

International VIEWPOINT

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The end of the Soviet Union:

The Great Escape?



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on the Ukraine
- ❖ *Poul Funder Larsen* on
Kazakhstan

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Birth of a nation

FOR THE FIRST TIME in its history, on December 1, 1991, the Ukrainian people had the right to democratic self-determination. For a long time before it could be expressed through a vote, dissidents had made Ukrainian aspirations for independence known through the pen, underground activists through their tracts and guerillas through the rifle. Almost all the citizens of the republic went to vote and 90% of them voted for independence — some 20% more than had been suggested by even the most optimistic opinion polls.

ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI

AT THE same time, the voters elected Leonid Kravchuk as the republic's president. Kravchuk, a former leader of the now-dissolved Communist Party, won by a large margin over his main rival, Vyacheslav Chornovil, a former political prisoner and currently mayor of Lviv. Not only the whole of the Ukrainian people, but also a large proportion of the republic's national minorities, including the Russian minority, opted for an indepen-

dent state.

The democratic attitude of the Ukrainian national movement towards the republic's various minorities — the determination to respect their rights, including their right to cultural or even national-territorial autonomy — has borne its fruit. More than a simple act of the right of an oppressed people to self-determination, this is a historic act of reconstituting a nation. We do not live in the epoch of the formation of national

states, but in the Ukraine this is not an anachronism.

While being one of the largest European nations in population and territory, it has not had its own state and has been harshly oppressed for several centuries. An irregularity of this size in the relations between modern nations could not last for ever. It was a factor of chaos in the world historical process, and an enormous obstacle to the overall process of the development of the productive forces and class differentiation, as was well explained in 1926 by Ukrainian writer and Communist militant Mykola Khvylovy.

In fact, the Ukraine was one of the first nations to take form on the European continent. This took place in the 18th century, during a tumultuous Cossack revolution and a popular war that freed the Ukraine from the grip of the Polish state, its feudal ruling class and its Catholic church. This democratic state of the free armed peasantry might well have radically upset the social order in Eastern Europe, but its inability to develop along a capitalist path led to the degeneration of the formidable political, social and cultural gains of that revolution and to their dismantling by the Tsarist empire. The nation was ground down by the oppression of the Muscovite bureaucracy into a mass of serfs and by Tsarist ukazes [edicts] to the condition of a "little Russian" people.

The Ukraine was reformed as a state

The Fall of the House of Gorbachev

THE fuse lit in 1985 has finally reached the powder barrel: the Soviet Union has exploded. The explosive potential was immense; the national question in this part of the world is of a formidable complexity. The ex-Russian empire, like the Ottoman empire, was marked by a geographical continuity between metropolis and colonies. The geographical dimensions of the Russian imperial domain were maintained as a result of the 1917 revolution which brought to power an internationalist regime proposing a definitive democratic solution to the national question. But behind the formal, legal equality of nations resulting from the revolution there remained a real inequality and oppression inherited from Tsarist times, albeit transformed in its social nature. The equality of nations, like that of individuals, can only be assured if compensation for the real inequalities produced by history is added to its formal expression. Thus Lenin argued for a transitional inequality weighted towards the formerly oppressed and absolute respect of their sovereignty. The Stalinist degeneration justified Lenin's worst fears. Specific national oppression combined with national resentment against general bureaucratic oppression, leading to the current explosion.

The absence of an autonomous political intervention by the working class of the ex-USSR gives the collapse of the Stalinist system a chaotic air. The working class is the only class capable of forging a renewed and remodelled union. The other unifying framework of the USSR was the bureaucracy, now collapsing under the weight of its phenomenal bankruptcy and decomposing into so many active factors of disintegration, with the exception of a minority grouped around Gorbachev. For Marxists, in particular those who share the class analysis of the USSR developed by Leon Trotsky, the political approach to the national question in the USSR is highly complicated by this overlapping between an oppression to be overthrown and social gains to be defended, extended and qualitatively improved: all the more complicated in that the collapse of the USSR is taking place on the basis of capitalist restoration.

Moreover, in the current historic context, the newly independent nations will tend to be drawn into the imperialist orbit, thus replacing one dependency by another, very much more pernicious; while a general "everybody for themselves" approach is itself a generator of national injustice. Precisely because the ex-USSR was not a federation of genuinely equal republics, those who have devoured the best slices of the common cake over the decades can also, by suddenly declaring their total sovereignty, escape the task of reparation and compensation to the least favoured. And one can understand the resentment of the Asiatic republics towards the unilateral declarations of independence by the other richer republics.

This great political complexity of the national question in the Soviet Union has for a long time led to divergent analyses in our own ranks. Programmatic divergences with political consequences, for, beyond the democratic assumptions common to all, there is the question of how to formulate national demands in the context of a non-capitalist state. Is it correct, for example, to reproduce the classical approach of the colonial question under capitalism, demanding unconditional independence for the oppressed nationalities? The debate remains open. It should be clarified by the evolution of the independent states in the ex-USSR and their socio-political dynamics. The article on the Ukraine that follows is the expression of one point of view in this debate. It can be compared to other analyses, of the Ukrainian and other national questions in eastern Europe, which are regularly published in our pages — Salah Jaber ★

when the wave of social revolution in Russia in 1917 awoke the Ukrainian national revolution, but the two revolutions did not combine. The petty bourgeois regime of the Ukrainian People's Republic, led by Symon Petliura, was fiercely opposed to Bolshevism, while also resisting the White Russian armies. The successive Bolshevik governments set up in the Ukraine during the civil war did not understand either the breadth or the depth of the Ukrainian question and gave way to Great Russian pressures.

Parallel Communist Party

A parallel Ukrainian Communist Party — the so-called Borotbists — was formed, with wide popular support, as a rival to the Bolshevik Party, aspiring to the independence of a Soviet Ukraine. After merging with the Bolsheviks, in the 1920s former Borotbists played a decisive role in the extraordinary Ukrainian national renaissance of the time, comparable only with that which followed the Cossack revolution. After being put back on its feet, the Ukrainian people were once more crushed during the Stalinist counter-revolution. A famine consciously provoked by Stalin led to the death of six million Ukrainian peasants in 1932-33.

All the gains of the October revolution on the plane of national liberties were reversed in a murderous process of Stalinization and Russification. The stifling of Ukrainian national consciousness was a necessity for the Stalinist regime faced with one of the major effects of industrialization: the massive incorporation of the "dekulakized"¹ peasantry, imbued with a strong sense of national identity, into an industrial proletariat which, in the Ukraine, had previously been mainly Russian. The Second World War showed that what frightened the bureaucracy — the Ukrainization of the working class in the Ukraine — had become a reality. In autumn 1941, in the interval between the withdrawal of the Soviet army and the installation of the Nazi civilian administration, a Ukrainian workers' regime was set up to run the big industrial city and region of Kryvyi Rih. Under the German occupation of the Donbass, the working class expressed its aspiration to an "independent Soviet Ukraine without the dictatorship of Stalin and the Communist Party", and it was under this slogan that the local networks of young Communists resisted Nazi imperialism.

After the war and right up until recent years, the bureaucracy exerted itself to consolidate its "gains" of the 1930s. The national culture was degraded to the level of folklore, and the national language discriminated against in the schools, and in public and scientific life. The daily use of Russian in public places was considered as the most elementary proof of a citizen's loyalty towards the Soviet state. It was

hard for the Ukrainian majority to occupy any kind of position of responsibility, whether in education, culture, professional life, not to speak of Ukrainian under-representation in the intelligentsia and their over-representation in the collective farm peasantry and working class. The economy was pillaged and suffered a dependent and deformed development.

Since the establishment of the Stalinist regime, the Ukraine has been obliged to transfer economic surpluses worth one sixth of its national income to Russia and other parts of the USSR without compensation. The Soviet authorities pretended that these surpluses were being invested in under-developed, above all Asian, regions of the USSR but "empirical evidence denies the hypothesis that the mode of investment was influenced by the objective of regional equalization" according to the economist Volodymyr Bandera.

A North/South split

And, indeed, if this is not true, then how can one explain that the USSR is so clearly split along a North/South axis and the levels of development on the two sides of this axis are characterized by a persistent and even growing divergence?

The first irruption of a mass movement demanding national liberty in this republic appeared in summer 1988, somewhat later than in the Baltic States or the Caucasus. Even then the movement was restricted to the city of Lviv in the west of the republic. The Lviv region (eastern Galicia) was only recently reunited with the rest of the Ukraine, on the basis of the Stalin-Hitler Pact of 1939. In the past, this region did not belong to the Russian Empire, but, successively, to Poland until the end of the 18th century, to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and then again to Poland between the two world wars. Having escaped the national oppression experienced by the majority of the Ukrainian people under the Tsarist Empire and the Stalinist regime, the population of this region has been traditionally marked by a strong national identity and a powerful aspiration for independence, forged in their struggles against the Polish ruling class.

The annexation by the USSR of Western Ukraine was massively resisted by nationalist guerrillas who enjoyed the support of the peasant masses and were only finally exterminated in the early 1950s. The final act of this resistance coincided with the first anti-Stalinist uprising in the USSR; in 1953-54 former Ukrainian nationalist fighters led mass strikes by concentration camp convicts, from Karaganda in Kazakhstan to Norilsk and Vorkuta in the far north.

Echoes from the Polish revolution of 1980-81 had considerable impact in this neighbouring land, contributing to the rebirth of national consciousness. Given

all this, it was not surprising that the Ukrainian national movement got started in Lviv, that it rapidly won broad worker and popular support and that it catalyzed the national awakening in Central and Eastern Ukraine.

In this part of the republic, it was first of all relayed by the democratic intelligentsia in Kiev. Promoter of demands for national rights in the 1960s under the "nationalist deviationist" regime of Petro Shelest, it had been brutally crushed after the fall of this regime on the orders of Brezhnev. It only began to timidly come back to life after the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl, finally going on to link up with the pro-independence militants from Lviv led by Vyacheslav Chomovil. This led to the formation of the People's Movement of the Ukraine (Rukh) with the Kiev writer Ivan Drach as its president. In September 1989 Rukh's founding congress came out for the sovereignty of the republic.

While the resolutions of this congress were a political bombshell, a second, and even more powerful, bomb exploded several months later: the Supreme Soviet of the Ukraine adopted a declaration on the sovereignty of the republic. This spectacular vote was only made possible by a turnaround on the part of the republic's bureaucracy. Renowned as a bastion of Stalinist conservatism, responsible for the Brezhnevite "stagnation" and forced Russification, it split under pressure from the mass movement.

The reformist wing, led by Leonid Kravchuk, supporting *perestroika*, took up the demand for national rights and the sovereignty of the republic. It realized that the Ukrainian bureaucracy could only retain power if it controlled the passage from the command economy to a market economy, so as to ensure itself a decisive place in the private appropriation of the means of production and the accumulation of capital, and if it challenged the Lviv nationalists and Kiev democrats for leadership of the national movement. A decisive factor in its decision was the threat represented by the emergence of an independent workers' movement in the Donbass.

This movement appeared in the wake of the first wave of Soviet miners' strikes. If on the socio-economic level the workers of the basin raised very radical demands, their national consciousness remained low, owing to the long process of Russification. The Donbass regional Union of Strike Committees was reluctant to join Rukh or form a united democratic front with it, contrary to the attitude of the miners and other workers at the other end of the Ukraine, in the Lviv region.

It was clear that the fate of the Ukrainian national movement largely rested on the decisions of this gigantic concentration of the industrial proletariat. In spring 1991, during the second wave of miners strikes, the Donbass strike committees swung

round to calling for the transfer of the economic management of the whole basin to the republican authorities, in this way joining in the push towards independence.

A subsequent and even more powerful bomb exploded in the aftermath of the failure of the coup in Moscow in August 1991. At first hesitant and even inclined to look favourably on the imperial putsch, the reformist wing of the Ukrainian bureaucracy surprised the world.

Independence declared

On August 24, without waiting for the results of the referendum set for three months later, the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet voted through a declaration of independence, sounding thus the death knell of the Soviet Union. This act led to great tensions between the Ukrainian authorities and the new "democratic" regime of Boris Yeltsin in Russia.

"The proclamation of the independence of the Ukraine is a bomb that destroys age-old stereotypes" wrote Yevhen Sverstiuk, a pro-independence activist. "In this respect, Boris Yeltsin has immediately ceased to be a democrat, and has become a seasoned apparatchik, the Russian people's deputies have recourse to the formulas of the Stalinist constitution and the American president keeps a diplomatic silence... The most experienced Russian politicians, conservatives and democrats, supporters or opponents of the coup, unite on the Ukrainian question as the Russian political class did in 1917."²

While setting about dismantling the arms of the central Union regime to give Russia control over the decisive means of rule such as the army, the police, the KGB and military-industrial complex, Yeltsin also put pressure on the Ukraine. He threatened to call into question the Russo-Ukrainian frontier and support separatist movements among the Ukraine's Russian minority. These threats coincided with stepped up propaganda from Russian Stalino-nationalist groups for the formation of a separatist republic of "New Russia" in southern Ukraine and the annexation by Russia of the Donbass. In Crimea the same groups have also been demanding the separation of the peninsula, exploiting the hostility of the local Russian population to the return, supported by the Ukrainian national movement, of the Tatar people to their native land from which they were expelled by Stalin. In the Transcarpathian region the local bureaucracy has tried to incite a supposed Ruthenian people, whilst nationalist currents in Czechoslovakia and Hungary are demanding the annexation of that region. The Ukrainian regime, as well as the national movement, is opposed to any redrawing of frontiers, and as a sign of good will has promised not to demand the vast ethnically Ukrainian territories belonging to Russia.

In the framework of a war of nerves



between Moscow and Kiev, the Muscovite press stated that the Yeltsin government has considered a nuclear strike against the Ukraine, then "corrected" its information to suggest that it was Kravchuk's government that was considering a nuclear strike on Russia and that American military potential could be called on to ensure the defense of Russia from a Ukrainian attack. A sharp polemic has broken out between Moscow and Kiev over the control of Soviet nuclear arms stranded on Ukrainian territory. The Ukraine has expressed support for denuclearization, but in the transitional period, before their withdrawal or destruction, there remains the question of whether these arms should continue to be under the control of a central state or pass into the hands of the Russian state or be controlled in common by the four nuclear states, the Ukraine, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan.

This is a political, not a technical, question. The problem is to make sure that the bureaucratic centre under Gorbachev, which is resisting with increasing desperation the break-up of the Union, or the Yeltsin regime, whose hegemonic aspirations are clear, do not use their control of nuclear arms to hinder the independence process. It is true that the break up of the USSR puts a question mark over the arms' reduction treaties agreed between Moscow and Washington, but it is also true that when the people imposes its will, pacts agreed between the imperialists and the bureaucrats are not worth much.

Yeltsin's policy towards the Ukraine is highly contradictory. On the one hand, this republic's independence is a huge point of support for his efforts to dismantle the Gorbachevian centre, which can no longer count on the potential support of the Soviet army and the Western powers. This is well shown by the initiative taken by Yeltsin in common with the presidents of the Ukraine and Belarus on December 8, 1991, to declare that "the USSR, as a subject of international law and geo-

political reality no longer exists," and to found in its place a "community of independent states." But the independence of the Ukraine gravely restricts the resources available for the restoration of capitalism in Russia. For this restoration to take place, the former bureaucracy and the new Russian elite need free access to the raw materials, industries and labour force of other republics, and most importantly of the Ukraine.

Just before the Moscow coup, President Bush went to Kiev with the aim of persuading the Ukrainian national movement to renounce the goal of independence. The strategy of US imperialism concerning the Ukraine was established in 1948, at the height of the Cold War, in a document, then strictly secret, entitled "United States Objectives With Respect To Russia".

According to the terms of this document, US policy in this area should correspond to a supreme imperative, namely it should be in accordance with the interests and aspirations of the Great Russian people — more exactly with the interests of the Kremlin regime in dominating other nations. "They were the strongest national element in the Russian Empire, as they now are in the Soviet Union. They will continue to be the strongest national element in that general area, under any status. Any long term US policy must be based on their acceptance and their cooperation. The Ukrainian territory is as much a part of their national heritage as the Mid-West is of ours".

The Ukrainians should remain "in the family of the traditional Russian Empire, of which they form an inextricable part.... For better or for worse, they will have to work out their destiny in some sort of special relationship with the Great Russian people. It seems clear that this relation-

1. "Dekulakized" — a reference to the liquidation of peasants who resisted collectivization, who the Stalinist regime claimed were all Kulaks (rich peasants).

2. *Literaturna Ukrayina*, September 3, 1991.

