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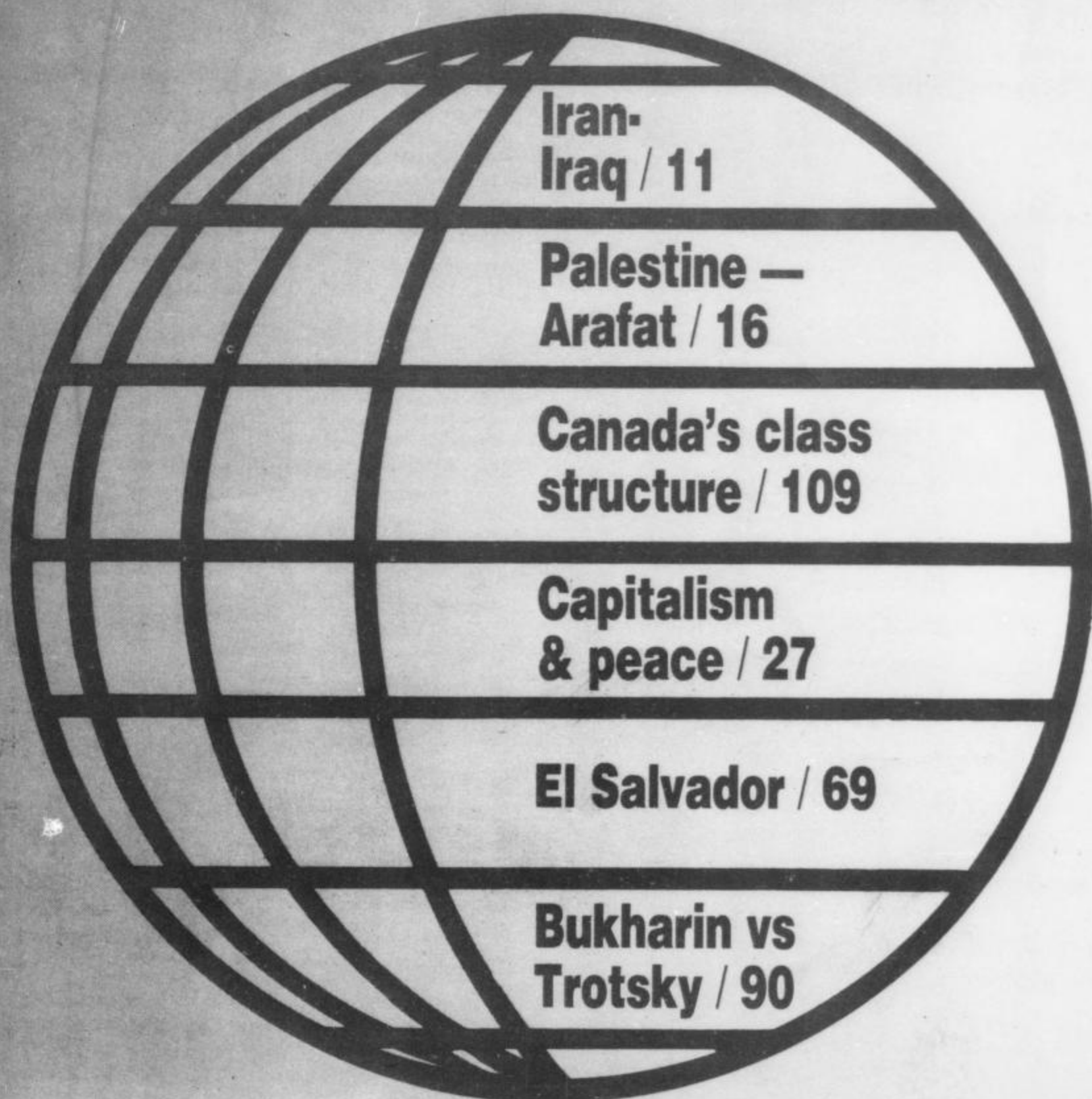
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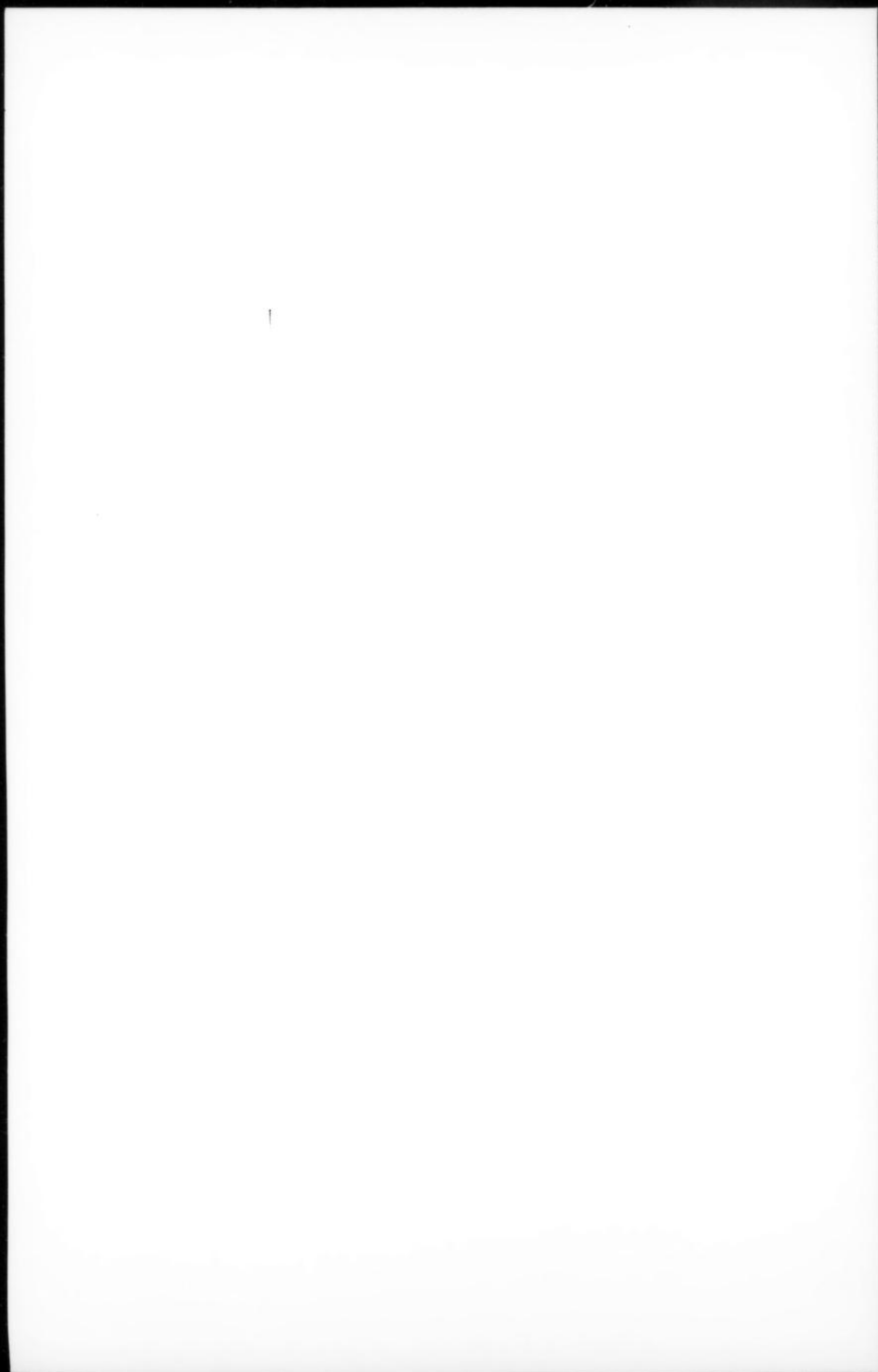
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Theatre of War or Theatre of Cooperation?

Horst Schmitt — Chair, Socialist
Unity Party of West Berlin (SEW)

IF looked at globally, Europe — the expanse from the Atlantic to the Urals — is a comparatively small place. Yet it houses scores of dissimilar nations, linguistically and otherwise, and is home to hundreds of millions of people. A cradle of civilisation, with a great history and a rich cultural legacy, Europe is also a focus of modern advance. It has had a tremendous influence on the world's destiny, particularly international relations. Two world wars, involving states far beyond Europe, originated here. Today, too, world peace largely depends on European affairs.

Although the guns in Europe have now been silent for over 40 years since World War 2, although the INF Treaty does really take us towards disarmament — for the first time ever — and interstate relations are improving, it would be wrong to speak of a guaranteed peace. For nowhere else on the Earth is there such a huge stockpile of arms, together with two opposing 1,000,000-strong armies — from the major military blocs — NATO and the Warsaw Treaty — equipped with the most sophisticated weapons, conventional and nuclear.

In densely populated Europe, states' relations based on peaceful coexistence, dialogue and mutual confidence are ever more imperative. The idea of a common European home, put forward by Mikhail Gorbachov, CPSU CC General Secretary, meets today's objective need to widen and improve continental teamwork. Our party considers it expedient to safeguard, by 2000, the viability of Europe, and peace and prosperity for future generations.

West Berlin is the capitalist island in the centre of the socialist GDR. By its very geopolitical location it has a vital stake in promoting the common-home idea and good neighbourly relations. The past has shown West Berlin to bear a special responsibility to Europe. Its Cold War role as an anti-socialist spearhead made it a source of tension and concern of all of Europe's peoples. The 1971 quadripartite agreement on West Berlin

defused that explosive situation. As with all European states, our further tranquillity and growth in greater measure depend on a grasp of the need to cooperate on a peaceful and equal basis for joint survival by their peoples and governments — regardless of the differences in social systems.

Figuratively speaking, West Berlin is a flat in the European house. Its residents ought not just to go about their domestic tasks, but help improve contacts among all the tenants. The best way to do that is to observe the quadripartite agreement strictly. West Berlin should not allow any arbitrary interpretations of its provisions or any actions that may run counter to them.

Think about the urgency of building a common European home and you will see how radically Europe's setting has changed. This century imperialism has scaled up conflicts enormously. The peoples of Europe found themselves drawn into a scramble for profit and power, merely to the advantage of rival bourgeois groups. This policy resulted in two world wars, unleashed by German imperialism in order to re-carve the spheres of influence in its favour. German fascism, with its claims to world rule, was the most poisonous offshoot of imperialism.

Both world wars devastated Europe and brought immense suffering to its peoples. But even they did not endanger their very existence. Now, with nuclear weapons, war threatens to end civilisation world-wide, not just in Europe. This makes Europeans vastly more responsible for their own and universal security.

Ever since the war's end, capitalist Western Europe has preached its own concept of security — Atlanticism. In plain language, it's dependence on an alliance with the USA and a NATO build-up. Prompted by bourgeois class interests, Atlanticism has polarised Europe and created a steadily expanding arms race.

In the political domain, 'European building' is now the rage. Encompassing Western Europe only — some limit it to the EEC Twelve — it does not contradict Atlanticism, but nevertheless deepens Europe's split.

It hardly needs arguing how harmful this division is for both East and West Europeans, and how adversely it affects the European process, started by the memorable Helsinki conference. Only in the last few years has the West begun to take the socialist states' security, disarmament and cooperation proposals more seriously, where once it rejected them out of hand. This is the result of the innovative foreign policy of the Soviet Union, which is paving the way for stronger peace in Europe. But people are also becoming more aware of the impasse where Atlanticism and NATO's staking on military force and nuclear deterrence have landed Western Europe.

It has to be said that such an attitude of certain circles in the United States and the NATO leadership is very disquieting to many Europeans. Washington would deflect the threat to the USA by sacrificing Europe as a 'theatre of war'. This position, determined by US interests alone, was obviously in evidence when US intermediate and shorter-range nuclear missiles were deployed in Western Europe, ignoring massive public protest. I remember the question then often being asked was: "Do these missiles really enhance West European security?" The authorities

reassuringly said they did, thus tying the USA more firmly to its West European allies. Now the INF treaty reveals even more clearly that those missiles posed a new threat to Europe, which became more vulnerable as the US hostage and preordained victim in the event of nuclear war. Subordinating their own interests to those of the US military-industrial complex, as Europeans increasingly see, is harmful. By pointing this out we are not inciting anti-Americanism but simply stating the facts. On the contrary, a balance of interests and mutual consideration of security requirements, for which the socialist states are calling, benefit Europe and the world and strengthen universal peace.

The changed European reality clearly demonstrates that the peoples of Europe can either survive or die together. It is this simple truth that underpins the idea of a common European home. It is new political thinking on a regional scale. No ad hoc tactical manoeuvre, it offers a strategy based on the vital interests of all Europeans and guarantees their peaceful future. Moreover, it enjoins them to cooperate, not limit themselves to a peace that preserves the opposing military blocs. An integral component of this strategy is the broad cooperation of European nations in all fields, even as far as complete and general disarmament.

Not only a natural wish to survive unites Europeans. They have lots of common ground, identical interests and shared views. The European feels at home in Paris and Budapest, Athens and Brussels, Stockholm and Moscow. Almost indefinable yet tangible, this kinship is as historical as it is geographic.

Europe has not had only discord and wars; it has had cooperation, harmony and a mutual enrichment of cultures. Its people, capitalist and socialist, share equally the European literary, musical and artistic heritage, and are also accustomed to mutually beneficial cooperation. The common destiny of the peoples of Europe is obvious.

The scientific and technological revolution has led to a speedy rapprochement. Modern transport and communications put us in touch throughout Europe within hours and seconds. Never before has there been such an urgency of information and knowledge exchanges, notably in advanced branches of science and technology. Cross-border computer networks loom on the horizon. All this is even more conducive to cooperation between European states.

In recent years, a powerful new factor has greatly influenced European life and consciousness: the damage to our environment. Ecological problems confront us more forcefully than ever before, recognising neither frontiers nor socio-political systems. Nuclear and chemical plant disasters, acid rain, dying forests, water and air pollution — all have effects extending far beyond individual countries and not subject to correction on just a national scale. Without joint efforts, Europe's peoples will not be able to preserve nature, nor help it sustain life.

Building a European home together, however, does not mean a convergence of the two socio-political systems. Lenin's article 'On the Slogan for a United States of Europe' comes to mind. It states the existence of common European interests. Lenin saw the major precondition for shaping all-European consciousness as the replacement of

the capitalist order by a socialist Europe. We, of course, do not think that European cohesiveness is only possible when all of the continent's nations have become socialist. Realistically speaking, one should accept that we shall have states belonging to the two socio-political systems for a long time yet. Their competition and rivalry will continue, but exclusively in a peaceful manner.

In spite of their differences the Europeans will seek to solve their problems together while taking into account the antagonisms between labour and capital. This suggests that they should carry on the policy of reason and dialogue, decrease tension, cease the threats, sabre-rattling and the enemy image, and promote cooperation in production, ecology, culture and human rights.

We, the West Berlin Communists, believe that with people's welfare as its goal, socialism will put capitalism to shame in every field, as it already has on the basic rights to life, peace, work, education, etc. Perestroika and the renovation of socialism, launched by the Soviet Union in accordance with modern conditions and requirements, and the serious efforts of many socialist countries to implement reforms to speed up the all-round development of socialism, confirm our belief.

While recognising that European (and universal) human values have a priority in relations between states, we cannot ignore labour-capital antagonisms or the class struggle in capitalist society. But objective reality says that only by ensuring population survival can capitalist Europe's Communists hope to end man's exploitation by man and to build socialism. Our ideals, and peaceful coexistence between the two social systems, are dialectically linked, without contradicting each other, and contain the idea of a common European home.

But how is one to build this home effectively? We already have a design worked out that covers all the project's aspects — military, political, economic, ecological, and humanitarian. They were concretised at July's Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee meeting: all European states should cooperate by assuming a conscious and shared responsibility for the future of our continent. This cooperation must be based on the ideas of equality, good neighbourliness, trust, on the principles and clauses of the European Conference's Final Act, and on full use being made of the potential of the Helsinki process.

Now, after the INF Treaty, reductions in European armed forces and conventional arms are on the agenda. For years anti-disarmament Western propagandists have been complaining that the Warsaw Treaty has an 'overwhelming superiority' over NATO in this field. They saw military capability asymmetries as a sign of the 'aggressive thrust' of Warsaw Treaty policy, disbelieved by many NATO leaders themselves, not to mention the West European public.

The socialist states have suggested the following to their Western partners: let us start by reducing our conventional arms and forces drastically; let us mutually remove any imbalance or asymmetries that may exist not only in Europe as a whole but also in individual areas; moreover, let us leave both military alliances only as much strength as is required for defence, not for surprise attack or offensive operations; let us expand

confidence-building measures and couple them with an effective system for monitoring agreement compliance; and so on to a 'third zero' — tactical nuclear weapons reduction and elimination and the complete deliverance of Europe from the nuclear threat.

These offers reflect the socialist states' desire to look for mutually acceptable solutions to such a vital issue as European security. They promise to guarantee an enduring peace in Europe. Well-known important initiatives have come from the SED, SPD and CPCz, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

The need for joint European action to protect the environment has now been raised in practical terms. We saw the modern world's vulnerability when the Chernobyl tragedy occurred. People, not only in the Soviet Union but also in some European countries, felt the effects of an out-of-control nuclear reactor. It became still more obvious that the environmental drive's focus should be on preventing nuclear war and the resultant total ecological catastrophe. An important step in this direction would be the cessation of all nuclear tests, proposed by the socialist states. But peaceful human activity also harms nature considerably, since measures are not always taken to limit or prevent this damage. The high cost of purification installations and scarce funds are often cited. Curtailing the arms race will release significant financial, material and intellectual resources for nature protection. The socialist countries brought forward at their Warsaw meeting a concept of international ecological security which envisages complete cooperation among states, such as mutual provision of unlimited access to advanced technologies that protect the environment. Joint care for Europe's ecological health is in line with the idea of a common European home.

Thus, the continent's East has again invited its West to broad and constructive economic teamwork for the benefit of all Europeans. Perestroika in the Soviet Union and the reforms in other socialist states open up new opportunities — for example, the setting-up of joint ventures. Significant prospects arise from the establishment in June of official relations between Europe's two largest economic organisations — the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance and the European Economic Community.

The East has also offered to cooperate on all human rights issues in peace and freedom, with due respect for the sovereignty of states and non-interference in their internal affairs.

Implementing this programme is of special value to the population of West Berlin, living in a socialist environment. Owing to the city's geopolitical position it would derive enormous benefit from the all-European process of a peaceful rapprochement of nations. Great new opportunities would arise for trade and other ties, the creating of a healthy economic structure, new jobs and employment training facilities, etc.

The working class and all working people of Europe are vitally interested in building a common European home successfully. It is they who shoulder the burden of the arms race and ecological disasters. New political thinking, by inviting states of the two systems to work together for peace, development and prosperity, corresponds best to working class

internationalism and requires that the Communists combine general human interests, which are now coming to the fore with the class interests of the working class. Their dialectical connection is not simple and may not always be comprehensible to all, but we must see it and apply it in politics.

The Communists have valuable experience in this regard. In 1935, when there was a growing threat of fascism in Europe, the Seventh Comintern Congress, having analysed the situation, called on the most diverse social forces to concentrate on what united them in the struggle against fascism and on saving humankind from barbarity. This Comintern appeal played a great role in mobilising all the forces against fascism.

The problem of survival now stares Europe and the world in the face, and so the Communists again appeal to every working man and woman, to all the forces of reason and realism to unite against this new, even greater danger. We attach special importance to promoting the cooperation of different currents of the working class movement. A basis for that already exists not only in West Berlin, but also throughout Europe. It is enough to mention CPSU ties with the Socialist International parties, with the Socialist International itself, the joint initiatives of the GDR and Czechoslovak Communists and West German Social Democrats in favour of peace moves in Central Europe, and many other examples of cooperation between European communist, social democratic and socialist parties and among the various trade union organisations.

New conditions are thus ripening for cooperation within the working class movement, regardless of whether it concerns its revolutionary or reformist wing. Our main job as Communists is to expand the sphere of united action to cover not only the issues of security, but also of nature protection, economic teamwork, the defence of the working people's interests and improving their living standards. We must vigorously develop the policy of alliances, without denying our differences, our priority being the elements of unity. And only given such an approach can we sensibly discuss what ideologically disunites us.

Life proves that the problems now facing peoples cannot be solved by one country alone. Many countries must pool their efforts and experience, the results of scientific research and the achievement in the social sphere, and promote unrestricted economic and trade ties. What makes the idea of a common European home feasible is that it meets the objective requirements of our time.

To build such a home does not mean any Eurocentrism or continental egoism. Of course, Europeans themselves need a stronger peace, and their states' friendly relations, confidence and teamwork. But the benefits will extend to all nations of the world, not just Europe. For if there is no peace in Europe, the world cannot be at peace. That is why the idea of a common European home meets the interests of all humanity.

In Planet's Flashpoints

Those Who Find Peace Deadlier Than Poison

Ali Khavari — CC First Secretary,
Tudeh Party of Iran

Iran and Iraq reached a ceasefire agreement in August 1988 and entered direct peace talks. There appeared the hope that the bloody eight-year-long internecine conflict would end. The United Nations and its Secretary General Perez de Cuellar personally had played an important and constructive role in bringing about the ceasefire. It had taken boundless patience and political tact to reconcile the sides' positions. A group of UN observers was dispatched to the Iran-Iraq border area under Security Council Resolution 598 of July 20, 1987, to monitor troop disengagement and withdrawal.

The First Secretary of the Tudeh Central Committee analyses below the causes and progress of the war, explains why it was waged for eight long years in the teeth of common sense, and presents his party's position on the present phase of the conflict.

THE Iran-Iraq war is one of the worst military conflicts since World War II in terms of duration, casualties (the total death toll is around one million), and the scope of destruction (estimates of damage to Iranian property alone vary from \$300 to \$400 billion). The blame for unleashing it has been put at Iraq's door not just by our party but by many official bodies.

Khomeini with his slogan of 'neither East nor West' dreamt of exporting the 'Islamic revolution' while the Baghdad government was fearful of its possible influence on Iraq. Baghdad hoped that the war would be a walkover due to the weaknesses of the Teheran central government, especially in the western border areas (the liberation movement in Iranian Kurdistan was growing at the time). So it began supporting the fierce foes of the Iranian revolution from among the big bourgeoisie and the close entourage of the former Shah's regime and the SAVAK.¹

The fall of the empire in Iran denied the US a strategic partner in the Middle East and meant a great economic and political loss to Washington in that region. So it tried to exact vengeance.

US imperialism and Israeli Zionism provoked and helped drag out the bloody conflict. Their far-reaching plans thrived on the policies and goals of the Iranian and Iraqi regimes.

The Constitution of the Islamic Republic reads that the army has the mission of not just defending the borders of the country but also of 'waging a holy war for God and for the propagation of God's law'. These mediaeval slogans of the Crusaders' age were echoed by government officers, mollahs

WMR continues a series of features on the world's flashpoints (see Naim Ashhab, *Stones Versus Bullets* in *WMR*, No. 7, 1988).

and official propaganda. The 'Islamic revolution' began actively to be exported in practice.

Khomeini and other Iranian leaders hoped to carry their plans through first of all in Iraq because most of its population are Shi'ites.²

The outbreak of hostilities against Iran brought to a head the many contradictions and passions related to the anti-imperialist and anti-Shah revolution. It supplied the Iranian regime with a long-awaited pretext and propaganda ammunition to begin implementing its expansionistic policy. The flames of religious and chauvinistic fervour were being fanned in the country with the slogans of 'protection of the Islamic revolution' and 'struggle against blasphemy', which Khomeini used for years to bolster his expansionistic ideological positions.

The policy of exporting revolution and building an 'Islamic empire' was not confined to the continuation of the war with Iraq. The regime practised armed intervention in Lebanon by setting up there paramilitary groupings of the Hezbollah (Party of Allah). It sowed discord in the liberation struggle of the Lebanese national progressive forces, unleashed terror against them, engaged in kidnappings and arms trafficking, etc.

The Teheran government gave every support to the forces of Afghan reaction, helped establish training camps for armed counter-revolutionaries and supplied them with weapons and money. It has been pursuing the same policy as the United States, Pakistan, and the reactionary regimes of the region in an attempt to stifle the Afghan revolution.

The Iran-Iraq war is a senseless and bloody venture from the point of view of the two countries' interests, and people of goodwill all over the world have viewed it as such for a long time. But those who provoked and unleashed it kept adding fuel to the fire in pursuit of their own far-reaching goals.

The collapse of the Shah's regime put the US imperial positions in the region in jeopardy. US imperialism needed a pretext to further its neoglobalist goals and to build up its military presence in the Persian Gulf, considered a key area in Washington's Middle East strategy. The US has been active there for decades and has no intention of leaving it, as US Defence Secretary Frank Carlucci said recently. The White House has assembled a strong naval force in the Persian Gulf while constantly inciting Iran and Iraq to continue hostilities.

Any war brings trouble and privations to people. Our people have been exposed to grief and suffering as well. According to WHO's 1987 statistics, Iran has the largest number of cripples in the world. Iranian merchants have found the import of wheelchairs and prosthetic devices to be a most lucrative business. Unemployment has reached 5 million; official press organs reported in January 1987 that 16 per cent of all families did not have even a single wage-earner.

The national economy is in deep crisis. Following the line laid down by the regime, factories have converted to military production. Iranian industry depends heavily on foreign supplies as a result of the Shah's economic policy which has been continued by Khomeini. It needs spare parts, semi-manufactures and raw materials, paid for in hard currency.

Almost half the enterprises closed or worked under capacity after the revolution. The country's revenue has dropped by almost 75 per cent in the past few years due to a production slump and lower oil prices. One can get an idea of the crisis phenomena in the economy and the social sphere from the fact that virtually all the country's oil revenue has been used up to buy costly weapons on the black market. Hundreds of thousands of workers have been sent to the front as cannon fodder. In 1987, according to Ministry of Education statistics, 120,000 teenagers were herded to indiscriminate slaughter right from the school benches.

Now that the ceasefire agreement is in effect there is hope that peace will be restored, but it will take decades of strenuous work and billions of dollars to repair the damage.

The decision to launch the war was taken without hesitation but it is going to be very hard to achieve total reconciliation. Many complex problems have piled up between the two countries over the years of hostilities. Many behind-the-scenes parties to the slaughter, such as the United States, other NATO countries, Israel and arms merchants, have a vital interest in dragging out the war. That is why the peace forces should be on their guard and contribute in every way to the efforts now being made to settle the conflict.

All this is just an outline of the causes at the root of the vicious conflict which has been going on between the two neighbouring countries for years. From the start the Iraqi forces mounted a major offensive and overran a part of Iranian territory. This determined the war's character at that time and became an important political factor of our party's position on the conflict, and practice has borne out the correctness of our conclusions and tactics. Initially, we thought it to be a war of liberation for Iran. Our party and other progressive forces of the country rallied to defend the homeland and revolution and effectively contributed to repulsing the aggressor. People were imbued with heroism and a sense of patriotism at the time.

Many Tudeh members, officers and men, were fighting courageously at the front. But after the act of aggression had been repulsed, they were repressed and executed or jailed for many years, along with other party members.

The first phase of the war, involving the defence of the homeland, lasted about two years. When Khorramshahr³ had been liberated and Iraqi troops were pushed back from the Iranian border, we immediately revised our slogans and tactics and demanded an end to the slaughter and a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Our party, having already realised the need to protect the revolution from the US imperialist conspiracy, clearly understood also that the continuation of hostilities on foreign territory would only play into the hands of the US and the forces of reaction. The conflict was acquiring a new character of a war of conquest, of a predatory war in view of Khomeini's plans.

It was at that time that the Islamic authorities charged our party with 'blindly following' the Soviet Union's peace proposals. The party then drew the conclusion that the US was doing what it could to have the hostilities continue and spread in the region in the interest of imperialism and Zionism. The White House was set on having the antagonists locked in

a vicious struggle for as long as possible.

The big comprador bourgeoisie also helped drag the war out and gave every encouragement to Khomeini in his plans of aggression.

Teheran was dreaming of capturing Iraqi oil fields and reaping enormous economic benefits as a result, so the bourgeoisie was giving the regime financial and political support to enable it to wage the war on Iraqi territory. The interests of US imperialism, Khomeini's annexationist illusions and the plans of the big commercial bourgeoisie thus all pushed the country in the same direction, into continued bloodshed. Guns kept roaring and innocent people were killed for another six years and hundreds of thousands of mothers mourned the deaths of their sons. Hopefully, one of the last chapters in that tragic and bitter story of our time is being written today. Who has won or will win? Clearly, only the enemies of Iran and Iraq stand to gain from this war, which has bled both countries white. That was how our people were made to pay for their anti-imperialist revolution.

American, French and other monopolies made fat profits from selling weapons to Iran, Iraq, and other countries in the region. Since money for arms purchases comes predominantly from oil, the chief national asset of those countries, they have increased its production and sales on the international markets, which has driven down oil prices.

Teheran's adventuristic policy, directed against its own people, has set the stage for US military presence and direct armed intervention in the Persian Gulf. Iran's oil terminals and platforms came under missile attacks in April 1988. The tragic loss of an Iranian airliner with 298 passengers aboard as a result of the criminal irresponsibility of the Pentagon brass shocked the world. That was neither a technical error nor a tactical miscalculation in policy but a logical result of the White House's neoglobalist policy.

