothing to offer them, just as it had nothing to offer me when I was a kid.

Q. But people can be interested in learning things that the schools don't teach.

A. Over the last two years, there has been a big increase in the number of people starting to learn Irish.

Q. What about Irish history, republican ideas?

A. No. that's all done through Sinn Fein.

Q. Does it do a lot of work of that type?

A. People who join Sinn Fein are encouraged to buy material like that and to read our newspaper, *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, which has historical pieces. It's a form of self-education. And then from there, it's up to you individually. If people came here and asked me, I would recommend books, and so forth. But most of our time is spent dealing with complaints. In a place the size of Divis, the amount of complaints is overwhelming. Even in the streets, I'm always being stopped and asked about complaints.

Q. Something or other doesn't work, or there's a leak in the roof, etc?

A. Yes.

Q. It's not "A soldier broke my window," etc.

A. Oh yes. That's always happening. Whenever there are raids, we go to the people's houses and take their complaints.

Q. How much of your work is that now?

A. Last week, we had houses raided, doors kicked in, windows broken. We make contact with the Housing Executive to try to make sure that the doors are fixed and the windows are fixed, and things like that there, or advising people, if any damage has been done, to take out claims. Lately there has been a steady increase in the amount of patrols in the area and in the number of people being stopped. Over this past number of months, quite a few people involved in the campaign for demolition have been arrested. Last Thursday, two young lads who are working for the Divis Joint Development Committee were arrested and held for 28 hours in Castlereagh [which became famous internationally as a torture centre after the 1971 internment roundups]. Five weeks ago, I was arrested and held for seven days. You're constantly being stopped.

Q. What sort of things are people arrested for?

A. They use the Prevention of Terrorism Act or the Emergency Powers Act. They can arrest you whenever they like. They would probably say it's just routine questioning.

Last March when a delegation from the Residents Association were coming back from a meeting in Scotland on the dangers of asbestos, five of them were arrested and held for 28 hours. We weren't questioned or anything. We were just left in a cell. We see it as a form of harassment. The Divis Demolition Committee in 1979-1980 was smashed by the arrest of all its members, who were brought to

Castlereagh. Some of them were charged.

Q. Why should they want to smash your committee? It doesn't threaten the state directly?

A. Back then people were given conditional discharges for causing damage [which was a tactic of the demolition committee]. But after that people became afraid to become involved in committees. Now the committees are starting to be successful. And I would say that it would be a disadvantage to the British if the community were organised.

Q. Is there still a running war between the community and the patrols?

A. No. The last protest I saw was about eight months ago. Fifty or 60 women came out on the balconies with the bin lids. It lasted four or five hours until the patrol went out, and that was it. You don't see much active involvement of the community in such protests. The hunger strike probably burnt out a lot of people.

Q. So, at the moment you are not trying to organise that sort of thing?

A. No. You have patrols in here maybe five times a day or a half an hour. And when there's patrols in here, you'd have them on the far side also.

Q. Is there still a pattern of children stoning patrols?

A. Oh yes, you always get that. For three months there, the kids were constantly stoning patrols. Finally, we had to go out ourselves to discourage it. Not because we wanted to stop the kids from stoning Brits, of course, but cars were getting their windows smashed, houses were getting hit. And it was not having any effect. So, we asked the kids to stop.

Q. Did you have any trouble getting the kids to stop?

A. No. But they are often back at it an hour later, when the Brits come in again.

Q. But the kids never defy you?

A. No. I get on very well with the kids. It's understandable that the kids are going to stone Brits. But it doesn't achieve anything. You have kids from about four to ten years old doing it. And then on August 9, there was a bonfire, and the Brits came in four jeeps and got out and started shooting rubber bullets, with kids around just that size [holds hand about two to three feet over the ground]. The Brits don't care who they shoot, so they don't. □

AROUND THE WORLD



United States

Against the current

AGAINST THE CURRENT, a new journal of revolutionary socialist political analysis, has been launched as a joint project of three US socialist groups. The first issue of the new *ATC* includes an interview with Ricardo Pascoe, a leader of the Mexican Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Mexican section of the Fourth International), on the crisis of the debt and the growth of the Mexican workers' movement; an analysis of recent strikes of American workers against wage cuts and other "concessionary" demands by corporations; an essay by Marxist feminist author Johanna Brenner on the theoretical and practical perspectives of feminists in the peace movement; and an address to a human rights convention by Professor Israel Shahak, chairman of the Israeli League for Human and Civil Rights, on the apartheid-like character of Israeli society today.