3. *National Security Council Records*, The National Archives of the United States.

ship can be at best a federal one, under which the Ukraine would enjoy a considerable measure of political and cultural autonomy but would not be economically or militarily independent"³. The world imperialist order needs, as one of its major pillars, Russian hegemony over the peoples of the old empire.

Commenting on the policy of the United States and the other Western powers, a militant of the Ukrainian national movement remarked: "It is significant that it took the shedding of blood in the Baltic states before there was any real protest from the West, although before this the Soviet army had been responsible for as much bloodshed at Tbilisi, Baku and other parts of the empire. We need to be aware that the Ukraine cannot count on the support of the West, because the latter only recognizes as illegal the incorporation of the Baltic states. In its opinion, all the other republics are part of the legitimate and indivisible territory of the USSR"⁴.

The Ukrainian national question has always been combined with the social question. The Ukrainian aspiration to independence has always been characterized by a strong aspiration to the social liberation of the broad masses. The Ukrainian nation forged itself initially in the course of a peasant revolution against feudalism. The national revolution of 1918-20 based itself on the social aspirations of the peasant and worker masses, as is witnessed by the rise of the so-called Borotbist Communist-independence current. In the mid-1920s Ukrainian Communist dissidents, led by Mykola Khvylovy, demanded the independence of Soviet Ukraine in order to protect "the young working class of the young nation" against the degeneration of the Russian revolution and against oppression by the bureaucratic layer which had come to power in Moscow.

Nationalist guerillas

The nationalist guerillas of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) which operated in the western part of the country during the 1940s, advocated the overthrow the Stalinist bureaucracy and the conquest of independence for the republic while opposing the restoration of capitalism. The socialization of the fundamental means of production, they argued, was necessary to prevent the formation of an exploiting class on the basis of private property, whereas in the context of a nationalized economy, political democracy was seen as indispensable to prevent the formation of a parasitic and totalitarian layer on the basis of a monopoly of state power.

For these guerillas, in the words of their commander Petro Poltava, the anti-Stalinist revolution and the conquest of independence by the oppressed peoples of

The South Korean model?

ON DECEMBER 1 the leader of the (former?) Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, and former first secretary of the republic's Communist Party, Nursultan Nazarbayev, won a resounding victory in the republican presidential elections, gaining 99.88% of the votes cast. This result, coming after the elections in Kirghizia and Tadjikistan, once more emphasized that the elites of the Soviet period are still firmly in control in the Central Asian republics — whether their current appearance is "conservative" (as in Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan) or rather more "centrist" (as in Kirghizia and Kazakhstan).

POUL FUNDER LARSEN

AS THE traditional power structures of the Union have withered over the last few months, the Central Asian region has increasingly come into focus as a separate entity. When the treaty for the new post-coup economic union was signed by eight republics on October 18 it happened neither in Moscow, nor St. Petersburg nor in Kiev but more than 3,000 kilometres away in Alma Ata, the capital of Kazakhstan.¹ Meanwhile throughout the autumn a flow of Western politicians, including James Baker and Hans-Dietrich Genscher, arrived in Alma Ata to meet Nursultan Nazarbayev, emphasizing the importance Kazakhstan,

and to a lesser extent the whole Central Asian region, has acquired in contemporary Soviet politics.

Kazakhstan and the other Central Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, Kirghizia and Turkmenistan) now constitute one of the three main "lumps" left over from a Union on the brink of collapse. Measured by space, Kazakhstan is the second biggest Soviet republic (four times the size of the Ukraine, five times the size of France), but little more than 16 million people live in this area which encompasses vast steppes. The Kazakh population is a minority in the republic, numbering less than 40% of the population; there are approximately the same percentage of

the USSR took place "in a decisive epoch of revolutions of national liberation and of social revolutions, of emancipation of peoples which are under the yoke of world imperialism and of the liberation of workers from the chains of exploitation and capitalist oppression".

For almost two centuries, successive generations fighting for the national freedom of the Ukrainian people have stressed the fact that all the defeats of the successive efforts to win Ukrainian independence have had the same cause; the incapacity to radically change society, to smash the oppressive social regime or to prevent the substitution of one socially oppressive regime by another.

There can be no national liberation for the Ukrainian people without the social liberation of the workers — that was their message. The old bureaucracy in power, including those who now support the moves towards independence, and the

new political elite which has emerged from the national movement, are orienting towards the restoration of capitalism, which would subvert a barely won national independence by submitting the Ukraine to the domination of the Western imperialist powers and, once again, to Russia. It is impossible to assure a solidly based independence for the Ukraine without the concentration of all state power in the hands of the representatives of the people and without the nationalized economy coming under the collective democratic control of the masses.

Ukrainian national independence in itself carries no solution to the key question, that of the social and political nature of the new state. But in overthrowing national oppression, it opens the road, until now blocked, to the recomposition of the social forces and to their class differentiation. ★

4. *Ukrayinske Slovo*, February 24, 1991.

Russians, while a hundred other peoples (Germans, Koreans, Ukrainians and others) make up the remaining 20%.

Before the October revolution Kazakhstan and the whole Central Asian area — then known as Turkestan — was a Russian colony. The bloody Russian conquest was finished by the early 1880s and millions of Russians settled in Central Asia as cotton producers, or in Kazakhstan, driving away the nomads from the steppes. There were several waves of this Great Russian domination; for example on the eve of October, in 1916, it took the Tsar's armies several months to quell an insurrection among the Kazakhs against forced military service.

In the late 1920s, the party/state leadership of Stalin launched the all-out collectivization of the countryside with disastrous consequences for the people of the region, thus squandering the trust won by such measures as the distribution of plots of land to poor peasants in Kazakhstan in 1921. In a ruthless continuation of the Tsarist policies, depriving the nomads of their pastures, the Stalinists unleashed a veritable genocide, the casualties of which probably ran into millions. The collectivization and repression in turn triggered massive emigration from Kazakhstan — primarily to China. Today more than three million Kazakhs live outside Kazakhstan — one million in Russia, one million in Uzbekistan and between one and two million in China. The republic's national composition was further modified in the 30s and 40s through the influx of hundreds of thousands of deportees including whole communities of "repressed peoples" (for example, Volga Germans and Crimean Tatars).

Wave of Russification

In the 1960s, Kazakhstan saw a further wave of Russification — ascribed to the CPSU ideologist Mikhail Suslov — closing Kazakh schools, changing names and so on. These latent national contradictions were at the root of the outburst of anger on December 17-18, 1986, when the centre (headed by Gorbachev) ousted the Kazakh leader Dinmoukhammed Kunayev — an old-time nomenklaturist — and replaced him with a Russian, Gennadi Kolbin.

A protest in the central Republican Square of Alma Ata turned into street fighting followed by a wave of repression by the authorities. This was the first major national confrontation of the *perestroika* period — and the first indication of the repressive line that the centre would pursue through these years.²

The rise to power of Nursultan Nazarba-



jev, a Kazakh technocrat educated in economics, who was appointed CP first secretary in 1988, marked a stabilization of national relations in Kazakhstan. By maintaining a relatively independent profile in relations with Moscow, while supporting the drawing up of a new Union Treaty, he has managed to win broad support among the different nationalities.

The Nazarbaev leadership has combined the drive towards a market economy with the preservation of a firm administrative grip, based on the largely intact structures of the nomenklatura in Kazakhstan.

Democracy found inexpedient

As one Soviet business monthly puts it with more than a hint of admiration: "Nursultan Nazarbaev is not at all inclined to give up authoritarianism. This is not because he is a stranger to the ideas of democracy, but because he thinks it is more expedient. By studying the international experiences he has realized that such serious economic transformations have nowhere been carried out without a strongly centralized power. This explains his systematic course towards acquiring new authorities and powers. More than a year ago he reformed the Soviet councils of Kazakhstan, thereby strengthening the administration — something which Yeltsin has just begun."³

After the failed coup d'état in August, which Nazarbaev managed to keep clear of by adopting a "wait-and see" position and which had few repercussions in Kazakhstan, the republican CP was abolished and a "Socialist Party of Kazakhstan" founded by mid-September as its successor. There are no signs that the events of August profoundly altered the

relationship of forces in the republic. As *Izvestiya's* correspondent noted: "It is evident that the party nomenklatura still plays a role and that the existing Supreme Soviet of Kazakhstan is still predominantly composed of 'former Communists'. Although the leading bodies of the new (Socialist) party contain virtually none of the leaders of the old CP of Kazakhstan, all former party leaders today receive state appointments as ministers, state councilors and so on."⁴

Though the issue of the property of the republican CP has not yet been settled, it seems likely that the new party can hold onto at least parts of it. In a personal conversation, an economist from Alma Ata aptly summarized the whole development: "All the apparatchiks of the CP have moved into the administration of the president — only now they get twice their former salary."

The political life of Kazakhstan has not seen the advent of opposition groups comparable in scope to, for example, the People's Fronts in other republics. Some parties of a liberal democratic orientation and a social democratic party have been formed, while a green party is in the making, but none of these will be able to challenge Nazarbaev's political hegemony in

1. The eight initial signatories were Russia, Belarus (Byelorussia), Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizia and Armenia.

2. In the Republican Square today you can find a small memorial board commemorating the victims of December 1986, while in a park in the centre a statue of Kunayev, who is said to live in a house nearby, remains. As a concession to rising national consciousness, December 17-18 are now being made national holidays.

3. *Delovye Lyudi*, July-August, 1991. With the granting of wide-ranging powers to Yeltsin on November 1, he has also accomplished this authoritarian goal.

4. *Izvestiya*, September 14, 1991. One instance, mentioned in *Izvestiya*, September 2, 1991, is the former head of the republican CP's ideological department, Kuanysh Sultanov, who was appointed minister of press and mass media by a decree of Nazarbaev.

the short run. He has even been able to impose a "moratorium on meetings and demonstrations" on the opposition forces.

A concrete illustration of the opposition's weakness was given in the run-up to the republican presidential elections. The deadline for the nomination of candidates (supported by at least 100,000 signatures) was November 10. However by that date, only one candidate, Nursultan Nazarbayev, had collected the required signatures. The national democratic opposition grouping Sjeltoksan announced its own election candidate, but did not collect enough signatures — a contributing cause of this apparently being serious harassment from the authorities.⁵

The Unity movement, counting on support from sections of the Russian population, also called on its supporters to vote against Nazarbayev — but the vast majority of the republic's Russian population ignored this call.

Islamic forces

A key question in the political life of the whole region in coming years will be the issue of the development of the Islamic forces. With religion only beginning to emerge as a political factor after many decades of repression, there are widely different assessments of its current impact.

It could undoubtedly become a tool both in the hands of opposition currents challenging the "old regime" from a religious-fundamentalist position and of former Communist elites seeking a new power base.

Several states in Central Asia and the Middle East (notably Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia) have made considerable efforts to link up with the "new" republican leaderships. Iran is probably in the lead as regards Tadjikistan (where the language is Persian) while the Turkish government has had extensive consultations in Kazakhstan.

Some intellectual circles in this republic identify Turkey's secular, modernizing regime of Ataturk in the 1920s as a possible model for their own social development.

The following for parties basing their appeal on references to Islam is obviously linked to the general social situation in the republics. Uzbekistan and Tadjikistan are deeply affected by the socio-economic crisis, fuelling fundamentalist currents and national tensions, for example in the densely populated Fergana Valley, while Kazakhstan, which has a non-Muslim majority, is currently suffering much less from the supply crisis than are many regions of Russia.

It remains an open question to what extent the institutions established in the Soviet period (compulsory education and so on) and the close ties between parts of the Islamic clergy and the Soviet regime will be able to counteract a strong relig-

ious revival on the political scene. Recently the Mufti of the Kazakh Muslims, Ratbek Nyzanbayev, publicly denounced attempts to form an Islamic party in the republic as "threatening the stability of Kazakhstan" and "letting loose the idea of pan-Turkism which can create hostility between believers from different confessions."⁶

As a sign of the times, the exhibition in Alma Ata devoted to the achievements of the Soviet economy (VDNKh) has now been turned into a commercial centre and exchange. The government of Nazarbayev is set for liberal reforms and commercial enterprises are multiplying.

By mid-September, a programme outlining the first phase of privatizations in Kazakhstan — involving at last 50-60% of the shops, services and small industrial enterprises as well as housing — was published in the republic's press.⁷ According to the programme, this "small privatization" will take place in 1991-92 and should be immediately followed by a "large privatization" of medium-sized and large industrial enterprises, with non-profitable and non-functioning enterprises being sold off first.

Apparently Nazarbayev's privatization programme envisages a more gradual process, and a more pronounced role for state intervention than its Russian counterpart. The programme does pay some lip service to workers' rights in the privatization process; however no special provisions for transferring enterprises to collective ownership are described. As regards the privatization of housing the programme prescribes a system of coupons distributed according to work seniority. This aspect of the reform has come in for strong criticism from the trade unions who have pointed to its unfortunate consequences for young workers, among other things. Another point also criticized by the unions concerns the way in which this sweeping privatization programme came into being: it was simply published following an order from Nazarbayev, without any discussion or decision in the Kazakhstan parliament.⁸

Authoritarian design of economic reforms

This type of decision making pinpoints the authoritarian design of the economic reform in the republic. When the discussion touches on the "model" of economic development it is usually the experience of the Pacific Rim economies, and particularly South Korea, which is evoked: "He (Nazarbayev) doesn't conceal his admiration for authoritarian regimes as long as they have robust market economies. He speaks respectfully of South Korea, which he visited last year. 'We're interested in how they managed to develop so much in only 30 years', he says. 'The market was established there under very tough discipline.'

"This month Nazarbayev plans to tour China's free economic zones, where economic liberalization coexists with political repression; Singapore's former prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew, no proponent of unbridled democracy himself, will visit Kazakhstan later this year. 'If you've got democracy on the production line, democracy in life, then who's going to work?' asks Nazarbayev."⁹

This concept of a development (in Kazakhstan and in the whole region) along the lines of the South-East Asian economies is obviously based on a series of fragile assumptions, including the feasibility of a large-scale restructuring of the working class (imposing iron discipline and long hours) and the creation of huge investments, to a large extent through the influx of foreign capital. But in reality, the foreign investments have so far been sparse, focussed on the extraction of raw materials and highly speculative.

The scandal around the enormously rich Chengiz oilfield is an indication of what can be expected from future investments by transnational corporations in the area — and in the former Soviet republics in general.

Massive unexploited oil deposits

The Chengiz oilfield is thought to contain at least 25 billion barrels of oil, and is perhaps the biggest oil deposit in the Soviet Union not yet exploited. After a prolonged period of manoeuvring and bargaining, with both the leadership of Kazakhstan and the union authorities involved, the outline of a deal with the American Chevron oil company was disclosed early this year.

The deal involves investments of billions from the Soviet/Kazakh side, while Chevron will contribute a smaller sum — but nevertheless profits are to be split 50/50. Chevron should make the technology for this enormous joint venture available, but several observers believe that the technological solution offered is second-rate and already outdated. However no neutral feasibility study has been carried out, and rumours of the incompetent and corrupt behaviour of the Soviet/Kazakh side in the negotiations were proliferating.

Two governmental commissions have characterized the project as not profitable for the Soviet/Kazakh side, which in turn prompted the liberal *Moskovskiy Novosti* (Moscow News) to state: "The size of the

5. Sjeltoksan means "December" in Kazakh. A main cause of this party, which advocates the rights of the Kazakh population, is the rehabilitation of the participants in the December 1986 demonstration.

6. *Izvestiya*, November 13, 1991.

7. *Ogni Alatau*, September 19, 1991. The programme was apparently co-authored by the South Korean economist Chan Yung Bang.

8. *Izvestiya*, September 27, 1991.

9. *Newsweek*, July 8, 1991.