But the US, patently aggressive policy line towards the national interests of my people and the strident but impotent anti-American slogans of the Iranian leadership have not prevented the Khomeini regime and the US from conspiring together. The world public has not forgotten the Pentagon's secret arms sales to the Islamic Republic, which came to be known as the Irangate. These deals are a reflection of Washington's consistent policy of building contacts with the 'moderates' in the Iranian government.

A meeting between a representative of Ayatollah Montazeri (Khomeini's chosen successor) and a US General in Ankara clearly indicates that the Irangate tactic is being continued. There is an understanding that arms and ammunition supplies to Teheran will be passed on to the Afghan counter-revolutionaries. Some of them end up in Iranian army arsenals.

The US never misses an opportunity to claim publicly its commitment to democracy and human rights, although it is perfectly well aware that they have been totally suppressed in Chile, Pakistan, South Africa, and Iran, which enjoy Washington's open or covert support, US policy towards the states of the region is determined by the hundreds of billions of dollars

which American monopolies are pumping out of the Persian Gulf countries.

There is no justification for the concentration in the Persian Gulf, more than 15,000 kilometres away from US territory, of the largest naval force since World War II. The avowed goal of that action is 'to protect US interests', which actually consists in the plunder of our national wealth.

The Islamic regime has announced its recognition of UN Security Council Resolution 598 almost a year after it was approved, and only after a series of defeats on the battlefield. Iran has lost Faw Peninsula, Madjnucha Island and some other areas it had captured earlier. Facing disaster, Khomeini had to admit: "This decision is deadlier than poison, but I bow to the will of Allah. I will drink from that cup. It is bitter and loathsome for everyone, and for me in particular, to agree to the resolution. But I have accepted it and a ceasefire in view of events and facts which I will refrain from divulging for the time being, and also in view of the opinions of senior political and military specialists."⁴ That was what Ayatollah Khomeini, who had throughout those eight years insisted on fighting on "even if it takes 20 years", told the people in his address of July 18, 1988. He added, however: "Ours is an ideological war which knows neither geography nor borders between countries. We must mobilise Islamic soldiers en masse all over the world to carry it on . . ."⁵

The general disillusionment of the people, the economic plight, major defeats and enormous losses of manpower and property made the champions of the export of the 'Islamic revolution' revise their tactics. But then, the application of mediaeval dogmas to today's realities could not have produced any other results. As for the ideological export of revolution, other Islamic nations have every right to ask the inspirers of this late-20th century crusade: what have you given to your own people except ruin, huge losses and despotism? Where will you lead us? Until recently the slogan of 'War unto victory!' was held to be the indubitable principal condition and rationale of the regime's existence. The Khomeini leadership took any proposal for ending the slaughter as an indication of the bankruptcy of its policy and power because a 'victorious war' was what it had been pursuing throughout the eight years of the gory conflict.

The regime's acceptance of Resolution 598 in spite of the grave fears for its fate is a result of the dead end which Khomeini's policy has reached and the awareness that the hopes for a military victory are futile. The regime now feels that if the war is continued, its own fall will be imminent.

Teheran is hard put to find a way out of this complex situation. It has been waging a war to further Islamic interests but now is willing to stop it for the sake of the same interests. This logic is not likely to soothe the war-weary people.

The people's wrath is reaching proportions that are dangerous to the regime. Differences and strife are growing in Khomeini's camp. Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani has been appointed a deputy commander-in-chief of the armed forces in a clear attempt to keep them under control, which is becoming more and more difficult. The general crisis of the regime is worsening and the hold of the authorities' hysterical slogans and threats on the people slackening. The sorry outcome of the long war, the bankruptcy

of the policy of aggression and export of the 'Islamic revolution', the socio-economic plight, and the suppression of all democratic rights deny any future to the anti-people and undemocratic regime.

The January 1988 Plenary Meeting of our party analysed the situation in the country and drew the conclusion that it was urgent and essential to build a broad front for freedom and peace to save the homeland from imminent disaster and mediaeval despotism.

People are demanding increasingly that the criminal war be ended, that the naval armada of the US and its allies be taken out of the Persian Gulf, that interference in the affairs of the countries of the region be stopped and that all political prisoners be released.

The armed conflict laid bare the malaise of Khomeini's policy, which has long been disguised with false slogans and appeals. The Tudeh Party believes that there are *objective conditions for the establishment of a general democratic front to fight the regime* but that, regrettably, as our January Plenary Meeting noted, subjective factors are holding up the implementation of that idea. The Tudeh Party calls upon all the progressive democratic forces and people of goodwill in the country to join efforts in achieving the long-overdue peace and doing away with the despotic regime.

¹ SAVAK was the Shah's security police. — Ed.

² Shi'ism is a branch of Islam with a majority following in Iran. The Shi'ite clergy seized power in the country in the February 1979 Revolution. — Ed.

³ An Iranian border town. — Ed.

⁴ *Ettala'at*, July 20, 1988 (in Persian). — Ed.

⁵ Ibid.

Victory Will Be Ours

Yasser Arafat — Chair of the
Executive Committee, Palestine
Liberation Organisation

THE Palestinians, the Arab nation and the Middle East as a whole are now witnessing a new stage in the development of the international situation: the nuclear threat, built up by the insane arms race, looms large over life on Earth and the world has become a huge powder keg.

Even the most sophisticated computers can make mistakes which, cumulatively, could trigger a nuclear war. In this sense the Soviet-US summit in Moscow was very important because it gave a fresh impetus to détente.

Recently, at Erich Honecker's invitation, I attended an international meeting in Berlin for nuclear-free zones. Speakers at the conference made it clear that not just the GDR and other socialist countries but also many political parties in Western Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Arab states, want such zones.

Journalists wondered what Abu Ammar¹ was doing at a conference on nuclear matters. I told them that we were very much interested in that

forum because the Palestinians were confronted by the Middle East's largest nuclear arms arsenal. Israel now has some 120 nuclear warheads, nuclear physicist Mordechai Vanunu has said. The importance of that problem to us is clear in view of the scientific and technological aid given by the US to its chief ally in the region in producing missile technology (specifically, in the development of the long-range Ariha missile, capable of reaching targets in Europe, the Soviet Union, Central Africa, India and Pakistan). It should also be remembered that Israel has joined enthusiastically the Star Wars programme and recently signed an agreement on strategic cooperation with the United States, thus acquiring a status equal to that of a NATO member.

The Palestinian revolution is a part of the worldwide liberation process. A threat to fighters for the noble ideals of freedom, democracy and progress anywhere in the world is a threat to us, and vice versa. Cooperation between the Pretoria racists and the racist Zionist regime, particularly in nuclear physics, also fits into this context.

By waging its hard-fought battle for existence, the Arab people of Palestine are upholding the cause of all honest and freedom-loving people of the world. That is why we say that *our revolution has a Palestinian face, an Arab heart and an international character.*

We think highly of cooperation with all the liberation movements in the world; it is diversified and reaches out to Latin and Central America, Asia and Africa. The Palestinian revolution has deep roots: we are a bough of a big tree, the tree of freedom.

We are fighting against heavy odds and many plots are being hatched against us. Sometimes we were left alone in the face of our enemy. Our battle knows no ceasefires, it has been waged on the military, propaganda and economic fronts and it is a question of life or death for the Palestinian people.

When Israel had invaded Lebanon in 1982 we came face to face with the most formidable juggernaut in the history of the Middle East conflict. It was the first time ever that Israel had amassed 8.5 of its 11.5 divisions on one front and kept them there for 88 days. One and a half of the remaining three divisions were deployed on the Golan Heights, half a division kept the 600-km long Jordanian front and one more was in reserve. It was the longest military campaign waged by Israel, and its manpower losses, according to CIA figures, were heavier than its aggregate casualties in the whole history of the Middle East conflict.

After we had withdrawn from Beirut, Caspar Weinberger, the then Pentagon chief, thanked the Israeli leadership for the opportunity to use the fighting in Lebanon to test the latest American weapons, such as cluster, phosphorus, suction, fragmentation, pellet, needle, gas and napalm bombs and shells. Nerve gases and the latest American laser-guided air bombs were used as well.

We and our Lebanese comrades-in-arms lost tens of thousands of men killed and wounded in 1982; and tens of thousands of Palestinians perished in air raids.

Reagan stated at the time that the Lebanese operation had wrecked the PLO structure. Our enemies provoked a split in the organisation in order

to rout utterly Palestinian resistance. We had to join another battle, now for the preservation of the PLO and Palestinian national unity. Standing shoulder to shoulder with our brothers from the national patriotic forces of Lebanon, we are still waging a difficult and bloody war in the south of the country. We shed blood and sustain losses together from Israeli air raids, under shells fired by Israeli warships and in operations by enemy troops against communities and Palestinian refugee camps in Southern Lebanon.

The uprising on the Israeli-occupied lands is a very important factor. We are witnessing basic democratic change in the character of the people's movement against the Israeli war machine, the strongest force in the Middle East, and against US imperialism. *The uprising is a truly popular Palestinian revolution in action.* It has lasted for nearly a year now. As it gathered momentum, people's committees of representatives of all social strata and all occupations were established in every community to guide mass action. There are 68 such committees in Gaza, 18 in Djabaliya camp, 51 in Nablus, and 49 in Ramallah and Al Beira.

When 2,500 PLO activists (the figure was supplied by the occupation authorities) were arrested, their places were immediately taken by new men. If a committee is suppressed anywhere, a new one springs up in its place.

We have achieved a great deal, namely forged popular unity, and established a joint national command of the uprising, which has become part and parcel of the PLO and its Executive Committee.

There was much speculation that it had been provoked by pro-Khomeini elements and that it was at Iran's bidding that Palestinian churches and mosques did not observe religious holidays. But the truth is that all people in our townships gave enthusiastic support to the slogans of the uprising. Moslems and Christians are fighting in it side by side. Do Christians also take orders from Iran? These allegations are meant to prove that it is not the PLO that leads the struggle, and to draw a divide between it and popular actions. But today even our opponents have to admit that the PLO is the true leader of the uprising and that most of the Palestinians support it.

All these events began in fact on October 24, 1987, when we appealed to people in the occupied territories to stage demonstrations of support for their compatriots in the sealed-off refugee camps in Beirut. Since that time the uprising has been rolling on wave after wave, become universal and is manifesting itself not just in a high degree of organisation but also in the development of new democratic tendencies.

The toughest decision the PLO leadership and commander-in-chief have so far had to take is to refrain from using arms in demonstrations and clashes with Israeli troops and armed Jewish settlers. Many of our people have been killed or wounded, many have had their brothers, sisters or parents killed. It has been hard not to resort to arms. But after many months of avoiding armed actions in the course of mass protests, we told the Israeli military clique: don't you think that we cannot bear or use arms? The Israeli army command has had to admit that we carried out 190 armed operations against Israeli troops last May alone.

All strata of the Palestinian people have become involved in the

uprising. It is not fundamentalist but this does not mean that the religious movements affiliated with the PLO have no part in it.

The uprising has now entered its third phase: the first was a general strike, the second unrest and partial civil disobedience in urban communities and now it is total disobedience to the occupation authorities.

We hope that the world community will continue to give every support to the Palestinian popular uprising in the occupied territories.

A major condition for a comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict is the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all the Arab lands occupied in 1967. The best way to resolve the problem, we think, is to convene a representative international conference with the participation of the UN Security Council members and all the parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

This year is especially important to us because it was in 1988 that the idea of convening an international conference on a Middle East settlement was reaffirmed and has, since the Moscow summit, been winning ever broader support. Although some differences over the character and terms of reference of that forum persist, the idea is backed by all socialist countries and by the Arab states, especially after the Algiers extraordinary summit, which was a major political success for the Palestinians' cause.

The restoration of Palestinian unity at the session of the National Council of Palestine in Algeria in April 1987, the large scope of popular actions in the occupied territories and the general thaw in the international situation contributed greatly towards the constructive results of the summit.

The idea of a Middle East conference drew support from the non-aligned movement, African states, Moslem countries, EEC members and, for the first time, from the United States. The Big Seven noted at their recent Toronto meeting the need to convene a conference.

The idea is favoured by quite a few people in Israel, primarily the democratic and progressive forces with which we have good relations. We have begun a dialogue with other peacemaking organisations which back the Palestinians' right to self-determination and deplore the crimes perpetrated against our people. Even army officers have set up a council for peace and security. One and a half thousand intellectuals, among them actors, artists, writers, journalists and university professors, have signed a statement deploring the Israeli government's policy and reaffirming the Palestinians' right to self-determination. This is a new and very characteristic feature of Israeli society. Not only Communists but people from many other parties and organisations support us. Of course, there are in Israel fascist-minded elements, fanatics and extremists like Kahane and Sharon, who demand not just tougher repressions but the deportation of the 2.25 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories.²

There is much talk about human rights in the West today in the context of the Palestinian problem, especially since the idea of an international conference is gaining ground. But what rights are those circles in the US and Israel talking about when they are the ones which unleashed institutionalised terror against us, which closed our mission in Washington, and which are not only trying to have the PLO mission at the United

Nations closed but are also behind the assassinations of our comrade Abu Dji had and attempts on the lives of leading PLO officers in Athens and in Cyprus, an air raid on the PLO headquarters in Tunisia and the sinking of a ship with home-bound Palestinians? Or to take another fact: 1,600 women miscarried after the Israeli army had used chemical agents to disperse demonstrations (the figure has been admitted by the authorities). As many as 10,000 Palestinians have been injured and 3,400 of them crippled for life; thousands have been thrown into concentration camps; 3,700 homes have been demolished or razed, all in the first seven months of the uprising. Dozens of Palestinian villages have perished like Lidice in Czechoslovakia.

We are facing a crisis provoked by the Zionist forces, under whose pressure Washington took discriminatory measures against the PLO mission at the UN. They clearly clash with the agreement between the US Administration and the UN, under which the host country is obliged to provide conditions for the normal functioning of the missions of all the UN member countries and also of observers granted that status by the UN General Assembly.

The uprising will continue in spite of the invaders' atrocities, killings of women and children, demolition of homes, mass arrests, raids on churches and mosques and the economic blockade. History cannot be stopped.

Our cause is undoubtedly helped by the mediated ceasefire between Iran and Iraq and their peace talks under Security Council Resolution 598. The just settlement of the differences between the two countries will impact favourably on the situation in the region and contribute substantially to an improvement in international affairs in general.

We have been fighting for years in the face of the many conspiracies and intrigues of our enemies, including their attempts to broaden strategic cooperation between the US and Israel, to eliminate a Palestinian presence in Lebanon, to split the Palestinian resistance movement, and to involve some Arab regimes in confrontation with us. All this makes our struggle very difficult but we are confident that victory will be ours.

¹ Yasser Arafat's party name. — *Ed.*

² Altogether 3.25 million Palestinians live outside the occupied territories. — *Ed.*

The Dialogue Continues

On Cooperation — From The Standpoint Of Realism

Svend Auken — Chair, Social-Democratic Party of Denmark (SDPD)

WMR's August issue carried an article by Professor Bernard Jeune, member of the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Denmark, 'Can the Right Be Pushed Back?', asserting that, by and large, today there are far broader possibilities for alliances between the left-wing forces, and that the rightist forces presently controlling a minority government in the country can be stopped and even rolled back in the new conditions when anti-war struggles are gathering momentum along with the struggle of the working people for their rights. The Social Democrats were and remain the largest component of the left-wing forces and the most influential political party in Denmark (about 30 per cent of the votes at May's early parliamentary elections). The *WMR* editors asked their leader to share his thoughts about the country's security policy and about the potential for interaction between the supporters of peace and progress both at home and internationally.

DENMARK'S Social Democrats first came to government in 1924. And although for the six years now the Conservatives have been in power, we are still, and not without reason, regarded as a potentially governmental party. Being in opposition the Social Democrats, as part of the alternative majority, have consistently used parliamentary methods to influence Danish foreign-policy stands. We urged that interstate negotiations were conducted in a more realistic way, we advocated freeze measures, we have argued with conviction and helped to adopt resolutions in the Folketing for reductions of strategic arms and the elimination of arsenals of binary weapons, we have argued against the SDI. We have adopted positive stands towards nuclear arms-free zones. All these resolutions are to be taken into account in Denmark's official foreign policy. But with a very right-wing government we have our doubts as to how faithfully they execute resolutions and decisions made by the Parliament. There have been continuous conflicts between the Foreign Minister and the majority in the Parliament. The Foreign Minister insisted that NATO loyalty should be the overriding principle of our foreign policy. We do not question Denmark's membership of this alliance. But we have held that inside it we should openly state our views, including revision of current strategic thinking and of current security doctrines.

The SDPD's crucial influence on Danish policy stems from the fact that we have a very strong network of international contacts, primarily with

other Social-Democratic parties. Representatives of these parties hold the posts of Foreign Minister in Norway, Sweden and Finland. We cooperate closely with them in formulating common attitudes on the main issues of world development. We are in contact on a regular weekly basis. And we have all kinds of joint committees and so forth.

Active cooperation is being conducted with all-democratic parties of Europe. We have an original form of such interaction in Northern Europe called 'SCANDILUX', which also includes Social-Democratic parties from Luxemburg, Belgium and Holland with very prominent observers as Egon Bahr from the SPD. Representatives of the French Socialist Party attend its meetings. We also meet with South European Social-Democratic parties. They are in power in Spain and Greece and participate in the coalition government of Italy.

So in Western Europe we are the only strong, internationally organised movement. Communists, of course, have their network as well, but it is ineffective due to the weak positions of the communist parties in Western Europe.

And because we have this close cooperation, we have also formulated a common strategy, common attitudes to disarmament with Social Democrats in Spain, West Germany, Benelux, Italy, and Greece. The only exception is France, but even there I feel a harmonisation of views. And that means that we can be a counterweight to the conservative forces in Europe.

I think President Reagan in his first three years had a very good effect on the thinking of the European Left, in the sense that they became more conscious of the need to elaborate alternatives to meet the thrusts of the conservative Reaganites' policy. I feel that Liberals — for example, Hans Dietrich Genscher in the FRG — have also evolved substantially. This consensus will be contagious in the sense that the conservative forces will be affected, too, and I hope that in the future they can be persuaded to join in a more active policy of security.

Therefore we don't want to move out in a completely polarised situation. We want to move as close to the centre as we can in order to be able to set the agenda for domestic debates. I think we've been successful in it in Denmark. I worked here on behalf of my party for a national consensus on defence matters.

The Conservatives could participate in it. I think we should be able to say: a country's security walks best if it uses two legs. One leg is a credible national defence and defensive alliance, the other being an active policy of peace and arms reduction.

On what basis could consensus be made? We all want a Danish defence, we want to be inside NATO. But we also need a strong peace and cooperation, as well as the ability to influence NATO decisions, in contrast to the government who will tag behind the Americans in everything. They consider it disloyal to NATO to object to them or to the Brussels bureaucracy.

If we are to cooperate on a truly democratic basis, we should put a strong case of ours and listen to other people's arguments, trying to forge changes if changes are called for, instead of clinging to the old attitudes.

Therefore we suggested establishing a security committee four years ago. The government somewhat surprisingly received it well, and we established that committee. As conceived by us, the committee was to be an instrument of dialogue. But matters have since been limited to interesting studies and talks with various experts. What hinders the political negotiations to harmonise divergent views is the position taken by the Foreign Minister who demands that the Social Democrats should go back on their views. For this he will wait in vain: after all, it is he, not we, who is in the minority.

If we are to speak of the essence of the differences over security policy, they primarily concern nuclear disarmament. Here the government is allying itself with the major NATO countries, whereas we want to have a third zero added to the double zero on medium and shorter-range missiles: it would be on short-range nuclear weapons. We likewise believe that the imbalance on the conventional side in Central Europe should not be righted by NATO in terms of rearmament, but that it should be corrected in terms of negotiated cuts by East and West.

In the domestic field, the military budget is a matter of contention too. Our view is that we want to restructure our defence, make it more 'defensive', so that our country's and other military forces can never be used for aggressive operations. This restructuring shall, according to our policies, be inside the present budget of 2.1 per cent. The government says it should be increased and does not agree to our theories of non-aggressive defence.

This doctrine is saying that deterrence, which is the main concept of modern defence, should be one based on making enemy attacks so expensive for the enemy that he would refrain from attacking us, without creating any legitimate fear of a counter-attack from our side. In more practical terms it means, for instance, that we have naval capabilities allowing us to fight back a naval attack in terms of land-based batteries, sophisticated mines, etc., without resorting to any large-scale operations.

We think that it is possible to create a credible defence, making it impossible for any force to attack us. We want it to be strong. It concerns also aviation: the planes can be highly sophisticated, but they are not to be designed for offensive actions.

Happily, changes are also occurring in Soviet military doctrine. If the USSR made asymmetrical cuts on tanks, and NATO on its superior forces in the air and at sea, it would be very good. If we could, by changing doctrines, reduce the possibilities for a surprise attack, then a precondition for general disarmament is at hand. And we in Denmark would want to make our small contribution to it.

The government holds that in case of attack it's better to fight not on Danish soil, but on alien soil. I think personally it's not a question where we should fight but a question of avoiding fighting at all. That is what our doctrine is all about: with this kind of defensive posture, the enemy will simply not need to make a pre-emptive strike against our forces.

When the Social Democrats come to power, all these measures will be adopted. They will become the pivot of Danish foreign policy. We will be faithful to what we said when we were in opposition, and we will openly

discuss it with our partners in the Northern area, NATO, the EEC and our friends in Eastern Europe. The SDPD has had over the years very intense contacts with the US administration too. We are anxious to maintain a dialogue with them.

As to NATO's overall nuclear strategy, we suggest that the function of these arms should be reduced to a credible second-strike capability, so that no adversary has the temptation to pre-empt. Each side must know that by making a nuclear attack it can't win, and will only condemn itself to destruction. Let nuclear arms deter nuclear arms, and no more. The top priority in East-West relations is, in our view, the talks on strategic nuclear arms. We certainly hope that an agreement on cutting them down by 50 per cent will be reached and signed.

I also think that all tactical nuclear arms should be removed from Europe. But this is closely linked with the problem of conventional arms, the imbalance in which is the sole reason for maintaining TNF at both sides. So to allay the misgivings about getting rid of the TNF's I would suggest first achieving a parity in conventional arms through asymmetrical reduction and then successfully following it up with an agreement on the third zero. That these are real prospects is confirmed by significant changes in the Soviet Union's policy — not only in the style and the spirit of thinking, but also in content.

Both Prime Minister Poul Schluter and I have visited this country during the past two years. Schluter as the official guest of the Soviet government was there negotiating on behalf of the Kingdom of Denmark, and I at the invitation of the CPSU — on behalf of Denmark's largest political party. A quite substantial difference. But we do not, when we are outside of our country, pretend to be an alternative to the government. We may not like it, but the conservative government is also our government. Yet we think Socialist parties with their long popular tradition, being rooted in the masses, have a specific responsibility in discussing international and bilateral problems.

Such was also the case during my visit to Moscow. There was a very interesting and long conversation with Mr Dobrynin and other advisers of Mr Gorbachov. And it was an opportunity to explain what our views are on European and global developments. And to my satisfaction I noted that on many issues we had identical or similar views. There were, of course, contentious issues. For instance, concerning Northern Europe. The expansion of Soviet military building on the Kola peninsula during the Brezhnev years was a cause of instability in our area and military high tension, also leading to an augmented NATO presence here. Formerly the Northern area used to be fairly calm. Mr Gorbachov in his Murmansk speech (October 1987) had indicated that the aim of Soviet policy was to normalise the situation, and we support that. But we will have to say that the Soviet side is at least partly to be blamed for this negative development.

On Afghanistan we then agreed — and this is now the official Soviet position — that the USSR should withdraw its military units from there.

Watching the internal life of the Soviet Union, we could state a real consensus on perestroika and that's necessary for change. But I saw a lack

of enthusiasm, everything was so businesslike, resembling more board-room than popular socialism.

Of the other impressions we would underscore the fact that there is little personality cult: Mr Gorbachov is more portrayed in the Western press than in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. And I like very much that part of it. There is also an insecurity with the administrative apparatus. People know that it is going to be trimmed down by 30 to 40 per cent, but nobody knows exactly who will go, how or when. Finally, there is the nationalities question which I think Moscow handles with great care, but again centrifugal factors exist.

On the whole, our visit was very interesting and useful. We are glad to have had this absolutely frank discussion. There certainly is more democracy in the Soviet Union and this is a more open society than it used to be.

So it can be stated that the credibility of Soviet foreign policy is growing, that people feel cautiously optimistic about its general thrust. Provided that the CPSU can solve the internal problems of the country, and there I see many obstacles, I am convinced that there is a real chance for the East and the West to achieve peaceful coexistence and cooperation. And that, of course, is clearly in the interests of Denmark.

When Poul Schluter visited Moscow, he conveyed the same sentiments and came back with very positive impressions of Soviet policies. But he felt that it was an opportunity for a heated ideological debate with the Soviets. I think that it can be so but I feel it's useful, knowing the ideological differences, to discuss what could unite us instead of separating us.

What I have said also applies to the solution of one of the main problems of Danish policy: establishing of a nuclear-free zone in Northern Europe. We think it's very positive that in the committee of parliamentarians of all Nordic countries, chaired by Anker Jorgensen, my predecessor in the party, they have been able to reach agreement on what should be understood in political terms by a NFZ. I also think it's encouraging that it has been possible to convince the governments of all our countries to set up last year on a high level a committee of officials to study this problem.

We hope to speed up the process as much as possible. It's my personal hope that the committee will manage to complete its work next year, allowing for the governments to negotiate and maybe to start talks on this question with NATO and also the Soviet Union and other countries of the Warsaw Pact that have promised us to enter into serious negotiations, in particular with a view to having arms reductions in areas adjacent to the Northern one: on the Kola Peninsula, the Leningrad military district and so forth. There have been interesting offers and I think they should be looking into them at the time when the Nordic countries themselves have agreed on them.

I think we should be positive to the overall thrust of the proposals made by Mikhail Gorbachov in Murmansk and by Nikolai Ryzhkov during his visits to Sweden and Norway (January 1988). But we shouldn't do that uncritically because there are points — for instance, on naval operations — that appear to us to be unbalanced. Let us discuss them. If we want to include also land-based forces, let us talk. We have no fear of negotiating.

When coming to the non-military side, I think the highlights of the Murmansk programme and Nikolai Ryzhkov's offers are interesting. For example, I appreciate very much the idea of jointly developing mineral resources on the Kola Peninsula, just as of coordinating efforts in the fields of navigation, ecology, and meteorology.

The Soviet Union now wants to see the reaction of its counterparts. Meanwhile the Nordic governments have taken a wait-and-see attitude: it all sounds very good, they think, but they would like to get some more specifics, some more details. To the proposals made in more concrete form they would be prepared to respond.

Generally, I feel that small countries should agree internally about what their policy should be, about how they are to keep together to play a more active role in world affairs. I think that both superpowers — the USA and the Soviet Union — tend to view the international field of negotiations as a bilateral relationship; that is, they may pay lip service to the importance of smaller nations, but when it comes down to real matters, unless the smaller nations make their presence felt, they speak over our heads.

There is a strong uneasiness about this, I feel, both in the Warsaw Pact and NATO. This is not to say that there is a crisis of the blocs. But it was odd to see the two superpowers' leaders in the White House meeting to decide on the security issues of Europe. I think that the Europeans — West and East — should have been more involved in that process. The small nations can and must play a part. They have very understandable and legitimate interests.

For our part, we are striving for cooperation and dialogue with small NATO and Warsaw Pact countries. In January we had a meeting in Copenhagen of Danish, Belgian and Norwegian Social Democrats with representatives of the governing parties of Hungary, Bulgaria and the GDR. We had a lot of contacts and joint initiatives. In the opinion of my party, these contacts are moving at a satisfactory pace. In the final communique we expressed readiness to continue the talks. Since then our party delegations have visited Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and the GDR.

If we could find a format for an international dialogue between Social Democrats and Communists, it would be a good idea, although I don't know how it should be organised. But the idea is right and we are already moving along this path. The General Secretary of the SDPD and its foreign policy spokesman, Styn Christensen, attended the Moscow Meeting of Representatives of Parties and Movements (November 1987) and reported very favourably.

I think it's also in the interest of East European parties to have dialogue with us. There are people who cynically say that the Soviets prefer reactionaries in the West to talk to, because they can better make deals with them instead of negotiating with competitors inside the labour movement. I'm sure that even if there may be more points of disagreement, we should be able to meet on the party basis. I have personally enjoyed my contacts both with the CPSU and other parties of this group of countries. They have a very pragmatic, open and frank stand that I appreciate. We should openly speak out our minds.

A few words on interaction of Danish Left forces. In Denmark I have many friends among the Communists. But the Communists' influence is very insignificant. They have built up some influence in the trade unions because they have many very strong shop stewards. Yet numerically the CPD is a very small force. They have less than 1 per cent of the total votes, and as far as I know, there are very profound discussions inside the party as to what their strategy should be. I don't mind discussing with my communist friends, but I only see with difficulty what role the Communists can play.