The new *Against the Current* is described by its editors as intended "not in any sense as a party organ, but to provide a forum for the broadest possible debate and discussion within the left. The resources we need to develop new theory and fresh interpretations already exist among the movement activists, the organizers and the serious scholars of the left."

The groups launching the magazine are the International Socialists, Workers Power and Socialist Unity. Socialist Unity is a group of supporters of the Fourth International; the International Socialists represent the "Third Camp" current within the revolutionary socialist left; Workers Power includes a number of former members of the International Socialists, as well as some supporters of the Fourth International.

In the past eight months these groups have been exploring their areas of political agreement, disagreement and perspectives on labor and social movements. These discussions led all three groups to the conclusion that they should join forces to launch a new revolutionary socialist organization. A regroupment convention, intended to fuse the three groups as well as other individuals and local collectives who have expressed interest in revolutionary socialist unity, will take place

in Chicago at the end of March 1986.

While in no way posing as a vanguard party — the kind of posturing which has helped discredit the small US revolutionary left and has contributed to the distortion of its politics — the three groups and others believe that this fusion can reinforce the work of socialist activists in building a rank-and-file left wing in the US labor movement; strengthen our voices in building solidarity with all struggles for freedom, from the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran revolutions to Polish Solidarity; and offer a positive alternative to the demoralization and disintegration of the revolutionary left.

The editorial board of *Against the Current* is also organizing a broader editorial advisory group, which will help to guide the magazine, build it and write for it. In this way, it is hoped that the journal will become a genuine partnership that provides a vehicle for a relatively broad spectrum of socialists — whether members or non-members of the sponsoring organization — who share a commitment to revolution, democracy and the rebuilding of the labor and left-wing movements in America from the ground up.

David Finkel

(Subscriptions to *Against the Current* are 15 US dollars surface mail and 25 US dollars air mail and may be purchased from ATC 17300 Woodward, Detroit MI 48203.) □

Britain

Miners' support demonstration

THE FIGHTING spirit of the miners' strike was very much alive at the national Justice for Mineworkers demonstration on March 2. Eight thousand miners, women from the pit communities and their supporters came across the coalfields to mark the anniversary of the strike and to show their support for the 500-plus sacked miners, for the dozen jailed miners and for the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) whose funds are still in the hands of the receivers.

Tony Benn, a leader of the left wing of the Labour Party and a Member of Parliament (MP), told the rally about the Justice for Mineworkers bill recently presented to parliament, which is built round the successful NUM resolution to the 1985 Trades

Union Congress (TUC) and Labour Party conferences. Peter Heathfield, general secretary of the NUM called on the trade-union leadership to break those in struggle now as the Tories seek to destroy trade unionism.

Dave Nellist, MP and Jeremy Corbyn, MP both attacked the labour leadership's obsession with witch hunting socialists in the Labour Party, while miners remained sacked and printers were fighting for their jobs at Wapping (site of the scab-run plant owned by press magnate, Rupert Murdoch). Both Sean Geraghty (EEPTU — Engineering, Electrical and Plumbing Trade Union, London press branch) and Ginger Wilson, *Sunday Times* Father of the Chapel (FOC — shop stewards convenor) compared Wapping with the miners' strike.

The demonstration was followed by a highly successful concert at the Albert Hall, where £10,000 was raised for the national solidarity fund.

For further information on the campaign write to Ed Fredenburgh, 49 Milner Square, London, N.1. □

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of state represented in CARICOM [Caribbean Community] that they reiterate the demand made by their foreign ministers in St. Kitts in May 1985 for the end of the US blockade against Nicaragua and for resistance to the pressure from Washington aimed at dividing the islands of the Western Caribbean on the question of the commercialization of banana production.

This assembly demands an end to the violation of human rights in Central America and the Caribbean.

This assembly offers its support to the South African peoples in their fight against the shameful apartheid system imposed by the racist regime in Pretoria ...