10. *Moscow News/Fax Digest*, 24 June 1991.

joint venture's authorized capital is only one fiftieth of the sum this country is to spend on prospecting and equipment, not to mention the worth of the oil deposit itself. Plans do not take into account the expected rise in world oil prices, which constitutes a double loss for this country. The most conservative estimates put Chevron's net profit share in this project at twice that of the average rate of profit in the US oil industry. The contract has been drawn up in such a manner that the corporation can get more than \$100bn. This country does not get anything like this. Chevron does not take on any serious ecological obligations, it does not even consider the danger of earthquakes that can be caused by the use of the technology. It does not commit itself to seriously taking part in the region's development."¹⁰

Moskovskiy Novosti then had to conclude: "The project's economic substance is perfectly clear: the Soviet Union and Kazakhstan are losing control over the country's richest oil deposit, while being promised absolutely nothing in exchange. Such an agreement is unprecedented in our time. Delving into the history of oil concessions, I realized that this is how former mother countries treated their colonies at the beginning of the century, moreover at gun-point."¹¹

Trusting in Chevron

However, when James Baker visited Alma Ata in mid-September Nazarbayev confirmed his trust in Chevron and publicly endorsed the project. This was by all accounts part of an agreement between the Americans (promising economic aid and support for Kazakh control over the nuclear weapons inside the republic) and the Kazakhstan government. As one newspaper quipped: "Nazarbayev gave away Chengiz and approached the bomb."¹²

But Chevron is far from the only multinational corporation dying to get its share of the huge natural resources of Kazakhstan; when Nazarbayev visited Britain he

held long talks with, among others, top officials from British Petroleum. The decision concerning Chengiz is clearly an attempt by the leadership of Kazakhstan to appear "flexible" and "open" to foreign investors. But foreign capital is likely to be exclusively interested in the republic's raw materials, thereby maintaining it as a producer and exporter of raw materials with only the remnants of a (highly unprofitable and polluting) domestic industry.

Kazakhstan is indeed a treasury of raw materials: it contains 70% of the Union's deposits of lead, zinc, titanium, tin and magnesium; 90% of the phosphorus and chrome; 65% of the silver; 30% of the copper; and 60% of the molybdenum. The republic's coalfields produce 142 million tons of coal a year — and there are important oil and gas deposits. After Khrushchev's "virgin lands" scheme of the 1950s, Kazakhstan has been one of the main producers of agricultural crops; primarily wheat, but also rice and cotton. Today more than 20% of the cultivated area of the Union is in Kazakhstan. Most of the agricultural products are exported, mainly as raw material — only 19% is processed.¹³

The industry allocated to Kazakhstan by central planning is dominated by heavy engineering, chemical and petrochemical industries, power stations and some light industry (for example, shoe and textile production).

The picture of an economy characterized by the production of raw materials and with only a rudimentary manufacturing sector is more pronounced in the other Central Asian republics. While they grow virtually all of the cotton in the Soviet Union, more than 80% of this is manufactured in Russia.¹⁴ The tendency towards monoculture has had serious consequences for the region's socioeconomic and ecological situation. It has also created a strong dependence on the Union's trade structures, which meant certain social gains for the region despite

the uneven division of labour.¹⁵

The ecological price paid for the industrialization and the agricultural monoculture has been terribly high. The disaster of the Aral Sea has become a symbol of the reckless exploitation of natural resources by the bureaucratic regime. This enormous lake of 66,000 square kilometres (second in the Soviet Union only to the Caspian Sea) has been shrinking over the last four decades primarily due to the irresponsible irrigation projects for the large-scale growing of cotton, rice and wheat. The rate of disappearance of the Aral Sea has accelerated over recent years and more than 60% of the Sea's waters have now gone, leaving serious health problems and social and cultural misery behind.

At the end of November, the Kazakhstan State Environmental Committee declared the area "an ecological disaster zone", acknowledging that "the ecological situation in the region is out of control."

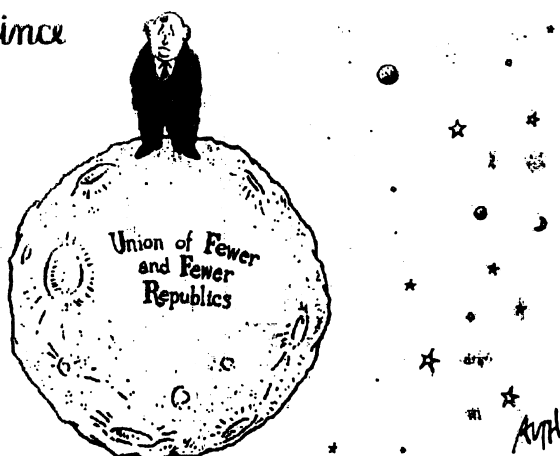
The Aral Sea disaster

"The living standards and health of the population have deteriorated dramatically, general mortality and infant mortality is rising." The statement estimates that: "All in all three million people on the banks of the Aral Sea in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan are living under such extreme conditions."¹⁶ As the Soviet Union disintegrates, only the republics directly affected will probably be willing to pay a part of the astronomical bill to clear up the disaster.

The Aral Sea is far from being the region's only ecological problem. Northern and eastern Kazakhstan are severely polluted by unfiltered smoke from factories and mines and large parts of this vast territory (particularly the area around the industrial centre of Ust-Kamenogorsk) is seriously contaminated by toxic and chemical leakages. The Soviet army has placed some of its most damaging installations on the soil of Kazakhstan, including the notorious nuclear site of Semipalatinsk, which has wreaked havoc for several decades. The test sites for chemical and biological weapons are also situated in Kazakhstan.

A breakdown of the economic ties between the republics could spell disaster for much of Kazakhstan's industry. The

The Little Prince



11. *Moscow News/Fax Digest* 21, May 1991.

12. *Kommersant*, September 23, 1991.

13. The statistics are from *Delovye Lyudi*, op. cit. and the *APN Yearbook*, USSR, 1990.

14. *The Guardian*, August 28, 1991.

15. The discussion on the terms of trade within the Soviet Union is often extremely biased, and consequently many, widely differing statements are given. One estimate in the independent *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* (September 17, 1991) indicates that the Central Asian republics of Kirghizia, Tadjikistan and Turkmenistan would actually benefit from a switch to world market prices — gaining respectively 110 million, 60 million and 300 million roubles a year.

16. *Izvestiya*, November 26, 1991.

Central Asian region would be left behind with its enormous ecological problems and lopsided national economies. Throughout the negotiations around the various forms of economic and political union Kazakhstan has therefore been one of the main proponents of preserving the unity of the republics. The preferred option of the Nazarbayev leadership has clearly been the combination of a binding economic union and a looser political confederation.

However, a series of steps towards asserting and strengthening the republic's power structures have been made: after the coup, Nazarbayev announced that all enterprises on the territory of Kazakhstan would be transferred to the jurisdiction of the republic, and that a republican reserve of gold and diamonds would be established.

The government has also announced that the republic is prepared to launch its own currency, but that it will not take such a step unilaterally. Some inter-republican economic agreements between Kazakhstan and other republics have already been struck; while the idea of setting up a regional grouping of the Central Asian republics has not yet made much progress.

The process of Russia seizing the institutions left over from the Union was explained bluntly by Yeltsin's henchman Burbulis: "Russia is the successor of the Union and all its institutions"; it has been met with disapproval in Alma Ata. So has the go-it-alone attitude implicit in the Russian economic reform, for example, the imminent price hikes that will affect all other republics as well. The prospect of a Russian superpower catering for itself and not ruling out territorial claims on other republics, with a strong army controlling all nuclear weapons, is hardly an encouraging one for Kazakhstan.

Control of nuclear weapons

Consequently, Nazarbayev has been increasingly unwilling to give up control of the nuclear weapons deployed in Kazakhstan. When asked whether Moscow should retain its control over the nuclear strategy of the country he answered: "Not Moscow, but the General Staff, which will be composed of the defence ministers of the republics."¹⁷ On November 26, a defence committee of Kazakhstan was set up. The immensely popular decision to close down the Semipalatinsk test site, decreed by Nazarbayev on August 28, was also a warning to Russia and the Soviet army that Kazakhstan will not put up with everything.

The friction between Russia and Kazakhstan is of course a particularly important issue in the northern parts of Kazakhstan, where Russians are in the majority. Tensions were aggravated when, following the coup, Yeltsin aides suggested that a revision of the borders between the two republics may be neces-

sary at some point. Kazakh nationalists immediately countered, maintaining that "original Kazakh territories include parts of the Saratov, Orenburg, Astrakhan and Omsk regions."¹⁸

There was a glimpse of the potential conflicts when in September some hundreds of Russian Cossacks arrived in the city of Uralsk, situated in Kazakhstan close to the Russian border. They wanted to celebrate the 400th anniversary of Cossacks in the region serving the Russian state and brought with them a Russian flag. This was immediately countered by a large protest demonstration of Kazakhs who saw it as an outright chauvinist provocation.¹⁹

Northern and eastern Kazakhstan is the industrial heartland of the republic, with the coal-mining city of Karaganda (700,000 inhabitants) as the "capital". In this area, as in other coal-mining centres of the Soviet Union, the workers' movement was reborn at the time of the 1989 strikes. Soon after, part of the strike leadership took over in reality the official miners' trade union in the region, but they were gradually coopted by the local nomenklatura.

Efforts to form independent miners union

The attempt to maintain an independent workers committee within the official trade union and set up a political workers organization, the Union of Workers of Karaganda, failed. Instead some of the activists moved on to initiate a local organizing committee of the Independent Union of Mineworkers (NPG). The strikes of March-April this year did not get a massive following in Karaganda, because of the active intervention of Nazarbayev (promising comprehensive indexation of wages) and the role played by the local trade unions: "Our strike was not as big as the one in Kuzbass [in Western Siberia]. The national question in the region and the fact that we are better off economically played a role in this connection.

"It was very difficult for us. The authorities tried to stigmatize our actions as extremist. The leader of the official trade union personally tried to call off the strike. We were immediately told that the consequences of the strike and all the economic losses would be imposed on those who organized it. The strike was spontaneous: there were no links between the strikers, and the miners thought that no one was supporting them.

"Immediately after the strike the persecution began. Workers were summoned by the directors who threatened to fire them. After that we decided to leave the official trade union."²¹ The Karaganda branch of the NPG also played an important role during the three days of the August coup, when they tried to organize popular resistance, giving out — under

very difficult conditions — seven different leaflets.

Meanwhile the official union, which can still count on support from the majority of miners in Karaganda, hopes for a bright future through the setting up of export deals with foreign firms. This was described in a Soviet paper under the telling headline: "What is better — to strike or to receive dollars?" The idea was explained by the chairman of the regional trade union committee: "With the help of the president of Kazakhstan, we have signed contracts with foreign firms about delivering 200,000 tons of coal. Sixty percent of the currency is earned by the mines, thirty percent is given to the republican budget and ten percent to the regional soviets."²²

This is undoubtedly the type of trade unionism that Nazarbayev likes, while unions trying to pursue a more independent line are subjected to explicit pressure from the authorities: "The authorities of Kazakhstan are trying to pacify the hotbeds of the workers' movement. One example is that the administration of the regional soviet has just taken away the legal approval of the regional workers' committee (in Karaganda)."²³

The Independent Union of Mineworkers is not the only union trying to build a structure independent of the nomenklatura (though it is probably the one with the biggest potential). By mid-August, a republican Independent Trade Union Centre, consisting of 12 (very heterogeneous) unions, was set up in Alma Ata.

Union criticism of economic policies

Lately the official unions have also been posing as more critical towards the economic policies of the republican leadership, as has also been the case in Tadjikistan, where in November, the trade unions announced a one-hour warning strike against the reduction in living standards. In a situation where the social crisis is felt by all workers, and scepticism about the market reform is widespread, the unions are forced to take a clearer stand. That could in turn spell trouble for the dreams of Nazarbayev and the other leaders in the region about turning their republics into replicas of South Korea. ★

17. *Izvestiya*, October 29, 1991.

18. *Rabochaya Tribuna*, September 17, 1991.

19. *Izvestiya*, September 18, 1991.

20. One of the Gulags of the Stalin period, "Karlag", was situated here until 1961. The city was constructed from 1934 onwards around the area's coal deposits — involving large amounts of forced labour. Today there are 25 mines in the region, the largest employing 4,500 workers, and nearby, in the satellite town of Temirtau, a steel works (employing 33,000 workers) has been constructed.

21. Extracts from an interview with Pavel Syumlin and Igor Frolov from the Independent Union of Miners. The interview was carried out by the author in Karaganda in September.

22. *Rabochaya Tribuna*, September 28, 1991.

23. Pavel Syumlin and Igor Frolov, op. cit.

An army in search of a state

THE YUGOSLAV federal Minister of Defence has just called for the rapid creation of a mini-Yugoslavia¹. He believes that the army has accomplished "its mission": to protect the Serbs from "a new genocide perpetrated by the Ustashe" and to secure the right to self-determination of those who wish to remain part of a smaller Yugoslavia.

CATHERINE VERLA



THE tone is the same as that of Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic: "Serbia is not at war. It does not want the army to conquer the Croat territories, nor to block the exercise of the right to self-determination of the other peoples who have together constituted Yugoslavia and have the right to separate from it". Certainly, the Serbian regime and the army top brass add, the unilateral declarations of independence by Croatia and Slovenia are "illegal" in relation to the Yugoslav Constitution which stipulates that the dissolution of the country must be done in a concerted manner.

But they add, "the will for separation is there. We will not hold by force those who wish to leave Yugoslavia. But we will not allow them to infringe on the right to self-determination of others who wish to remain in Yugoslavia". As to the frontiers, "the Constitution allows that they can be modified but on the basis of common agreement. The declarations of independence change the external frontiers, such was not our wish. But when the equilibrium of the whole, Yugoslavia, is challenged, then it is necessary also to renegotiate the internal frontiers". Such is the argument, extremely coherent with regard to "legality", developed by the representatives of the "Yugoslav bloc".

But legality itself can be applied in different ways. And behind the law, there is the relation of forces. It is this latter which in the past has forced the Albanians of Kosovo to accept a "Yugoslav" framework that they rejected (after the defeat of the plan for a Balkan confederation including Albania).

It is also this that has made Kosovo, cradle of the first Serbian medieval kingdom (but with an Albanian population of more than 90%) a province of the Republic of Serbia. It is again this relationship which has denied the Albanians of Kosovo the status of a "nation" (with its own republic/state), making them instead a "national minority" inside Yugoslavia, without the right of secession.

This double standard is continued in

these cease-fire agreements, which, far from treating the Albanians in Serbia and the Serbs in Croatia symmetrically, will recognize the rights of the second and completely ignore those of the first. Until Kosovo explodes again, without doubt this time supported by Albania.

But the relationship of forces is also unequal between the recognized nations: in the first place, of course, the force of the Croatian state has been legally imposed on the Serbs of Croatia, just as that of the Serbian state was legally (but first politically and physically) imposed on the provinces of Kosovo and Vojvodina.

A balance of pressures

Under different forms, it could be said that in the Yugoslav constitution of 1974, the last of the Tito era, a balance between all the pressures from below was realized: Serbian sovereignty on the territory of the Serbian republic would stop at the frontiers of the provinces recognized as quasi-republics with the right to a veto at the level of the federation; Croat sovereignty over the Croatian republic was shared with the Serbs of Croatia, treated as a constituent nation; in the same way, Bosnia-Herzegovina was a state of Serbs, Croats and Muslims (Islamicized Slavs recognized as an ethnic entity).

In other words, Yugoslavia was not only in itself a federation of republics, but these latter were also (for the most part) multinational states, with equal rights. This did not reflect an artificial division, but long term mixes and movements of population (the Albanians moved to Kosovo after the Serbs had fled the Turks, the Serbs of Croatia and of Bosnia-Herzegovina lived for some centuries in the frontier zones between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman empires, and so on).

It is obvious that the challenging of the multi-ethnic equilibrium of the 1974 constitution is the product of the overall crisis of the Titoist regime at the turn of the

1980s. This crisis produced on the one hand the recentralizing tendencies (liberal or backward-looking, respectively behind Milosevic who fought for a recentralized Yugoslavia), and, on the other, tendencies towards a break up of the federation through the reaffirmation of nation-states (states of one principal nation). The Serbian and Croat nationalists share common sources in this process, and have nourished each other in it.

Faced with the defeat of a Yugoslav centralist project, the Serbian powers turned to a "Serbo-slavia" supported by an army whose *raison d'être* is to have a state to defend (the biggest possible). To maintain the old Yugoslavia by force is completely impossible. But the Serbs of Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina play a dramatic and pivotal role in the project of maintenance of a Yugoslavia without its separatists. To consider that they are simply manipulated by Milosevic's Serbian regime is to pass over the political defeat of Croat president Franco Tudjman, which was not inevitable, unlike the military defeat which became certain when the army took on the role of protector of the Serbs.

An odious assimilation

It is odious to assimilate Croat national sentiment with the fascist nationalism of the Ustashe and it is unacceptable to equate (as the Serbian nationalists have done) any project of a Croatian sovereign state (including in a confederal Yugoslavia) to a Ustashe state.