When it comes to the hard domestic-policy issues, we feel that Communists are so small a force that they are almost forced to take all the most radical, marginal views, that they would not in the foreseeable future be able to share in mainstream Danish politics. We have a long tradition in personal relations, but, realistically speaking, they have no future for a long time to come.

Regarding the Socialist People's Party we cooperate closely with them in the Parliament on foreign policy and also in domestic areas. There is a very difficult economic situation in Denmark. And we have stated that, providing the SPP can find a realistic basis for economic policy, we would invite them to share the government responsibility in the event of a removal of the right-wingers from power.

Apart from the Parliament, the trade unions and anti-war actions, there are certain areas — solidarity with freedom fighters, the Blacks in South Africa, national independence movements in Central America and Asia — which one may describe as natural areas for extensive left-wing cooperation. The Social Democrats are in there — Communists, SPP, Radicals. And they should be there.

for human survival

Peace And Capitalism

*Jurgen Reusch, D.Sc.(Econ.) —
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Studies (FRG)*

FOR a long time, Marxists were quite right in assuming that lasting peace on the Earth could be secured only after socialism fully triumphed over capitalism, but we now have a situation in which we have to think again:

We continue our discussion of the question: 'Can Capitalism Cease to be Aggressive?' (See Victor Perlo's article 'Can Capitalism Do Without Militarism?' in *WMR*, No. 7, 1988). — *Ed.*

the global threats in an interdependent world have given mankind's survival top priority over any class interests. It also turns out that the worldwide transition to socialism involves much more time and effort than it was assumed. It looks as though capitalism and socialism will have to live side by side for a fairly long time to come. It stands to reason, therefore, that *stable peace must be attained in the presence of monopoly capitalism*.

That is not a new conclusion. What is new is the urgency of the task to secure peace, and the lack of a reasonable alternative. How is this to be done? First of all, imperialism must be made to give up its use of armed force, and to 'soften' militarism within the framework of that system. Victor Perlo shows very well that in the US context such an approach has a definite and well-founded prospect. But there still remains this question: Can one expect of capitalism a long armistice *despite the interests of its ultra-reactionary circles*? How is one reliably to prevent a possible nuclear (or any other) confrontation between the military blocs, and then also a conventional arms race? I feel that this cannot be done *unless capitalism itself makes a constructive contribution to peace and disarmament*. Does capitalism show any signs of being interested in doing so? How are these expressed, and how are they to be taken into account in our struggle for peace and social progress nationally and internationally?

The urge to resort to violence naturally springs from the very nature of monopoly capital. The spearhead of militarism is directed primarily against world socialism and also against the national liberation movement. It is imperialism, US imperialism in the first place, that is responsible for the arms race and the nuclear threat looming over mankind. Capitalism has ceaselessly waged wars throughout its history, over 150 of them in the last four decades.

We are not considering some flimsy hope of turning the wolf into a lamb, but of thinking through, in the new conditions, the contradictions built into the interconnection between capitalism, profit, arms manufacture, and war.¹ The point is to analyse these contradictions with a view to containing the aggressive tendencies of the last exploitive system, and to identify the points of support now existing within capitalism itself, and the conditions in which these can be successfully used to hammer out a peaceable course.

These questions are also of immediate concern to the Communists of the FRG and are being discussed by them. We have taken an active stand against the arms race and have tried to make an in-depth analysis of West German militarism. The FRG has a developed military-industrial complex and still strong militaristic traditions. In the pursuit of general and specific imperialist objectives, it has taken part in the policy of confrontation, and adopted a counter-productive attitude to many international issues. How much of an active contribution then can one expect Bonn to make to peaceful coexistence and disarmament in the near future?

Nuclear war or armed confrontation between the opposite social systems can no longer serve as instruments to meet the bourgeoisie's general class interests. That is an historically new fact. The organic connection between capitalism and the arms race and war cannot, of course, be eliminated, but how much of an influence do modern factors have on it?

One should not forget that this connection is realised in practice through the actions of individuals and large groups. Being ideologically mediated, it thereby provides a field of action for variously-oriented forces and becomes something of a trend in their struggle.

Different and often even opposite policy versions have already long been possible on the basis of capitalism. Lenin identified two main camps within the monopoly bourgeoisie: the extremely reactionary bourgeoisie, and the moderate and more realistically-minded bourgeoisie. These two trends can be clearly discerned in the policy of state-monopoly capital in the FRG today: the aggressive and the reformist trend, which essentially differ from each other also in the approach to peace and disarmament. Their erstwhile consensus on foreign policy and military issues have even been disrupted in the key areas (Victor Perlo notes the existence of a similar picture in the United States).

The aggressive policy version prevailing in the FRG has some important specifics as compared, for instance, with that in the United States, and they have become even more pronounced in the new situation which has taken shape since the signing of the INF Treaty. Despite its basic loyalty to Washington and its strength strategy, FRG imperialism on the whole attaches less significance to arms manufacture in the framework of economic development.

While the efforts to build up the arms arsenal, primarily a feature of the CDU/CSU political line, are strong and sustained, they have recently run up against obvious economic, social and political barriers. In the FRG the military force factor is seen in a different light and more pluralistically, as compared with the view of the Reagan Administration. The FRG, as a West European state, pins great hopes on the control and limitation of armaments. Besides, there are sharpening conflicts within the ruling coalition between members of the Free Democratic Party and the CDU/CSU. Indeed, considerable differences on peace and disarmament issues also tend to appear in both Christian Democratic parties. The stand taken by the various factions within these parties turns out to be at odds with the US aggressive circles' policy of confrontation.

Before going on with this line of reasoning, let me briefly describe the state of the FRG's arms industry.

By the early 1980s, it was employing roughly 300,000, a figure that has somewhat diminished since then. This means, therefore, a little less than 3 per cent of the total number of persons employed in production. NATO's estimates put the FRG's arms spending at about 3.4 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, which is much lower than it is in the United States. State military-related research, development and engineering took up 3.9 per cent of the total in 1982, and while the figure has increased, it is still not higher than 5 per cent.

The FRG's arms industry ranks sixth in total output, and is highly monopolised: the bulk of the arms contracts go to a relatively small number of concerns. Many of the 27 leading arms manufacturers also turn out civilian products, and military hardware accounts for over one-half of the total output in only 12 of them; it is 50 to 60 per cent for Messerschmitt-Boelkow-Blohm, a major arms supplier, and less than 10 per cent for

Daimler-Benz. In other words, most of the leading arms makers are also active on civilian markets.

From 1982 to 1987, state expenditure on the armed forces and weapons went up by 15 per cent, three times as fast as civilian expenditure. Armaments have become a priority of budget policy. The Bundeswehr and the arms industry will continue to be financed just as generously, but since 1985 the increase in military spending has been proportional to the growth of total Federal expenditures. The military budget went up by 2.1 per cent in 1987, and by 0.9 per cent in 1988, which is lower than the budget increase as a whole. Adjusted for inflation, real outlays on the armed forces and weapons have been lately somewhat reduced. In accordance with medium-term financial planning, the budget share of arms spending should also somewhat diminish in the next few years.

Militarism, as I have said, is rooted in social and, ultimately, in economic relations, and may be manifest in any capitalist society as a trend. Military-industrial complexes have been taking shape in some capitalist countries as a result of the coalescence of the major arms makers and the senior military and state bureaucracy. These complexes *are not the prime source of imperialist aggressiveness, but a generator bolstering militarism.*² The aggressiveness of imperialism in its diverse forms would basically still not be deprived of its sources even if these complexes did not, or ceased, to exist.

From the economic standpoint spending money on war, says Marx, amounts to a nation jettisoning a part of its capital.³ Arms manufacture can, for a certain period, partially stimulate the economy, above all in the industries and enterprises which have a stake in arms contracts. But *over the long term and with respect to the entire economy the arms business tends to impede the development of the productive forces, thereby acting as an additional factor in the crisis.*

This fully applies to the present phase in the development of state-monopoly capitalism in the FRG. The high degree to which arms production and its expansion are monopolised infringes upon the interests of a large number of concerns and small and medium enterprises not involved in fabricating the instruments of death. What is more, fairly important and diverse interests of the monopolies lie outside the sphere of arms manufacture, and the possibility of satisfying these interests is ultimately restricted by the policy of confrontation. Furthermore, there is evidence of growing diversification also within the concerns, so that the making of weapons is often no more than an element of their strategy, and frequently not even the decisive one.

The message here is that the centre of gravity can move with relative ease from the civilian into the military sphere, when the civilian market is in the grip of a crisis, and state demand for military hardware can be mobilised, and that it can just as easily move the other way — from the military to the civilian sphere, given the right general political and social conditions.

The main part of monopoly capital can, in definite circumstances, give preference to the civilian type of productive-forces development in order to realise more effectively its urge for the lucrative investment of capital

and engage in economic competition with the socialist countries. Consequently, economic factors countering the expansion of arms manufacture and the growth of the role of the military-industrial complex exist within capitalism itself. Will they become definitive, and if they will, when? That is not only an economic question, for it also has pronounced politico-strategic aspects. The capitalist state can pursue a militaristic policy even in defiance of definite economic interests. In short, there is nothing automatic about the process, and everything depends on the balance of forces and the class struggle.

In this context, Victor Perlo has expressed a noteworthy idea: monopoly capital as a whole is apprehensive of the political effects of demilitarisation, and for that reason objects to it. Its apprehension springs mainly from the fact that the dismantling of militarism resulting in more intense economic and other contacts with existing socialism would erode the 'enemy image', which helps to cement the ideological system of capitalism. In other words, wherever military-industrial complexes take shape, and the armed forces and the strength policy have a big role to play, they are fuelled not only by economic necessity or interests but also by the strategic tasks of imperialism. That is why such complexes do not always emerge in all capitalist countries.

The military-industrial complex is not just capital proliferating on war contracts. It is an institutionalised blend of the specific interests of capital with military and state agencies. The military-industrial complex is rooted in the capitalist economy, but it tends to proliferate in a definite political medium. The military-industrial complex is "neither a necessary component part of the social system, nor the sole and inevitably dominant bloc of forces and strategies for securing the relations of monopoly domination and exploitation; it rivals with other conceptions, which also have economic and social roots in monopoly capital closely allied with state institutions".⁴

That is even truer when the military-industrial complex is linked (as it is in the United States) to the nuclear superiority strategy or even to the conduct of a nuclear war: in that case its development cannot be explained only or mainly by economic factors. *The policy of resorting to the threat or conduct of nuclear war is even less necessary for realising capitalist interests and safeguarding the economic and social foundations of capitalism than the arms build-up and the armaments policy generally: it tends to become ever more meaningless.*

Powerful productive forces are generated by the scientific and technical revolution, and their main feature is intensification and closer international interweaving of capital. These productive forces objectively require socialism, but even under imperialism their development depends, to a much greater extent than before, on some (even if minimum) international economic stability, on the relevant global proportions and an optimal balance between man, technology and the environment. This could include repudiation by monopoly capital of military expansion, say, in favour of economic expansion. "Objective circumstances induce monopoly capital and its experts to be increasingly involved in global thinking."⁵

On the international level, therefore, monopoly capital also has a stake

in preventing war, taking the edge off global problems, and solving them as far as possible. One is left with the impression that the highly industrialised states, with their sensitive infrastructure, now cannot at all withstand a war, whether nuclear or any other.

However, these trends will not become definitive of their own accord. *They can and must be stimulated, activated, stabilised and developed in the right direction by socialism.* This requires both political pressure, struggle and incontrovertible proof that the aggressive scenarios for getting out of the situation have no chance of success. The prerequisite for success here is that socialism has most definitely prevented imperialism from attaining military superiority, the basis on which the new Soviet policy of peace and disarmament has been so dynamic that it cannot be evaded by the governments of the capitalist countries either. The flexible peace strategy of the USSR, the GDR and other socialist states is a most important instrument for mustering the realistic and reasonable interests of capitalism.

The possibilities for influencing policy in the capitalist system have on the whole been growing on the basis of the current development of the productive forces. In other words, there is no need to wait for a revolution for effecting disarmament and limiting the influence of the military-industrial complex in the West: this can be done even within the framework of capitalist relations. But that would bring about an essential change in the image of capitalism itself. Victor Perlo is quite right in saying that, in particular, influential arms corporations would have to give up a large part of their profits.

The military-industrial complex in our country continues to be a strong and dynamic form in which monopoly capital is organised and interwoven with the state apparatus. It has a significant economic potential and opportunities for political direction. While the manufacture of arms in all the industrial sectors, instead of a single limited one, shows the potentialities for disarmament, it also gives the military-industrial complex additional strength to attain its objectives.

But there are various factors and favourable opportunities even under capitalism for reducing arms manufacture relatively without hindrance and conflict, and for going over to civilian production. "It is some of the political and material interests of big capital, and not general economic interests, that are an obstacle to disarmament and to switching from the making of weapons to the making of civilian goods."⁶

On the assumption that these obstacles are not insuperable one could draw this conclusion: *even under capitalism, notably in the FRG, there are internal factors for disarmament, and for a policy of peace and international cooperation.* If they are to be manifested, there is a need for a phased and flexibly developing conception that can win over the majority as an alternative to the neoconservative offensive, which still has a solid basis.

For its part, this requires a constructive contribution by various social and political forces — revolutionary and oriented towards reforms — and their cooperation, both at home and internationally.

The struggle for peace and disarmament opens up for the working class movement fresh prospects within the framework of the capitalist relations

prevailing in the FRG. First, the starting points should be located for switching from military to civilian production. Furthermore, says Herbert Mies, there is a need to set up non-aggressive and non-militarised economic and social structures, with the working class, most importantly, providing the impetus for the FRG's capacity for peace.⁷ Consequently, even in these social conditions one could get down to tackling the most acute problems, with a simultaneous potentiality for further anti-monopoly and socialist social changes.

The problem of capitalism's aggressiveness will not be fully solved if all the efforts are reduced to trying to excise the military-industrial complex from the capitalist organism as a malignant growth. *The tasks which arise are not identical, but rather interconnected and of differing significance.* There are a great many intermediate stages between the prospect of a nuclear catastrophe and a disarmed capitalist society prepared for coexistence. The most urgent task is to limit the destructive impact of the capitalist system on our integral world, to reduce the existing danger and to avoid mutual annihilation. Prevention of a nuclear war is the central task which must remain significant at every stage.

The FRG, in particular, should stop backing any confrontation based on resorting to nuclear threat or armed force (primarily within the NATO framework and in alliance with the United States), and to take a constructive stand on détente.

It is certainly realistic to formulate the task in that way, but its solution will still fall short of making capitalism repudiate militarism and liquidate the military-industrial complex. In the FRG, for instance, *there could be a capitalism refraining from reckless nuclear superiority schemes (out of an urge for self-preservation), and confining itself to a 'moderate' arms production norm mainly involving conventional armaments and lending itself to political control.* It would counterbalance the US urge for world domination by West European interests, including those in the form of European military structures capable of easing and stabilising a situation and averting war. This kind of capitalism would tie in its security interests with a readiness for political, economic, scientific and technological cooperation with the socialist countries, and would finally rule out the policy of armed interventions in the Third World, by giving complete priority to neocolonialism, which is based on economic methods of domination. This would amount to great progress as compared with the extremely reactionary and militaristic policy scenarios, but it would still not be enough, in view of the task of securing mankind's survival, which urgently requires constructive and radical reforms based on cooperation.

That is why the working-class movement and the peace movement should show themselves to be forces continuously advancing the process of disarmament, democratisation, and creation of the conditions for coexistence based on cooperation. Every step along this road requires deeper and more complex influence on national and international social structures. While it originates in the political sphere, it must necessarily range over the economy as well.

This is a realistic prospect, but one that is not yet a hard fact. Capitalism can be compelled to a radical turnaround for the benefit of mankind most

probably, as the record shows, through acute and long struggle in the course of which opposite interests need to be reckoned with and powerful resistance surmounted.

¹ This aspect, incidentally, was not entirely ignored by the Marxist classics. It is dealt with, for instance in Engels's article 'Can Europe Disarm?'. See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Werke*, Vol. 22, pp. 369-399.

² This question is considered in G. Tsagolov's article 'The Locomotive of Militarism' in *WMR*, No. 4, 1987. — *Ed.*

³ See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 66.

⁴ Jörg Huffschmid, *Rüstungs — oder Sozialstaat*, Köln, 1981, S. 188 f.

⁵ See Lutz Maier, 'Das Monopolkapital und die Friedensfrage', in *IPW-Berichte*, 11/87, bes. S. 7.

⁶ Jörg Huffschmid, *Rüstungs — oder Sozialstaat*, a.a.O., S. 230.

⁷ See Herbert Mies's article 'War Is Alien to the Working Class' in *WMR*, No. 11, 1987.

Trust Among People

WMR's questions answered by cultural personalities from Britain, France and Japan.

We asked well-known cultural personalities — British writer, actor and film maker **Peter Ustinov**, French composer **Michel Legrand** and Japanese writer **Kenzaburo Oë** — to speak about the role of the preservation and consolidation of peace, a problem of unparalleled importance today. They were asked the following questions:

1. What troubles you most in today's world? What gives you ground for optimism and hope?
2. What is the place and role, actual or potential, of literature and arts in working towards a better world, a world without wars? What is your duty as a cultural figure?
3. How, in your opinion, can the public contribute to the building of a nuclear-free, non-violent world?

Below are the answers we received.

Peter Ustinov
writer, film maker and actor

1. My greatest concern is how to establish mutual understanding and trust among people. After all this is tantamount to preserving life itself and civilisation on earth. Military threat in the nuclear age is incomparable with any other threat there has ever been in the past. That is why I think that whoever uses the atomic or nuclear bomb first will make the people who were hanged in Nuremberg look like juvenile delinquents or even naughty children. And this moral factor is inseparable from politics. After all moral laws are higher than political laws, to my mind.

At present we need most of all tolerance towards the opposite socio-political system, its traditions and values. When people defend with excessive zeal things of their own, especially to the detriment of things common to all mankind, they risk losing not only the former but even the latter. In other words, one can lose everything because of a little thing. This is not to say that one should accept unquestioningly whatever the opponent has. One should question things. If I teach my children anything it is not 'do as I do'. Why should one act blindly or mindlessly? Question everything, make up your own mind and if you think it's wrong tell me because then it is open to discussion. This ABC of human communication should be applied to international relations.

We are still in the grip of conditioned reflexes thrust on us by the press, by the media in general, dominated by old stereotypes without our being aware of it. Is it reasonable to demand either capitalism or socialism? Why not both in peaceful coexistence? I think the more different ideas there are in the world the richer it is. I don't see any cause for a military contention between capitalism and socialism. I think every nation has the right to make its own choice. Because it is quite normal for a country which is trying to struggle out of misery to be very far to the left. And it is quite normal for a country which is extremely rich to be a capitalist country. Life itself rather than the bomb will show what society is better.

I am an optimist and I'll tell you why later.

2. Literature and arts make our life and ideas of it more diversified and richer. They also help people to understand each other better. And this takes care of it. People in arts have done a great deal to bring harmony into human relations at most diverse levels and in different dimensions and yet the untapped potential is truly big. At Issyk Kul I had another chance to see that the writer's duty is to awaken a feeling of mutual trust among nations. I mean not only by writing books but by coming into contact, exchanging opinions and views.

3. To make the world safer, people should be kinder. I think the task is feasible, otherwise I would not have been among the participants in the writers' meeting at the shores of Issyk Kul or of the Moscow forum 'For a Nuclear-Free World, for the Survival of Humanity'. Such meetings, especially like the latter forum, make you feel bound in a common interest and concern in humanity.

To be able to hear and be heard is what we need so much and what I wish all of us. The process of learning amounts to the process of cross-fertilisation. By coming to know each other better and drawing closer together we gain confidence and trust, and public opinion becomes a material force. This path leads to a non-violent world. That is why I find the experience of social contacts at international meetings of men of letters, arts and science highly interesting and useful. But no miracles can be expected to come out of this. People in Russia are very good at marinating cucumbers, mushrooms and herrings. You know perfectly well the value of leaving it for a while and then coming back to it, and it tastes delicious. Something like that happens with the results of meetings: the best things that come out of forums like that come out very much later. In other words, they have to marinate. Peace should be nurtured.

Michel Legrand
composer, conductor, singer and pianist

1. The most disturbing thing is to see people kill each other. It is unnatural and nevertheless keeps going on in different parts of the globe. Some may be lulled by the definition 'a local conflict', not me though: war always spells death, bloodshed and tribulation.

It is hard to reconcile oneself to the idea that nuclear weapons, which are unparalleled in strength, continue to threaten mankind like the sword of Damocles. What gives hope, however, is that the realisation of this threat, of the murderous military might should eventually encourage all people to put an end to our drifting towards a catastrophe. I hope very much that as soon as mankind, every one of us, becomes aware of the realities of the nuclear age the calamity will be averted. After all, the warmongers and those who cash in on the arms race are in the minority. But they'd better be the first to realise the inadmissibility of nuclear war. Can they hope to be able to sit out a nuclear holocaust in impregnable bunkers? I don't think that the bosses of the military-industrial complex can be so naïve.

I believe in a better future and look ahead with optimism. And it is not because I view things through rose-coloured spectacles — I think I cannot be accused of that — but because I am sure of the constructive power of the human mind.

2. This can hardly have anything to do with one's occupation: as a composer, I want harmony not only in music but also in life. I am absolutely convinced that arts and literature can and should — and this is one of their aims! — make the people and the world we live in better. Who, if not us, should enlighten people's hearts, foster kindness and eradicate vileness.

3. To begin with, I believe there is no international problem that cannot be settled by peaceful means without conflicts. This is my profound personal conviction. Mankind is reasonable enough to cope with any moot problem whatsoever. To come to a just settlement, it is necessary to shed biased opinions, old stereotypes and the hostility complex. There is only one type of bias that I like — it is when people and nations are friendly to each other. This has, by and large, been wishful thinking so far and hardly a universal law of relationships. But it can be that tomorrow if we pool our efforts. It is within the powers of all and everybody to make a contribution.

Yes, the world is full of contradictions. But this is by no means the cause to engage in mutual destruction. Instead of taking up arms and drawing a bead on the 'enemy', we should get together and think in earnest what steps to take. We should look inside and outside of ourselves and see the realities of our age.

Kenzaburo Oë
writer

1. To begin with, like most people on earth, I am worried about the possibility of a nuclear catastrophe. As a citizen and a human being I am

deeply concerned about it. There are enormous stockpiles of nuclear weapons, whereas, let it be recalled, the Little Boy (this is how the Americans referred to the bomb dropped on Hiroshima. — *Ed.*) was enough to kill thousands or mutilate many others for years to come. I mean here the Japanese *hibakushi* who survived the dropping of the A-bomb in August 1945.

To tell you the truth, I am deeply pessimistic about the future. It is extremely important today not to delude oneself nor rely on anybody nor let oneself be carried along by the tide of life. As you see, I am not inclined to be beatific but I am not a fatalist either. I trust that developments can and should be turned for the better.

2. I'd say that literature and art have a decisive role to play in improving the world and defending the supreme gift — life on earth. Writings and artistic images are powerful instruments. As for the topic, I have been writing about Hiroshima for 25 years now. My book *Hiroshima Notes*² deals with Hiroshima survivors. When I began writing the book I wanted to speak about solidarity among people: we all should be united and at one in opposing evil. To this day I remain faithful to this burning issue.

3. The role of the public is multiple when it is a matter of making the world a safer place to live in. From my personal experience I can say that many things are of great help — books, demonstrations, international forums of progressive anti-war forces.

And there is one more thing — never despair even if something does not come out right. I personally, apart from writing books in which I call upon the readers to be vigilant and to make active efforts (what our tomorrow is like depends on what we do today), try to be closer to my young compatriots, helping them to get a full picture of the realities of the nuclear age. I am gratified to say that gradually, little by little, the young people are creating a new situation of intolerance of the nuclear arsenals and of the pro-American militarist policy pursued by our government.

In fact the young people are taking up the struggle of the *hibakushi* who insist on the abolition of nuclear arsenals not only around Japan but throughout the world. They demand this from Tokyo but the conservative government turns a deaf ear to these demands. But morally speaking, they have a very strong impact on public opinion. It is only natural, as the *hibakushi* are a living reproach for nuclear deterrence policy. As years go by there remain ever fewer survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is the duty of our conscience to raise the voice of protest against new wars and to double our efforts in resisting the forces of confrontation and war.

It is of paramount importance to remember that the threat of a nuclear conflict is a global problem and its solution cannot be restricted by national boundaries. Mutual efforts and close international cooperation are called for in this, like in any other cause. You may wonder what we do for the purpose. We take part in international meetings, both bilateral and multilateral, and organise peace marches to other countries. For example, I went to the USA to organise the Hiroshima Day there. The symbolic bell of Hiroshima should sound all over the globe so that the tragedy is not repeated.

¹ For details about the Issyk Kul Forum see Federico Mayor Zaragoza, 'Signposts for the Future', *WMR*, No. 1, 1988. — *Ed.*

² The book was published in 1963. — *Ed.*

Freedom From Nuclear Weapons

Wigberto E. Tanada — Senator,
Republic of the Philippines

AFTER more than 300 years of Spanish colonial rule, we were the first in Asia to proclaim an independence in 1898, but the first Republic was short-lived. At the end of the American-Spanish War (1898-1904), Spain ceded us to the United States for \$20 million, but not without the Filipinos declaring war against the imperialist United States of America.

To the USA, as later events will show, the Philippines was congenial, convenient and strategic for their economic and political expansion through militarist policies. We were taught English, western liberal democracy, popular elections and free enterprise. In 1934, the USA granted us autonomous rule, and in 1946 we again proclaimed a Republic.

Times have changed for Filipinos since then. Last year, after the overthrow of the US-backed dictatorship, a new Constitution was drafted and overwhelmingly ratified.

This brief historical summary is not complete if we do not mention that after World War II, our country was among some fifty countries who helped draft the great Charter of the United Nations. This had a logic of its own: we had known the scourges of war — one million of our people died in the war against Japan — and we can imagine the grim consequences of nuclear disaster.

Our new Constitution declares the principles of democracy and peace: the sovereignty of the people, the renunciation of war as an instrument of national policy, the conduct and pursuit of an independent foreign policy. It is anti-war and anti-nuclear weapons. Section 8, Article II of the Constitution (and we are especially proud of this provision) states:

"The Philippines, consistent with the national interest, adopts and pursues a policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in its territory."

Our country, under the new Constitution, in the 42nd UN General Assembly (1987), voted in favour of 39 resolutions on disarmament which include a resolution to establish a nuclear weapons-free zone in Southeast Asia.

When I asked my father, a former Senator,¹ what Bill he thought I should file first, his answer was accompanied by a smile.

"There are many complex issues you will bear. Are you prepared to

Wigberto E. Tanada, born 1935, studied at the Ateneo de Manila, finished law at the Manuel L. Quezon University (Philippines) and graduated with a master's degree in law from Harvard University (USA). He was elected Senator in 1987 and now chairs two Senate Committees; he is also a prominent figure in the New Patriotic Alliance (BAYAN).

legislate the enforcement of the policy of freedom from nuclear weapons in the Constitution?" he asked.

And now I can say with satisfaction that this year's First Session of the Senate approved Senate Bill 413 which I had helped to draft and which, when enacted into law, will be known as the 'Freedom From Nuclear Weapons Act'. It will seek to enforce, through a Nuclear Weapons Monitoring Commission, the policy of freedom from nuclear weapons provided for in the Constitution. The proposed law prohibits any person from bringing to Philippine territory, whether in transit or for unloading therein, any nuclear weapons or any nuclear parts or components thereof, and so forth.

The Bill was approved by 19 of the 23 Senators last June 6, 1988, and is now before the House of Representatives. Its overwhelming approval by the Senate shows convincingly that times are really changing. Now the US authorities must realise that they can no longer treat us the way they did in the past. Up to this day, our 'special friends' — the Americans — refuse to confirm or deny the presence of their nuclear weapons on Philippine soil, even though this is in breach of the new Constitution. The 'special relationship' is special only for the USA.

My stand on US military bases, and here I am not speaking for the Philippine Government, had evolved long before I became a Senator: they need to be fully removed from our country. After the new Constitution was ratified in 1987, we agreed that they would remain until the year 1991. But now I have updated my stand. I believe that at present we must insist on a correct reading of the provision, which is to help make us a nuclear weapons-free zone.

There are forces, however, which support an extension of the treaty on bases. First and foremost, they include some multinational corporations, which derive great financial advantages from the US military presence, and some sectors of the ruling economic free enterprise élite. The USA will be doing everything possible to maintain the *status quo*. One example is the campaign of pressure on the media to influence the people of my country. Legislators, government officials, youth leaders as well as prominent intellectuals have been invited to the USA, with all the travel expenses being paid for. The US Embassy's staff are particularly active. They go to different parts of our country and meet with the public, creating a semblance of care for the Philippines.

Washington is carrying out both indirect and direct acts which are subversive in character. Just a week after the presentation in the Senate of the Bill to turn the Philippines, by constitutional mandate, into a nuclear weapons-free zone, there was an abortive coup against the government of President Corazon C. Aquino. Simultaneously, American legislators offered to help us in implementing our programme for economic revival, through what they termed a 'mini-Marshall Plan'. Suspicious, we told the United States that we are not trading in our sovereignty and independence.