Since our last meeting 19 months ago in Havana, there have been concrete advances in the struggles of the peoples of the region, as in Haiti, and a new situation is taking shape that demands of us a greater degree of unity, better communications and more effective cooperation ... □

Declaration of anti-imperialist organisations

ON FEBRUARY 10-12, 1986, a conference of Latin American and Caribbean political parties was held in Managua at the initiative of the Nicaraguan government. The objective of the meeting was to examine the state of war existing in Central America and especially the aggression directed against the Nicaraguan revolution.

The Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT — Revolutionary Workers Party), the Mexican section of the Fourth International, attended the conference.

As a prelude to this conference the Anti-imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America convened their second assembly on February 8-9. Forty-three delegates representing 30 organizations from 18 countries were present. The declaration from this meeting, that we reproduce below, was given to the press on February 10, 1986, by Raphael Faveras, a member of the Bloque Socialista [Dominican Republic] and president of the Committee of Anti-imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America.

The Caribbean and Central America continue to be a principal focus of world tension because of the policy of domination, exploitation and war conducted by imperialism against the growing struggles of the peoples of the region. This regional policy of economic, political and military interference is an integral part of the Reagan administration's "neoglobalist" policy, which is also characterized by an anticommunist crusade directed against national liberation movements and popular struggles....

This assembly condemns the policy of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which seeks to subject the developing countries of the region, and of the world generally, to its economic diktats for the profit of big international capital. This policy underlies the Caribbean Basin Initiative, which, without resolving any of the serious economic and social problems of the region, attempts to drag the area into the political-military plans of the United States....

The assembly also condemns the policy of state terrorism, the incessant military and economic aggression of the United States against Nicaragua, as well as the menace of direct military intervention and the US attempts to bring down the legally elected government of Nicaragua.

This assembly also makes known its support for the initiatives and

propositions that the Nicaraguan government has formulated to the Contadora group, including its declaration affirming that it will not be possible to achieve peace as long as the United States pursues its aggressive intervention in the Central American region. Moreover, this meeting has demanded the resumption of a bilateral dialogue between the United States and Nicaragua at Manzanillo.

Similarly, it condemns the high level that the military, political and economic intervention of the Reagan administration has reached against the heroic fight of the Salvadoran people....

US out of the Caribbean

This meeting is being held at a moment when the Cuban revolution is stronger than ever, in spite of the constant attacks to which it is subjected from the United States — the military menace, the economic blockade and ideological tactics.

The assembly celebrates the fall of Duvalier, accomplished by the Haitian people, forever faithful to their noble tradition of liberty. They have vigorously opposed any attempts to preserve the antipopular power of a Duvalierism without Duvalier. The courage of the Haitian people is a

source of inspiration for all the struggles in the Caribbean. The conference is in solidarity with the fight for authentic democracy in Haiti. It considers that democratization in Haiti implies the respect for the sovereignty and the right of political exiles to return freely. The conference has declared itself against any attempt at military intervention by the United States in Haiti.

The anti-imperialist organizations consider that the projected visit by Ronald Reagan to Grenada, formerly a free and sovereign country, is an attempt to make official the neocolonialization of that country. We condemn this visit as an act of imperial arrogance, an insult to all the patriots of Grenada and an affront to all the peoples of the Caribbean region.

The assembly expresses its profound concern about the growing militarization of the Caribbean and Central America by the Reagan administration, in particular the utilization of Puerto Rico as an armed base for launching military interventions against the Caribbean and Central America. It likewise expresses its concern about the increasing militarization of Honduras and its use as the seat of camps of mercenaries who attack Nicaraguan territory. Moreover, it denounces the utilization of Antigua and other territories for the same purposes. We demand that the Caribbean region be declared a zone of peace, of independence and of development. We declare that without peace in our region there can be no social and economic development.

On this subject, the conference considers that the region's foreign debt, which per capita is the highest in the world, is further strangling our economies. We consider that the problems of the foreign debt are not just economic but are also fundamentally political and that the debt is not payable. We affirm, moreover, that the only solution to this problem resides in the creation of a new international economic order. The assembly expresses its support to the struggles of the people of Guatemala for democracy and social progress.

Our assembly makes known its indignation over the existence in our region of territories under colonial domination, and we emphasize that the popular fight against this domination must be amplified. We lend our support to all peoples who are still waging an anticolonialist fight, as is the case in Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guyana and the Netherlands Antilles [the Dutch West Indies].

We launch an appeal to the chiefs

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