The propaganda of the official Serbian media has used this war to sharpen the memories and the hatred lingering from the wartime period. But the Tudjman government has given it arguments which have made the task easier: the hasty proclamation of a charter of the rights of Serbs and of minorities on June 25, 1991, the day of the declaration of independence, came too late, and was perceived as an attempt to throw sand in the eyes of the

1. *Le Monde*, December 5, 1991.

international community, without real effect or credibility; it came after the sabotage of the negotiations initiated by the Serbian representatives in Croatia. The demands initially made by these latter amounted to infinitely less than what the Croatian government is proposing today. Tudjman's declaration that he was happy that his wife was neither Serbian nor Jewish, his anti-Semitic and reactionary nationalist writings, the tolerance towards the Ustashe groups whose support he needs in the areas where the war is sharpest, all this has exacerbated the fear and hatred.

The current repression against the far right Croatian Party and its leader Paraga, in a context of military defeats attributed to Tudjman and in which the Ustashe have gained a reputation as the best fighters on the ground, will lead to a political disaster: now seen as victims, the far right currents, favoured by the logic of war, could gain in strength at the next elections. And yet the Serbs do not form a homogeneous bloc, whether in Serbia or Croatia: still today, in the villages of Banija as in the big cities where half of them live, there are many who reject what has now become an aggression against Croat sovereignty and against real self-determination for every Serb.

For if Serbs are accused of "treason", of collaboration with the Ustashe, when they reject the war and recognize Croatian sovereignty, there is no self-determination. Nor is there any possible sovereignty on an unmanageable Croatian territory, cut in two and reduced by a third.

There is no possible peace through the imposition, by armed force, of the "liberation" of towns or villages where less than 20% of the population is Serb, as is the case in Slavonia, or when those who refuse to fight are repressed as "war criminals" or sent forcibly to the front, as is the case in Vojvodina. The intervention of troops of the United Nations Organization (UNO) is today accepted on both the Croat and Serbian sides. But who represents and who controls who? Nothing could be less clear, whether at the level of the army high command, the village fighters or the paramilitary groups.

Nothing is clear either as to the objectives. What will become of the disputed territories? The logic of war is still there; it will remain there as long as it is not admitted that Serbs and Croats can live together. The logic will accentuate with the break-up of Bosnia-Herzegovina, should the Muslims choose to regroup in "their" state and redefine their boundaries with the other republics; it will spread to Macedonia where the Albanians wish to join a greater Albania and Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia want to carve up what will remain of the Macedonians; it will inevitably return to a Serbia which all its minorities will wish to leave. ★

The manoeuvres begin

AFTER three months of dithering, the Europe of the Twelve has decided to recognize Croatia and Slovenia. From economic sanctions against all the republics, there will now be an economic boycott of Serbia and Montenegro alone. The Serbian regime has thus been put on the blacklist by the European Economic Community.

This turn by the EEC seems to be an expression of the growing weight of German diplomacy in the Yugoslav crisis. It amounts to a change in the European position, made necessary by the expected sending of UN troops to Croatia. The manoeuvres over the redrawing of frontiers to the profit of a Greater Serbia have only just begun.

SLAVKO MIHALJCEK

THE task is all the more difficult in that it is necessary to convince the Croats that they are being supported while getting them to accept the loss of a part of their territory where the population is 70% Croat.

While the UN's mission of mediation is now underway, the aims and methods of the intervention remain the subject of tense negotiations. The Serbian regime flaunts its serenity and claims that the position of the UN emissary, former US secretary of state Cyrus Vance, is "close" to its own.

The latter meanwhile has reiterated that the international force can only be deployed with the consent of all parties. Serbian consent is conditioned by the proclamation of "Vukovar, a Serb city", and of a "Serb government" in the "liberated territories", as well as by appeals for the colonization of villages from which the Croat majority of the population has been forced to flee.

Croatia's President Tudjman has been forced to accept the deployment of the international force, not along the former frontier between the two republics, but between that frontier and the current front line, this being the price for European recognition.

The question is: will the UN troops assure the separation of the belligerents and a return to the prewar situation, or will they legitimize Serbia's territorial conquests?

Under pressure from a public disturbed by European indifference to the slow agony of the inhabitants of Vukovar

and Osijek, and reluctant to continue to support a policy that seem to encourage Serbian expansionism, Germany's leaders have been actively trying to convince the Twelve, and above all France, of the need to seize back the initiative in Yugoslavia.

The French, in the name of European solidarity, will follow under duress, with the intention of marking out their own positions when the time comes.

France's President Mitterrand continues to refuse to distinguish between the aggressor and the victim.

Making a distinction between "current administrative frontiers" and the "future international frontiers" which "do not automatically coincide", Mitterrand places himself in continuity with the Treaty of Versailles, which was in its time one of the causes of the rise of the exclusive nationalisms in the Balkan countries. In Croatia, European recognition will favour the mobilization against the far right.

Denounced for several months by the Croat press for its exactions and its ties with European fascists, the Party of Law



Kosovo

WHILE the Croat parliament discusses a statute giving wide autonomy to the Serb minority in Croatia, the two million Kosovo Albanians continue to choke slowly under Serb military occupation. A new appeal by the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo to the United Nations, asking for protection for its people, has gone unreported in the media. In the last year 100,000 Albanian workers have been sacked for their beliefs; 450,000 Albanian school students have yet to return to school after the summer break. The situation in Kosovo is explosive. — S. M.

has finally become the subject of a number of legal proceedings and its leaders have been arrested.

Lacking popular support, this party's militia has not attempted a putsch against the so-called "government of national unity" currently in place, which brings together liberals, social democrats, reform Communists and others.

Decomposition of Serbian regime

In Serbia, the ideological decomposition of the regime of Slobodan Milosevic has continued with giant steps, with attacks on the opposition and increasing reliance on the Chetnik bands of V. Seselj (who has publicly declared in the Serbian assembly that to finally solve the Croat problem it is necessary to cut the throats of all the Croats).

Faced with disobedience and mass desertions by young Serbs, the regime has resorted to sending to the front Chetnik volunteers who specialize in "cleaning up" and pillaging the conquered villages. After the arrests, physical attacks and the sacking of the premises of pacifist associations continue in Belgrade.

Milovan Djilas has broken his silence and characterized the Serb intervention in Croatia as an unjust war doomed to failure.

This former Communist leader, expelled from the CP in 1965 for his criticism of the bureaucracy as a "new ruling class", has affirmed that the Yugoslav frontiers established in 1945 are the best possible.

He also recalled that the present Serb/Croat frontier was drawn by a mixed Serb and Croat commission led by himself, a neutral Montenegrin, after detailed visits and consultations in all the villages concerned. ★

Stateless nations demand freedom

THE CONSEU (Council of Nations Without a State in Europe) held a press conference in Paris on October 27 to remind people of the democratic demand for the right to self-determination for all peoples, including within the present European Economic Community (EEC).

ALAIN NAZIER

The CONSEU is a forum for exchange and cooperation, whose main founding and participating organizations are Sinn Fein (Ireland), Herri Batasuna (Euskadi) and A Cuncolta (Corsica). It has extended its audience to other nationalities, notably in eastern Europe and looks to the participation of 25 members.

In May 1990 this organization adopted a Charter of the Rights of Peoples (see IV 189, July 16, 1990) which demanded the right to "self-determination in an independent and sovereign manner and to self-government in following the democratic choices of its members" (articles 6 and 7 of the Charter).

The aim of the press conference was not only to popularize this platform but also to give an account of the initiatives taken. The day before, the CONSEU had met European parliamentary groups in Brussels and held a press conference there. This is the first time that the CONSEU had tried such a move, which is a sign that it is going on the political offensive.

The political aim was twofold. The first is to get written into the political rules of "Europe 1992" the principle of the right of all peoples without exception to self-determination. A letter to the current EEC president, Lubbers, put forward this demand.

Political solution to national questions

The second is to promote the idea of a political solution to the national questions in Corsica, Euskadi and Ireland on the occasion of the Maastricht summit. For the initiators, the struggles of peoples and nations has come emphatically back to the centre of the historical stage with the collapse of the bureaucratic regimes in the East, something they consider positive in itself.

But they denounce the practice of the West European states of granting their favours in a discriminatory fashion. They salute German reunification, the independence of the Baltic States, and consider positive the efforts to find a rapprochement of the two Koreas.

They also denounce the fact that the EEC states only accept the right to self-determination for others and refuse it in their own states, thus causing conflicts which have persisted "for decades" in some cases.

Thus in Ireland there have been 3,000 deaths in the past 22 years, which, as Sinn Fein's Tony Hartley pointed out, would be the equivalent of 100,000 deaths in France.

This is in clear contradiction with article 8 of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Helsinki agreement) which states that "states will participate in the equality of rights of peoples and their right to self-determination... these have the full right to dispose of themselves in full liberty at the moment of deciding when and in what way they wish to decide their internal and external political forms, without outside interference... The participating states... reaffirm the importance of eliminating any kind of violation of these principles."

Gulf between words and deeds

What a gulf between words and deeds! The recent example of the French state taking upon itself the right to decide if the Corsican people is fully a people or not is a sad and grotesque example of this.

The process of European integration does not seem to tend in this direction, as one of the CONSEU's spokespersons, Mikel Egibar, stated regretfully. The only latitude offered by the EEC is regionalization in the framework of the existing states.

Such an administrative decentralization does not offer these entities real rights to political decision making nor better economic possibilities, even when it does not render official the partition of peoples between states, such as is the case in the Basque country and Ireland.

A Cuncolta, in the person of Jean Guy Talamoni, reaffirmed with vigour that self-determination is not only an institutional issue leading if need be to independence, but also the method of popular self-organization used to reach that goal, in

accordance with "a humanist and democratic socialism based on the traditions of our community."

What is certainly new is the desire to find a solution in the European framework, and not only in the framework of each state, and the appeal to democratic public opinion in Europe, something raised by the Herri Batasuna senator J. L. Alvarez Emparanza.

Certain questions clarified

The press conference enabled a certain number of questions to be clarified. The participants are not opposed to European union, on condition that it is not just technocratic as at present, but tending towards a Europe of the peoples.

But even from this point of view, everything that removes powers from centralized states is viewed favourably by Alvarez Emparanza, who prefers a European ECU to a diversity of currencies for example.

This immediately raises the question of the meaning of the sovereignty of those nations without states. Alvarez' answer is clear: "there are some levels of competence that we are not demanding: not an army, not a frontier and not a currency". Can this really be the position of all CON-SEU's members, when they see what is happening in the East?

The reply was guarded and the spokespersons replied that the Conference is not unanimous on everything, representing a minimum platform whose nodal point is the right to self-determination, allowing it to draw in as many nations as possible.

In November 1992, the third General Assembly of CONSEU will take place in Corsica with the participation of the Amerindian nations, for, as J. L. Alvarez said, the "discovery" of the Americas is something of which states that like to consider themselves civilized should be ashamed. ★



Europe after Maastricht

THE MAASTRICHT summit of European Community leaders held from December 8-11, ended, as expected in compromise. Agreement was reached on a schedule for European monetary union, a harmonized social policy, and a joint foreign and defence policy — with Britain retaining an opt-out clause on the first two.

CLAUDE GABRIEL

DOES the compromise reached at Maastricht mean that "European construction" is going forward or backwards? Can we say that the projects of the Single Act and Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) have been finally compromised by an accumulation of obstacles which are both economic and institutional?

The answer to such questions is of vital importance, since the failure of the EMU project would be more than simply one episode among others; it would be a turning point in the whole political and economic situation in Europe.

The mass media have built up an atmosphere of suspense. Every time the preparations for Maastricht have hit a snag, many newspapers have concluded that the community project is finished. But, as soon as a new compromise is reached a few days later, by The Hague, Bonn or Paris, the same editorialists proclaim that an important step forward has been taken.

Only the British press, following the line of the Major government, have generally stuck to a consistently critical and sceptical approach.

Recriminations in the press

In the same vein, at the very moment when the French press was "fearing" that the new Germany would break up the European project to turn towards *Mittleuropa* [Central Europe], the German press for its part was announcing that it was really the French commitment to Europe that was starting to waver out of fear of the new united Germany.

Thus national public opinion is shaped to suit diplomatic needs and the manoeuvres of politicians. At the very moment when the capitalist high command is, out of necessity, freeing itself from "national" hindrances and constraints, an appeal continues to be made to chauvinist fantasies to hide the real issues in the great restructuring underway.

But what are the real mechanisms at

work behind this smokescreen?

When the Yugoslav crisis broke out, many editorialists expressed their vexation at the lack of a common Community approach and its inability to arrive at a serious intervention policy.

So many things are expected from this Europe. For some it should deal with national disparities and soak up unemployment: others see in it the road to an economic relaunch; others want it to become a new regional policeman.

First of all it is necessary to untie the tangle of divergences which have set the states and governments of the community against one another in recent months.

The list is certainly long, from the form of association of the Eastern European countries to the role of the future central bank, not to mention the weight of the European parliament, the powers of the Brussels commission, the need for a common diplomacy and the perspective of an integrated defence system.

The real points of division

However the question is: what are the real points of division, and what are in the last analysis only secondary contradictions? For example, it is not the events in Central Europe and the Soviet Union that have suddenly destabilized the project for Economic and Monetary Union.

There is no reason whatsoever why, in the present-day world, Germany would want to veer off on its own tack in pursuit of uncertain gains in the East, when a solvent market of nearly 400 million people has been in existence for a long time in the West. The two things are not even to be compared. And if the German economy can fight on two fronts, it is not in the slightest ready to sacrifice the advantages of the big integrated West European market.

A survey of the various hitches in the construction of EMU, and of the positions of each individual state at each hitch, makes it clear that there are no defined camps defending worked out and coherent

positions on Europe.

Whether one is talking about defence, the role of the Strasbourg parliament, the mix of "federalism" or "confederalism", the role of the ECU (European Currency Unit), the rhythms of and steps towards monetary union, the common agricultural policy and so on, different groupings and alignments of states and governments arise.

This diversity could be seen as yet another proof of the weakness of the Community, since it reveals the heterogeneity of interests. But is there anything astonishing about that? Things were no different at the time of the Treaty of Rome and the first days of the Common Market. However, in the end, the long-term interests of capital prevailed over inertia and sectoral considerations.

It is all the more the case now that the present differences favour pragmatism and compromise. The heart of the affair is to be found elsewhere, in the reorganization of the determinant sectors of capital and in the search for a way out of the crisis.

The problem is thus not so much that the "Europeans" have been unable to reach an agreement on Yugoslavia and undertake a vigorous intervention there. The Yugoslav imbroglio in any case makes any policy of external intervention, including by each state taken separately (assuming that the individual states have such policies) risky.

Common response considered

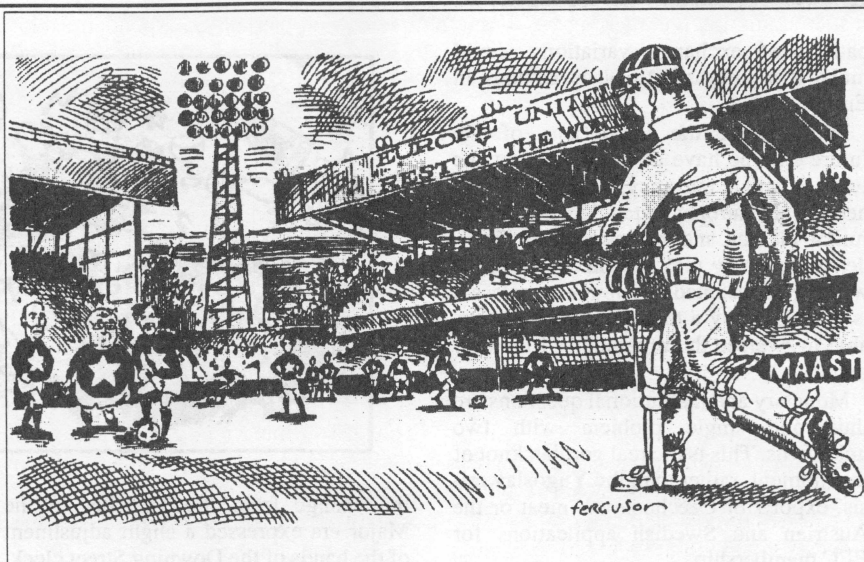
While it is clear that the European partners do not all have the same interests, it is above all remarkable that, for the first time — and moreover faced with a military conflict in Europe — a response and a common military intervention have been considered. The fact that there has been a debate on this question is a significant sign of the tendencies at work.

The same is shown by some of the debates on "European defence". The fact that the recent NATO summit ended in a compromise, recognising the link between NATO and the EEC, confirms the long-term tendency towards a new European militarism.

At the same moment, furthermore, Madrid announced that it would get involved in the project to set up a joint Franco-German force, while, a few weeks later, Belgian troops participated in manoeuvres alongside troops from this famous Franco-German brigade.