Some people think that the bases assist our economic development. These have been on our soil for forty years now. Some even assert that they have pushed our progress, helping to strengthen our relationship with the United States. But now ever more Filipinos see that this is not so. The

US bases do not assist us; on the contrary, they hamper our independent economic and political development. We incur huge social costs because of them. The bases account for much of growing prostitution, contraband, drug addiction and narcotics trafficking in our land — phenomena which humiliate our women and corrupt the youth.

There is another major consideration. Though the Philippines won independence over 40 years ago, in many fields we are not sovereign yet. Take the economy. The Philippines is rich in natural resources and popular talent, but why are there so many poor people in the country? Based on many studies and research, we have concluded that the answer is because of the aftermath of colonialism, and at the present time because of neocolonialism. Foreign companies dominate our economy, which means that they are able also to influence politics to a certain degree. Hence, the urgent need to fight for an end to the US military bases. We believe that *the US bases are the most potent instruments of colonialism and neocolonialism*. So long as they exist in the Philippines, Washington will be able to interfere in our economy and politics.

Ever more Filipinos now realise this. The anti-bases movement keeps growing; admittedly, not all fully understand the need to get rid of them. But we believe that if we succeed in putting a strong case for this, the masses will join our drive.

In our talks with the USA, we realise that we are dealing with a superpower. But moral and legal right is on our side. Though we can't physically expel the Americans, we can tell the world that we have a Constitution and laws and that our actions are legitimate. We are taking the Pentagon to the court of international public opinion. We also want Americans to know the exploitative role their government plays in the Philippines.

If the bases are withdrawn, we initially shall of course incur certain temporary economic losses. A transitional period will occur in developing the bases. Studies on conversion of the base communities' economy are presently underway. If the bases, now with airports, army barracks and so on — are handed over to the Filipinos, in the end we shall gain. For these are sizeable tracts of land. In particular, Clark Field Air Base initially occupied 53,000 hectares — almost the size of, if not bigger than, Singapore. Many Filipino peasants have no land. We have now enacted a law on agrarian reform. Even if only 60 per cent of the bases' areas are suitable for farming, this means 30,000 hectares which we can distribute on an individual or collective basis to those who have no land at all and start a cooperative movement here.

This also applies to the naval base at Subic Bay. It straddles 15,000 hectares, including fish-rich waters which are barred to our fishermen. The base has facilities usable for our economy: shipbuilding and repair yards, and the equipment for handling ocean-going ships. Consumer-goods plants, among others, could also be set up in the area. In short, the Philippines would obviously benefit. Thailand had a number of military bases dismantled, and the country is now actually on the up-trend. The same holds true for Singapore. They removed all foreign bases and the

Republic is now forging ahead. Therefore, I am confident that the Philippines will succeed no less.

We do not wish our country to be the first to be attacked in a nuclear confrontation between the two superpowers. For the same reason, we do not wish our territory to be used to launch a foreign government's nuclear attack against any state. For this reason, it is necessary to turn Southeast Asia into a nuclear weapons-free zone and to create conditions for fruitful international cooperation.

In a Forum on Security Issues in Asia Pacific, we proposed the establishment in the Philippines of a Nuclear Risk Reduction Centre for Southeast Asia. The Centre can be managed by Filipino, Soviet and American personnel and technicians from peace councils and movements and other non-government organisations. Such a Centre can help institute and develop nuclear risk crisis management, and formulate confidence-building measures as well as conduct educational campaigns on the dangers of nuclear weapons.

A much more comprehensive framework to the issue of security for all nations — not just for the superpowers, but also other countries including almost powerless countries in the poorest, debt-ridden Third World states — must yet develop. Such a concept may benefit from acknowledging the contribution that new and creative pro-humanity and pro-life thinking in the socio-cultural, political and economic spheres could generate collective efforts to bring about development and not mass destruction. The Gorbachov-Reagan Summit to confirm agreements to eliminate intermediate nuclear missiles gives meaning to initiatives for a nuclear weapons-free Southeast Asia, a nuclear weapons-free world.

Having been convinced that a spiritual, humanist cooperation in the application of science and technology is far more reasonable and rational than alienation and distrust, nations can together address the problems of food and health, ecology, degenerating qualities of life, widespread poverty due to great debt burdens.

Indeed, mankind's highest obligation — the affirmation of life — must bind us all in solidarity. In the Philippines today, there are more than 10 million people living in many communities who have declared their provinces, cities, towns and villages and communities nuclear weapons-free zones. In the deliberations of the Senate on Senate Bill 413, we adverted to the need to mobilise and educate the people on the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Aware of the dangers of nuclear melt-down accidents, our government has decided not to operate an extremely expensive nuclear thermal plant.

Disarmament and development: these concepts are interrelated. Because of the arms race, more money goes to arms stockpiling, arms development and sophistication rather than to construction of the infrastructure of peace and the better well-being of peoples and nations.

Let us consider the following facts:

— In infant mortality rate, the US ranks 14th in the world while the USSR ranks 51st. The budget of the US Air Force is larger than the total educational budget for 1.2 billion children in Africa, Latin America and Asia, excluding Japan.

— The USSR in one year spends more on military defence than what the governments of all the developing countries spend for education and health care for 3.6 billion children.

— There is one soldier per 43 persons in the world but only one physician for 1,030 persons in the world.

— Since 1945 and up to 1986, there were 120 wars with four times as many deaths since World War II than before it.

— From studies of fatalities, the figures show that at present, more civilians die than soldiers. This is because wars are now more life-threatening for non-combatants than for those directly involved in fighting the war.

— Since 1945, wars have been fought exclusively in the Third World.

— Almost \$900 billion are used in global arms spending. Every minute in 1986, the world was spending \$1.7 million for the arms race, swallowing up 6 per cent of the global gross national product (GNP). In 1985, the expense amounted to \$800 billion, and since 1960 to 1986, the accumulated arms spending reached \$14 trillion.²

The struggle against the arms race is a long process; we need to move forward step by step. Reagan and Gorbachov have indicated to use the path towards denuclearisation, disarmament and, finally, to world peace. We are confident that we can make a worthy contribution to this effort through a Philippines that is nuclear weapons-free and without foreign military bases, forces and facilities as provided for in our Constitution.

In a nuclear arms race, there are indeed no winners, there can only be losers, and the losers can only be mankind itself and its homeland, earth. In a nuclear holocaust, even death will lose its human meaning.

The human meaning is in Life, and in Peace alone can the life of humanity be affirmed and the humanity of life celebrated.

¹ Lorenzo M. Tanada, an outstanding nationalist and civil libertarian of the Philippines; he ran for Vice-President in 1957.

² From *World Military and Social Expenditures*, 1986, US Army Central Agency.

First-Hand Information

Bank Account Opened

The formation of an International Foundation for the Survival and Development of Humanity was announced in Moscow. Washington and Stockholm earlier this year. Some of our readers want to know more about this organisation. *WMR* editors asked Rolf Bjornerstedt, the Foundation's executive director and a well-known Swedish scientist and public figure, to profile that organisation.

THE idea was proposed by Soviet and American scientists at the International Forum for a Nuclear-Free World and Human Survival held in Moscow in February 1987.

A Committee formed at the Moscow Forum got down to preparatory work and conducted three meetings. At its constituent session in mid-January 1988 the Foundation passed resolutions on organisational problems and endorsed guidelines for its activity. The purpose of the Foundation will be to make grants for innovative projects aimed at international security and disarmament, development (including the Third World and humankind as a whole) and environmental protection. The Foundation will sponsor such projects, contract national and international organisations to carry them out and also encourage the more stimulating ideas suggested by others.

Accounts have been opened in three Soviet banks for Soviet citizens wishing to help finance the Foundation's activity. It is the first international private foundation to be based in the Soviet Union (the Soviet Council of Ministers had to pass a special decree to sanction the Foundation as an independent entity operating under Soviet law). The American Academy of Arts and Sciences in Boston is to be our treasurer in the US. The well-known American industrialist Armand Hammer has so far made the biggest donation of \$1,000,000. We hope that the Foundation will have considerable financial possibilities.

Our Board of Directors includes scientists, public and cultural figures, and representatives of the clergy from many countries. For example, among the American and Soviet board members are the president of the Eisenhower World Affairs Institute, Susan Eisenhower; Armand Hammer, chair of Occidental Petroleum; Robert S. McNamara, Academicians Dimitri Likhachov and Andrei Sakharov, Metropolitan Pitirim, Jose Goldemberg of Brazil, V. Pamalingaswami of India and Heinz Stiller of the GDR. Other board members come from Sweden, West Germany, Italy, Spain, Great Britain, Canada, Israel, Bulgaria and other countries. Board sessions will be held once or twice a year, with regular working contacts to be maintained through telecommunications.

Routine work is to be done by the Executive Committee of the Board, which consists of eleven people, with Academician Yevgeny Velikhov (USSR) acting as chair, and Jerome B. Wiesner, American scientist, as his deputy. The Foundation, headquartered in Moscow will open branches in Washington and Stockholm. The staff, which will be international, small and not permanent, is now being formed. I have been living in the Soviet capital, which I consider my second home now, since last November, concerning myself with the affairs of the Foundation and studying Russian. We have already worked out the Foundation's statute norms, main directions of work and criteria for grants and are tackling other organisational problems. It is, in fact, now that we are beginning our practical work.

In my view, the establishment of the Foundation was prompted by two things. First, the problems we are going to address are of exceptional importance and highly topical. Our organisation offers prospects for

broad cooperation for the sake of peace for all people regardless of their social affiliations or ideological convictions.

Second, perestroika in the USSR is bringing about major changes. Our organisation would have been unthinkable a few years ago whereas now it is a reality. We hope that the Foundation will become one of the aspects of perestroika and that openness will be the hallmark of its activity.

Cooperation of scientists, cultural personalities and businessmen in implementing Foundation programmes will make it possible to forge a closer link between practical politics and public opinion and to attract the attention of statesmen and specialists to urgent problems of our day with the aim of studying and resolving them speedily. Our goal is to influence governments and to foster in them the political will to take concrete steps. We intend to inform the public on all issues, paying special attention to young people and students.

The Foundation badly needs broad political support. We have received it from Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, who had a frank and substantive three-hour talk with the Foundation leaders after the constituent session. We are guaranteed success if the leaders of other states show similar concern for our organisation. But we are not over-optimistic: a long and arduous path lies ahead.

the socialist way

Party Conferences: Realistic Renewal

In late July 1988 the WMR Commission on Socialist Construction sponsored in Prague a round table attended by Professor **Mincho Draganov**, Doctor of Philosophy (Bulgaria); **Tibor Halai**, Candidate of Economics (Hungary); **Jan Smeral**, Candidate of History (USSR); and **Dragan Vukčević**, *Borba* foreign policy columnist (Yugoslavia). They were directly involved in the preparatory work, deliberations or coverage of the BCP, HSWP, CPSU and LCY conferences held this year. The round table participants exchanged their views on topical issues of practical and theoretical interest in connection with the decisions adopted at these party forums. We present an abridged record of the discussion.

Forum of Great Importance

First, a general question suggests itself. What prompted your parties to convene these conferences?

Halai. The HSWP convened its 2nd conference in May 1988 because we had to sum up recent broad discussion of major issues involved in future socialist development and to work out a concept of Hungarian society's advancement.

In the period directly preceding the 13th Congress of the HSWP (1985), favourable trends emerged in our economy. However, they were neither in-depth nor comprehensive. For various reasons, the congress failed to take this into account, and the economic and standard-of-living targets proved to be insufficiently substantiated.

There were no real opportunities even for maintaining living standards at the present level, let alone for raising them. Our foreign debt increased, real wages declined, and inflation kept growing. People began to lose confidence in their future, and the system of political institutions proved incapable of tackling newly emergent problems promptly. Hence the decline of confidence in the party and in government leaders. It was in fact a crisis.

Smeral. The USSR, too, was on the verge of a crisis. However, the fact that the CPSU was the initiator of radical change influenced the situation drastically and produced an upsurge of confidence in the party.

As to the concrete reasons why the 19th All-Union Conference of the CPSU was convened, I would single out three major factors.

First, there was the need to analyse the record of perestroika and see where it made progress and where it stalled and why.

Second, we had to answer the main question of how the revolutionary change beginning in our social fabric could be made irreversible. Having examined the situation, the CPSU Central Committee concluded that a radical economic reform and the policy of democratisation and glasnost were to be complemented by a far-reaching reform of our political system.

Third, we were to outline, on the basis of a broad exchange of views, a concrete programme of action for implementing the policy decisions of the 27th CPSU Congress.

Draganov. The special thing about the BCP Conference is that it did not mark a sharp turn in the development of socialism in Bulgaria. The course it followed was determined at the July 1987 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee. That was when we adopted our concept of further socialist construction in Bulgaria, a concept that followed up organically on the Programme for Building Developed Socialism approved by the 10th Congress of the BCP in 1977 and on the decision of the 13th Congress (1986) concerning a radical boost to economic growth. The 13th Congress did not articulate a policy of restructuring Bulgarian society, but the decisions it took marked a turning point.

The task of the BCP Conference was to take stock of the work performed and to outline the principal objectives of our restructuring.

Vukčević. Yugoslavia's Communists decided to convene a party

conference because they realised that a radical reform of our society's economic and political structure was in order. In recent years, both before and after the 13th Congress of the LCY (1986), many documents were approved to lead the country out of the crisis. However, the measures proposed were not always well thought out or their implementation consistent. For this reason Yugoslavia now faces unprecedented inflation, a big external and internal debt, unemployment, a gap between the growth rates of labour productivity and consumption, and major economic imbalances. In addition, contradictions were growing increasingly acute between the interests of constituent republics and provinces on the one hand and those of the federation on the other, between more and less economically developed areas, as well as between word and deed. In short, everything urged us to start changes throughout the social fabric without delay.

What Do We Expect of Socialism?

How did your parties respond to these problems? What modern concepts of socialist development have they put forward?

Smeral. A brief excursion into history is in order here. There was a time when socialism was associated with the belief that a society based on individualism would, sooner or later, exhaust its potential, and that it was to be replaced by a society based on collectivist principles. However, socialism was at the same time interpreted — particularly by Lenin — not as the absolute negation but as the development of the entire positive heritage of civilisation and culture. Equally important was the idea that socialism was not a boon to be handed down to people from on high, that it could emerge and develop only as a vibrantly creative effort of the masses. Unfortunately, this idea was not understood properly, and a dogmatic, primitive and vulgar interpretation prevailed. The fact that the democratic principles of socialism were underrated produced particularly painful effects: after all, democracy is not only an end, it is also a means essential to the advancement of socialism. That, I believe, is one of the basic reasons why the potential of socialism was not asserted fully.

I think we have understood now that socialism is a synthesis of collective and personal elements. We are yet to learn to combine factors of collectivism with the full-fledged development of the personality and all-round use of its creative potential. Therefore, the task is to enhance the humanistic principles of our system.

Draganov. The BCP Conference has articulated and specified four principles of our new socialist society.

First, the diversity and unity of socialist ownership and property. The previous model of socialism reflected the view that socialist property could only belong to the state as a whole. However, we have exhausted the potential of such property. Workers were obviously alienated from it and from the government institutions which controlled it completely. The BCP concluded that socialist property could take many forms and comprise cooperative, personal and other types. We also institutionalised joint ownership with capitalist companies and countries.

Second, the balance was shifted in favour of centralism in the current model of socialism, while we need a greater emphasis on the democratic aspect.

Third, self-government. The way the BCP sees socialist society, self-government is to be a key principle underlying its functioning on the basis of effective democracy. At the same time, we believe that self-government should be practised in dialectical unity with centralism.

Fourth, the conference acknowledged the need to introduce radical changes into the relations the BCP maintained with government bodies, self-governing entities and civic organisations. The objective is to free the party from tackling the managerial tasks beyond its terms of reference. The party is to pursue its objectives through its members, through its personnel policy and through its educational and ideological work.

Halai. The HSWP Conference set in motion the process of implementing the programme for the renewal of Hungarian society, for economic development and an improved political system.

Over the past three decades, the Hungarian economy has scored historic victories. This means that the socio-economic concept the HSWP worked out after the tragic lessons of 1956 was, on the whole, right. However, today's difficulties are largely due to the inadequate assessment by the party of current trends at home and abroad.

First and foremost, we must resolve the problems of our considerable foreign debt (\$17 billion) and domestic imbalances.

Correcting the outdated manufacturing and commodity structure of our industry is another priority task. This difficulty is compounded by the need to 'authorise', at least temporarily, a certain level of unemployment.

There is also the inflation which, despite all our efforts, keeps growing.

The so-called market problem can be regarded as an urgent issue too. We hold that, combined with centralised planning, effective commodity-money relations are to diversify the forms of economic management.

What else can enable Hungarian society to move ahead with confidence? We think it imperative to suggest a fundamentally new definition of 'socialist property'. The dominant role of public property we proclaimed previously is being exercised within a multi-sectoral economy.

Furthermore, economic and social advancement is directly dependent on the state of our political system. Its reform is a major task of Hungary's socialist development. We do not question the party's leading role. It is equally clear, however, that the party must give up many functions which are alien to it. This calls for an effort to perfect democracy within the party and for a reappraisal of the concept of democratic centralism.

By way of a summary, let me say that we are yet to complete our work on an updated concept of socialism.

Vukčević. The foundations underlying the concept of a distinctly Yugoslav socialist society were laid at the 7th Congress of the LCY in 1958 and are reflected in our Party Programme. Regrettably, though, some of its provisions remain unrealised to this day. We have been marking time, and now the implementation of radical economic reforms is made more difficult by the fact that Yugoslavia is lagging behind the industrially developed countries of the West and by the growth of nationalism (witness

the situation in the Kosovo Autonomous Republic).

In addition, a crisis has set in in several socialist nations, although its severity differs from country to country. I think this crisis has been with us since the very birth of socialism. And so today we need a special kind of political wisdom to lead our countries out of their present state.

Smeral. I think this formula is too rigid. We in the USSR do not ascribe crisis-producing phenomena to the emergence of socialism. We blame them on its subsequent deformation. Things went differently in other countries which, from the outset, largely adopted the Soviet concept of socialism as it existed in the 1920s and 1930s. True, one can find germs of a crisis in any situation at all. But they produce a crisis only if they are not identified and overcome in time. This is something we are yet to study and analyse.

Vukčević. So we differ on this point. I agree that there are many things we are yet to ponder and study deeply. But, to return to our question. Many people in Yugoslavia expected the party conference to approve drastic measures. It decided to reorient the country towards a market economy with public ownership and a stronger role of socialist self-government. We must grant our factories and concerns greater economic rights and opportunities and reduce the administrative apparatus at all levels.

The conference also considered the question of improving the political system. The steps suggested include stronger rule of law and the development of socialist democracy.

Of course, the party dealt with its internal problems too. The conference stressed that democratisation within the party should be stepped up, that we should add fresh blood to LCY ranks, strengthen our unity and enhance the guiding ideological and political role of our League in Yugoslav society.

The question is whether we Communists can accomplish the tasks that have been set. Some party members fear that, like decisions of the 13th Congress, they will not be fulfilled properly. The decisive part is to be played by the LCY leadership which has assumed the blame for the present situation. Should it again fail to ensure compliance with the decisions adopted, an extraordinary party congress will be convened.

The Common and the Diverse

Can one identify common elements in the approach of the fraternal parties to the essence of the modern concepts of socialist development?

Halai. Apparently, the thrust of our reforms is the same: they are to make continued and successful development of socialism possible.

Smeral. In the past, mechanistic attempts to promote a uniform view of socialism proved quite harmful, and so we now particularly stress the specifics of each individual country, and that is as it should be. But I think that we have a great deal more in common than might appear at first glance. However, no one has the right to tell others what to regard as common. Only life and practical work can be the judge.

Draganov. We all realise that restructuring is an objective necessity. We are also aware that it can only be tackled in an integral way. After all, there have been repeated and serious attempts at accelerating the development of socialism in our countries. But we failed to carry them through — first, because we looked for the key to all our problems in the economic sphere only and second, because we were not attentive enough to one another's experience.

The integral nature of the restructuring effort means that the fraternal countries and parties undertake it jointly but in different ways, working out their own concepts of development on a common Marxist-Leninist basis.

Does this imply the existence of a 'general model' of socialism, or is it more correct to believe that each country has its distinctive model?

Smeral. We must reject categorically the simplistic interpretation of the 'socialist model' as something mandatory for all, immutable and approved by a 'higher authority'. But I think this phrase is quite acceptable as a working term denoting the totality of certain features of socialist society at different stages of its development.

Draganov. The BCP speaks in its documents about the need to devise a general model of socialism which is to pay due attention to new historical realities and improve their understanding. In other words, this model is yet to be worked out. We hold that a general model is one thing and common features are another. The system of capitalism in Japan differs from that in the United States. But common features of capitalism are present in both.

Our documents stipulate that the creation of socialist models in individual countries will eventually help to create a common ideal. But we are far from trying to impose on anyone our own views of what socialism should be like in every country or our vision of its general model.

Can we regard restructuring as a general rule for all socialist countries?

Smeral. I would say we should be more cautious in using the words 'general rule'. Objective laws do exist, and the social sphere is no exception. But an oversimplified, primitive use of the term often discredits its meaning. A general rule does not imply uniformity. We in the USSR describe the process in question as perestroika. In Poland, they speak of socialist renewal. In the GDR, it is perfection of socialism. Other formulae of development have been mentioned at our round table too. While their essence is the same, all these processes display substantial and different distinctive aspects, and that is to be welcomed.

Still, I do not think we should shy away from the term 'general rule'. The important thing is to deduce general rules from reality, not abstract speculation. And, of course, they should not be used to impose one's views on others.

Draganov. The BCP thinks that restructuring is an opportunity for meeting socialist society's need to develop according to objective general rules.

Vukčević. I would like to emphasise that in reforming our political system, which is so far impeding Yugoslavia's economic development, we do not retreat an inch from socialist principles. On the contrary, the objective is to make our society more socialist. We do not believe that any sharp turns are necessary: we charted our path back in 1948. It is simply that we must accomplish the tasks we have before us.

Halai. One can indeed describe the processes currently under way in Hungary as a radical revolutionary turning point. I am referring above all to the turn towards the Leninist concept of socialist construction. We must break with the Stalinist interpretation of socialism.

Draganov. In my view, the restructuring effort in Bulgaria is absolutely imperative. In principle, we could have delayed our drive to improve socialism. But the result would have been different. The socialist countries would have become a secondary, minor force on the international scene.

For a New Quality of Socialism

Smeral. Whatever the character of the processes now gaining ground in our countries, they are largely a reflection of the theoretical heritage left to us by Marx, Engels and Lenin — although, of course, we adapt it to today's realities and reappraise the experience gained at all stages of our development.

Vukčević. True, much of what we are acting on now can be found in the classics. But I do not think we should simply project these ideas onto current realities: we should develop them to fit the new situation.

Before the revolution, Lenin worked on the issue of an effective and democratic system of popular representation, of government by the people under socialism. For obvious reasons, this system could not be tested fully in the wake of the October Revolution. But we know Lenin's main ideas on this score, and we know his attitude to bureaucracy. But should we say that in our current efforts to reduce the bureaucratic apparatus we merely follow Lenin's bequests? Of course not. Bureaucracy has changed, and so have the means of combating it. Besides, there is the example of the rational way in which the West is fighting red tape. This modern experience is obviously useful to us, and we should not be afraid of emulating a positive Western example. Lenin never denied the significance of such examples for socialist construction.

Smeral. The awareness of the need to impart a new quality to socialism is, I think, central to our modern concept of socialist development. In other words, we should assert comprehensively its humanistic essence and make it really consonant with the formula of 'socialism for man, not man for socialism'.

Halai. I believe we should also define the concept of socialist pluralism.

The HSWP regards political pluralism as freedom of opinion and even of platform but not of factions within the party. It means an opportunity for all sections of society to express their interests via this or that organisation.

Socialist pluralism can function and serve to enhance democracy under a one-party system. But the existence of such a system is not, in principle, an absolutely essential or the sole possible condition for the development of Hungarian society. Today, no other party can express the people's

interests as fully as the HSWP does — although the situation may be different some years hence.

Smeral. I think the meaning of the term 'socialist pluralism' will have to be considered further, with due regard for the practical experience we are accumulating. Obviously, socialist pluralism should not only recognise the legitimacy of different interests and views but also provide relevant mechanisms for their expression. Here, glasnost is of particular importance as an integral part of socialist democracy.

As to the question of whether to have a one-party or a multi-party system, the record shows that it is tackled in different ways, depending on a given country's historical traditions and distinctive conditions. Perestroika in the USSR shows that a one-party system, too, has an enormous democratic potential. The openness and dynamism of the 19th party conference and the opportunities it offered for comparing different views are ample evidence of this.

Draganov. The term 'political pluralism' does occur in BCP documents, but it is for the social and political scientists to reveal what it actually means. In principle, every country is entitled to interpret it in its own way.

For example, we all speak about self-government as a form in which socialist society functions, but it functions in different ways. Self-government in Yugoslavia is different from self-government in Bulgaria. We also differ in our approach to the question of ownership and to other issues.

Smeral. Every society needs a guiding force to chart the avenues of growth and devise a strategy for attaining this society's objectives. Therefore, the party should not simply reflect the existing interests automatically (many of them are transient) but rather shape them so that they would be consonant with our ultimate goal. I think we should invariably rely above all on persuasion and use the 'feedback' mechanism. At times, the masses are not ready to accept this or that idea. In this case, one must not hurry or apply pressure. One should beat a temporary retreat and explain the meaning of what we are suggesting. Society should be made to see things as they really are, to grasp the need for resolving the problem in question.

Vukčević. I would like to note that we do not use the term 'the leading role of the party'. In our party documents we refer to its 'guiding role'. In principle, however, this role is secured by similar means — for example, through personnel policy (in which mistakes may occur).

Progressive change inevitably encounters the resistance of those who object to it.

Halai. Unfortunately, some people in Hungary blame the reform for negative development such as inflation or the difficulties in finding a job. But these do not result from our restructuring effort. Rather, they emerged because of the delay in the tackling of long-standing problems.

One cannot really draw a hard-and-fast line separating the advocates of reform from its opponents. Judging by what one hears, all Hungarians are ardent supporters of vigorous change. But, in fact, the sincerity of these

statements depends on how far-reaching our reforms are and on how consistently they are implemented. That is where differences surface and interests clash. Specific steps to effect the reforms also give rise to disagreement.

On the whole, however, the opponents of reform are not all that numerous in Hungary. I believe that even those whose real wages or salaries have temporarily declined are not in fact opposed to the renewal drive, although they take their difficulties with a heavy heart.

Vukčević. The current reform in Yugoslavia is often impeded by the fact that it is hard to make even the seemingly traditional principles of our society operate 'at capacity'. For example, we cannot always effectively apply the principle of democratic centralism. Yugoslavia is a federation of six republics, and there are as many republican LCY organisations, plus two provincial ones. Some of them accord priority to their local interests and, consequently, they are not very enthusiastic about acting on the decisions that pursue objectives of importance to the entire country and to the entire party but may impinge a bit on regional interests.

Smeral. There are few people in the USSR who oppose perestroika in principle and, with occasional exceptions, they do not attack it openly. But perestroika demands that everyone take a committed and vigorous stand and give up many stereotypes and many obsolete forms and methods of work. Not everyone is ready for this. A great deal will depend on how quickly people will feel the day-to-day, practical effects of the changes that have begun. Accelerating this process is what the decisions of the 19th party conferences are about.

The Guarantees of Success

Can one be sure that the decisions of party conferences, the restructuring effort will be implemented fully, without back-sliding?

Draganov. As far as political guarantees are concerned, in Bulgaria they are ensured by the party which is described in BCP documents as the motive force of reform.

Halai. In discussing the guarantees of reform we often cite what I would call extraneous factors. But the process of reform, the fact that it is under way, is important in itself. It means that a relapse into the old ways is hardly possible. And the involvement of the masses gives the reform an inner strength and makes it irreversible.

Draganov. I agree fully. One may, perhaps, say that these things are self-evident. But they are still valid. The Bulgarian people themselves are changing in the course of the reform, and this guarantees that the process will continue. The human factor is acquiring a new quality. And that is something the party should reckon with if it wants to keep in touch with the masses and if it sees the danger of arrogant attitudes: in the past, some party leaders maintained that they alone could guide the masses to a better future.

Another question arises in this connection. When we say that the reform is guaranteed by the party and by the people, does this perhaps

mean that we belittle the functions of the law, of factors inherent in the rule of law which has been proclaimed as the objective in several socialist countries?

Smeral. The effort to create a state based on rule of law which is to protect the rights of citizens from all forms of arbitrary action is one of the more effective ways of involving the people in perestroika and, consequently, a guarantee of its irreversibility.

Draganov. Essentially, it is not so much the question of creating a new legal system. After all, legislation does exist in the socialist countries. The problem is that these laws have not always been observed. And so we believe that we should begin by promoting our citizens' initiative within the existing legal framework.

Vukčević. An effective election system is also essential to the successful development of socialism, democracy, self-government and rule of law,

Smeral. I regard a clear-cut and legally protected delineation of party and government functions as particularly important. We have already embarked on this course. In the material sphere, the solution of the food problem is our foremost need. The sphere of administration must acquire the qualities of a service sector. Offices are not to issue orders to the economy but to service it.

Vukčević. We concluded that the managerial and administrative apparatus should be reduced substantially. In Serbia, this reduction has already been completed. It was not easy because we were dealing with people's lives. Nevertheless, we have cut the managerial staff by about 15 per cent, dismissing those officials whose work was in fact useless. Naturally, they were retrained for useful jobs. All of them are employed now.

Halai. We must extend social protection to our workers against the temporary decline. If we fail to protect people from the adverse effects of the reforms or to prepare them for possible losses, we may lose our allies and, eventually, everything.

There Will Be No Retreat From Restructuring

In the light of the subjects we are discussing what would you say about the dialectics of the national and the international?

Halai. The relationship between the international and the national is shaped by both common and distinctive interests of each country. The two aspects are interlinked, and one should not disrupt this unity by emphasising one at the expense of the other. The important thing is to look for a common approach on the basis of independence and with due regard for the general and the specific. I believe that much has changed radically in this sphere over the past three years.

Vukčević. Every socialist country indeed has its distinctive ways of tackling practical tasks, and this should be taken into consideration. But the search for common interests should help in the solution of specific problems.

Smeral. That is a very interesting idea. There is no contradiction between internationalism and independence. A fuller realisation of each country's interests, greater attention and respect for the experience of every fraternal party do not clash with the flourishing diversity of socialism. On the contrary, this combination is essential to the understanding that the socialist countries cannot cope with their problems if each, even the biggest, acts on its own.

Draganov. We hold that at the current stage, internationalism should be strengthened. It is one of the finest qualities of the world's socialist movement. But we should remember that the essence of internationalism also changes with the passage of time. And so we are to impart a new content to it.

Vukčević. Not only political figures but also the public should take part and follow developments in the sister countries. For example, public opinion in Yugoslavia supports perestroika in the Soviet Union. Its enormous potential lies in the fact that it enabled the world to really discover the USSR.

We have already decided that it was a mistake to believe that the socialist world could do without cooperation with countries of a different system. This prejudice has been rejected. Today, Europe and the world are breathing easier. This means that substantive changes have occurred, benefiting both the East and West, as well as the world at large. I am no idealist, and I realise that the strengthening of peace is a long and perhaps endless process. But we should do all we can to promote realism.

Smeral. We are looking for a more rational and more effective socialist road. Our enemies argue that this is a retreat, that socialism has failed the test of time. No, we reply, it is not a retreat. We simply seek to make socialism stronger. We may be lagging in some areas, but I am convinced that socialist renewal is the main avenue for tackling today's complex problems.

Keeping Alive The Spirit Of Innovation

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MONGOLIAN society now has to face some altogether new problems and these need to be tackled with an in-depth and complex approach. Our party has been quick to respond to these objective requirements. The 19th Congress of the MPRP in 1986 added depth and substance to the restructuring process, already begun in our society, by pointing to the spread of obsolete stereotypes in social practice and theoretical thinking and in the activity of some individuals and work collectives who have yet to see and understand the changes in the social life, and who have, for that reason, lost their capacity for innovation.

Causes of Stagnation Phenomena Self-Critically Brought Out

The MPRP's main task in solving the present problems is to identify the causes of the stagnation, to extirpate them boldly and master the new thinking. We often find now a mentality of passiveness and indifference produced by the administrative-command methods, the great dependence on the vagaries of the climate and age-old religious canons.

The urge to build up unnecessary stocks of technical equipment continues to prevail in the agrarian associations, so that most of their income is spent on buying machinery which is used inefficiently, so harming pastureland and livestock. It stands to reason that if farmers are to produce a lot of wool and take in a good crop, they have to keep working the year round, but the fact is that the old habits die hard and they work mainly in the spring and the autumn. The result is that farm output falls short of the potential.

Many new industries were started, the volume of social production increased markedly, and great changes took place in the social structure of Mongolian society in the 1960s and 1970s, but the upper echelons of administration were unable to work out the right way to direct the producer organisations, concentrating on sending 'down' diverse directives, rules and instructions, and demanding reports and other relays of information about the local state of affairs, and all that despite the fact that paperwork does not help to run an efficient economy.

The setting-up of more and more organisations and establishments and the inflation of their staffs resulted in the appearance of superfluous transmission points, a spread of bureaucracy, and an assumption that everything can be done by issuing yet another set of instructions. Some of these seemed designed to suit those who sought to defraud the state for their own benefit. Such practices fed a mentality which assumed that every sphere of society — economic, commercial and spiritual — could be run through super-centralised direction, and inevitably led to stagnation, ossified thinking and a rejection of new ideas.

Centralised administration is, of course, a necessity, but it should not develop on its own; it should develop in accordance with the need to improve the economy. That is why the MPRP has been working on a new economic mechanism on the assumption that "whereas direction and planning from above used somehow to work in the past — when capital investments and the scale of production were small, the industries few, and economic ties not as intricate and ramified as they are today — the situation is now altogether different".¹ The directives, instructions and rules hampering the development of socialist enterprise and the solution of social problems, merely producing bureaucratic barriers and red-tape, are now being reviewed and rescinded.

As the obsolete forms of economic administration and management are eliminated, so we must review some of the established theoretical tenets, such as the one-sided view of the subject of socialist property. We always assumed it to be the state and so used the term 'state property'.

Lenin spoke of 'state trusts', 'state factories and plants,' etc., but used

that definition during the transition period, when both public and private property existed side by side. This state of affairs subsequently underwent a radical change because private property, the antithesis of socialised property, was abolished, and it was assumed that the state was no longer required to act on behalf of the people, into whose hands all the property had been transferred. After all, 'people' and 'state' are concepts that are not identical, even under socialism.

Our theoretical interpretation of state property and its recognition as the sole form of the whole people's property in practice turned it into 'no-one's property'. But it is important that this property should be in use and at the disposal of the concrete work collectives. Indeed, it was a disregard for the people's role as the subject of public property relations, and the one-sided preference for state administrative institutions, that led to bureaucratic over-centralisation in running the economy and to its slower development.

In our country, the planning of every sector of the national economy, in particular, gradually became the paramount mandatory-command method in directing economic and social processes, so that no account was taken of the objective potentialities in the localities, and the grassroots initiatives and needs were ignored. Such a state of affairs cuts across Lenin's requirement for "more scope for independent local enterprise; more forces to the localities; more attention to their practical experience".² If the state of the national economy is to be radically and basically altered, ownership of the means of production should be juridically and economically separated from their possession as an object of economic management.

It is true that a start has now been made on planning from below, but the going is heavy, both in planning and in all the other processes of renewal.

The ingrained old habits and outdated mentality are the prime impediments.

Inert stereotyped thinking and dogmatism in theory are to some extent kept alive by the law of continuity in the development of social consciousness, and which is why, even as the social fabric is being renewed, the old notions of good and evil remain in the people's historical memory and are passed on from generation to generation, so that not everyone is capable of comprehending the new realities and restructuring their thinking. The momentum of the old mentality of contemplation, passiveness, putting one's trust in chance, etc., is manifest in the urge to avoid challenging problems, the neglect of the initiative and creativity of the masses, and a reluctance to solve pressing problems on the grounds of a shortage of resources, manpower, and time. They are even more strikingly evidenced by self-complacency, self-satisfaction with what has been done and, most importantly, estrangement from everything that is new and progressive.

New Approach to Theory

Set ways of thinking also have a deadening effect on theoretical ideas, paralysing them and adversely affecting social consciousness. The result is a kind of vicious circle. If this negative interaction is to be prevented, there must be a sustained and vigorous development of scientific thinking and the eradication of dogmatic theory. Mongolian society now needs a new

approach to the study of theoretical problems. The 19th Congress of the MPRP said that social science in the country had not yet gone beyond the mere propaganda of home truths, and it had yet to stop making abstract and schematic conclusions and copying domestic and international development trends in its analysis.

Consistent efforts to master Marxist-Leninist dialectics, and to abandon the habitual schemes into which new phenomena are fitted, are crucial to renewing our theoretical thinking. There is no one truth that applies to every case. According to Marxist dialectics truth is always concrete, which is why it is important that researchers should stop talking and writing about dialectics generally, and get down to bringing out the concrete dialectics of concrete phenomena.

If theoretical thinking is to be actively developed it is especially important for the public at large to display an interest and initiative in the study of theory. Hence *the task of developing a taste for theory generally, among practitioners in particular, along with the skill to draw from it rational elements for their immediate activity.*

When considering the conditions and causes of the 'stagnation' of thinking, we are not implying that everything in our society is outdated and that there is little new and advanced experience. Not at all. Sharp quantitative and qualitative changes in the country's development have taken place in the period of socialist construction, and it is this rapid growth that helps us gain a better understanding of the phenomena and processes which tend to slow down our further advance. The break-up of the old and the establishment of the new is a coherent process in which the two elements are dialectically interdependent. Life shows that the *new thinking tends to arise primarily in close connection with a solution of outstanding problems*, which is why it always has a critical edge. If we are to invigorate it, we need to remain realists, to keep thinking and to take care not to allow the old dogmatic tendencies to revive.

Solving problems at every level and in every sphere of public life calls for an ability to take a broad, long-term view of things, to put an end to the inert and harmful mentality of departmentalism and parochialism, which puts the interests of a given industry or outfit above those of the people and the work collectives. Among the imperatives in shaping the new thinking are the need to match word and deed, the ability to learn how to obtain and predict results and to have a critical and sober-minded attitude not only to our shortcomings and failings, but also to our greatest successes.

The new thinking is not a denial of everything in the past. The crux of it is a reappraisal of the past in the light of the present, which has produced challenging problems in technological, ecological, economic, scientific, aesthetic and social development. In other words, the new thinking means taking the broad view for the sake of the working man and woman, for the sake of those who create. But the new thinking cannot assert itself on its own, and in this context Jambyn Batmunkh, MPRP CC General Secretary, has said that "it takes painstaking work and unceasing effort to overcome the obsolete habits in living and thinking. It is a problem that will not be solved by fits and starts, or by superficial measures".³ *The ability to work with people should be at the heart of restructuring, and this means hearing*

people out, displaying concern for them, protecting them and expecting a great deal of them. Human beings are the starting point in eradicating the habitual stereotypes and asserting new thinking. The important thing is that everyone must be self-critical and keep increasing his or her knowledge, because what modern conditions require is above all a high standard of culture, and this implies continuous study and quest together with a capacity for self-improvement.

Talks and lectures alone will not help to restructure human mentality, nor are propaganda and agitation enough. Concrete practical deeds and multi-faceted, complex actions are required to bring about changes in public mentality and thinking: in *the economic sphere*, improving the relations of production and the economic mechanism; in *the social sphere*, all-round improvement of working conditions, everyday amenities and recreation facilities for the working people, and activation of the human factor; in *the ideological sphere*, a restructuring of style and method in ideological education in the spirit of the decisions of the MPRP's 19th Congress, its invigoration in all the party, state and public organisations, close links of ideological work to life and its vital tasks and problems, and an end to the negative practice of evading sharp issues; in *the socio-political sphere*, broader democracy, efforts to overcome bureaucratic practices, openness and development of criticism and self-criticism; in *the organisational sphere*, more efficient, constructive and systematic control and verification, reduction of staffs, enhancement of responsibility, scrupulous observance of legality, and tightening up of discipline and order; and in *cadre policy*, primarily a change in the thinking of leading functionaries.

All these efforts need to be combined, without any aspects being neglected. It is especially important in asserting the new thinking to give the utmost support to new ideas and deeds, to develop them in order to skilfully direct and coordinate the process of their formation. All that is borne out by the perestroika practices in the USSR and the restructuring in other socialist countries, including the Mongolian People's Republic.

¹ *Third Plenary Meeting, MPRP CC, Ulan Bator, 1987, p. 17.*

² *V. I. Lenin, Collected Works, Vol. 33, p. 29.*

³ *Jambyn Batmunh, MPRP CC Report to the MPRP 19th Congress, Ulan Bator, 1986, p. 71.*

What The Young Generation Lives For

Choi Ryong Hai — CC member, Workers' Party of Korea (WPK); CC Chair, Socialist Working Youth League of Korea (SWYLK)

THE people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are working steadfastly for a complete victory of socialism and the peaceful reunification of the country. At their head in the glorious cause of freedom and national prosperity is the Workers' Party of Korea, the guiding force of our revolution.

The Socialist Working Youth League of Korea is the WPK's political reserve, and a true follower, as is the younger generation as a whole. We see in the preservation of sovereignty and independence and in the achievements of socialist construction, the embodiment of a selfless effort by millions of our young people. Led by Comrade Kim Il Sung, the young patriots of Korea waged a long and bloody struggle against Japanese imperialism and won national independence. Our young people then became real masters of their own lives.

The Korean people's revolutionary cause, based on Marxism-Leninism and the *Juche* idea; has today entered a new phase which opens up the prospect of an early and complete triumph of socialism in our country. But conditions are still, as ever, very difficult. The US imperialists, occupying South Korea since 1945, have turned it into a colony, and a military-political bridgehead for aggression against the DPRK and other socialist states, thereby hindering national reunification, seriously complicating the building of socialism in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula, and endangering peace and security in Asia and worldwide.

Evidence of the US imperialists' aggressive plans is abundant. In the peninsula's south, for example, they have deployed over 1,000 units of nuclear weaponry and continue to increase launch capacity. They are bringing in more troops and carrying out large-scale manoeuvres. Recently, in conjunction with the puppet South Korean army, the Pentagon organised the Team Spirit exercise, aimed at preparing for a nuclear war.

But our people and youth do not want to see an uncontrollable nuclear conflict, which would destroy the fruits of peaceful work and pose a real threat to other countries, originated on their soil.

We know from experience the horrific consequences of war. The Korean people lived through nearly 40 years of brutal Japanese colonialism, and after liberation had to fight a three-year war, brought about by US imperialists, for independence, during which some 448,000 bombs were

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dropped on our land, and 8,700 enterprises, 7,775 cultural, scientific and medical establishments and 605,000 dwelling homes were destroyed. No less than 370,000 hectares of fertile agricultural land lay untilled. We still feel sorrow and bitterness at the partition of our country, and ten million families remain divided.

The DPRK's young people are deeply convinced that consolidating socialism is the only way to ensure national prosperity and a stable peace in Korea, which is why they devote all their energy to socialist construction, and to defending this eastern outpost of peace.

The Socialist Working Youth League of Korea is a mass political organisation of about four million. It fosters loyal builders of socialism and torchbearers of our great revolutionary cause, and actively engages in ideological and educational work among the young people, instilling in them revolutionary ideals. It organises them in order to tackle urgent tasks, such as the creation of a strong and independent national economy.

The 200-km railway project between Jasong and Hyesan, in the country's north, exemplifies our young people's ability to work with enthusiasm. It's a very difficult, large-scale project: the builders have to cut through steep mountains and erect bridges over numerous gorges and rivers.

Kim Song Ho's shock team is one of the fine performers there, working enterprisingly, using high-speed methods. Characteristically, these young people are undaunted by difficulties. In one of the tunnels, for example, a heavy slide of barren rock occurred on an almost completed section. What was to be done? Some experts suggested altering the direction of tunnelling, but this would have meant a loss of time, wasted labour, and disruption of the schedule. The youth team, finding innovative engineering solutions, eventually overcame the land-slide, the schedule was maintained and construction work moved on without delay.

Young people work valiantly wherever the party may call them, be it a hydro-electric plant site or a rice field, a coal mine or a fishing trawler. Undoubtedly, credit for this also goes to our league's primary organisations. They explain the party line, rally young people, and help disseminate progressive experience. Members of the cells pay much attention to improving their political competence.

Aware that socialism can only be built when there is great revolutionary enthusiasm and iron discipline, we seek to impart these qualities to every young person. The country's young generation is determined to fulfil its tasks as successfully and as quickly as our older brothers achieved the no less complex and noble objectives of the first years of socialist construction.

Today our citizens have much of what is needed for a full, happy life and shock work. The party and state care for everyone, and the young generation is paid particular attention. The state has assumed the bulk of spending on education. School and college students receive free clothing, textbooks and whatever they need for productive studies. The party has introduced a law on child care and upbringing, the strict implementation of which has meant that kindergartens and crèches have enough places for all our children of pre-school age, at no cost to their parents. The country

spends over 10,000 Won for each person, from birth to completion of higher school.' At the party's initiative, excellent recreation centres have been set up for young people, and extra cultural and sports facilities, as well as health and holiday homes, are now being built.

Such a policy is warmly welcomed by the young generation. They fully trust the CC WPK, answer by deed the care shown for them, and work assiduously and creatively to build a socialist society.

Our youth have another cherished goal: to secure peace in Korea and attain its peaceful reunification. The DPRK's young people identify with the struggle of their contemporaries in South Korea, where the anti-US and anti-fascist movement of the popular masses has recently intensified. Apart from ending the neocolonial US dominance, it is a movement for national dignity, sovereign rights, a democratisation of society and the country's reunification.

The US imperialists and the South Korean rulers have for decades arrogantly used the imaginary 'threat of an attack on the South' in order to justify the presence of nuclear weapons and US forces there, as well as the preservation of the fascist dictatorial regime. But our People's Republic, working for reunification, has never intended to attack South Korea. Realists on the other side of the demarcation line acknowledge this. It is obvious to them who is to blame for the instability on the Korean peninsula. It is US imperialism, which has turned South Korea into a large Far Eastern nuclear base.

Taking a stand against imperialist designs, and for national sovereignty, the young people of South Korea look with hope to the North where socialism is being built and where citizens themselves run the state. South Koreans sympathise with the peaceable policy of the WPK and our Republic's government and are joining the struggle for peaceful reunification.

The puppet South Korean authorities are preventing this dialogue between citizens. In June they deliberately wrecked a planned meeting of students from Seoul and Pyongyang. Over 50,000 South Korean policemen blocked the approaches to the border point at Punmanjom, and a delegation of South Korea's youth, as well as Western journalists accredited in Seoul, were unable to reach the place of talks, where DPRK students had awaited their contemporaries for many hours.

We shall always support the just demands of South Korea's democratic youth and population for an independent and peaceful reunification of our homeland through the combined efforts of our entire nation. The recent initiative of the DPRK government for a joint interparliamentary conference of North and South Korea merits special attention in this context. A letter setting out this proposal was conveyed to the South Korean side on July 21. It also was accompanied by a draft of a joint declaration on mutual non-aggression. The message stresses that neither side has benefited or would benefit from confrontation and war. A return to normalcy on the peninsula and the establishment of relations between the DPRK and South Korea is the top priority of the single Korean nation, the letter notes correctly. The persisting tension cannot contribute to the

successful holding of the 24th Olympic Games and the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students.

In the struggle for peace, the new generation of the Korean people devotes much attention to developing international solidarity with the boys and girls of socialist states, and with progressive world youth. The General Secretary of the CC WPK and President of the DPRK, Comrade Kim Il Sung, has pointed out: "In order to fulfil their crucial mission in the struggle against imperialism and for the construction of a new society, the progressive youth of the world should strengthen their international cohesion and militant solidarity." Fulfilling this instruction, our league now maintains constant links with over 400 organisations of their contemporaries in 160 countries and with many international and regional organisations, and is developing friendly cooperation with them. Wishing to make a more weighty contribution to advancing the worldwide movement of youth and students and to promote their maximum solidarity and cooperation in the fight for peace and social progress, the SWYLK came up with an initiative for holding the 13th World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang in 1989.

Interested democratic organisations in many countries, and also various international and regional bodies warmly supported and endorsed this initiative. And today, with a great sense of responsibility, our league, the students, and all young people of the DPRK are energetically preparing for a successful youth forum.

The large-scale construction of various social and cultural facilities is under way in the Republic's capital. These projects, being erected under Pyongyang's WPK-developed master plan, will undoubtedly help the world youth festival's success. No fewer than 260 large facilities will be made available to it, including a Young Pioneer Palace, a circus, a Grand Theatre, a youth theatre, a stadium for 150,000, hotels, an indoor sports complex for badminton and table tennis competitions, and a weightlifting hall. This complex is as big as a whole town. Pyongyang will soon be fully equipped to host this youth festival.

The youths and girls of our Republic are anxious to mark this significant event with labour achievements. We see an ever larger number of young workers who are fulfilling their production assignments ahead of time. Thus, the miners of the Kang So Coal Mining Complex are effectively mastering a new mine, producing hundreds of tons of coal daily over and above the plan. This is one of many such examples.

The preparation of a cultural programme for the festival is in full swing. A brass band of 2,000 musicians is rehearsing, the designs for gymnastic and artistic performances by 20,000 sportsmen in the stadium are being completed, and the theatres of Pyongyang have started producing revolutionary operas and plays together with a specially choreographed musical poem for 5,000 performers.

We are confident that the first World Festival of Youth and Students to be held in Asia will become a forum of friendship among young people of all countries. We hope that it will be a momentous event in strengthening the solidarity of the young generation and make a significant contribution to its anti-imperialist, anti-war and anti-nuclear struggle, and to peace.

With effective assistance from the party and government, our league is making every effort to ensure that the festival in Pyongyang justifies the hopes and wishes of young people everywhere and that it takes place, with their active participation, in a free and democratic atmosphere.

Led by the Workers' Party of Korea, the young people of the DPRK are determined to achieve an early victory of peace and socialism in Korea, and to work together with all progressive youth for a better future and a new, nuclear-free and just world.

¹ US\$1 = 0.91 Won, according to the current exchange rate. — Ed.

² Kim Il Sung, *May the Youth Become a Worthy Continuer of the Juche Revolutionary Cause*, Pyongyang, 1981, p. 17 (in Korean language).

the party

Commitment To Revolution Through Practice

Nguyen Dyk Tam — Political Bureau
member and CC Secretary Communist
Party of Vietnam

DELEGATES to the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (December 1986) noted the country's important achievements in building socialism but at the same time thoroughly analysed mistakes in the socio-economic sphere and frankly identified their main causes, namely, shortcomings in the party's ideological, organisational and cadre work. The Central Committee's political report to the Congress said self-critically that responsibility for them rested first of all with the Central Committee, the Political Bureau, the Secretariat and the Council of Ministers. There had been no timely and adequate replacement of men in the party's guiding core and the party leadership had fallen behind the changed situation.

The Congress formulated guidelines for Vietnamese Communists to rectify shortcomings and also set priority tasks: to update the way of thinking and style in party work, to make more exacting demands on the political, business and personal qualities of functionaries and all party members, to raise the role of primary organisations and to improve the quality of personnel in positions of leadership.

The need for renewal was brought about not just by mistakes committed by the party but also by new realities facing it. Along with rectifying mistakes, we should draw on and replenish all the useful experience of

ideological and organisational work, and transform it in the spirit of the ideas of the Sixth CPV Congress.

In today's situation we have to update our way of thinking in every field, especially in the economy, so as to master the laws governing processes of the transition period and to apply them correctly. Our party, the Sixth CPV Congress noted, erred on the side of voluntarism, oversimplification and undue haste in advancing towards many socialist goals, while the country was, and still is, at the very first stage of the transition period. Besides tackling urgent tasks, we now have to work out a scientific approach to long-term, strategic problems and to this end revitalise theoretical research.

Theoretical studies helped draft the resolutions of the latest CC Plenary Meetings on pressing problems of distribution and circulation, on modernising national economic management, overcoming bureaucratic administrative centralism, adopting socialist cost accounting and on working out optimum economic structures. Measures have been taken gradually to stabilise the socio-economic situation by 1990, to provide incentives to commodity production and to prepare the ground for progress in the years to come.

After the Sixth CPV Congress the Central Committee organised lectures to study the resolutions of the Congress and the subsequent CC plenary meetings with a view to retraining primarily senior party functionaries. Party leaders, including Political Bureau and CC Secretariat members, expounded the concept of renewal in the spirit of the Congress's decisions at courses in the Nguen Ai Quok Higher Party School, which has now become an Academy. Similar courses were organised in the provinces for lower level functionaries and rank-and-file party members.

These measures have made for some progress towards updating the mode of thinking and forging unity of views and action. However, there are two erroneous tendencies accompanying positive developments: on the one hand, the momentum of conservatism has not yet been reversed, or the braking mechanism dismantled, while on the other, some people are impatient to renew everything overnight.

Exacting demands are now made on the political, business and personal qualities of cadres and party members, mainly on those in positions of leadership. The yardstick is their efficiency in performing the tasks set before them. A Communist ought not just to believe firmly in our ideals but also clearly understand the party's policy line and pursue it in practice. This means that Communists must *contribute to renewal not just by word but by deed*. Every party member must be in the vanguard of three revolutions — in relations of production, in science and technology, and in culture and ideology — and work hard for the good of the homeland. People trust the political qualities of party cadres only when they manifest themselves not just in pledges of commitment to revolution but in efficient work, personal conduct and way of life.

There are in the CPV quite a few people who are dedicated to the party and the new system and ready to fight selflessly for the country's interests and perform their internationalist duty. Even when the party made mistakes in economic management, most of the Communists did not lose

heart but led people in overcoming difficulties, expanding production and introducing stability in everyday life. The more dynamic party members were the first to shake off the fetters of old managerial methods and, acting creatively, to gather some experience of renewal for the whole party.

At the same time quite a few party members lost their fighting spirit and displayed irresponsibility, greed and pessimism. Many of them degraded themselves, which spawned corruption, bribery, breaches of the laws and immorality in everyday life.¹ We are resolutely ridding ourselves of such people, who shame our socialist homeland. But there is a great deal to be done.

We have drawn the conclusion that the negative phenomena are due to both the political and personal characteristics of party members and shortcomings in the educational and organisational work of primary organisations and senior bodies. That is why it is necessary to analyse the root causes of errors in order to rectify them once and for all. Practice has shown, too, that errors in leadership and economic management have prepared the ground for the spread of negative phenomena in the state apparatus and in society as a whole. Spineless party members have fallen under their influence.

The CPV has admitted more than 900,000 new members and expelled over 200,000 in the past 12 years.² Since it became the governing party, high moral standards, an efficient state machinery and firm support from the people have been especially important to us. The party must be strong in order to build a strong state and strong public organisations. Conversely, the party cannot be strong if its social base is inadequate. From this point of view efforts to build the party, although directed at a specific range of issues, are inseparable from the strengthening of the socialist state and of public organisations. After the Sixth Party Congress the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the Secretariat worked out measures to improve the party leadership of government bodies and public organisations. The decision was taken also to modernise and improve the activities of party committees and primary organisations.

To put an end to negative phenomena, the Central Committee launched on February 3, 1987, the party's birth anniversary, a drive to translate into practice suggestions and proposals put forward by Communists during a campaign of criticism and self-analysis in the run-up to the Sixth Congress. Party members have their duties delineated more clearly and have to report regularly to their party organisations. In this way we foster a combative spirit in Communists, evaluate their progress and strengthen primary organisations and our contacts with people.

The preparations for and proceedings of the congresses of public organisations and elections to the National Assembly are becoming more democratic. The press and the other mass media pinpoint the more typical shortcomings, name those who are to blame for them and vigorously help mobilise public opinion to rectify them in the party and in society as a whole. The first steps towards democracy that have been taken are quite instructive.

There is an inextricable link between the building of the party with a strong core of cadres and the consolidation of government agencies, mass

movements and socio-political organisations. That link was clarified in the Congress's documents and in a resolution passed by the Political Bureau in 1987 on a drive to cleanse party organisations and state institutions, make them more combative and to improve social relations.

The resolution takes note of commendable political and moral qualities of party officials and rank-and-file members, on the one hand, and their shortcomings, on the other. It identifies the root causes of negative phenomena in the party, such as the long rule of bureaucratic centralised administration; omissions in the selection and placement of personnel and in fostering in people communist ideals and revolutionary morality; slackening respect for the CPV Rules and the laws of the state; and manifestations of individualism and misconduct among people in positions of responsibility, including high-ranking officials.

The cleansing movement got under way in September 1987 and will last until the next CPV congress, its goal being to do away with the negative features in the life of the party and society, to make the party more combative and the state institutions more efficient, and to give an impetus to the implementation of the socio-economic goals set by the Sixth Party Congress.³ The resolutions of the Central Committee and the government on socio-economic management and administration, on restructuring leadership and renewing its style, on cadre policy, etc., define the goals of the campaign that are to be achieved through a combination of the ideological and organisational development of the party and the fulfilment of political tasks.

In mounting this campaign in the party, in the state institutions and among the people, we encourage cadre workers to practice criticism and self-analysis, involve the mass of people in building the party and government bodies, use inspection and auditing agencies, stimulate public opinion to fight negative phenomena and *support good people and good causes*.

It is most important today to maintain a high level of exactingness and discipline from top to bottom both in the party and among the people. The promotion of public openness, in particular through newspapers and radio, helps mould a healthy and honest way of life and raise citizens who are dedicated to the ideals of socialism, live by their own work, look after collective interests, care for public property, and fight greed, lies, idleness, self-indulgence, waste, prejudice, etc.