It is very hard for the Americans to demand that Germany take a growing political, and above all financial, part in world defence and at the same time oppose the progressive crystallization of a European defence system.

The concentration of a European military-industrial lobby is little by little becoming associated with a European



defence doctrine and with specific real political and diplomatic interests.

This perspective can go hand in hand with the maintenance of a revised Atlantic Alliance and the preservation of a central role for American military forces. The world is no longer to be kept in line by a single hegemonic power, but capitalism has, more than ever, need of a multi-form repressive capability.

The decisive change is thus elsewhere — it is in the relationship that is being progressively established between the European political institutions on the road to integration and a part of the "Western" defence system.

This new layering of responsibilities is the outcome of two things: the relative political and economic weakening of the United States (despite the Gulf War, one of whose aims was to re-position this country within the imperialist camp) and the rise of all kinds of perils in Eastern Europe and the Third World.

No unchallenged policeman

The EEC has its own interests and special responsibilities in this second area. Neither France, Germany nor Britain taken separately can play the role of unchallenged policeman in Africa, the Indian Ocean or Eastern Europe. Thus, a sign of the times, it is at this precise moment that the objective possibility of European military integration, capable of rising to the challenge, has arisen.

Such a transformation doubtless needs much time. But on this point, as on others, a definitive halt to progress in this direction will not come from internal economic or political contradictions. Only social struggles, with the entrance onto the scene of militant political and social movements, can put a spanner in the works of the bourgeoisie's European integration.

There are two kinds of problem involved in getting EMU off the ground. The first is that of the opening of markets and the restructuring of European enterprises in the framework of the Single Act.

The second is that of the institutions, of the type of political community and the extension of the prerogatives of these into defence and diplomacy.

Between these two levels, the monetary question plays a pivotal role, being both necessary for the "big market" and a decisive step to the establishment of effective supra-national institutions.

It is here that the major present obstacle arises. This is the decisive moment when the inequality between the advances in the internationalization of capital and the political processes will make itself felt. This desynchronization has been underlined many times, notably in relation to the enormous difficulties of replacing the present "national" states with a proto-European state.

Loss of discipline in EMS

Besides social resistance and political struggles, the only factor that could provoke a prolonged failure would be monetary disorder due to the loss of discipline inside the European Monetary System (EMS), the result of the failure to establish a single currency in time. This eventuality cannot be ruled out.

We have already pointed out that we are now in a sprint: the present period — of free circulation of capital, and relative parities under review — cannot last long without the establishment of definitive parities within the EMS or without a homogenization of discount rates — that is as much as to say, without a decisive step towards a single currency.

Given the growing internationalization of the European economies, the EMU would have immediate advantages over the present transitional period. It would, for example, allow stable exchange rates, thanks to the ECU becoming the "single currency."

Currently, the EMU's proponents calculate the cost of exchange transactions at 0.5% of the Gross Domestic Product of the Community. Exchange stability would be an anti-inflationary element and the disappearance of speculative and other anti-

pations of exchange variations would make it a safer bet to place savings in Europe.

Furthermore, the institutions of the future Europe have as much need of the ECU as single currency, as the ECU has need of a "European state", in which the ruling classes and business have confidence, to really play its role. A currency will not be accepted by capitalists unless it is backed up by a reliable state apparatus able to oversee the regulation of the system.

Monetary and institutional questions are thus one single problem with two unknowns. This is the real gordian knot of the moment, rather than the Yugoslav crisis, exports of Czechoslovak meat or the Austrian and Swedish applications for EEC membership.

It might seem that the major contradiction between the economic and financial domain, on the one hand, and the monetary and political domains, on the other, is insurmountable. But the increasingly complex intertwining of European industrial and financial interests and the establishment of the big market mean that a definitive failure of the EMU project would have gigantic consequences on the economic and social planes.

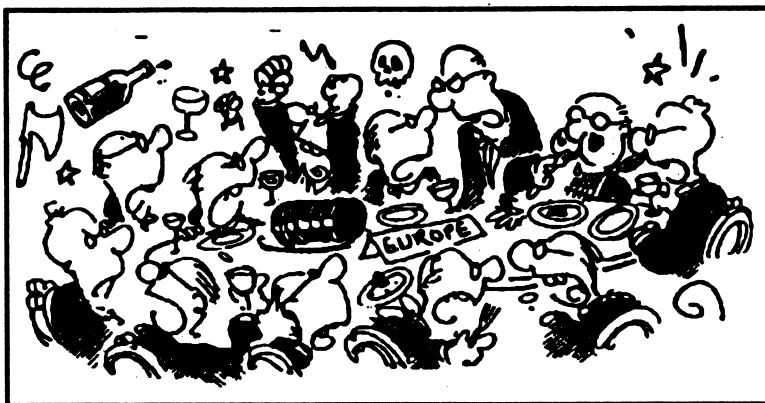
These consequences would then change the relation of forces between the classes on the continent. This would leave the system in mid-stream. While having broken away from past forms of protectionism and national economic policies, the transformation into something else coherent would not have taken place.

A new era of conflicts and struggles

Such a failure would open the way for very deep economic disturbances which could lead to a new era of conflicts and mass struggles. We should be in no doubt that the ruling classes and the governments are well aware of this. The existence of political will is thus one of the facts in this matter and explains the current pragmatism and compromises.

What the French press interpreted as the anti-European obsession of Margaret Thatcher on the monetary issue in fact turned out to correspond to a more accurate grasp of the rhythms and difficulties. The "Mitterrandian" dream of a rapid advance towards a federal Europe equipped with a single currency has had to bide its time. The French president has himself had to concede a longer term approach to monetary union to the Germans.

The present British position is not thus based on some ideological tendency to "Atlanticism", the defence of national sovereignty or other such nonsense. It is above all the present structure of British capitalism that explains the specific European policies of London (see box). And



the change from the Thatcher to the Major era expressed a slight adjustment of the hands of the Downing Street clock, precisely as a function of the tendencies at work in the processes of British industrial alliances and restructurings.

All the countries of the Community are thus confronted by the same problem: to at one and the same time open up their markets to foreign competition, while at the same time defending their own "national champions".

Two processes are running alongside each other: the international reorganization of capital on the one hand, and the specific reorganizations on the European plane (including the EFTA countries as well) on the other.

The double nature of this process makes the industrial restructuring process in Europe an extremely complicated process to follow. Alliances, fusions and takeovers cross and inter-cross between Europeans, Americans and Japanese, sharing out areas of different interests according to branches and products.

It has often been pointed out that there is no ready formed European industrial fabric properly speaking. However, in some important branches things have advanced a long way. These include banks and insurance, aerospace, aeronautics and air travel, and to some extent arms, energy and electricity, distribution and partly also the food industry.

Sectors of straightforward competition

There are also sectors where, for the moment, the big European market allows a straightforward competition between European partners, who can devour each other joyfully without the direct intervention of the Japanese or Americans; this is true for example of road transport and, for the moment, railways.

On the other hand there are two major industrial sectors where, while a European alliance would be of vital strategic importance, a failure has already been recorded. The first of these is cars, a sector which is struggling to escape the Japanese embrace and will lose more and more ground to the latter.

And then there is electronics, where dependence on Japan for micro-processors and the new alliance between Macintosh and IBM sounds the knell for European hopes in this field (Bull, Phillips, Olivetti). It also seems that the "battle" over high definition television, conducted by means of specific European protectionist measures, has been lost.

The wide-ranging global restructuring now underway weighs without doubt on the EMU.

For the restructurings that have been taking place over the past ten years are not only aimed at concentrating European capital and overcoming the competition between the "national champions" to form a new European industrial fabric on the basis of sharing out the big market. They have also and above all been aimed at winning control of a part of the world market.

Now, on this level, for each type of product, it is necessary in one way or another to conquer a part of the American market — the European market being insufficient — and it is necessary to very rapidly establish oneself among the three leading groups in the world.

From a national to a global approach

It is also necessary to go from a fundamentally "national" industrial approach to cope with global challenges; between these two "European industry" is a simple "potentiality". Starting from this point, the big groups can oscillate between a doctrine of European protectionism (as for example, with the positions of Peugeot towards the Japanese) and a doctrine of generalized free exchange.

It seems however that the present outcome of these multiple fragmented strategies of capital is to reinforce the perspective of EMU. There have been repeated appeals from big European firms for a speed up in reaching a monetary agreement as well as to Brussels for aid to foster competitive European industries.

In the background, despite all the nonsense talked on this subject by liberals trying to justify austerity, is the ever more important role of the state. This latter is all the more needed since it alone can contin-

ue to assist and organize research and certain investment projects which require gigantic sums — see the parallel role of the Miti (a public body which coordinates the research and development policies of the enterprises) in Japan.

At present — a little in the manner of two firms assuming in common the risks of a research project or the launch of a new product — the European states must intervene together to support certain big industrial projects.

This is the role of the programmes of public aid for common research: Race, Esprit, Eureka and so on. But this is also the case for deals such as Airbus, the Ariane-Espace company and the Hermes project.

The real challenge is now the “future products” such as high definition television, biotechnology and genetics, high speed trains, the “intelligent” car, telecommunications and multimedia products.

Creation of proto-state necessary

The need for the organization, assistance and taking in hand of a part of the risks by the public authorities argues in favour of the creation of a proto-state capable of financing and coordinating these needs. This is something from which British capital cannot escape, and this is no doubt also the conviction of Major, who must however manoeuvre within his own party and also face the challenge of the upcoming elections.

The EMU was objectively presupposed in the Single Act. It is not possible to allow capital to circulate freely without very quickly posing the problem of a common currency. Without that, the slightest important imbalance in the EMS, with the present disorder, could bring on monetary chaos, amplified by speculation.

A failure with the EMU would thus mean a sharp retreat from the big market, and, consequently, an anachronistic return to strict national protectionism. The Treaty of Rome would be thrown into question.

On the other hand, the EMU represents an important link in the policy of “exit from the crisis”. This, as a consequence of the Single Act, combines industrial, monetary and institutional restructuring.

In the last instance, that is to say at the political and social level, the carrying through of this project would form a new non-economic element, useful for a possible exit from the long wave of recession. It is thus a major issue for the European bourgeoisies and states.

Two tendencies cohabit, that of growing globalization and that of the formation of a specific European political and economic entity. A point of equilibrium between a new free exchange regime and new forms of protectionism must thus be found in the

Britain's stake in the US economy

BRITAIN controlled \$120bn of investments in the United States in June 1990. This is more than a third of total direct foreign investments in that country — the total for Europe being \$268bn. Between 1980 and 1990, while the total of foreign investments increased some 4.8 times (the European figure being about the same), British investments went up 8.5 times.

In 1989, four of the ten biggest investment operations were carried out by British capitalists, and 28 of the 109 investment operations of more than \$100m. Since 1987, new British investments represented 40% of the total of new foreign investments. These British investments are going first of all into manufacturing (36.3%), notably chemicals (39% of British investment in manufacturing).

Next comes oil with 18% of these investments.

British assets in the US made up 16.7% of foreign sales (32.2% of European sales). British subsidiaries employed the most people (734,000) in 1989, a third of the jobs in European firms. However, since these investments are mainly in the traditional sectors, they are dependent on the American economic cycle. This is one of the reasons why there has been a slowdown in British investment in the USA since 1990. ★

framework of the hypothetical exit from the crisis. This is what is at stake in the current negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Three neo-protectionist poles could emerge inside the OECD: North America (North American Free Trade Agreement — NAFTA); Japan-Asia; and Europe. But it would be a mistake to believe that they would be simple replicas of the old systems for “defending” national economies.

Trade wars to take new forms

Trade wars will take new forms, since the unequal and combined development in the OECD countries takes place in different ways according to the branches and products, with Japanese, American or European hegemony according to the case in point.

Thus none of the three poles will have an absolute hegemony, a fact that will have political and military consequences.

However it would be a mistake to see the feverish behaviour of capital as a Brownian motion in which it is impossible to predict the future “rationalities”. That the economy is increasingly globalized, and that the movements of capital are more and more complex is one thing; but the system needs a point of equilibrium.

This will not be engendered purely and simply by the economy. The political and social dimension, imperative for finding a way out of the current crisis, has to find a form in a new socio-political system that is adequate to the global development. The EMU and its politico-institutional dimension can precisely be a part of this solution for the European states.

One must thus avoid a series of errors. That, for example, of taking desires for reality, and interpreting the inter-imperialist contradictions as the final

avatar of the crisis of the European system.

The most urgent task without doubt is to provide the workers movement and the anti-capitalist left with an alternative to the Europe that is little by little taking shape.

The new reality means that any strategic retreat into the national framework, out of conservatism or the illusion of self-defence, would be an impasse. Very quickly, its tenants would finish by falling back on the region or on the “nation” on the city or the enterprise.

Challenge of new internationalism

The micro-strategy would become the uncertain refuge of all those who do not feel capable of matching up to the challenges of the new internationalism. Starting from the daily struggles and all forms of social resistance which will certainly develop in the coming years, it is necessary to sketch out the contours of an alternative Europe, or at least, the first elements of a counter-offensive.

Starting from immediate necessities, whether economic, social or political, it is necessary to build a new coherence, which combines the right to self-determination of all working collectives or of life and an audacious anti-capitalist project without frontiers.

The Maastricht summit will remind us how far behind our enemies we are. ★



The fading consensus

THE BELGIAN parliamentary and senate elections of November 24, 1991 showed that the crisis of political representation in the country has reached a qualitatively new level*.

ALAIN TONDEUR

THE three traditional currents (Social Christian, Socialist and Liberal) only received 65.7% of the votes of the Flemish electorate (95% in 1950 and 74% in 1987). In the French speaking regions (Wallonia), the Socialist Party (PS), the Social Christians (PSC) and the Liberals (PRL) together received 81.5% of the votes (as against almost 89% in 1987).

People voted against all the established parties, including the Liberals, who lost 2.4% in Wallonia and 3.5% in Brussels, despite being in opposition. The setback for these parties is even clearer if we look at the results in the big cities, above all in Flanders. Here the CVP, SP and PVV only got 47.2% of the votes in Antwerp — non-traditional parties thus had the absolute majority here.

The Flemish federalists (the Volksunie — VU), despite adopting an ultra-nationalist tone, were also punished for taking part in the government, while their pre-electoral outbursts have damaged their credibility as a responsible government party.

However the biggest loser was the Socialist Party. The Christian Democratic party, the CVP, has a solid core confessional vote which it would take a very severe crisis to shake. However it is a different story with the SP/PS. In Flanders it lost 4.6%, its share of the vote falling to 19.6%. By participating in an austerity government it has undermined its own historic basis in collectivism; its electorate is leaving it to find another form of collective identity, a nationalist and racist one — in the far right Vlaams Blok. The SP has lost a third of its electorate in the Brussels region and in 19 communes it came behind the Vlaams Blok.

The PS is holding up better in Wallonia, where, despite losing 4.7%, it remains the biggest party, with 39.2% of the vote. Here the PS lost votes to parties to its left. However in the future it will probably also lose support to the fascists of the Front National (FN).

18 Apart from the successes of the Vlaams Blok and the green Ecolo party, the rejection

of traditional politics was demonstrated by the substantial vote for the shady ex-millionaire Van Rossem, who got 5.2% of the vote in Brussels on an anti-establishment ticket. For the moment, this is the form in which political polarization and the breakdown of consensus are expressing themselves. In essence the same thing is happening in Flanders as in Wallonia; there is a rejection of professional politics, and of the traditional forms of political discourse and the party format, especially among the young. Nonetheless the two parts of the country give very different impressions.

In the South for the time being, the polarization is accompanied by a certain shift to the left, with the decline of the PRL and the breakthrough of Ecolo (the Francophone Greens), who saw their vote rise to 13.5% (+ 7%). Furthermore a left wing member of the Socialist Party, Jean-Maurice Dehousse, who has opposed cut-backs in the Liège city administration, scored a personal success.

In the North, there is a very marked slide to the right, with the decline of the PS, the stagnation of the Flemish Greens (Agalev) at 7.9% (+ 0.6%) and above all the breakthrough of the far right Vlaams Blok with 10.4%.

Decline of left of the left

Meanwhile the left of the left fared badly. Thus in Wallonia, the Socialist Workers Party (POS-SAP, the Belgian section of the Fourth International) declined markedly in comparison with 1987, falling from 10,900 to 4,545 votes. The vote declined in Liège and Charleroi and the party only got 1,705 votes in the 19 communes of Brussels (against 3,013 in 1987).