The campaign will be a success if these political decisions are translated into reality. Every grassroots organisation should set itself correct socio-economic goals and define measures to achieve them, work more efficiently, place executive personnel wisely, modernise the style of work, fight bureaucracy and match words with deeds. The CPV began this work during preparations for its Sixth Congress and at the Congress itself, and also at the party election conferences at all levels; the cleansing campaign will continue in this spirit.

The further development of the party is closely linked with the reorganisation and reduction of the state and management apparatus. The most important thing here is correctly to design a new administrative mechanism in the centre and in the provinces. The job was given to an ad

hoc team of senior officials; they went out to model enterprises in various parts of the country in order to work out proposals meeting the goals formulated by the Sixth CPV Congress, the Central Committee and the Political Bureau. Conferences were convened in the provinces to exchange experience of developing managerial structures in accordance with general principles and the specific political tasks of individual regions. A special effort is being made to achieve the production and economic independence of local production units and to enhance the guiding role of the primary party organisation in the work collective and its function of control over the management.

The Sixth CPV Congress pointed out that the renewal of leadership at all levels was the most important stimulus of revolutionary change: the task is to build a core of cadre workers whose moral and business qualities would meet the needs of the present period.

There have been many replacements of leading personnel in the past year. But practice shows that mere replacement, without a renewal of the quality of leadership and administration from top to bottom and without a thorough and planned training of future leaders, can hardly improve the situation. That is why we have given up pro-forma planning and begun to apply job criteria, make better use of various schools and training courses and move workers to posts which would better suit their businesslike qualities.

Party conferences have elected new, larger party committees and infused fresh blood into them. District and regional committees have been renewed roughly by half and now have more people with higher education. Almost all committee members are graduates of party schools.

There is one shortcoming that is common to all functionaries and executives: they are weak on economic management because many of them have been trained according to the principles of the old school. The Ho Chi Minh City Party Committee believes, for instance, that only one-third of the managers of the city's factories and organisations are a match for today's tasks.

We are putting behind us the ways of the war-time years, when people were expected to make sacrifices and when economic incentive was out of the question. We are getting rid of subjective and voluntaristic attitudes. By fostering revolutionary enthusiasm and conscientiousness, we raise the level at which political tasks are being tackled. Our goal is better to reconcile economic management with a concern for the needs of the working people and to prevent our social policy from falling behind the requirements of production.

We are also making efforts to prevent party committees from taking over the functions of state institutions and the latter from making decisions which ought to be made by production and other economic units; one more task is to avoid duplication of work done at a lower level of administration by senior bodies. In other words, responsibilities are clearly defined in accordance with the new structure of administration, and management and administrative personnel are reduced. In the Binhthien Province, for instance, the number of departments and sections of the CPV Provincial Committee and the People's Committee has been cut from 70 to 52, and

229 officials, or 28 per cent of the province's administrative personnel, have been released. Around 1,000 have been released from party and administrative posts in Ho Chi Minh City, when 14 out of the 25 departments in the city's district and regional party committees were closed. Similar processes are going on all over the country.

Our priority in renewing the style of leadership is to uproot bureaucracy. To this end we try to involve the mass of people in the party-building effort by asking them to criticise functionaries and party members and to recommend the best workers for CPV membership and the best Communists for election to the party committees of primary organisations.

Regular contact between senior officials and the rank-and-file has been established and political education days are organised at offices and enterprises. To take another example: in the run-up to the congress of the Ho Chi Minh Young Communist League, delegates met the heads of those industries and departments which are involved especially closely with young people's work and life; those meetings naturally raised the level of discussion at the congress and helped it adopt more meaningful decisions.

We must not confine ourselves to criticism of shortcomings in the ideological sphere and the style of work but stop short of dismantling the machinery of economic management by decree, which inevitably creates a cumbersome and clearly irresponsible bureaucracy and turns it into a system. That is why right after the Sixth Congress the Political Bureau drafted and submitted to the Central Committee a plan of developing and organisational structure in which *the party would lead, the working people would be the collective owner of socialist property and the state would govern*. We are trying to apply correctly the principle of democratic centralism in the changed circumstances, to guarantee collective leadership and personal responsibility and to make the style of leadership both revolutionary and scientific.

We are still at the very start of the road, our achievements are few and their effect leaves much to be desired. We are closely studying the practice of the CPSU and other fraternal parties and are thankful to them for their internationalist assistance to the Vietnamese revolution. For our part we will do our utmost to implement the resolutions of the Sixth CPV Congress on improving the party work and the situation in every other field.

A CC Plenary Meeting devoted to the more urgent questions of party development, which was convened last June, became an important landmark. Participants noted that the socio-economic difficulties and numerous negative phenomena in the party and in society were persisting, that the drive to cleanse the party and the state apparatus and to make them more combative was not as vigorous and far-reaching as it should be, and that its results were limited. Practical measures were planned to rectify speedily the situation and the decision was taken that the party committees, including the Central Committee, should be renovated in elections by at least one-third and that no party committee secretary could hold office for more than ten years.

Energetic efforts have now been launched across the country to implement the important decisions of the June 1988 Plenary Meeting, to promote the party's vanguard role in society and to rectify mistakes and

shortcomings in party development. It is only in this way that the Communist Party of Vietnam will fulfil its mission comprehensively and thus meet the aspirations of the entire Vietnamese people.

¹ Some officials in Darlak Province, for example, were caught diverting state-owned building materials for their private homes. Senior officials of the public education department and the local branch of the State Bank took fat bribes. The manager of a district foreign trade organisation arbitrarily decided on an 'internal' sale of expensive imported radio equipment at cut-rate prices. — *Ed.*

² The CPV, founded in February 1930, has a membership of 1.9 million in 1988. — *Ed.*

³ See for details: Dao Dui Tung, 'Facing the Truth', *WMR*, No. 6, 1988. — *Ed.*

The Communists and Elections

The People Must Express Their Will Freely

Jaime Barrios — member of the Central Committee, Communist Party of El Salvador (PCS)

El Salvador's March 1988 parliamentary and municipal elections were a farce, with right-wing parties the only ones fielding candidates. The continuing armed struggle, the authorities' anti-people terror, and the virtually unpunished activity of the notorious death squads utterly invalidated the possibility of a free expression of the electorate's will.

The refusal of the revolutionary-democratic and patriotic forces to participate does not mean that they entirely reject election campaigns. The Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) and the Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) would consider taking part in elections only after a solution had been found to the problems caused by the armed conflict, itself a reflection of the present profound social and political crisis. Although ever since its founding, in March 1930, our party has been operating illegally or underground,¹ it is an active participant in the country's social and political life. Over the years it has amassed a rich experience, of great importance to our current revolutionary practice.

TO see how diverse this experience is, at least in general terms, let us recall that in 1963 Julio Adalberto Rivera's government reformed the electoral law by incorporating a long-standing demand of political parties, including the PCS, for proportional representation in the Legislative Assembly.

This reform, the ending of repression and the attitude of tolerance from the military, helped to reinvigorate democratic parties, organisations and

sections. Election struggle became the predominant form of their political activity. But the PCS proved to be unprepared for such a turn of events. It took the party some time to begin legal activity. We could not simply walk onto the political stage with unfurled red banners with hammer and sickle on them. The party remained illegal, and it was necessary to find ways for joint action with other organisations. This aim was achieved in 1966 when the PCS concluded an alliance with the Renovated Action Party.

Our participation in the presidential election campaign of 1967 showed that the party had begun to assimilate this form of struggle, imparting to it an anti-imperialist and democratic character. We strove to make the masses aware of the need for deep changes in the country, while at the same time compelling the other political forces to define clearly their stand on such issues as radical agrarian reform to end the concentration of land in the oligarchy's hands, the unfair distribution of the national income, cultural backwardness, unemployment, poverty and hunger. Communists also stressed the problem of the country's economic and political dependence on imperialism. During the campaign, we succeeded in reaching our major goal of restoring the party's influence among the workers of the capital and other industrial centres.

The Sixth Extraordinary PCS Congress (1970) ushered in a period when building a unified democratic front became the focus of communist political activity. We reckoned that the potential for using, in the revolution's interests, the legal struggle as a whole, and the election struggle in particular, had not been exhausted. The ruling circles and the power-holding National Conciliation Party (PCN), founded in 1961 by Adalberto Rivera, were pursuing a reformist policy. This called for a realignment of the democratic opposition forces and the elaboration by them of new strategy and tactics.

There was a rather motley opposition at that time. It included small leftist groups, adhering to the theory and practice of armed struggle and, for example, the Christian Democratic Party (PDC), which had a fairly broad social base. The PDC, representing the middle and petty bourgeoisie, urban strata, the peasantry and a part of the working class, was full of indecision. On the one hand, its leadership decided to come to terms with the military. In the presidential election of 1972, they put up a joint candidate with the PCN, to run the country on the basis of a reformist platform. On the other, many PDC activists, the middle link of the party and primary organisations took part in the mass struggle, thus really acting unitedly with the left-wing forces. There also began the radicalisation of the Salvadorean clergy, who played a significant role in uniting peasant organisations as a Christian federation.

We faced a number of urgent questions: How to regroup and rally the politically active masses — under the banner of a democratic, popular and anti-imperialist struggle — to form a real, not a propagandist, alternative? Could we do this without the PDC? And was it possible to remain indifferent to the prospect of this party colluding with the military dictatorship?

The plenary meeting of our party's CC held in October 1970 answered these questions. It had a decisive significance for the establishment of a

democratic united front with the participation of the PDC, and for the consolidation of left forces.

Having examined the situation in Latin America and, in particular, in El Salvador, the CC meeting arrived at the conclusion that the reformist policy, designed to prevent revolution, had in fact become a source of aggravated contradictions in the ruling circles. As a result of the intensified mass struggle, economic demands quite often developed a political slant. The policy of reforms therefore objectively advanced the revolutionary process, rather than impeding it, as the proponents of this policy had assumed. Naturally, reformism is reactionary by itself and becomes a catalyst for the revolutionary process only given a strong and correctly-oriented mass movement.²

The CC meeting instructed the party to participate in the 1972 elections on the basis of an agreement with the PDC and other democratic organisations. It was to be a political coalition, the programme of which would in fact contain the provisions that had already been put forward by Communists in 1966-1967. Of course, concluding an alliance with the PDC was no easy job: that party's leadership was reluctant to team up with us. But the opinion of its radically-minded primary organisations, which stood for joint actions with the PCS, prevailed. Some leading figures of the Christian Democrats also spoke in favour of unity. The way was thus cleared for the setting-up in May 1971 of a National Opposition Union (UNO). It included, apart from the PDC, the social-democratic National Revolutionary Movement (MNR) and the National Democratic Union (UND), which provided a means of activity not only for the Communists, but also for some other illegal democratic groups and figures.

The UNO's programme stated that it was not a question of a merger, but of a united front of political parties and democratic forces which set themselves a common historic aim: to save the country from a structural and institutional crisis, from the danger of a repressive military dictatorship being established, and to commence the process of democratisation.³ Such a programme reflected the desire of the popular masses for democracy and structural changes.

Analysing the UNO's activities in 1971-1977, the 7th PCS Congress later stressed that it was a considerable success for our party. It was the election activity of the UNO — nothing else — that determined the regime's political isolation at home and abroad, the serious weakening of the official party, the actions of the majority of the people against it, and the extreme polarisation of the opposing forces. Today, it is impossible to understand any aspect of the political situation in El Salvador without bearing in mind such prerequisites as broad mass actions, an all-pervasive, convincing propaganda and agitation, the promotion of activists, the creation of support committees and so forth, that characterised the election campaigns of the UNO, especially in 1977.⁴

In assessing the PCS's activities in this direction, we shall stress the following considerations: when in 1966 the party first spoke out loud and clear on the political scene, we regarded elections only as a *means of broad rapprochement with the masses*; we underrated the importance of using our influence to increase the number of votes cast for the candidates we

supported; the failure in the 1972 presidential elections was due to the UNO not being ready to raise the masses for a struggle for respect of their sovereign expression of their will or aware of the political value of backing from the majority of the people (and this was opening the opportunity to contest power).

There were sufficient grounds for such an underestimation. Under a dictatorship an election cannot serve as a real way for participation in running the country, even less so for taking power. However, the popular masses, expressing their will, speak out for power too. Hence, the necessity of an organised struggle and a firm and effective leadership. This thesis formed the basis of UNO tactics in the run-up to the 1977 elections.⁵

Such was, in general outline, the PCS's election policy in the period when the party was operating illegally. It helped to strengthen our links with the masses, to radicalise their thinking, and to enhance the level of consciousness among the members of the allied parties. Yet we self-critically admitted that the peculiarities of such a form of political struggle as participation in an election and the ideology, methods and traditions of allies had sometimes had a negative effect on the PCS, creating conditions for right-wing deviationist tendencies and their varieties, engendering some unrealistic and liberal conceptions which adversely affected the party's activities and discipline.

The elections of 1977, the victory taken away from the people and then the mass uprising drowned by the dictatorship in blood became landmarks on the road of a switchover to armed struggle by the PCS. Of great importance in this sense was the April 1977 CC meeting, which mapped out new guiding reference points in our activity, as well as the 7th Party Congress held two years later. Today it is clear to us, said the documents of the congress, that participation in elections as the main component part of the struggle of democratic forces for power has exhausted its potential. Not only progressive and organised sections, but the broadest masses now know this from experience. *Without providing conditions for a free expression of the will of the people, without replacing the regime with a truly democratic government, elections will not have their previous strategic value.*⁶

After the 7th Congress we oriented our policy of establishing alliances towards the creation of a mighty front of all revolutionary-democratic forces with a unified leadership able to coordinate the revolutionary processes in the country.

As early as 1980 this brought us considerable success. In April a Revolutionary Democratic Front (FDR) was set up comprising as permanent members and observers 114 socio-political, trade union and cultural organisations. At present the FDR consists of the following major movements: the National Revolutionary, which is part of the Socialist International, the Popular Social Christian and the Independent Movement of Professionals and Technical Personnel of El Salvador.

Six months later, in October, the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) was born. It brought together the Popular Liberation Forces, the Revolutionary People's Army and the Armed Forces of

Liberation (the military arm of PCS) and the Revolutionary Party of the Working People of Central America.

On November 30, 1986, the FMLN and the FDR concluded an allied pact. This pact developed the principles of an alliance on which agreement had been reached back in 1980. The sides agreed that the alliance was to bear an historical, strategic, political and voluntary character.

Historical because it reflects the ripe need for national and social emancipation. Irrespective of their ultimate political aims, the FMLN and the FDR formulated a common national platform of struggle at this stage representing the aspirations of the majority of the people.

Strategic because we are convinced that only through joint efforts is it possible to achieve victory and uphold it in the face of the counter-insurgency strategy of imperialism and its Salvadorean allies to accomplish a democratic, anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist revolution and, having won power, to establish a pluralistic regime which will adhere to the positions of non-alignment.

This is also a *political* alliance because it represents a coalition of political and military-political forces which adhere to different ideological positions.

Finally, it is a *voluntary* alliance because it relies on a conscious and free striving of its participants for unity.

As to the FMLN, it gains strength with the growth of the political maturity of its constituent forces. To achieve victories over the enemy in the course of the unitary process, we must seek to reach ever higher goals. The ninth year of military actions and the intensified class battles demand that the FMLN should become a single party of the revolution as soon as possible.

We proceed from the premise that as a result of the Front constituents' merger, a unification of their mass grassroots organisations will also take place. In other words, the new party should by no means resemble a federation. The component parts will disappear, something new will emerge on their basis. Such is the dialectics of unity.

Salvadorean Communists are convinced that the building of this new party is an historically ripe step, dictated by the revolutionary process. The roots of this tree will be nourished by the experienced amassed by each of the FMLN's organisations, by the blood shed by the people in the heroic battles. It is a question of a profoundly considered, not an improvised, step in the political struggle.

But in such a situation how do the FMLN and the FDP treat elections? In the first place, both associations insist on a radical solution to the crisis in El Salvador, rejecting any palliatives. They suggest forming a government of broad participation which will arise as a result of such a solution and where the FMLN-FDR are to be represented.

This government will start accomplishing the most urgent task, that of a ceasefire, and also deal with the most acute socio-economic problems, with the creation of conditions for the self-determination of the people of El Salvador. The process will culminate in a general, truly free and democratic election.

Thus, the last ten years, filled for us with a difficult struggle, have

enriched the revolutionary-democratic movement with new experience which has no equal in the history of the country. The military-political organisations of left forces have grown stronger. Their firm unity has been achieved. Large mass organisations have emerged. The revolutionary war is becoming an all-people's war. The FMLN-FDR have received international recognition as a force opposed to the regime. The struggle is continuing.

¹ Certain distinctions exist between clandestinity and illegality, in our view. Speaking of illegality, we mean situations where communist parties, though not officially recognised, act more or less openly. In this sense the PCS has operated illegally for 11 years, from 1966 to 1977, and for the remaining 47 years, deep underground.

² See *Pleno del Comité Central del Partido Comunista de El Salvador Realizado el 18 de octubre de 1970*, Multigrafiado, p. 4.

³ *Programa de Gobierno de la Unión Nacional Opositora*, 1977-1982, s.f., p. 9.

⁴ See *VII Congreso: Informe del Comité Central Partido Comunista de El Salvador*, Multigrafiado, s.f., pp. 32, 33.

⁵ In 1977 the UNO won the elections. But as a result of the falsification of their results General Carlos Humberto Romero Mena came to power. The revolutionary-democratic forces responded by a general political strike and by mass, including armed, actions which were suppressed by the dictatorship.

⁶ *VII Congreso. Informe del CC del PCS*, s.f., p. 38.

'This Is Sawt Al-Shaab'

These call-signs were first heard early last year when the Lebanese Communist Party's radio station went on the air. In a short time the broadcasts of *Sawt al-Shaab*, or the Voice of the People, won the sympathies of millions. In number of regular listeners it is already one of the leading Lebanese radio stations. We asked its director Hanna Saleh about the establishment of this station, and about the problems Lebanese communist radio journalists face in an unending civil war.

Why was *Sawt al-Shaab* set up?

LIFE itself asked us this question too, but somewhat differently: how can a revolutionary party wage the struggle in Lebanon without having a radio station of its own? Ours was a pragmatic answer. Broadcasting is one of the best ways of introducing people to politics quickly, as the bourgeoisie well knows. It has, in fact, upgraded its own media in order to shape public opinion, aiming to advance its own interests by imposing an 'anti-consciousness' on the masses, and nullifying the impact of revolutionary ideas.

For more than thirteen years now Lebanon has been in the grip of civil war. Direct confrontation takes on every possible form, including armed clashes, but still the battle of ideas prevails.

The war adds to the difficulties with our ideological work, not only as Communists, but also as a patriotic and democratic contingent of the

Lebanese people. Because of civil strife and the artificial barriers that it creates, it has become extremely difficult to reach the population in a number of areas. Religious-political groupings hold power there, and this prevents democratic forms of activity with the masses, such as lively and direct contact through the press. How, then, are we to get across our message to the people? How can we make our programmes widely known? How are we to mobilise people in a struggle for their own interests, for patriotic involvement, resistance to the occupation and a fight for national and social aims?

To this end Communists and other democratic forces needed to acquire a better means of communication, one that serves a wide area and helps overcome the artificially-induced divisions. *Sawt al-Shaab* became for us just this kind of means of communication with the masses.

What does the Lebanese Communist Party want the new medium to achieve?

We realised that our radio station's programmes had to be more open, stimulating, and informative — in fact, truly popular — in presentation and content. From the start we accepted the challenge of our times, pledging that our broadcasts would be open to all patriots and democracy-seekers, and would convey to the public the views of all political groups, even those with whom we differ sharply, inform the listeners of every platform, and in this way help them to develop their own opinions and raise mass consciousness.

Undoubtedly the main aim of *Sawt al-Shaab* is involvement in the ideological struggle, but it must also enhance people's awareness of their own legitimate interests, and inspire them to defend these interests in every way, for the sake of the national and social liberation of the people of Lebanon, and of all Arab peoples.

Other radio stations of the patriotic forces, including the Progressive Socialist Party's *Sawt al-Jabal* (The Voice of the Mountain), are also helping to achieve these aims.

It probably wasn't easy to launch this new venture?

No, it wasn't. This was new to us. Broadcasting differs in essence from the press, so we could not draw on our more than 60 years' previous experience of bringing out daily, weekly and monthly publications. For example, journalists who write daily for a newspaper can organise their time with comparative freedom. Not so with a radio station. Here they become slaves to time, captives of the microphone, which instantly 'gobbles up' the effort of many editors — and still remains hungry. On the radio time does not stop and work does not end. It's a real workshop, where you have a synthesis of many types of human endeavour: creative writing and editing, music and song, theatre and poetry; an interlacing of diverse programmes and advertising; and a huge amount of technical work without which you cannot build a radio bridge and make all this available to a wide audience.

There were so many difficulties that we even had to delay our first transmission, and then to extend the period of test broadcasts. We learnt the art of training announcers the hard way. It is not easy to select people who can fearlessly 'confront' the microphone and make no language mistakes. Even after almost two years in existence we still encounter problems, but we do now have some good journalists and announcers at *Sawt al-Shaab*.

The air is already highly saturated in Lebanon. What are *Sawt al-Shaab*'s facilities and how wide is the coverage area?

Seven major radio stations operate in the country, each seeking to transmit their great many broadcasts all over Lebanon. But there are also many local radio stations. They spring up almost daily, operating on ultra-short waves and crowding the air.

In order to provide competition, originality and choice, we need to attract the best national talent in politics, culture and science and cater for a range of tastes and views, while sticking to our political guns.

The scheme's technical aspect required special attention: ensuring good reception all over Lebanon and drawing up a schedule, particularly for prime-time broadcasting. *Sawt al-Shaab* now starts early in the morning, at 5:50, and works without a break until 1 am. We broadcast on 1,188 and 1,269 kHz medium waves and on 1.37 MHz in the UHF band. Except for several 'dead' zones, the voice of the station can be heard throughout Lebanon. Before the end of the year we shall try to ensure a transmitter capacity and a geography of broadcasting which would enable a quality reception of our programmes in any part of the country, and also in extensive areas of the Arab world. Simultaneously we are arranging for short-wave transmissions — then the call-signs of *Sawt al-Shaab* will reach everywhere that the millions of Lebanese and other Arab peoples live.

Please say a few words about your radio programmes.

They are very diverse. Political information consists of four detailed news releases and a final account of the day's major events, as well as 13 short news reports. We include daily comment in our broadcasts, arrange interviews with politicians, and prepare the press reviews. We practise other forms, too, with an eye to bringing political discussions within the reach of the widest possible audiences, through a language accessible to all and devoid of any artificiality, and produce dramatised programmes featuring popular Lebanese actors and singers. All kinds of issues are raised in them, mainly topical such as the experience of Lebanese patriotic resistance to the Israeli occupation forces. I want to note that *Sawt al-Shaab* readily enlists talented young people, especially from among the art graduates, who bring many new and unique features to its work. Much attention is being given to literary programmes involving leading national poets and writers.

Our station also runs daily programmes for children, and organises meetings and seminars on trade union, student and women's movements,

education and agriculture. *Sawt al-Shaab* prefers animated discussion with people, at work, in the home or on the streets, to transmissions from the quiet of the studios. Our microphones listen attentively to the cares and anxieties of citizens, discovering what they think and feel about life's problems.

Is the work of communist radio journalists dangerous?

Of course it is. But it is not only our staff members who work in adversity, but all the Communists and democrats. My colleagues are a part of the Lebanese people and consequently they, like the entire people, also bear the burden of today's ordeals.

How influential is *Sawt al-Shaab* today?

Though still very young, the radio station of the Lebanese Communists has already made its mark among other mass media. Its influence and popularity are growing every day. But we are well aware that there is still a long way to go before *Sawt al-Shaab* realises its full potential in the ideological battle against the imperialist media for an early end to the civil war, and a serene and peaceful future for the people of Lebanon.

Attaining this goal involves the struggle for a common national-democratic plan to settle the Lebanese crisis. This is the only way to end the bloodshed and eradicate whatever brought about the civil war and might cause fresh outbreaks of internecine violence.

INFORMATION

International Contacts

Although The Conditions Are Different...

WE are trying to bring out socialism's potential to the full; this is far from easy but the 19th Party Conference showed that we are on the right track, Mikhail Gorbachov told Nguyen Van Linh, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, at their meeting in Moscow. The Soviet leader stressed that broader democracy in the party and in society and the far-reaching reform of the political system make it possible to involve the mass of people in government and self-government and give them a real chance to express their interests and defend them.

The Vietnamese guest noted that the 19th Party Conference had had great political repercussions in his country, as everywhere in the world. Although the two countries' conditions are different, the Vietnamese communists are using creatively the ideas and practical experience of

Soviet perestroika in their own efforts to implement the resolutions of the 6th CPV Congress, to cope with Vietnam's difficulties and to renew every aspect of the social fabric.

For Broader Cooperation

It is necessary to step up the efforts of the peoples, of all the progressive and democratic forces in order to curb the arms race and achieve disarmament, primarily nuclear disarmament, and to find peaceful solutions to conflicts in various parts of the world, Nicolae Ceaucescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party, and Meir Vilner, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Israel, agreed at their meeting in Bucharest.

Nicolae Ceaucescu and Meir Vilner, on a visit at the invitation of the RCP Central Committee, informed each other of the activities of their respective parties, noted the good relationship between the RCP and the CPI and called for broader bilateral cooperation in the interests of the two parties and countries and for peace and mutual understanding.

Soviet-Ethiopian Relations On A High Level

We empathise with the Ethiopian people's choice and are in solidarity with their efforts to overcome the difficulties they are facing at the current turning point of their country's development, Mikhail Gorbachov told Mengistu Haile Mariam, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Ethiopia and President of the Republic, at their meeting in the Kremlin. The visitor for his part stressed the close connection between the processes taking place in the USSR and the strengthening of peace and security and the assertion of the principles of new political thinking in international relations.

The two leaders focused on the development and improvement of contacts between their parties. Mikhail Gorbachov stressed that as a result of perestroika, the CPSU was giving up functions which were not its proper domain and that its role as the political vanguard of Soviet society was growing immeasurably.

Mengistu Haile Mariam expressed profound gratitude to the Soviet Union for its disinterested assistance in saving the starving population of Ethiopia's drought-stricken areas and also for its contribution to the country's economic growth.

Both leaders noted with satisfaction the high level of Soviet-Ethiopian political cooperation and stressed their shared interest in its further expansion, in the two countries' interests.

From The Press

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

An Unusual Meeting

A NOTICE which party members of the Linden/Dahlhausen district got in their mail proved a shock: "Please attend a crisis meeting. Party group board." What happened? Is the board resigning? Or have several members suddenly decided to drop out?

This is how Hannelore Nowak, a member of the Bohum regional board of the German Communist Party, writes in the party journal *Praxis* about an unusual meeting in her grassroots organization.

"It is a crisis meeting," the deputy board chair began, "because we don't know what to do. First, we have taken stock and decided that our party group is doing too little. Second, we cannot get the board to meet because its permanent members are tired: practically no one wants to accept any party assignments and the board has to do virtually everything on its own."

People in the audience sat glancing at one another shamefacedly: what they were hearing was in fact the truth. But their confusion did not last long. One after another, they came up with ideas as to what the group could do, such as organise party education, work with the public, regularly put up information bulletins, address problems in communal policy, issue leaflets on concrete questions and forge closer contacts with the Greens and the Social Democrats.

All the proposals were put down on a sheet of paper and pinned to the wall. "But who is going to do all this?" a board member asked. It turned out that there were volunteers to tackle each of the problems. Candidacies for a new board were discussed and the decision taken to have meetings more often. A sense of cohesion was re-established.

A plan of work complete with the names and addresses of those responsible for individual assignments was eventually drawn up. Three points were added on the members' initiative: an open meeting to mark the 70th anniversary of the Communist Party of Germany and 20 years of the German Communist Party, the goal of recruiting three new members by the end of the year and — down with the crisis in our ranks!

The task now is to turn it all into reality.

In Brief

28-Party Initiative

IN a joint statement approved in connection with the outrageous trial of Turkish Communist leaders Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin in Ankara, 28 communist parties of European socialist and capitalist countries demand that the Turkish authorities immediately release Kutlu, Sargin and their

co-defendants, amnesty all prisoners of conscience, legalise the Communist Party of Turkey and all the other democratic organisations, guarantee the free exercise of trade union and other political freedoms.

A delegation of European Communists left for Ankara to present the text of the statement to the Turkish Prime Minister and to reaffirm the solidarity of the international democratic public with the courageous prisoners. But when they arrived, accompanied by numerous journalists, at the Prime Minister's residence, the police brutally blocked their way and forcibly removed them from the grounds. Furthermore, the authorities refused the communist parties' delegates permission to see Kutlu and Sargin, who said in a message from prison to their visiting supporters: "Our will shall not be broken!"

ALBANIA

Commenting on the completion of progress report meetings and elections in the Albanian Party of Labour, the newspaper *Zeri i Popullit*, published by the APL Central Committee, says that Communists and primary party organisations have a great deal to do to improve management and the scientific organisation of production. The effect of party work will be judged on the strength of activity, the use of advanced experience, the views of specialists, cadres, and people in general, and the degree of mobilisation. Communists' higher sense of responsibility for the job entrusted to them, better organisation of labour and the ferment of creative thought are an insurmountable barrier to the alien manifestations of bureaucracy.

COLOMBIA

A Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Colombian Communist Party, convened against the backdrop of a difficult domestic political situation caused by a wave of violence and terror and growing popular resistance to it, discussed and approved a number of programme documents as part of preparations for the 15th CCP Congress, scheduled for December 12-15. The Plenary Meeting reviewed the political theses for the Congress, a report on the situation in the party and draft amendments to its Programme and Rules. The participants addressed a message of greetings to the CPSU and the people and government of the Soviet Union, voicing support for Soviet perestroika, and stated their solidarity with the Nicaraguan people's struggle against US aggression.

FRG

Herbert Mies, Chair of the German Communist Party, deplored a government Bill toughening regulations for foreigners residing in West Germany. He said in a letter to foreign political parties and organisations operating on the territory of the FRG that West German Communists were in solidarity with immigrant workers. The Communist Party views them as a part of the FRG working class because they have common interests in the struggle for peace, democracy and social rights. Herbert Mies urged the ruling parties to grant equal political and social rights to foreign workers and their families and end discrimination against them instead of passing Draconian legislation.

ITALY

The Italian Communist Party lost more than 300,000 members between 1977 and 1987 and by the end of June 1988 had a membership of 1,382,536, or 91.6 per cent of the figure in June the year before. Reporting these statistics, *l'Unita* says that it is very difficult to recruit new members and that the party's biggest losses were in medium-sized and big cities, whereas the situation in the smaller communities is on the whole sound. Clearly, these processes are related to the party's 'overall condition', the newspaper says, and organisational measures alone cannot change the trend which has already become evident.

PORTUGAL

A Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party reviewed the drafting of a new party programme and work on amendments to the party Rules in the run-up to the 12th PCP Congress, scheduled to take place in Porto on December 1-4, 1988. The resolutions passed on these questions are being studied and discussed within the party. The Plenary Meeting called upon Portuguese Communists to take an active part in the pre-Congress discussion of various aspects of the country's domestic and foreign policies and the party's role in national life.

SAN MARINO

The Communists and Christian Democrats have formed a new government as a result of their victory in the May 1988 elections to the country's supreme legislative body, the Grand General Council. A festival held by the San Marino Communists' newspaper *La Scintilla* in the capital of the world's oldest republic contributed greatly to the consolidation of the party members and to their increasing influence on the populace. The festival was addressed by SMCP General Secretary Gilberto Ghiotti and Honorary Chair Ermenegildo Gasperoni.

SPAIN

Thousands of Barcelona's inhabitants and visitors came to the Montjuich Park for the festival organised by the newspaper *Avant*, the central press organ of the Party of Communists of Catalonia. Delegations had been sent to the festival by communist and workers' parties and national-liberation movements from many countries. The programme included discussions on problems of domestic and international affairs and on efforts for peace and a non-nuclear zone in the Mediterranean.

exchange of views, discussion

International Communist Movement

Communists in Western Europe: Retreat or Build-Up of Forces?

Two Views Of The Problem

WMR has asked the leading figures of several fraternal parties in European capitalist countries for their views on the state and prospects of the communist movement on the continent.

The bourgeois mass media claim that it is now in a state of crisis. Is that so? What effect do communist activity in the area of existing socialism and the current processes in the USSR and some other socialist countries have on the activity of the Communists? What are the prospects for a growth of influence of the communist parties in Western Europe as a whole, and in the individual countries? What could be the role here of concerted efforts, a search for new forms of cooperation, and more vigorous exchanges and interaction by the Communists on the scale of the whole continent? What could *WMR* do to promote the development of these processes?

Below are the replies we received from the communist parties of Greece and Italy.

There Is Every Ground For Optimism

Grigoris Pharakos — CC Political
Bureau member, CP Greece

THERE has, indeed, been a proliferation of claims by the bourgeois media that the communist movement on the European continent is going through a crisis. Some have even predicted its decline and virtual demise. These simplistic assertions and superficial conclusions are being made because of the stagnation or even reduction in the number of votes cast for some communist party candidates in Western Europe. Let me say right away

that these claims are not new, although their variations are different.

Predictions of crisis and decline have been made again and again throughout the communist movement's long history. One need merely recall the satisfaction with which some politicians insisted that the communist movement in Europe had been wiped out during the fascist offensive before World War II. However, despite its defeats, it found, even then, the strength to play a great role in resisting the 'brown plague'. After the war, many communist parties gave a lead in the radical transformations which altered the political map of our continent in favour of socialism.

We are not trying to make any schematic comparisons of past and present events. One can hardly say that history repeats itself. We do not wish to be complacent, to idealise the present state of the communist movement, or to conceal the serious problems it is facing. The point is that a great international revolutionary trend, such as ours, requires a deeper and more cool-headed analysis, and here it is important to bring out at least two concrete truths.

First, *the historical necessity which produced our movement*, i.e., the need for an organised vanguard in the struggle to get rid of capitalist society and create a new, communist society, *is still relevant*. Much has radically changed in the world over the past decades, and much has been changing in the conditions of the struggle for man's liberation, but it can hardly be right to claim that this struggle is itself no longer necessary, that it is historically irrelevant.

It is a fact, therefore, that the existence of the communist movement is still based on this absolute and concrete historical truth: everyone fighting for change is in need of such a vanguard, and no one had yet offered anything better. No matter how broad the progressive and peace-loving forces seeking, each in its own way, to solve the ever graver general human problems they do not minimise the indispensable role of the communist movement or erode its quite definite political framework. That is why it is able to continue to act as the vanguard, not because this is fore-ordained in any way, but because of its struggle for the solution of the global problems and for socialism.

Second, since that is our view of the role, mission and historical place of the communist movement as a whole, and of the communist parties in each country, let us accept that *the development of this great revolutionary tide cannot be either uniform or straightforward at all the stages of its history*, which differ essentially from each other.

Along its way, it is bound to run faster or temporarily in reverse, because of the difficulties and turning points. In my view, the communist movement of our continent is passing through probably the most difficult turning point today, as deep changes occur in Europe and the world.

We all feel that the communist parties — each, of course, in its own way — must meet the challenge of the times. Everything in the world is now being very rapidly internationalised, and the great worldwide problems (notably, the problem of peace) appear in a totally new light. The fast-paced scientific and technological revolution, with its well-known effects on labour relations and in the economic and social spheres, tends to create

new and totally unknown conditions and sets us new tasks. If we are to cope with the high demands of our day, we must overcome the lag of many years and find new approaches to analysing and summing up international realities, creatively developing our theory, pursuing our policy, and opening up prospects ever more firmly based on the realities in each country and meeting the working people's present-day needs. Finally, there is a need to revive the internationalist values and to invigorate joint action within the framework of our movement.

At its 12th Congress in May 1987, the CP Greece made strenuous efforts to do so. It is determined to carry on the struggle for change and socialism in our country's concrete conditions, fully aware that not only progress within that party and our movement as a whole, but the destiny of human civilisation, of the Earth itself in this nuclear age depend on the capacity of each party successfully to meet the challenge of the new interdependent international and internal reality.

Accordingly, we have made a high assessment of the deep changes now underway in the socialist countries, above all, of the revolutionary perestroika in the USSR, which has been given a fresh impetus and new depth in the course of the 19th CPSU Conference and its decisions. It is true that stagnation phenomena in some socialist countries and other long-term inhibiting factors have prevented socialism from manifesting all its advantages at the present stage, a fact that has, of course, had an influence on the development of the communist parties in the West. I would say, on the other hand, that the theoretical and political lag of the communist parties in the capitalist countries, and the attempt flatly to reject the existing socialist realities have also had an unfavourable effect on the development of the thinking and action of socialism itself, and have damped down the constructive dialogue within our movement.

We believe that many aspects of the renewal in the socialist world in all their diversity help to enrich the communist movement as a whole and its thinking, and open up fresh and optimistic perspectives. We believe that the communist parties have enough strength and experience to be able to use these prospects in their own conditions and duly to meet the challenge of the age. Our optimism is based not only on the facts of history and on some encouraging elements that have appeared in the working-class movement in Europe. We are convinced that *the changes under way in the world do not diminish the significance of socialism, but, in fact, carry it to the foreground of history as the only human alternative to capitalist regress.*

The changes in the socialist countries are not, of course, any kind of recipe for general application, no matter how they may influence the thinking and perspectives of the communist parties, especially in Europe, just as there is no beaten track along which Communists of the capitalist part of our continent can advance. But that does nothing to diminish the need for exchanges of experience, for the broadest international solidarity, and for joint struggle by the communist parties of Europe and the whole world.

From time to time, the communist movement has made use of various forms to accentuate its own identity, to strengthen its ties and develop the common struggle. It would certainly be very useful to assess this historical

experience and try to draw some valuable conclusions for our day. The forms of cooperation used at this or that concrete stage of our movement may, understandably, prove to be obsolete and even harmful today. I emphasise, therefore, the need to develop solidarity and cooperation on an international scale, in particular among the Communists of Europe, with an eye to the requirements of the present day, and to the future, and on the basis of equality and full respect for each party's independence.

We must not forget that we are faced with crucial European and world problems on whose solution mankind's survival depends, and which are not only of vivid interest, but which also require a contribution by the broadest progressive and peace-loving forces.

But this by no means diminishes the special role which the communist movement must and can play more vigorously on the scale of the continent. We stand for the development of solidarity and cooperation among the fraternal parties not for the purpose of erecting a wall between them and the other forces striving for the same or similar goals, but in order to increase the potentialities for the broadest cooperation on problems which agitate everyone.

Accordingly, we stress the need for cooperation, dialogue and interaction between the communist parties in the general struggle for peace, détente, and European security. We want to see the most effective solidarity and the widest and most profound exchange of opinions on a continental scale concerning the ways to the socialist perspective. We also believe that it is highly important — and we have taken the relevant initiatives — that the communist parties of the Common Market countries should cooperate with each other for better and more effective defence of the working people's interests, for resisting the attacks of international capital, for reducing regional inequality in Europe, for preventing dangerous military integration, and expanding the opportunities for carrying out national development programmes.

The communist parties, especially on our continent, now need more dialogue, meaningful exchange of experience, and profound solidarity and cooperation in the common struggle. That does not infringe upon each party's independence but helps to enrich and strengthen every party in a world that is becoming ever smaller and ever more interdependent. All that will give us greater militancy, and will open up new horizons for a broad policy of alliances on the national, European and international scale in the struggle for peace; for a new and just international order, for progressive transformations in each European country, and for socialism as we move towards the year 2000.

Along all these lines, *WMR* will undoubtedly be able to play an even more essential role. The debates held in the course of the international discussion of its work in Prague last April showed all of us, I think, the reference points for advance along this way. Yet another optimistic perspective is opened up by implementing in practice the conclusions we then reached together.

Perspectives In Renovation

Gianni Cervetti — member of the Leadership, Italian Communist Party; Chair of the Communist Group in the European Parliament

LET me say, first of all, that the use of the term 'communist movement' appears to be both out of place and out of time.

We think that the history of relations between the communist parties has gone through three phases: at first they belonged to one organisation, to one international party, the Comintern; then they were in an ideological and politically organised camp which was, in fact, directed by one leading party, the CPSU, and which for nearly a whole decade was symbolised by the Cominform; finally, a 'movement' took shape. In principle it denied any form of organisation but maintained, or rather implied, the existence of 'privileged' relations between the national political organisations of the Communists and kindred forces. It was a passage of successive relaxation of ties, initially fairly close, but subsequently still not entirely weakened during the existence of the 'movement'.

In the first phase, especially in Europe, there were objective and weighty causes which justified such ties and in a sense made them necessary. And that despite the correct decisions or, conversely, serious mistakes made within the framework of such relations and frequently for their sake. This question has already been studied and still needs to be more thoroughly analysed in historical terms. Indeed, the three decades between the start of the First and the end of the Second World War spanned an historical period which is most peculiar in characteristics and development. One could say, in general terms, that it was a thirty-year continental 'civil war' in which acute social and national contradictions and intense conflicts between classes and states were interwoven. It is this factor that made it historically necessary to set up an organisation — either European or worldwide — in order to enable the forces united within it to fight back and hold on.

As for the second phase (which lasted for about ten years, from the standpoint of major developments, the thick of them, and somewhat longer, from the standpoint of developments on the 'periphery'), it could be defined as a 'post-civil war' period. There is a need to discuss — and a discussion was, in effect, under way even then — the kind of relations the communist parties should have had, and the kind of influence the concrete decisions taken at the time had on their strength and on their future development.

There is no doubt, however, that the objective reality justified — at a definite period in this or that form, at any rate — the existence of special, privileged or strictly defined relations between the communist parties. But I think that one should also state the existence of a marked lag in defining and establishing more appropriate relations.

Meanwhile, since then all the objective arguments have disappeared.

Much has changed radically in the world. This involved not only economic, social and political upheavals, which differed in nature and had serious consequences (for instance, the collapse of the colonial system and the scientific and technological revolution), but also the very foundations on which a struggle for the renovation and emancipation of mankind could be carried on.

There has been a change in the character of war and the character of conflicts generally. Following their preamble in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: "A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism", Marx and Engels say: "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles . . . that each time ended either in revolutionary re-constitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes."¹

The latter prospect, applied directly to the global scale, now appears to be the most realistic eventuality. At the same time, the obvious dialectics suggest that new and enormous potentialities have appeared. Suffice it to consider the possibility of eliminating war — the worst form of conflict — from mankind's present and future life, even before classes have been abolished, or the possibility of solving, on the already existing technological and scientific basis, the material problems of billions of people.

The world has become interdependent. The fundamental conception which provided an effective and essential basis for the formation of communist parties (the transformation of imperialist war into socialist revolution) — the prime reason for their necessary and inevitable distancing from the other forces of the working class, progressive and socialist movement, something that predetermined special, exclusive or privileged relations between them — has ceased to be valid. The new thinking is more than a mere slogan.

In these circumstances, we feel, there is no point in speaking about a 'communist movement'. The usual objection to that is that it is still necessary to establish a tie between the vanguard forces which have a particular function in transforming the society. This argument does have some meaning in abstract terms, but it is a fact that in concrete terms this function is not an *a priori* one, not something that is given once and for all. Besides, in the new conditions there is a change both in the modes of its definition and in the configuration of 'accords', associations and alliances, which become a matter of choice that every one has to make for oneself in the face of the new problems and the new tasks.

Concerning the 'objective and subjective causes behind the crisis (or stagnation) in the influence of many communist parties', let me say that they probably lie in a failure to understand or a serious lag in understanding what has been said above. There is, of course, some general 'cause' which has always involved particular and specific motivations lying within or outside this misunderstanding. These motivations make it hard or impossible to 'dominate' the reality.

And the last consideration. What I have said applies to the present day, but highlights primarily a definite phase, a definite historical process. And this makes the crisis even more acute, and the solution of the problems,

even more difficult. You ask about the effect of the processes in the USSR and other socialist countries on the parties' activity.

In the past such processes had fairly serious effects. The situation turned out to be an impediment above all to the possibly favourable developments, notably in the communist parties which did not have an autonomous line in elaborating their own policies, in practical action and in judgements about the 'countries of existing socialism'.

That is why one could say that the causes of the weakening of the communist parties lie 'within' rather than 'outside' the individual parties. Autonomy is, in effect, a gain, and not a godsend. But things look somewhat different when one goes on from an analysis in general to the various historical phases and the various parties. There is, for instance, no doubt that the choice they made just after World War II was of crucial significance in determining the extent of the influence and the very future of a number of parties.

It would, at the same time, be wrong nowadays to assume that the 'current processes in the USSR' can and must have a direct impact on a party and be reflected in it, although the development of the world situation, especially on the European continent, does decisively depend on the Soviet Union's international and domestic policy. In this sense, all the forces of progress and renewal in Europe take a vivid interest in developments in the USSR, and this can be seen from the numerous statements and innumerable events. What is more, the 'interest' is so great that if one were to assume the most sinister and undesirable hypothesis — the defeat or end of the present Soviet course — it is now no longer possible to conceive of the existence of any relations between these forces and representatives of a different Soviet policy.

The prospects before individual parties will obviously depend on many factors, primarily on their capacity for renewal. In what sense and in what sphere? In the sphere of each country's internal policy and Western Europe's supranational scale, within whose framework the present and future of the peoples of this part of the continent are now being largely shaped.

The future of the Italian Communist Party will likewise be determined by its capacity for deeper analysis, self-enrichment and renewal in the face of two challenges:

First, the challenge to the party's will and capacity to show (on the basis of clear-cut programmatic propositions and consensus) all the left-wing and progressive forces the prospects for transforming the outdated structures of the Italian state.

Second, the challenge to the ICP as a component of the left-wing forces requiring its own contribution to solving the major problems, above all on the level and in the sphere of supranational relations. These are the problems of peace and security, disarmament and defence, détente and a settlement of regional conflicts, cooperation between East and West, and North and South, the interconnection between development and preservation of the environment, economic growth and employment, the new place of women and youth in the society, and the values of solidarity and social efficiency. In various terms, there are once again the problems

of democracy, political unity and autonomy of Western Europe.

Recent events, like the presidential elections in France, testify to the importance of these problems and ways of solving them. And, of course, to the key role of relations between the left and centre forces in the society, both for eliminating the obvious hegemony of the conservative forces evident in Western Europe in recent years, and for the opening up of fresh prospects.

It follows from what I have said that the question cannot be formulated in the sense of coordination 'of efforts and ties between the Communists on a continental scale'. This is a much wider question and it is obviously less connected with the geographical scale. Cooperation bears directly on the progressive and left-wing forces as a whole. Outside this logic we cannot see how any force whatsoever, be it party, mass organisation, or cultural body, especially in Western Europe, can actually exercise its proper political functions. *WMR* can make a valuable contribution considering the dimensions and character of the questions now on the agenda.

¹ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, pp. 481, 482.

South American Communists Meet

A MEETING of communist parties of South America, held in Montevideo, called for stronger solidarity with all the patriotic, democratic, and revolutionary forces in Latin America and the world over. The meeting was attended by delegations from the communist parties of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela and the People's Party of Panama. The People's Progressive Party of Guyana sent a message of greetings, which approved of the documents adopted by the meeting (the PPP was not represented because it was holding its congress at the time). There were also observers from the CPSU, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Sandino National Liberation Front, the Farabundo Marti National Front and *World Marxist Review*.

Speakers stressed the importance of Communists' efforts to achieve understanding with progressive political parties and organisations.

The final document of the meeting notes that perestroika in the Soviet Union, the rectification of mistakes on Cuba and the abandonment of stereotypes and dogmas in theory and practice have given a fresh impetus to Communists' efforts around the world. New thinking will help intensify the struggle for stronger world peace.

The irreversible character of the Cuban revolution, the further progress of revolutionary change in Nicaragua and the Salvadorean people's successful heroic struggle against the pro-American regime are evidence of the strong resistance of the peoples of the region to the aggressive plans of US imperialism.

The participants in the meeting took a decision to further their mutual contacts and exchanges of views. Understanding was reached on holding new meetings to help strengthen the unity of the revolutionary democratic and anti-imperialist movement in Latin America.

The Choice of History And The History Of Alternatives

Nikolai Bukharin vs. Leon Trotsky

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Nikolai Bukharin, a prominent Bolshevik, was born on October 9, 1888. He joined the revolutionary movement at 17, took part in the revolution of 1905-1907, and became a member of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party in 1906. He was arrested by the zarist authorities several times and sent into internal exile. One of the leaders of the October 1917 armed uprising in Moscow, he was elected to the party's Central Committee in 1917 and became an alternate member of its Politburo in 1919 and a full member in 1924. He also served on the Executive Committee of the Comintern. Lenin regarded him highly as the author of many books on political economy, sociology and philosophy and called him "a most valuable and major theorist of the Party".

In 1928, Stalin orchestrated a campaign of slander against Bukharin: he was called a 'defeatist', an 'enemy of collective farms' and an 'enemy of industrialisation', and accused of picturing Lenin as a 'peasant philosopher'. In 1929, Bukharin was dropped from the Politburo and then, at the 17th Party congress in 1934, demoted from full to alternate membership in the Central Committee. Expelled from the party on frame-up charges in 1937, he was executed in 1938.

The political fate of Bukharin took a new turn in 1988: he was fully rehabilitated and posthumously restored to CPSU membership. This article is about one of the more important periods in Bukharin's biography — his ideological struggle against the advocates of 'barracks communism'.

WAS there an alternative to Stalin? The question, often raised today, is very important for understanding what we have built and why we are rebuilding it. Particularly fruitful is the view of those who connect the 'Stalin phenomenon' not only with the crimes he committed but also (and

primarily) with the system of social relations which Soviet scholars increasingly often describe as command-style administration. It follows that the question of whether there was an alternative to Stalin should be rephrased: 'Was there an alternative to command-style administration?'

Many researchers, even quite thorough ones, maintain that there was no alternative to this system citing Russia's economic and cultural backwardness during the 1920s, the small size and the weakness of her working class, the hostile external environment, the need to reach the level of advanced capitalist countries as soon as possible, and so on and so forth. They also distinguish 'accompanying' factors — the 'tzarist' mentality of the Russian peasant and the absence of long-established democratic traditions. Hence, they say, the inevitability of command-style administration. True, some extol it (whatever its flaws, it did ensure economic and military progress), while others curse it (the price of this progress was too high), but both sides believe that nothing fundamentally different could have developed in our country.

The First Crossroads

The path the country embarked upon during the 1930s was chosen amid a heated and acute debate which began within the party in 1923 and ended by 1928-1930, when a Stalinist collectivisation drive had been completed and all prominent figures who had led the party during Lenin's lifetime had been removed. This debate opened as a polemic with Trotskyism, the first attempt to introduce administration by command in the USSR. Why it failed then and why it recurred and triumphed by the early 1930s, albeit in a different form, is a matter calling for serious examination.

The concept of a system of command and coercion was articulated with particular clarity by Leon Trotsky in his report to the Ninth Party Congress in 1920 and elaborated further in his articles of 1923-1924 ('A New Course' and 'The Lessons of the October Revolution') and in the works of his closest supporter Ye. Preobrazhensky (especially in 'The Principal Law of Socialist Accumulation', written in 1924).

Essentially, this concept was aimed at a system of forced labour, of barrack-like social organisation. Like soldiers, workers were to be attached to particular factories (and re-posted if need be) by supreme government bodies. This 'mass of workers' was to be assigned rigid production quotas from above in the form of legally binding plans, to be fulfilled under threat of severe reprisals. In rural areas, too, there was to be universal forced labour according to rigid quotas determined by higher authorities, which were also to issue binding decisions on the distribution (or, more exactly, requisition) of farm produce. Initially (in the temporary absence of a different apparatus), this 'mobilisation' of peasants was to be managed by the 'military authorities' and then by 'advanced industrial workers' who were to move to rural areas on orders from party leaders. If someone quit their assigned factory and moved to live elsewhere, this was to be regarded as 'desertion from the labour front'. Trotsky also invented a punitive system whereby deserters were to be sent to penal work teams and even to concentration camps.'

Trotsky discussed whether this system would be economically efficient. We are told, he said, that forced labour is unproductive, but that is an old bourgeois prejudice. Our 'socialist' forced labour will be productive and efficient because 'we' can and must ensure that the worker would regard this labour as free, voluntary and fulfilling.

Those were the principal parameters of the Trotskyist version of command-style administration. True, by the mid-1920s Trotsky and his followers' views became a bit more liberal, but their main thrust remained unchanged. Whereas Lenin said that the very *principles* of wartime communism were untenable (as a strategy of socialist construction but not as a temporary, emergency policy) and suggested a *fundamentally* different path of development (via NEP), Trotsky and his supporters were simply looking for a somewhat more moderate form of wartime communism.

Instead of NEP, the Trotskyists proposed, at the 12th Party Congress in 1923, a policy of 'initial socialist accumulation' (ISA). It was aimed essentially at industrialising the nation by exploiting the non-proletarian social strata, primarily the peasants. That is why the idea of switching to a tax in kind (put forward by Trotsky in 1920) was later specified as follows: "The task of the socialist state is . . . not to take away less from the petty bourgeois producers than capitalism used to, but to take away more."² The difference between this and 'surplus appropriation' was, in fact, purely semantic.

Bukharin's Objections

Nikolai Bukharin subjected Trotsky's view to thorough criticism. Today, it may seem that no particularly penetrating theoretical insight is needed to rebuff Trotskyist ideas properly: they clash too obviously with the principles of social justice and political liberty — in other words, with the ideals of socialism as seen by Marx and Lenin. That was the stance taken by some critics of Trotskyism in the 1920s, for instance, Zinoviev and Kamenev. But this criticism was not really effective: the Trotskyists held that the situation had changed, that quotations from the classics were no longer enough, that new ideas and a 'new course' were needed.

Meanwhile, Bukharin's approach was methodologically flawless. From the very outset of the debate he acknowledged that by 1924 the situation in the country and in the world had changed radically: "The nation has reached a crucial stage. We are at a crossroads of history which differs from the historical turning points our revolution has left behind."³ Having agreed with Trotsky on this, Bukharin actually suggested that the parties to the debate refrain from juggling quotations. Instead, he guided the discussion towards a useful analysis of the new realities, towards a search for new roads into the future. He wanted public opinion to take Trotsky's and Preobrazhensky's ideas very seriously because they were an earnest attempt to grasp new objective realities, and not just idle speculation. Bukharin said that policy differences were the most important thing, not personal ambitions of party leaders.

Trotsky and his supporters had no intention of presenting the coercive administrative system as a socialist ideal. They merely claimed that the ideal was so far unattainable, and that for the time being the task was

simply to ensure the nation's survival and create at least a minimum of conditions for progress towards the ideal. They saw their plan as a response to the highly unusual and difficult objective circumstances and opportunities which arose at the time. Historically, the situation in 1924 differed perceptibly not only from what Marx had seen during his lifetime but also from what Lenin analysed on the eve and in the wake of the October Revolution: capitalism had stabilised and revolutionary situations in Europe failed to culminate in revolutions. The USSR was the world's only socialist country, with its industry and the working class decimated by World War I and the Civil War of 1918-1920. How could one cope with all these challenges?

And so we suggest, the Trotskyists said, an effort not to attain the ideal but to take the very first steps towards it. That is what the ISA strategy is all about. True, the measures we propose are brutally coercive. But what else can be done? How else can we start the nation on the path of progress? After all, we are poor and backward, and the external environment is hostile too: foreign countries are ready to use economic and military means to crush us. Moreover, politically conscious proletarian forces who are aware of the need to leap forward, even at the cost of great sacrifices, are few. The petty bourgeois sea around them is vast. We do not have the time to advance gradually and smoothly. We must leap ahead and become as strong as our adversaries, otherwise we will be destroyed. "Completing this leg of the journey as soon as possible, wasting no time in reaching a junction at which the socialist system fully taps its natural advantages over capitalism is a matter of life and death for the socialist state," Preobrezhensky said fervently.⁴ Therefore, to take this leap forward, 'we' must introduce rigid centralisation, reduce democracy and resort to authoritarian methods of leadership.

The arguments, serious enough, could not be dismissed as patently absurd. Their weight was what Bukharin sought to analyse. Unlike the so-called guiding 'nucleus' of the party Political Bureau — the triumvirate of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Stalin — he never accused Trotsky of being an evil conspirator who plotted to destroy the party and undermine socialism — charges that reached absurd levels during the 1930s, when Trotsky was branded as a 'fascist henchman' and 'Gestapo agent'. Bukharin saw Trotsky as a revolutionary who was dedicated to the working class and sought to hasten the triumph of socialism in his own country and in the world. But he was a seriously misguided revolutionary, and his illusions threatened the cause he sought to serve. Bukharin's great accomplishment was that he revealed the Trotsky phenomenon as a kind of historical and personal tragedy, not deliberate malice.

"This Has Nothing to do with Socialism"

According to Bukharin's astute and accurate observation, the fallacy of the ISA concept lay above all in the fact that the means suggested by Trotsky and his followers did not lead to the objectives proclaimed. Bukharin created a wonderful image of them as gardeners who pulled a plant's leaves upward to make it 'grow faster'.⁵ The plan was not to stimulate the inner potential for development but to 'pull the plant into sunlight' by force.

That was the actual essence of the Trotskyist programme — dragging people into socialism, 'herding them into paradise with a cudgel'.

In his articles Bukharin kept recalling Lenin's view that socialism could only be brought about by a creative historical effort of the masses themselves and that progress towards socialism implied the promotion of workers' *initiative*. Meanwhile, Trotskyism reproduced the old and outdated patterns of political relations and historical development — an all-powerful and omniscient ruling minority driving a backward and passive majority of workers towards a 'bright future' with the help of a carrot-and-stick policy. A strange way of building a 'society without exploitation' indeed.

Bukharin often stressed that Lenin saw democratic organisation of the people as essential not only to the political system of socialism but also to the system of genuine public ownership. Without this organisation, the state can only be a tool in the hands of a ruling minority (however ringing the democratic rhetoric in government offices) and ownership, a tool of bureaucratic rule. Democratic organisation of the people, Bukharin emphasised, is not an advisable addition to public ownership but an element indispensable to its exercise. Conversely, the Trotskyists actually wanted less democracy and more bureaucracy, more administration by fiat.