The Belgian Party of Labour (PTB/PvdA — a formation of Maoist origin) saw its national vote fall from 43,386 votes in 1987 to 31,674 this time. It lost 14,602 votes in Flanders while gaining 536 votes in Wallonia. In its Antwerp stronghold, the PTB/PvdA has slid from 17,309 votes in 1985 to 6,005 votes today. It seems more than likely that it held its position in Wallonia due to transfers from a small part of the traditional Communist electorate.

In Flanders, the Regenboog (Red and Green) coalition received in total 11,083 votes and suffered a loss of half of its votes compared to the 1989 European elections. However Regenboog got more creditable scores in Antwerp (7,587), Meuchelen (1,900), Leuven and Alost. ★

1. See IV 218 for an account of the breakthrough made in these elections by the far right Vlaams Blok party.

Norway's Maoists at a crossroads

IT has been a year of turmoil inside the Norwegian AKP (m-l), one of the few big groups of Maoist origin still left in Europe. The party congress held in December 1990 was a turning point in the party's history.

ANDERS EKELAND

THE PARTY adopted a new, non-Stalinist, programme, revised its previously bureaucratic centralist statutes, and issued a "Statement on the history of the Communist movement". The congress also decided to drop the m-l (Marxist-Leninist) parenthesis from its name, thus becoming simply the AKP (Arbeidernes Kommunist Parti — Workers Communists Party). All this showed the will of the overwhelming majority at the congress to make a break with the Stalinist past. But it should be noted that the membership and the congress were severely divided over how fast and how far to make the break with the past.

The congress was divided into two major wings/factions: the so-called "right" — those who wanted to make a clean break with the past and with Stalinism, and build a new revolutionary party together with other left forces — and the "left", who were more reluctant to condemn Stalinist crimes and were hostile to bold initiatives with other left forces. To the left of the "left" there is a small and utterly dogmatic/nostalgic current, rejecting change, sticking with Maoism and the old centralist way of functioning. This current got about 10% of the votes at the congress.

The divisions were not so sharp over the new programme and statutes, partly due to the very general way these documents were worded, which left much room for interpretation. There was more debate about specific points in the "Statement on the history of the Communist movement", although both the "left" and the "right" were in basic agreement on a fundamentally critical attitude towards the kind of "socialism" built by Stalin, Hoxha and Mao.

The final document is marked by compromise and the fact that neither the "left"

nor the "right" wanted to condemn Mao and Maoism in the same manner as Stalin. The "Statement" considers the Chinese contributions to the "Great Polemic" between the CPSU and the CCP as programmatic documents and sees the break between the CPSU and the CCP as a major turning point for the "Communist movement". This is no surprise because the AKP was always much more Maoist than Stalinist in style and orientation.

The issue that really did divide the congress was that of what attitude to take towards other left forces, centering around the fate of the AKP's electoral organization, RV (Rød Valgallianse — "Red Electoral Alliance"). Although the RV was set up in 1973 as a mere front organization for the AKP (m-l), it ultimately became a place where ex-party members breaking with Stalinism and sectarianism could get together with other independent socialists. In the RV they could be politically active, escaping from the strict centralism of the party.

State support for parliamentary parties

The only problem was that the RV's statutes guaranteed the AKP the right to the name, property and income of the organization, and since the RV receives about \$200,000 in the form of state support to parliamentary parties, these clauses are not mere formalities. In addition, all staff appointments and political decisions could be vetoed by the AKP. Several AKP full timers were paid for with "RV money". Actually there was no clear boundary between the two organizations at the top level.

The "right", that is the anti-Stalinist opposition, wanted to bury the AKP — and with it the party's Stalinist past — and get a clean start by making the RV the nucleus for a new party. Such a move presupposed that the RV would turn into a new organization with internal democracy and no special privileges for the AKP. This would also avoid a bitter power struggle inside the AKP, which could be left to the "left" because all the activity, new recruitment and money would be channelled into RV. The "left", of course, saw the danger of RV becoming a real competitor, a stronghold for the "right" in alliance with various other left currents.

The congress finally compromised on this point. The RV became an independent organization without special privileges for the AKP, but its activity was to remain strictly parliamentary until the elections in September (see box). Then the discussion could start again.

Both "left" and "right" have implemented the compromise in a loyal and disciplined way. Soon after the congress the local organizations of the "old" RV invited other forces on the left to set up the "new" RV with individual membership in a formally independent organization. The

main problem is that after years of Stalinist sectarianism, party chauvinism, and so on, there was a widespread distrust towards the AKP among independent left activists. There is no longer a plethora of grouplets or organized currents on the left. The only organized forces are AMG (Arbeidermaktgruppa, Workers Power Group), the International Socialists (politically identical to the British Socialist Workers Party) and what remains of the pro-Moscow Communist Party. Of these, only the AMG, an activist group of about 40 people, has a clear orientation towards a regroupment of the left centered around the AKP/RV. The International Socialists, roughly the same size as the AMG, are as sectarian as their British sister organization.

The pro-Moscow Communists are split into various factions, but one of them is interested in the AKP/RV developments. This means that for the "right" in the AKP the AMG has been the only organized force with whom they could work, giving the latter a role in the RV out of proportion to its numerical strength.

The RV held its congress in March 1991. The congress discussed the organization's programme and elected a new leadership. The old programme was a revolutionary one, but it was flavoured by Stalinism and restricted the role of the RV to parliamentary work. The AMG presented alternative texts on a few major points and won some minor victories, but it did not succeed in persuading the congress to untie the RV from the straitjacket of parliamentary work.

The leadership of the AKP had sent a directive to all members attending the congress not to support amendments of this type. In spite of the deep disagreements the atmosphere of the congress was a constructive one, the only point of bitter controversy being the elections. The AMG did get two members out of 17 on the new leadership, but this leadership is dominated by the "left", the "right" being grossly under-represented.

The current situation on the Norwegian far left is dominated by the question of the future of the AKP and RV. Even though the AKP has lost a considerable number of members over the past ten years it remains a party.

Number of active members unknown

The number of active party members is still unknown to everybody except the inner circle of the AKP for security reasons. At its height the party, youth and student organizations together probably had about 3,000 members. Today it is probably about a third of that, but a large proportion of ex-members subscribe to the AKP daily paper, or vote for them. The party made a turn to industry in 1974-75 and has gained positions and influence in the union movement. The question of who will become the hegemonic force in AKP/RV is very important for the building of a revolutionary party in Norway. The situation today is that the "left" has the apparatus and many experienced cadres, but is politically very much on the

Municipal elections show leftward shift

NORWEGIAN ELECTORS WENT TO THE POLLS ON September 9 for municipal elections which — besides their significance for local politics — have become an important indicator of the popularity of the government. This year the electorate turned left, with the EEC, unemployment and ecology emerging as the main campaign issues.

The ruling Social Democrats (Arbeiderpartiet) ended up with their worst result since the Second World War — 30%. The Conservative Party (Høyre) got 21.9%, which they did not regard as a defeat although it is far from their "all time high" of 30%. The Christian People's Party (Kristelig Folkeparti) maintained its usual stable support of about 6-7%. The most encouraging result was the drastic decline in support for the right wing populist "Progress Party" (Fremskrittspartiet), which got only 7% of the votes and suffered a spectacular decline in working class areas.

The winners were the anti-EEC parties, the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party, SV (Sosialistisk Venstreparti). The former left the bourgeois government last autumn because of its pro-EEC course. The latter received 12.1% of the vote, 2.1% more than in the 1989 parliamentary elections, benefiting from its anti-EEC stance and the rightward drift of the social democrats.

Sharp political differences are now emerging within the SV itself, with the leadership ready to shed the last elements of Marxism from the party programme and expressing doubts about the anti-EEC policy. These developments could well have a split dynamic.

The Red Electoral Alliance (RV- Rød Valgallianse — see article) increased its vote by 0.8% from 1989, receiving 1.5%. It did particularly well in the big cities (4.1% in Oslo, 3.2% in Bergen, 3.0% in Trondheim).

In the industrial centers of Odda and Notodden the RV scored, respectively, 9.0% and 5.5% of the vote. — **Anders Ekeland** ★



defensive.

After the municipal elections in September of this year the inner-party struggle started again. The "right" took the initiative, presenting their own platform and demanding that the "left" do so as well. The platform of the "right" is close to revolutionary Marxism, although unclear on its evaluation of Mao and not mentioning Trotsky at all. But it contains a clear perspective for a regroupment on a revolutionary, democratic socialist platform and grasps the importance of the polarization taking place inside the Socialist Left Party (see box). The platform of the "left" is marked by its lack of a clear perspective for party building, which reflects the fact that its hard core is made up of full timers who find it difficult to break with the past, and are fearful also for their positions.

The outcome of this struggle is hard to predict. But it is probable that the RV will become a new party under the hegemony of the "right", which does not want to engage in a long and tiresome battle inside the AKP against the apparatus and the "old guard" and indicated that it would prefer to leave the AKP and start building the RV with other forces. This threat resulted in a new compromise at the AKP central committee meeting of November 8.

"Right" wishes to dissolve party

The ban on normal political work was lifted for the RV and the perspective adopted that it should develop into a real party and that the AKP should become the name of the "left" faction inside the RV. Part of this compromise was that the next party congress is to be held in May-June 1992, clearly reflecting the desire of the "right" to dissolve the AKP as soon as possible.

This would shift the scene of the political struggle into the RV, but in the RV the "right" can act as a real faction, unhampered by party discipline. It can openly recruit on the basis of its own policies and cooperate with other forces. The "left" will slowly disintegrate due to its lack of perspectives.

Given the fact that the AKP has a daily paper with 8,000 subscribers, and receives 30,000 votes in a country with a population of 4 million, a victory for the "right" will be a small but not negligible gain for the revolutionary left in Europe and the rest of the world. It will be particularly important for cooperation between revolutionaries in the Scandinavian coun-

Waiting for the recovery

WITH the expected US economic recovery weak and stumbling, bank failures and the federal

deficit escalating and consumer confidence in the cellar, the capitalist class in the United States has suddenly begun questioning the leadership of George Bush. White House Chief of Staff John Sununu was the first casualty of corporate capital's sudden insight that the administration has no serious economic policy and no visible plan for developing one.

DAVID FINKEL

THERE are broader political implication also: Bush's hegemony over the right wing of his own party, reflected in his ability to impose political discipline on Republican rightwing ideologues as well as "moderates", has been severely weakened — hence Pat Buchanan's entry into the Republican primaries.¹ For the first time — only half a year after Operation Desert Slaughter had propelled Bush to a 90% public approval rating and in the very midst of the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Communist Evil Empire — it seems that Bush himself can't count on re-election by acclamation.

One incident in mid-November encapsulated both the economic contradictions and their political consequences. On Friday November 15 during a speech in New York, Bush expressed support for a proposal to impose a legal cap of around 14% on the interest rates credit card purchasers pay on their balances, as compared to the present 18%. The stock market immediately went berserk, falling over 100 points within hours and imposing a veto far more decisive than Bush himself ever wielded. In a sardonic commentary on Bush's leadership, *Barron's Weekly* (November 18) commented: "His harmless little proposal, meant only to demonstrate his concern with the economy thing and prove that his mind wasn't always on packing his bags and flying off to Rio or Rome, had decidedly unintended consequences."

The incident, while in itself of no great intrinsic importance, does illustrate such factors as (1) the mass of consumer debt that now retards retail spending; (2) the fragility of the banks whose survival depends precisely on that debt; (3) the general nervousness of investors and traders in a climate where economic news is presumed to be malignant until proved benign; (4) disintegrating confidence in the president's economic competence.

For months, the administration's only

apparent strategy has been lower interest rates for commercial borrowers (Bush was apparently trying to make a quasi-populist gesture in extending these to hard-pressed family consumers). A Shearson Lehman Brothers executive noted, days before the November 15 mini-crash, "The Federal Reserve is putting monetary policy to the test. With the economy becalmed by the effects of the credit crunch and eroding consumer optimism, the Fed has not hesitated to lower the discount rate to 4.5%, the lowest level since 1973 (and) the fifth discount rate cut in 1991." Banks in turn lowered their prime lending rate to 7.5%.

No upturn in sight

Such measures are supposed to stimulate investment and critical economic indicators, but, except for a 7% increase in housing starts in October, haven't done so yet. Manufacturing, whose tentative upturn had been the lynchpin of election year recovery hopes, has lost momentum. The government's October Employment Report showed factory layoffs of 32,000 workers, a 0.7% decline in hours worked, a probable fall of 0.3% in industrial production and capacity utilization slippage from 79.7% to 79.2%. "Our overall message remains the same: interest rates need to fall further to restart activity" the Shearson Lehman Brothers analysts wrote, suggesting that they have no more positive ideas than the government or the Federal Reserve.

November's news was worse — a net loss of 250,000 jobs throughout the economy — leading to yet another interest rate cut the first week in December. A second major airline, Pan Am, has closed down, following the Midway Airlines shutdown earlier in the fall.

The principal reasons for the poverty of economic program are not hard to describe. The federal government is too deeply in debt to undertake the spending that could simultaneously create jobs and begin rebuilding the crumbling infrastruc-

ture of education, transportation, and health that mainstream journalism now universally recognizes.

The vast resources available for such projects were squandered in the 1980s binge of tax cuts for the rich; deregulation-induced leveraged buyout/junk bond escapades that destroyed the savings and loan industry; and the final spasm of the US's Permanent War Economy, which succeeded so well in bankrupting the Soviet Union that it practically did the same for the USA. During this same decade, the rate of investment in new plant and equipment in the USA from 1982-90 was one third lower than during the period from the 1950s through the end of the '70s.

That long period of expansion ended with the deep recession of 1979-81. Thereupon came Ronald Reagan's most spectacular achievement, and ultimately the most ruinous: embarking upon the greatest campaign of deficit spending in US (or world) history, bailing out the economy — massively re-distributing wealth upwards in the process — and doing so in the guise of a fiscal conservative!

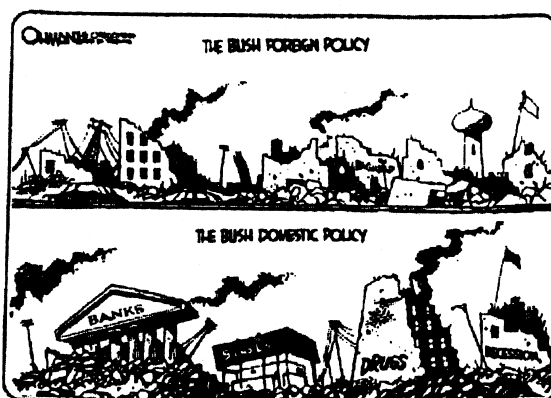
The bills are now due, as the federal deficit for the coming fiscal year is projected to rise over \$300bn. The government's obligations to the savings and loans cesspool are estimated to run anywhere from several hundred billion to one or even two trillion dollars.² Looming even larger are the impact of bank failures. The impending insolvency and need for re-funding of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) fund to reimburse failed banks' depositors is well-known; but a union organizer whose work brings her in contact with bank examiners told this correspondent: "The situation is really much scarier than anyone is reporting, in terms of the danger of really big banks going under."

Nightmare on Wall Street

Hence, of course, the near-panic on Wall Street over the specter of lower bank profits on credit cards, even though such news in principle should have encouraged at least the retail sector.

Meanwhile, the ritual of Christmas seasonal shopping is underway, which is played out as follows: early dire predictions of sales slumps are relieved by a massive turnout of shoppers the crucial first weekend after Thanksgiving (end of November), only to be followed by December fears of a slowdown, ending with a redemptory last-minute feeding frenzy to leave merchants with "better than expected" results. The scenario this year looks generally similar, but with the ominous wrinkle of large pre- rather than post-Christmas markdowns to lure the shoppers. A high volume of sales may thus be accompanied by thinner profits.

This phenomenon is of course limited to those who shop at all. But a growing sector of the population cannot: the long-term jobless and the homeless. Trickle-down economics have had at least one effect. The federal government's deficits have been passed down to state and local governments in the form of sharply reduced or eliminated federal aid, precisely at the time when it was most needed, causing in turn savage social service cutbacks by more than two thirds of the 50 state governments. In the case of Michigan, gripped by the auto industry slump and the brutal administration of a hard right state governor, General Assistance (welfare) to all non-disabled adults was terminated in November, creating almost instant homelessness for close to 100,000 people in the state, including 50,000 in the city of Detroit alone.



Opinions among bourgeois writers as to what to do vary widely. The financial editor of the conservative *Chicago Tribune*, in his column for Sunday, November 10, suggested a return to Keynesian principles of government spending. Felix Rohatyn, in a series of articles in the *New York Review of Books* and elsewhere, has argued for a mobilization of resources to restore crumbling infrastructure from highways and bridges to the disastrous public education system. The question, of course, is where the money is to come from after over a decade of debt-driven speculative boom — it was never Keynes's program for governments to run massive deficits in (ostensibly) prosperous times!

Robert Heilbroner, also writing in the *New York Review of Books* (October 24, 1991) observes that the logical place to turn is taxes for purposes of public investment, given that the US population (notably its upper income sectors) is one of the least taxed in the world. This runs, however, violently counter to the ideological run of play, which views the "disappearing middle class" in this country as being wiped out by ruinously high taxation. This terminology facilitates massive mystification inasmuch as "the disappearing middle class" amalgamates yuppie stockbrokers and speculators wiped out in junk-bond

and real estate collapses with working class families losing their homes and medical insurance along with their decent-paying jobs.

Actually, between 1980 and 1990 the tax burden on the richest 10% of the population fell by close to 10%, while the tax burden on the poorest 20% (that is, those below the "middle classes") increased more than 15%. The richest five million US families secured \$370bn in tax reductions between 1981 and 1988 — and little if any argument is being made to claw back some of this windfall by restoring some semblance of a progressive tax structure.

"If Christmas spending is a washout," write the Shearson Lehman Brothers executives in an early December newsletter, "expect a fiscal fix in the first quarter as politicians will become united on a desire to please the electorate before November."

A "fiscal fix" means an election-year tax cut, which will be the outcome of negotiations between Democrats looking to score points by aiding the "beleaguered middle class" while Bush and the Republicans seek a big capital gains (paid on profits from stock sales and so on) reduction, on the (generally fraudulent) promise that this measure will "spur investment and create jobs."

In reality, such measures bear only a dubious relations to the timing and strength of a recovery. That recovery may begin this spring, or may be delayed by the onset of "double-dip" recession. Whenever

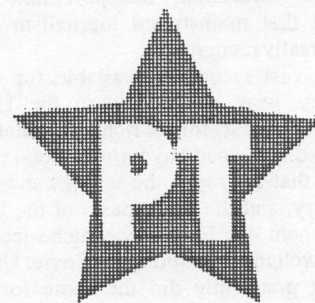
it does come, it seems very unlikely to have the power to reduce the size of the government's deficit, a tumour massive enough to block the flow of resources for desperately urgent public investment — so desperately urgent that some of US capital's own brightest thinkers now regard it as the key to the country's future.

Where the left can hope to intervene in this debate may lie in the areas of national health care, where millions of working people have been stripped of insurance in the manufacturing sector crisis; in grassroots community mobilizations around homelessness, disintegrating schools and collapse of public amenities; and perhaps in the arena of independent politics should any of the tentative third-party initiatives (such as the exploratory presidential campaign of African American Ron Daniels) cohere as a progressive force in the 1992 election. ★

1. Pat Buchanan, a one-time a speech writer for Richard Nixon, is a rightwing newspaper columnist known as an isolationist.

2. Savings and loans are US thrift institutions, originally carrying limited charters to facilitate home loans and family savings. Although the details are too complex to recount here, Reagan-era deregulation enabled them to maintain their federal deposit insurance while engaging in "investments" that amounted to nothing more than real estate and junk bond speculation. The extent of fraud and collapse of these institutions easily dwarfs that of the 19th century Credit Mobilier or the 1920s Teapot Dome scandals.

First congress of Brazilian Workers Party



THE political and economic crisis in Brazil continues to grow. Every day further news confirms the aggravation of a crisis to which, at least for the moment, there is no solution in sight. In the first five days of November, 12,179 workers lost their jobs, including 1,038 public employees in Sao Paulo, a figure greater than the total registered job losses in October. The situation becomes even clearer if we bear in mind that between January and October of this year 14,300 enterprises went to the wall, a growth of 289% over the same period in 1990.

Unprecedented violence (five children murdered each day by the so-called "death squads") goes with growing concentration of wealth (while 50% of the population over ten years old have 11.2% of the national income, the richest one percent take 14.8% of that income, which makes Brazil the country with the highest level of inequality in this respect).

And, finally, this is a society where, despite the "modernizing" rhetoric of President Fernando Collor de Melo, the remuneration of women workers is 51% below that of men doing the same work.

ALFONSO MORO

EVEN before two years of Collor's term are up, the social decay has reached almost unimaginable levels. Despite the repeated "adjustment plans" approved on orders from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), inflation remains above 20% a month. Some 4.5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is transferred annually abroad as service on the foreign debt; on the other hand, it is officially recognized that 45 million Brazilians (more than a third of the total population) live below the poverty level and that some eight million children do not go to school.

Such facts are the background to the first congress of the Workers Party (PT) which was held in San Bernardo del Campo between November 27 and December 1 this year, which we attended.

The "ABC" industrial corridor (San Andrés, San Bernardo and Caetano), in the environs of Sao Paulo, is known throughout the world not only because it was here that the military dictatorship sought to set up the shop window of the "Brazilian miracle", but also because it

was here, starting in May 1978, that there arose a movement that changed the course of the country's history.

In May and June of that year 4,000 engineering and car workers launched a strike wave to fight against super-exploitation in the factories and to stop the decline in their real wages, a wave that continued throughout 1979-80. These strikes saw big workers' assemblies demanding union independence, the right to collective contracts and democracy within the unions, among other things.

It was this industrial zone, to which further cities such as Diadema have been added — a reflection of the anarchic growth of dependent capitalist societies — that was chosen eleven years later for the holding of the first PT congress.

Its deliberations began with the reading out of messages from, and addresses by, representatives of the 110 foreign organizations that had been invited, including the Cuban Communist party, the FMLN of El Salvador, the FSLN of Nicaragua,

the URNG of Guatemala, the PRD of Mexico, the PUM of Peru, the Frente Amplio of Uruguay, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, the PRT of Mexico, the PRD of Panama, AD-M19 of Colombia, the General People's Congress from Libya, and delegations of all kinds from the social democratic parties of France, Sweden, Denmark and elsewhere. There were also representatives from the embassies of Venezuela, Germany, France and even the United States.

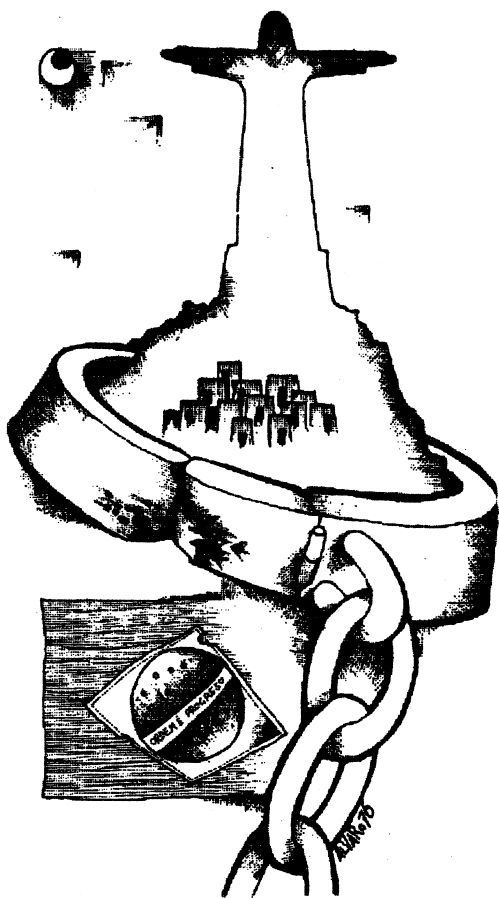
Lula's opening speech was a clear reply to the offensive launched in the country's main newspapers in the preceding days by the right both within and outside the PT, pointing to the lack of unity in the party (with the presentation of 14 different texts seeking to win the support of the majority of the delegates) and a supposed lack of political direction. He also took issue with those who were already dreaming about winning power in 1994 without dealing with the present situation.

Affirming pluralism

Arguing against both, Lula affirmed the pluralism which had been such a feature of the preparatory discussions. He insisted that the PT is not a "one text" party and that the PT's adherents, like Brazilian society as a whole, must begin to learn what a real debate about ideas and different projects is, since the country itself needs this type of democracy.

Later on, and in a clear reference to the struggle inside the party, he said that "there are some who think that the main thing is 1994 (the year in which presidential elections are scheduled), but we know that the key thing is to know how to put forward concrete proposals to people now; the most important thing is that all the delegates gathered here leave knowing what they are going to do in their sectors of intervention when the congress closes. If, on the contrary, we discuss only what we are going to do in 1994, then this congress will have chosen its priorities badly." This was greeted with much applause.

Lula was followed by speeches by the Nicaraguan Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega and other international delegates. Ortega's speech turned on the urgent need for the revolutionaries of all continents to get organized and unite to fight with increased



full delegates had been registered, that there were 400 invited delegates and more than 200 national observers, apart from the international delegations.

November 28 was devoted to the presentation and approval of the theses on guiding principles, which took place in an intense atmosphere. The pluralism and the freedom with which each speaker expressed himself was striking — as was the fact that not one woman spoke in this session — despite there being 219 registered women delegates.

Theses and percentages

A leaflet distributed in the name of the National Directory was distributed to those present entitled "Main Theses and Approximate Percentages of Delegates at the First Congress". It stated that thesis 5, presented by *Convergencia Socialista* (a Trotskyist current identifying itself with *Morenoism*) had 6-7% of the delegates; thesis 7 (*O Trabalho* tendency, Trotskyist/Lambertist) around 4%; thesis 8, "A Project for Brazil" bringing together currents on the right of the PT (*Nueva*

Izquierda, part of the *Vertiente Socialista* and some sectors of *Articulación*) around 12%; thesis 9, "A Revolutionary Course for the PT", presented by the *Democracia Socialista* (section of the Fourth International, United Secretariat) about 12%; and thesis 10, "For a Socialist and Revolutionary Course for the PT", which brings together a wide range of left inclined forces, from 10-12%.

A notable omission in the leaflet was any mention of thesis 11, put forward by *La Articulación*, the largest tendency in the PT, which had the support of some 47% of the delegates and which would finally be approved as the guiding text in the discussion on "socialism and strategy", the first point on the congress' agenda.

While the discussions were going on, the international guests were kept busy, with activities going from a display on the "The PT in government" to a dinner with Lula.

A commission of the women delegates at the congress also met the international guests to explain their proposal to the congress for a minimum quota of 30% women in the leading bodies. This proposal was the result of a collective — but not consensual — effort and more than a year of discussions — the issue had been

raised at the 7th National Meeting in 1987, but without any real changes resulting.

The proposal came from the majority of the PT women present at the congress, across tendency lines. They also asked the guests to give an account of the feminist movement in their own countries. Many of the guests did not distinguish between the situation of women in their countries and the place of the feminist movement, with the participant from the former ruling party of Panama, the PRD, explaining that his country had solved the problem "years ago, the problem not being the representation of women in leading bodies, but their abilities." Such remarks aroused strong reactions.

Meanwhile the amending commissions continued their work, as dozens of men and women came to the tribune to give fiery and much applauded speeches. It is easy enough to understand that at one and the same time, the common effort that gives the PT its existence is valued, while the participants are aware of the need for a radical change. Even the most rightwing delegates used a class language that would seem very leftwing in many other organizations.

In fact, the PT right knew that it could count on the Brazilian press — whose reports on the congress were highly misleading — and played this card for all it was worth, attempting to retain the offensive throughout the five days of debate, although their political positions were heavily defeated.

Party control over deputies

One of the essential points on the agenda was the discussion on the text "Conception and Practice in the Construction and Intervention of the Party", which dealt with the type of party to be constructed, organizational problems and the problem of escape from party control by leaders with official positions in the United Workers Central (CUT — the biggest Brazilian union confederation) or by mayors and elected representatives.

The consensus expressed in the interventions was unambiguous; there is a danger that the bureaucratization and institutionalization of the party might take on a hardened form, and it was and would be necessary to actively combat this danger.

Questions relating to tendency rights and the representation of women were also addressed in very heated discussions. The negotiations went on for hours without any common position being arrived at. The debate and voting — the closest of all the votes — on the rights of tendencies and their expression in the PT lasted more than three hours. Finally, amendment 23 was adopted by 466 votes to 441, with abstentions from the ultra-left. This gives tendency rights in favourable conditions to those who really want to build the PT and who do not use their prerogatives to conduct a factional struggle against this

vigour against the new world order that the imperialist countries are trying to impose.

He added that he did not accept that imperialism could dictate the end of armed struggle. "The struggle of the PT in Brazil is as legitimate as the armed struggle of the peoples of El Salvador, Guatemala, Palestine or South Africa. We cannot exclude any possibility to change this unjust system", he concluded.

This night of greetings and presentations took place against the background of a constant hubbub which made it difficult to hear what the speakers were saying, in an atmosphere of fiesta, rejoicing and hope. And before the PT samba school did its piece, Luisa Erundina, the present mayor of Sao Paulo, spoke in the name of the party's 24 mayors. (Another 12 elected on the PT ticket in 1988 have deserted in order to get involved in one or another bourgeois project.)

After giving a brief history of the PT, she ended up with the words: "with our debates, with our unity, we will demonstrate not only that socialism will not die but that it is more alive than ever, that it is thinking and acting; and that Brazil would not be what it is today without the PT."

Before the close, the master of ceremonies informed the conference that 1,090

party. On the issue of the representation of women, one speaker against explained that this proposal would divide the party, that there was no consensus, that it was necessary to let time do its work.

There were all kinds of comments on this subject. Finally, Benedicta, a long-time militant highly respected for her work with inhabitants of the *favelas* (shanty towns), and the only mulatto federal deputy, famous for proposing a law to further the fight against apartheid in South Africa, argued in favour of the quotas. She made a clearly feminist intervention, explaining that power was in the hands of men and that the class struggle was not asexual.

She ended her passionate speech saying: "we are not asking for a concession, or for something extraordinary; only for what belongs to us as PT militants." The applause announced the results: more than 60% for. Tears, laughter, hugs and singing marked the moment. Then a huge banner with the words "Now I am a star. Women of the PT" was set up on the platform.

The last day of the congress was devoted to the discussion on the current situation and tactics. Fatigue was evident on everyone's face. A row nearly broke out when a delegate read a motion calling for the representative of the US embassy to be expelled from the hall. The PT's secretary for international relations defended his presence: "When we go to the USA we will not be asking to see small sects, it will be the State Department which interests us." Finally, the intervention of the stewards prevented things from going further. The motion was put to the vote and the majority accepted that he stay in the hall.

Latin American left meeting in Managua

The Latin American delegations met to consider the accords of the Sao Paulo Forum¹ in preparation for the Forum's third meeting which will take place in 1992 in the Nicaraguan capital Managua. This was a consensus decision among the coordinating organizations; a forum of economists will also take place within this framework in Lima in February 1992; motions of support for the Cuban revolution and for the return of ousted President Aristide to Haiti (see article on p. 27), as well as on the negotiations between the FMLN and the Salvadoran government, were made public.

Around five in the afternoon, Lula took the microphone to wind up. His speech concentrated on the congress' main points. He explained that, contrary to what the media were saying, the party was more united than ever. He then went on to reflect at length on the issue of women's representation in the PT. He said that this question was the most important issue at the congress, that many had believed that

the quotas would not be adopted and that their adoption would lead to many changes — he also spoke of the important work led by the women.

Emphasizing the freedom with which everybody had expressed their points of view, and addressing himself to the international delegations, Lula affirmed that they should draw lessons from this congress. He also reminded delegates of the need to sell the PT's new journal, *Brazil Agora*.

"We have both internal and external problems. On the external front we must each day more than ever defend Cuba, fight for the return of Aristide and make the US and its government to understand that we demand that they leave us to control our own destiny and resolve our own problems. On the internal front [we must]

step up the struggle against social injustice, the Collor government, for land reform and in defence of wages." To applause and chants of "Lula-la" he concluded: "I do not know if we have the greatness to confront all this."

In any case the congress is not finished. We must wait and see which of the currents, the left or the right, will make the best use of its results. The former have the support of a very radical rank-and-file, the latter of the means for broad public self-presentation. ★

1. The Sao Paulo Forum, bringing together a wide spectrum of Latin American and Caribbean leftwing organizations, held its first meeting in the Brazilian city of Sao Paulo on July 4, 1990 (see IV 190, September 17, 1990). A second meeting took place in Mexico City in 1991.

The rising cost of an economic "miracle"

FROM Bolivia to Argentina, from Poland to the Soviet Union, important governmental advisors and distinguished economists have been looking towards the "Chilean miracle" which according to them, has permitted years of economic growth and has allowed Chile to escape "the lost decade" experienced by the Latin American subcontinent. How much of this is true and how much is false?

We reprint below an article on this subject by the Chilean economist Pedro Vuskovic which first appeared in the Nicaraguan journal *Pensamiento Propio*.

PEDRO VUSKOVIC

THE Chilean economic model has been promoted as a uniquely successful one, touted as capable of sustaining dynamic growth and safeguarding macroeconomic equilibriums. Its social costs are recognized but its defenders hold that the same model will later permit these problems to be rectified.

Implemented by the military dictatorship, the model has been shrouded by such prestige that the civilian government has maintained it almost intact as the foundation of its economic policies. This plan has been promoted in international circles, leading to its reproduction in other Latin American countries. Chilean advisors — under North American inspiration — offer their services to other governments who have chosen similar policies. In doing so, they have successfully built a quasi-mythical image, as false as it is dangerous, and which obliges us to examine its true nature.

We can begin by questioning its best apparent feature — sustained and rapid economic growth. Because in fact the main argument used in support of this model is that the Chilean economy has successfully experienced relatively high levels of economic growth in contrast with the deterioration of the majority of Latin American economies.

It is true that the Chilean economy registered positive rates of growth in some years when other countries experienced set-backs. According to official figures, the growth of the GDP was around 6% in 1984, 1986, and 1987, more than 7% in 1988, and 10% in 1989.

These figures, however, take on a different significance if they are looked at in a larger historical perspective. A good part of this growth in fact involved nothing more than a regaining of ground lost as a result of the very same policies; in particular, falling production of 12.9% in 1975 and 15.2% in 1982-1983.

If we look at the period of 1974-1989, the average annual growth rate of the Chilean economy was 3.1% while that of Latin America as a whole was 4%. Thus, far from advancing, the Chilean economy fell behind the Latin American norm.

Another way of approaching the question is to project the growth rates registered between 1960-1973 (a period covering the Allendist, Frei, and Allende governments), and compare them with the rates attained by the GDP from 1974 until 1989.

We can conclude from this comparison — which was carried out by the engineer Jose Ibarra — that during the dictatorship there was a net loss of GDP equivalent to the value of two years of production or more than three times the accumulated foreign debt. In the last years of this period many of the principal economic indicators remained below the levels registered during the Allende years. In 1989 per person consumption barely reached 1969 levels.

There was nothing miraculous in the growth registered in the second half of the 1980's nor was there a tendency that could be sustained. In that phase of recovery, and in order to obtain these results, the dynamism started to fade and the conditions for a slowdown in economic growth started to develop.

Depletion of natural resources

For example, the increase in some exports was based on the depletion of natural resources (among others the extinction of certain species of marine life and the irrational exploitation of forests) which cannot be indefinitely prolonged and insertion into foreign markets that would not continue to grow significantly.

One of the features of economic management that had the best effects on growth was that a good part of the servicing of the foreign debt was achieved by transferring property from national assets. Normal income from exports was thus not being devoted to servicing the debt, but instead the national economy was increasingly given up to foreign interests — a situation that could not continue indefinitely.

For these and other reasons, it was clear that this growth, which for a certain time was even spectacular, could not be sustained. In the first year of the civilian government there was an eloquent warning. The growth of the GDP in that year was only 2.1% — barely above the population growth.

This slow growth has accelerated social demands and eventually had repercussions on the balance of the economy.



Unless trends towards greater economic concentration and inequality intensify (which in political terms means more repression), it is highly probable that financial disorder will worsen and inflationary pressures accelerate.

Even those who promote it recognize that this economic model implies significant social costs. They justify these adverse consequences by claiming that the model eventually develops the possibilities to overcome these costs or at least generates sufficient resources to make up for them.

But the problem is much deeper. Neoliberalism has imposed an economic strategy characterized by the concentration of all the available resources in certain areas of the national economic system — and more precisely, in a part of society, or even in a part of urban geography.

In these areas a modernization oriented primarily towards exports has progressed, in a framework of bigger openings to foreign capital markets, of full control by the market, and of privatization of companies and public services. The inevitable counterpart of this concentration is an extreme accentuation of inequality and poverty to such a point that social segregation develops.

All previous experience with this strategy indicates that underdeveloped capitalism will be preserved under the two poles of international integration and domestic social disintegration. This essential nature of these policies in practice is the key to understanding why signs of prosperity can occur at the same time as the deterioration of the living conditions of the majority of the population. Thus the policies of the dictatorship have ended up by simultaneously providing a significant overall growth rate and the accumulation of a gigantic "social debt".

It is difficult to exaggerate the scope

of this debt. There has been an impressive rise in the proportion of poor and destitute: taking the level of destitution alone, the rate was 8.4% in 1969 while in 1987 it was calculated at 22.6%. The same occurred if we include wages as a total of the GDP; during a long historical phase this was around 50% (48% in 1970), rose above 60% in 1971-1972 and shrunk to less than 40% during the dictatorship (38% in 1989).

This marks a long period in which profits grew at the price of enormous losses for the workers: according to Jose Ibarra, the accumulation of these losses in terms of declining jobs and the contraction of real wages has resulted in the equivalent of 3.8 times the total of the foreign debt which appeared simultaneously with this process.

It is not surprising that inequality is today in Chile bigger than ever. Thus, statistical research into the distribution of income amongst social layers demonstrates that deep inequality is becoming a feature of daily life.

Expansion of profits

Besides the unprecedented expansion of profits — the fundamental factor in the concentration of income — there are new privileged roles with highly inflated compensation in comparison with others: A director of the Paper and Carton manufacturing company for example, received 4.5 million pesos a month for participating in management meetings, compared to 30,000 pesos paid to a nurse in a public hospital (a 1 to 150 ratio).

The scope of the accumulated social debt and the severe change in the traditional distribution of wealth fully justify the current rise in social demands.

The promise that the economic policies would tend to "pay off" the social debt has no objective basis in real life. The result is that these excesses of inequality

constitutes one of the biggest challenges that confront society today.

Likewise, the response of the civilian government to popular mobilizations is unacceptable. The demands of these mobilizations are for wage adjustments which would barely compensate for what has been transferred to capital gains and other sources of privileged revenues. The satisfaction of the demands of pensioners, teacher and health workers, who have pressing needs, would represent small amounts in comparison to the sums oriented to other ends, including the military and police budgets.

Are there material possibilities to raise wages and reestablish decent conditions of life? In today's Chile the answer should be yes: a society that attained the annual equivalent of a \$2,100 income per person has the potential to eliminate poverty, to guarantee basic consumption for all, to assure access to reasonable health and educational services and resolve housing problems.

With this level of income it is not so much a problem of productive capacity, but of distribution of income between social layers.

Facing up to the social consequences of the model and meeting rising demands is not, in fact, simply a question of political will. The logic of the plans of the neo-liberal politicians impose exceedingly tight limits as to what can be done. In practice they create irreversible situations which can only be changed if there is a fundamental change of the model itself.

Surrendering national assets and inequality

What occurred in Chile in 1990 clearly illustrated this dynamic. For example, the process of surrendering national assets and inequality.

The modest rhythm of growth that was registered in the GDP of that year (2.1%) allowed the raising of the gross national income by only 0.7%, since two thirds of the productive growth was transferred out of the country. This gives an idea of the scope of the compromises with foreign interests that has sustained this plan. Of what remains in Chile, 85% corresponds to capital profits and only 15% to wages.

The same difficulties appear when there is an effort to make up for the social costs of the model by taking direct compensatory measures in favor of disadvantaged groups.

One can also expect that efforts to alleviate the model's impact on the deepening of poverty through welfare will have only very limited success. Unless there are big resources available and there is a significant capacity for state intervention like in Mexico, the social welfare policies will merely give a temporary respite to problems which have deeper causes inherent in neo-liberal policies.

Thus, we see another decisive aspect of

current neo-liberalism and of what will happen in the future: a rigidly logical conception that does not permit any changes, to which one can only oppose another, fundamentally different, economic, social and political strategy.

The neo-liberal strategy is based on a total opening to foreign economic interests and on using exports as practically the sole source of economic vitality. That is why economic policy is subordinate to the goal of orienting the national economy towards external markets.

Rapidly applied scientific and technological advances in developing economies have reduced the "relative advantages" traditionally recognized as belonging to the underdeveloped world. Advances in microelectronics used in the mechanization of production tend to further reduce the economic significance of wage gaps (i.e. advantages attributed to our "abundant and inexpensive labor force") for the profitability of enterprises.

To maintain competitiveness in foreign markets it is necessary to continuously reduce real wages which implies a growing outflow of the fruits of domestic labor. It is a fallacy that the economic opening to the outside world contributes to raising domestic wages: the risk is that, given the privileged position of exports, wages will continue to be slashed in order to remain competitive with foreign economies which rapidly change their labor force for higher technologies in mechanized production.

Advances in biotechnology and genetic engineering significantly reduce the other source of comparative advantages of Latin America in the world market; its rich natural resources. The developed countries rapidly increase the production of synthetic products and increasing productivity in agriculture and livestock production strengthen their capacity for self sufficiency even with relatively small agricultural lands.

Shrinking relative advantages

The advantages tend to be limited to seasonal differences between the two hemispheres (Chile), or geographical closeness (Mexico); or to defending such advantages by selling ever cheaper the fruits of these resources, which means their devastating exploitation.

The access to foreign markets directly leads to surrendering control of exporting to foreign capital or to compromises with the latter, and indirectly to slashing trade barriers and indiscriminately opening up the economy to foreign interests. The result is a constant drainage of revenue and financial assets which are transferred out of the country instead of staying there to strengthen national capital accumulation or improve living conditions.

Paradoxically, it is claimed that the

model has registered higher rates of exports than imports. In 1990 for example, Chilean exports increased by 7.6% , while imports were only up 0.6%. This "surplus" means a net transfer of national labor out of the country.

In sum, the narrowing of the export sector forces the state to continually support exporting via lower wages or the abusive exploitation of natural resources, and to indiscriminately open up the economy to the outside world at the expense of the country's natural resources. In defending this increasingly restricted exporting perspective the country ends up being absorbed into the commercial zone of the North American economy approaching thus a higher stage of the subordination of the economy to foreign interests.

This has occurred without a national debate on such a decision, which has incalculable historical implications in terms of national identity and self determination.

Current Chilean economic policy leads to a generally steady rhythm of economic growth barely offsetting population growth, with no foreseeable hope of recovery in the coming years. Foreign investment will not guarantee a new boost to the economy since it usually involves buying previously existing enterprises.

Soon their (repatriated) profits will equal, if not surpass, the amount that the payment of the foreign debt interests would have represented. Most probably, the growth rates of the coming years will be modest, and most of the yields will be transferred out of the country.

The entrance of Chile into a free trade zone with the United States would complete a process of subordination to the North American economy, of the renunciation of the fundamental bases of national identity, all the while extremely limiting the country's capacity for self determination.

We can thus identify three levels of the consequences of the neo-liberalism applied to Chile: de-nationalization and deepening of inequality, poverty, and helplessness, which is part of a strategy of general growth regardless of social costs.

And this is only on the material plane. The costs of the Chilean economic model are considerable on the ethical level as well: the perversion of values, the spread of individualism, a rise in personal competition and selfishness.

A thin disguise of technology and modernity

The fact that this economic policy is being maintained has but one explanation: it is the sole way of preserving the privileges of capital and of its servants, under a thin disguise of technology and modernity. ★

The invisible hand

OFFICIALLY, the United States is doing everything it can to restore democracy to Haiti. But behind the scenes it is a different story. Could the US be the "invisible hand that inspired the coup d'état" to which deposed president Father Aristide, without naming names, has referred?

ARTHUR MAHON

WHAT game is the United States playing in Haiti? On October 29, 1991, applying a recent resolution of the Organization of American States (OAS), George Bush signed a decree for an embargo stating that "the serious events in the Republic of Haiti... constitute an unusual and extraordinary threat to national security, the foreign policy and the economy of the United States."

As a consequence of this, Alvin Adams, the US ambassador on the island, called in Haitian business men and warned them that they risked losing their visas for the US and a freeze on their assets if they tried to get round the embargo. On the surface it is hard to imagine a firmer position.

But what has this same ambassador been saying in private? This is the question posed by some fifty popular, professional and human rights organizations, as well as by the Haitian Religious Conference. In a letter sent to Adams in November, they wrote: "we find it hard to understand the conditions that your embassy has sought to impose for a month on the legitimate government. These seem strangely in tune with the proposals currently being put forward by the famous 'crisis committee' of our republic's Senate, which finds itself in a totally illegal situation:

1. The postponement of the return of President Aristide to a distant date (in six months);

2. The resignation of the legitimate prime minister, René Préval, before Aristide's return;

3. The choice of another prime minister as the outcome of a joint decision of Aristide and the presidents of the two chambers during the exile of our constitutional president;

4. The formation of a cabinet of ministers by this new prime minister which will begin working to make possible the return of Aristide;

5. The maintenance of the head of the putschists, General Raoul Cédras, as commander of the army.

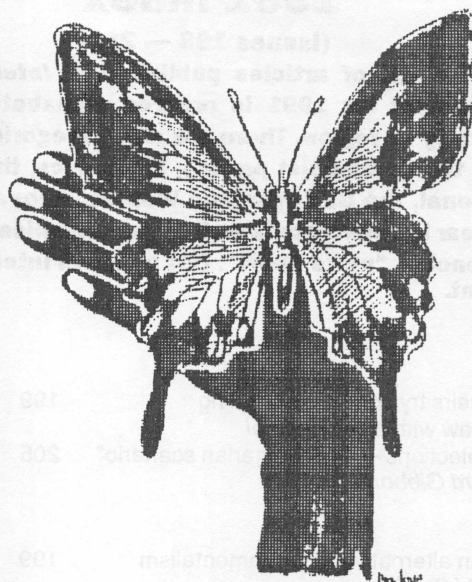
... Your position, Mr. Ambassador, amounts to direct support for the main criminals, authors and accomplices of the putsch for whom you are demanding immunity; this leads us to ask some questions about the deeper origins of the coup. It is clear that all kinds of deals are being cooked up to poison the situation and break the resistance of the people with a view to imposing a solution contrary to its will."

Organizations involved in defence of human rights have written to the OAS, expressing their astonishment that the US ambassador had accompanied the delegation of Haitian parliamentarians which took part in negotiations with Aristide in the Colombian town of Carthagena from November 22 to 24. The meeting was presided over by Ramirez Campo, a former Colombian minister who has been charged with the Haitian dossier by the OAS. No text was signed there. In fact, the parliamentarians rejected any explicit mention of Aristide's return to power.

A new prime minister to suit Bush

Bush signed the embargo decree after Aristide expressed his readiness to choose a new prime minister, in concert with the presidents of the two legislative chambers. The new government will be open to members of the opposition. But it seems that the US now wants to get more. Their idea is that Aristide should not return to Haiti until the army has had time to dismantle popular organizations and terrorize the population. Thus, when Aristide returns, the bourgeoisie and the military will not have to face popular revenge.

It is clear that the OAS supports this approach. According to the *Reuters* news agency, diplomats are saying that France "fears that Washington and its South American allies may prepare to drop" Aristide and "French diplomatic sources underline that the meeting in Carthagena was organized in such a way as to isolate Aristide."



Writing in *Le Monde*, Marcel Niedergang claims "the majority of the members of the OAS' mission no longer favour the 'immediate' return of Père Aristide and wish to act 'flexibly' and try to reply to the 'accusations of human rights' violations made by the opponents of Aristide's regime".

After the Carthagena meeting, Ramirez Ocampo affirmed: "I believe that the embargo will be lifted as soon as a new government is formed." In the declaration published after Carthagena, Aristide accepts "the urgency of forming a new government" and "the principle of his return as soon as possible".

He must know that in Haiti the Duvalierist counter-revolution is in full flood, that the people have been taken hostage and that he must make concessions if he wants to resume the struggle alongside it. But he must also know that he will get no promise of his returning soon, since there are plenty of pretexts available for endless postponements.

Forged documents may well be in preparation to show that he violated the constitution, that he stole money and that he is ill and unable to govern.

On their side, the putschists are playing for time and trying to establish a position of strength. They face formidable resistance from the people, who, despite the repression, are refusing to send their children to school.

Although they are the first to suffer from the embargo, they are demanding that it is applied even more rigorously in order to hasten the downfall of the putschists. These latter meanwhile, have just been given a breathing space in the form of 110,000 barrels of oil. Other petrol tankers are awaited.

This should enable the dictatorship to hang on until January 5, 1992, the date on which it claims it will "organize" elections. ★

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