Bukharin was quite right: objectively, Trotskyism was not Leninism, it did not lead to genuine socialism. Instead, it led to the emergence of a different system of relations, neither capitalist nor socialist, the nature of which Bukharin did not identify because he did not believe that it was in any way relevant: he was convinced that Trotskyism had no chance of winning.

However, Bukharin had to answer another important question. The system suggested by Trotsky was not socialism and did not lead to socialism, but perhaps it could resolve the nation's pressing problems? After all, for all its brutality, we do regard the period of initial capital accumulation as a step forward. If so, why not, by analogy, apply the same yardstick to the Trotskyists' "initial socialist accumulation" and accept it as the heavy price exacted by progress?

With very good reason, Bukharin refused to do so. He held that an analogy between initial capitalist accumulation and the social projects of the Trotskyists was untenable. In the former case, conditions essential to *capitalism* were taking shape. But what about the Trotskyist interpretation of ISA? Was it really aimed at laying the foundations of *socialist* relations primarily at shaping the worker-owner who would participate, on an equal basis with others, in economic and political management? Would it create an opportunity for man to be transformed from a means of accumulating material wealth (as was the case previously) into the highest value of historical development? No, in spite of its name, ISA was not in fact *socialist*, advocating a number of methods typical of *initial capitalist* accumulation (exploitation of peasants, extra-economic coercion, repressive legislation, etc.). Bukharin made a valid point when he said that in the Trotskyist programmes, "the proletariat acts the way the knights of initial accumulation did".⁶ In an age when capitalism was losing its status as

an historical necessity, methods similar to those of initial capitalist accumulation were no longer historically justifiable and no longer possessed the elements of progress they had displayed two or three centuries previously.

Bukharin further argued that the basic Trotskyist precept of industrialisation 'at the expense' of the peasants (i.e., their exploitation and the stripping of agricultural assets) was dangerously wrong. The exploitation and severe taxation of the peasants (in order to secure sizeable resources for the nation's industry) would produce directly opposite results. The Trotskyists did not realise, Bukharin stressed, that *industrial development depended on progress in agriculture*; therefore Trotsky and Preobrazhensky's plans would not only devastate agriculture, but subsequently lead also to a crisis in industry, and in the economy as a whole.⁷ In other words (again, Bukharin uses a strikingly appropriate metaphor) the Trotskyists "suggest that the working class *wring the neck* of the goose that lays golden eggs, arguing that feeding the goose is pointless philanthropy."⁸

Bukharin observed that the reason why the Trotskyist concepts, plans and ideas were economically unworkable in concrete situations lay in the fundamental idea of Trotskyism — that long-term historical incompatibility exists between working-class interests and those of the peasants (seen merely as a class of private property owners). Trotsky regarded their alliance as temporary and transient, predicted their imminent future conflict and thought it necessary to prepare the working class for this clash, ideologically and materially, by strengthening it at the expense of the peasants. "Comrade Trotsky's mistake," Bukharin said, "is that he regards the conflict between the working class and the peasants as *inevitable* while it is merely *possible*. That is not the same thing at all. The conflict is inevitable only if the proletarian regime proves to be less profitable to the peasants than the bourgeois regime, if the peasants refuse to accept proletarian leadership. But this conflict is not inevitable, and it *will be avoided* if the party of the triumphant working class accords priority to the support and consolidation of the worker-peasant bloc."⁹

Key Points of the Alternative

Bukharin's alternative to the ISA concept was that NEP should be continued and enhanced, and that it should be interpreted broadly, not simply as a small opening for private initiative in a 'national economic structure based on ironclad planning'. Bukharin countered the system of extra-economic coercion and forced labour with the labour of the worker who is also the owner; the dictatorship of a bureaucratic minority with the self-government of the majority (the working people); the exploitation of the peasants with a firm alliance of workers and peasants as equals: industrialisation 'at the expense' of agriculture with the dialectics of the two branches of the national economy stimulating each other's development; rigid, bureaucratically centralised plans with flexible planning to encourage initiative. Whenever Bukharin was asked to sum up the essence of socialism, he invariably quoted Lenin's definition — *the system of civilised cooperators*.

Addressing advanced industrial workers, he described the principal methods of socialist construction during that period simply and profoundly: "Do not lose touch with the muzhik as your base; develop industry gradually. Remember that a kopeck accumulated by a farm is the basis for accumulating a ruble in socialist industry. Rely on the muzhik firmly in all your economic and other policies. Remould the muzhik through the cooperative movement, urge muzhiks to unite in cooperatives. You control the banks and the credits. Spend decades reshaping the muzhik and do not be put off by the fact that he is a property owner. Remember that he is to be your ally, an ally you are to reshape. Have patience, do not hurry, do not overdo things, do not flaunt your communist virtues and scare the muzhik off: keep them to yourself if he fears them, learn to handle him cautiously and wisely so that he would follow you — only then will you win."¹⁰

"A nonsensical utopia, a product of Bukharin's scholastic thinking," responded the Trotskyists with irony. Bukharin, they said, wants to build socialism while supporting and comprehensively encouraging the peasant, the system of small-scale commodity production, something which, in Lenin's words, keeps creating capitalism. Indeed, that was a problem the Trotskyists identified with some accuracy. Bukharin accepted their challenge and, drawing on Lenin's ideas, offered a brilliant solution — which, unfortunately, has since been consigned to oblivion. Let us try and revive Bukharin's advice. (For objectivity's sake, let us note in passing the far-fetched nature of the familiar claims that Bukharin's aim was to build socialism relying mostly on kulaks' farms. The charge is absurd. On the contrary, Bukharin firmly opposed those who "sniffle and whine about the accelerated offensive against the kulaks".¹¹)

Bukharin unerringly revealed the 'methodological source' of the Trotskyists' mistake in that they "approach the issue as if it were *static, not dynamic*".¹² In other words, they disregard the fact that in the course of revolutionary change people transform their social environment and thereby transform themselves. This was what was happening to the peasants as the revolution progressed from one stage to another. Nothing should be imposed on the peasant; he should not be 'forced' to accept socialism. He should be encouraged to join the struggle out of his own self-interest. He will remake himself in the course of his own struggle, his own activities. The task for us Marxist-Leninists is merely to find the appropriate slogans and the best possible means for accelerating this process.

Bukharin cited a well-known example of such strategy — the adoption by the Bolsheviks, after the October Revolution, of the Social Revolutionaries' agrarian programme. It seemed paradoxical for a proletarian revolution to effect a non-socialist agrarian programme. By approving it, the Bolsheviks acted as genuine democrats should: to them, grassroots demands were the law. Only practical experience gained by the masses would reveal the insufficiency of their demands, dispel the peasants' illusions and open their eyes to the advantages of working-class programmes.

This was the Leninist policy Bukharin fervently defended, insisting that

it would expand, not contract the social base of the revolution, and increasingly bring the interests of workers and peasants closer together, not into conflict. However, Bukharin did not claim that this process would develop without any social collisions. A sober realist, he acknowledged that these might be inevitable. He said that after the revolution, a regrouping of forces was clearly under way in rural areas. But given an adequate policy, this regrouping would not affect the masses, and they would remain an ally of the revolutionary working class. Bukharin summed up his analysis by noting that we had won our victories "precisely because the party followed Lenin's, not Trotsky's course; and it is precisely because we will continue along the path Lenin charted — that is, because we will keep pulling the peasants ahead in our wake while relying on them — that we will arrive at socialism."¹³

An Advocate of Slow Development Rates?

Another charge the Trotskyists levelled at Bukharin was that he advocated slow development. Again, the shot was wide of the mark: 'slow' in relation to what? To sort all this out, let us recall Bukharin's famous metaphor: "you Trotskyists want to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs, while we suggest feeding this goose for the time being. True, you Trotskyists will bring the flesh of this goose to the nation soon, even immediately. But then what? In a little while the goose will be eaten and, having left the nation without meat and without eggs, you will doom it to hunger. That is all your superhigh rates will amount to. We cannot 'wring the neck' of the village; we cannot, for the sake of acceleration, fleece everything that can be fleeced today, because the issue of 'accumulation' in *socialist industry* is inextricably linked with the issue of 'accumulation' on the *peasants' farms*."¹⁴

Bukharin was not at all in favour of 'low rates', of 'dragging our feet'. That is simply another myth. He said that "we must strive for the highest possible rate of industrialisation",¹⁵ and proved that this was not an abstract conclusion by citing the important and instructive historical record of the United States, which outstripped all other nations 'in the strength and *scope* of industrial development'. "Trotskyist ideologists are naïve enough to maintain", he said, "that the greatest possible amount of resources annually rechannelled from agriculture into industry would generally ensure the highest possible industrial development rate. But this is clearly wrong. The highest *long-term* rate will result from a situation in which industry increases on the basis of a rapidly growing agriculture. Only then will industry reach record levels in its development."¹⁶

Summing up the debate, the 15th Congress ruled in 1927 that "it is wrong to demand a maximum rechanneling of resources from agriculture into industry because this demand will not only mean a political break with the peasants but also undermine the supply of raw materials to industry itself, undermine its domestic market and exports, and upset the balance of the economic system as a whole. On the other hand, it would be wrong to rule out the use of rural resources for industrial development: today, this would mean a slower rate of advancement and tip the balance against industrialisation."¹⁷

That was how an attempt at creating a command-style administrative system (of 'barracks communism') was repulsed in 1923-1927. The policy of 'socialism as the creative effort of the masses', a policy begun by Lenin, prevailed. Nevertheless, at the turn of the decade it suffered a political defeat, yielding to new attacks of the command-style administrative system, this time in its Stalinist version. Why did this happen?

History's Twists and Turns

There had long existed two main trends in Russia's revolutionary movement — a 'barracks communism', authoritarian one (Zaichnevsky, Nechayev, Tkachev, and others) and a democratic trend which extolled the historical initiative of the people (Radishchev, Herten, Lavrov, Dobrolyubov and Chernyshevsky). These two types of orientation, political thinking and philosophy reflected the differences in the social and cultural conditions of the two principal sections into which the mass of revolutionaries were divided — the layer of advanced, culturally developed working people capable, as Marx put it, of preserving and adding to the 'fruits of civilisation', and a layer of those relegated to the bottom of the social ladder, of real 'outcasts'. Their hatred of the social order was in most cases totally destructive. On the one hand, this part of the oppressed could (and did) fight the oppressors with selfless heroism. On the other hand, there was the danger that these people would try and elevate their own moral precepts, largely shaped by their inhuman treatment under the old social order, to the rank of a universal law in the newly created society. As a result, Marx and Engels said, a revival of the old abomination in a new form might occur.

Lenin, too, was very well aware of that. He did not idealise Russia's revolutionary masses, and he knew that such trends did exist. The important thing, he said, was for the more advanced and culturally developed part of the working class and for its political party to channel the robust energy of the backward social strata in a constructive direction. With great patience and irrefutable arguments, Lenin criticised ultra-revolutionary attitudes to economic issues, ethnic policy, questions of culture and, finally, to the prospects of a world revolution. That was very difficult political work, and its success was connected in many ways with the unity and cohesion of the party's 'Old Guard'. Lenin urged his successors to protect that unity: if you allow infighting and fragmentation, he said, you will not be able to control the impatient, uncivilised, petty bourgeois sea that surrounds you. And he asked the question which plagued him constantly during his last years: will this mean a retreat of the revolution, a Thermidor?

But like many other bequests left by Lenin, this one was ignored by his successors. First and foremost, the victory of the command-style administrative system was attributable to the vast numerical superiority of petty bourgeois, culturally and politically backward forces, both in society and in the party, to the disintegration of party unity and, subsequently, to the virtual disappearance of the party's 'Old Guard'. Unfortunately, even the best defence and development of Lenin's policy, of the democratic

trend within the party (set forth in Bukharin's works) was not free from major defects, and this weakened the ability of the party and of advanced workers to defend themselves against the impending disease of Stalinism.

What Are These Shortcomings?

Bukharin criticised Trotskyism only as a sum total of theoretically flawed views. His criticism was excellent, but he failed to demonstrate that the repressive/coercive system (suggested by Trotsky) was simply a specific manifestation of the sentiments and aspirations of powerful social forces. *That* was the point to which he did not draw the party's attention — although the overall task was not only to present a critique of Trotskyism but also to explain how the headstrong pressure of these forces could be resisted and how they could be made to follow the right path, how the revolution's two great 'continents' could be merged into a single 'landmass'.

Aside from that, Bukharin did not separate the essence of the command-style administrative system from its Trotskyist form. Therefore, the party developed a defensive reaction against Trotskyism proper but not against the substantive aspects of the system in general. When it began to re-emerge in a different, Stalinist form, few recognised it as a manifestation of the same danger. (One might note in passing that the new frequent assertion of the virtually complete similarity of Trotsky's and Stalin's views is an 'extremist' opinion too. But that is something to be discussed in its own right, as are the salient elements of Brezhnev's policies.)

The situation at home and abroad called for a higher rate of accelerated development than the pace suggested by Bukharin. Meanwhile, opportunities already existed to enrich, enhance and perfect the programme of acceleration adopted by the 15th Party Congress. First of all, NEP could be extended to the sphere of international relations — something on which Leonid Krasin, Lenin's comrade-in-arms and foreign policy architect, insisted since 1923. His proposals were bold and sweeping, particularly the one he advanced at the 13th Party Conference, suggesting that it was perfectly possible to secure foreign credits and set up international concessions in exchange for an obligation to pay off tsarist Russia's debts to the West (debts cancelled by the October Revolution). But his ideas were attacked immediately: the Soviet Union would allegedly become 'dependent' on the capitalist world and so this proposal was unworthy of a proletarian revolutionary. Bukharin, too, overlooked the validity of Krasin's ideas.

He also failed to fully understand and develop Lenin's idea of state capitalism within socialism. When he was younger and 'farther on the Left', Bukharin tried to convince Lenin that 'state capitalism' implied the state's role as a co-exploiter, an ally of capital, but that in a state of workers and peasants state capitalism was therefore impossible, that it was a theoretical mistake and so on. This prompted Lenin to accuse Bukharin justifiably of inflexible and insufficiently dialectical thinking. He missed the fact that Lenin referred to a new and completely unique social relationship — enterprise in a *socialist* state which allows it but also regulates and restricts it.

Finally, Bukharin did not suggest a sufficiently convincing answer to several new and complex problems that had arisen by 1929. The situation was far from simple. Agriculture was thriving, but industry failed to provide it with the necessary manufactured goods. Besides, Bukharin did not explain how the peasants could be effectively involved in industrialisation with the help of *economic* means. Nor did he find the proper form for the realisation of Lenin's ideas about the cooperative effort in industry. Some believed that Lenin referred only to a cooperative movement in rural areas and in small-scale economic production, and that industry should be managed by the state. In other words, the cooperative effort did not spread to industry; nor did elements of commercial viability and self-management, or incentives to greater labour productivity — although Lenin's definition of socialism as a system of civilised cooperators also applied to the cities and to their relations with rural areas.

None of this came to pass. The opportunities were forfeited and, instead of the cooperative effort spreading to industry, urban 'barracks' invaded rural areas and Stalinist collectivisation began. The democratic way of socialist development championed by Bukharin was blocked for many years to come. But the confrontation of the social 'continents', two policies — authoritarian and democratic — continued. The impulses generated by Lenin's leadership during and after the October Revolution, did not disappear.

Now that the Leninist course is coming into its own, Bukharin's works contribute substantially to the restoration of historical truth. His critique of the command-style administrative alternative is so forceful, convincing, graphic and sweeping that it will surely become one of the most cherished landmarks of Marxist theoretical thought.

¹ See *9th Congress of the RCP(B) Protocols*, Moscow, 1960, pp. 93-99, 537 (in Russian).

² *Vestnik Kommunisticheskoi akademii* (Communist Academy News), Moscow, 1924, No. 8, p. 59.

³ *For Leninism*, A Collection of Articles, Moscow-Leningrad, 1925, p. 332 (in Russian).

⁴ *Vestnik*, 1924, No. 8, p. 59.

⁵ Nikolai Bukharin, *Notes of an Economist*, Moscow-Leningrad, 1928, p. 19. (in Russian).

⁶ *For Leninism*, p. 293.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 304.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 353.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 371.

¹¹ Nikolai Bukharin, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

¹² *For Leninism*, p. 303.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 364-365.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 303.

¹⁵ Nikolai Bukharin, *op. cit.*, p. 43.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷ *The CPSU in the Resolutions and Decisions of Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenary Meetings*, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1984, p. 277 (in Russian).

viewpoints

Goals Of Our Struggle

Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar —
CC General Secretary, Communist Party
of Nepal

SOCIAL contrasts are as striking as physical ones in our country. The Kingdom of Nepal, situated in the Himalayas between India and China, has perhaps all the climatic zones, from the tropics to perennial snow in the world's highest mountains, including Everest. Tourists coming to Kathmandu from all over the world find themselves in the exotic Middle Ages: a motley throng of people moves through narrow streets winding between decrepit huts, while nearby stand magnificent palaces, temples of striking beauty and amazing monuments of ancient Oriental culture. King Birendra of Nepal is one of the world's last plenipotentiary monarchs. His family and courtiers wallow in riches while the overwhelming majority of the 18 million Nepalese live in abject misery, eking out a living from their tiny plots of land.

It was in that situation that our party, speaking for the interests of the people, came into being. Though relatively young (founded in 1949), the Communist Party of Nepal is well-known and respected in the country. What are the goals that the Nepalese Communists are fighting for? What is their view of the situation at home and abroad?

Our party was formed during a period of revolutionary upheaval against the autocratic regime of the feudal Rana family, which had usurped power with British assistance.¹ The clan ruled Nepal for over a century, providing hereditary prime ministers while the Kings remained nominal heads of state.

It was one of the darkest periods in Nepalese history. Ruthless terror and arbitrary rule held sway, the people were poor, without rights, and almost 100 per cent illiterate, and big landowners mercilessly exploited the peasants, who were permanently in bondage. Many of them left their homes for other countries in search of employment, or signed up for the British mercenary colonial army. Slavery itself was practised right up to 1924. Fearful of losing their privileges, the tyrants, who were in league with the British, deliberately kept the country isolated from the rest of the world and prevented its industrial development and cultural progress.

The Nepalese Communists, together with other parties and democratic forces, were active in the people's armed uprising against this despotic dynasty. The Rana tyranny was toppled and the King's authority restored in 1951.

Even after that victory our party enjoyed legal status only for short

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periods. Nevertheless, its influence among the peasantry and students continued to grow. We secured several seats in both chambers of parliament after Nepal's first parliamentary elections in 1959. The party was becoming a political force to be reckoned with. But in 1960 the King decided to stop playing at democracy, dissolved Parliament and banned political parties and trade unions. We were forced underground.

The party believes that the current regime is anti-people and that no reforms can change it essentially. It will take fundamental political change to improve social life. The King relies on the bureaucratic state machine, the police and army, and exercises virtually unlimited powers. All the same, he has to manoeuvre and resort to propaganda tricks in his bid to preserve social tranquillity.

Feudal relations still prevail in Nepal. The landowners have kept their privileges and the best farmlands, while the farmers' plots continue to be broken up until some of them can no longer support their owners. Literacy is below 30 per cent. Nepal is the world's fourth poorest country in per capita income (US\$160 a year) and is becoming the third. Living standards are declining steadily: recently Nepal was a 'comfortable' sixth from bottom on that list. Urban poverty is especially striking: many people cannot even afford any vegetables, and most Nepalese eat meat no more than once a week.

According to the National Planning Commission, more than half the Nepalese live below the poverty line, fixed at an income level of two Nepalese rupees (US\$0.1) a day. Child labour is used without a limit on working hours and pay is far below the adult wage.

The government's economic policy obstructs any reduction in unemployment or the creation of new jobs, blocks economic development and pushes up prices. Social or cultural development programmes are non-existent. Foreign interests are being allowed to tighten their hold on Nepalese commerce and industry, while our national bourgeoisie is weak and contributes little to industrial growth; its business operations are confined to domestic and foreign trade and smuggling. Most of the country's business is controlled by Indian tycoons and by capitalists from South Korea, US, Japan, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Thailand. To make matters worse, members of the Royal family and high-ranking officials siphon off millions of dollars from foreign credits into their own bank accounts in Switzerland and other countries. Corruption is rampant. The upper classes keep inciting religious and ethnic fanaticism and communal strife.

Our ultimate goal is socialism but we are living in a feudal society, and so our priority, unattainable without changing political power, is to do away with this social system. That is why we first of all demand political freedoms that would set the stage for general democratic struggle. Our next task will be non-capitalist development. All the progressive forces should concentrate their efforts on breaking the resistance of their common enemy, the feudal aristocracy, and for this reason pro-bourgeois and left parties should now work hand in hand. Of course, new problems will arise when political power has been changed, and the Communist Party will have other tactics and slogans. But our immediate goal is a

national democratic revolution.

Today the Nepalese Communists' primary objective is to have basic democratic rights restored. Eight years ago, bowing to a broad protest movement, the regime called a referendum on whether to allow political parties in the country. Two million voters wanted them but another 2.4 million cast their ballots for what is known as the *Panchayat* (non-party) system.

The important thing is that two million people were in favour of having political parties, i.e., democracy in social life. The regime is finding it increasingly difficult to ban individual actions by Communists and other political movements.

But even today we can speak our minds publicly only at the risk of being arrested. Mass rallies and public meetings are forbidden. Neither is the party allowed to publish books, pamphlets, or newspapers: one can publish only in one's own name. All this makes us a clandestine party, enjoying a certain quasi-legal status.

We are aware, as I have already said, that we cannot win single-handed, and so we try to relate our efforts to the struggles of other progressive forces. The largest of them is the pro-bourgeois Nepali Congress Party, which in the mid-1980s launched a struggle for civil rights and liberties. Communists vigorously contributed to it under the slogan of rallying all the left and democratic forces. Our attempts to hold mass rallies and demonstrations — to demand the restoration of democracy and a war on corruption and high prices — failed because several hundred people were arrested. The authorities further instigated a series of acts of provocation, involving terrorism in public places and hand grenade and bomb attacks. The situation was used to crush the democratic movement and I myself was one of the many people thrown into prison.

Most of the political prisoners were released after six months but I spent two and a half years in jail without charge or trial. They wanted me to repent and file a plea for mercy but I refused: I had not done anything wrong but merely wanted democracy in the country. I was eventually released last autumn, no thanks to the government: there was strong public pressure to have all the political prisoners freed.

There are also ultra-leftists on the Nepalese political scene who have some influence on students and professors. They do not recognise the need for a democratic phase of the revolution but advocate an immediate transition to the dictatorship of the proletariat. We communists do not share their ideas and believe that our society is not yet ripe for such a change. In our view, moreover, their concepts should be rejected because they are in fact grist to the mill of reaction.

So long as feudal structures prevail in our economy, politics and culture, they should be the main target of our struggle. At present even the pro-capitalist forces (except the comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie) are our allies because they have an interest in dismantling the feudal system.

The Royalists and their administration would like to split the ranks of their class enemies by means of a 'divide and rule' policy. The ultra-leftists are playing into their hands. But the left and general democratic movements keep growing in spite of these and other difficulties. Our

slogan is: 'Left unity is not an alternative to, but part of, broad democratic unity'. The clearer the left forces' understanding of that fact and of the great potential of this tactic the better the prospect of creating a broad democratic front. Ultimately, the success of the revolutionary struggle at the present stage will depend to a large degree on such a front.

This does not mean that the economic struggle of the working people should take a back seat for the time being. Communists demand, for instance, that surplus farmland be taken away from big landowners and distributed to the poorer peasants and that the amount of wealth of high-ranking government officials be made public. We think it necessary to develop agriculture and national industry, raise wages, reduce unemployment, and improve the education and health care systems.

Our idea therefore is to carry on both political and economic struggle, but the main aim at the moment is, I repeat, to work for the restoration of democratic rights. That is why the demand for a multi-party system is our priority; it must become the rallying point for all the left and democratic forces in their struggle for a revolutionary transformation of society.

Communists must take account of the reality of religion, which is very influential in Nepal. Around 90 per cent of the population profess Hinduism, 9 per cent are Buddhists, and Islam and specific local faiths also claim some following. The regime is out to foment religious fanaticism. A recent world Hindu conference sung the praises of the 'world Hindu Kingdom' and 'the King of all the world's Hindus'. But the progressive democratic movement and the people's religious spirit are not hopelessly antagonistic from the point of view of our country's history and traditions. Marxists take great care not to offend the people's religious sentiments.

We try to mobilise people for a large-scale struggle for peace and disarmament. This effort also faces many difficulties. Europeans and people in many other lands, for example, have had first-hand experience of the horror of two world wars and are well aware that a third world war would destroy civilisation. But our people do not readily understand this problem. Nepal was not directly involved in either of the two world wars and for a Nepalese they are just history, which he or she has heard from others or, at best, read about in books. It is in part for this reason that we find it difficult to inspire people to struggle for human survival and for a nuclear-free and non-violent world.

Nepalese Communists pin their greatest hopes on new political thinking, which is already bearing fruit in international affairs. In these troubled times of great responsibility it is extremely important to realise that the world is interdependent and integral and that global problems cannot be resolved without worldwide cooperation.

As for Nepal's foreign policy, our government's avowed commitment to peace is explained by several circumstances. Nepal is wedged in, as it were, between 'two elephants', India and China, and is strategically important to the United States. Any government, however reactionary, would tread cautiously in this situation. Incidentally, the government's proposal for making Nepal a 'peace zone' has a domestic rationale as well: the regime would feel more secure if the Nepalese progressive forces were denied

international solidarity from the Indian public, for instance, in their struggle against feudalism.

We have always urged the government to resolutely oppose the United States' attempts at involving Nepal in its strategic interests, to keep down the country's debts to the West and vigorously deplore the American policy of blackmail and threats against independent countries. All our proposals are aimed at promoting cooperation with our great neighbours, India and China, and also at challenging the financial diktat of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Nepalese Communists closely follow processes under way in socialist countries. The renewal of socialism is a very important fact and glasnost and democratisation in the Soviet Union are broadening the possibilities for our own struggle toward political freedom. It is our conviction that the Soviet people and their Communist Party will have the strength to bring the cause of perestroika to its successful conclusion. It will be a major contribution not just to building a new society in the Soviet Union but also to the development of the entire international communist and national liberation movement.

Facing heavy odds, Nepalese Communists are resolved to fight on for the emancipation and happiness of their people, and for the triumph of peace, progress and socialism.

¹ In the early 19th century the British colonialists, trying to bolster their position and undermine the opposition in Nepal, exploited the enmity between the Kingdom's various feudal clans. On the night of September 15, 1846, the British helped the Rana brothers to massacre their rivals, among them anti-British courtiers and the more influential members of major feudal families.

Against An Authoritarian Regime

Shankar Basu — CC Secretary,
Communist Party of Bangladesh (CPB)

In Bangladesh or Golden Bengal, as Rabindranath Tagore fondly called this land, there is a tireless struggle by the people for democracy, and a complex process of consolidating forces, involving a variety of contradictions, schisms and mergers, stormy rallies and strikes. Bangladesh Communists, who this year mark the 40th anniversary of their party, are actively involved in this movement. What is their role? How do they assess the situation in the country and their objectives? The article given below answers these questions.

THE present situation reveals a lack of democracy in the country, an anti-people government policy, and our people constantly suffering from

hunger, disease and epidemics. In terms of average income, Bangladesh is among the world's poorest states.

Two-thirds of the peasantry, which makes up 85 per cent of the population, has no land, and another 3 per cent lose it every year. Unless this process is stopped, all the land will pass to a small group of the rich, who do not work it.

The country's situation now closely resembles that which existed before independence in 1971. What has brought about such a state of affairs?

In the first place, Bangladesh depends almost entirely on foreign capital, with 85 per cent of the state budget funded by external sources. It cannot be formed without the cooperation of the Bangladesh Aid Consortium. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and other such organisations have Bangladesh in their 'clutches'. Each year the 'benefactor's' aid is preceded by an IBRD report on the development of Bangladesh, which actually determines government policy, because this report gives concrete recommendations. A refusal to follow them involves an immediate suspension of aid payments. Therefore, in taking the 'advice' of this world financial centre, the present Bangladesh leadership continues to pursue a policy of denationalisation, hiving off previously nationalised enterprises and banks, as they did with the Industrial Development Bank, the Industrial Loan Agency and others.

Furthermore, the 'trustees' advised the regime not to spend the allocated funds on agriculture. After independence, in order to develop agriculture, the government took a number of measures to supply the peasants with seed, pesticides and implements. This aid is no longer available, and the relevant state agencies have been privatised. As a result, the cost of fertilisers, machinery, etc., has increased tenfold over the last twelve years, while the purchasing price of farm output remains unchanged. According to government estimates, the cost of producing a bale of jute (our export staple) amounts to 250 taka¹, but in the last three years the Bangladesh peasant has been forced to sell raw jute at a price of less than Tk.150 per bale. Each year the country produces about one million tons of raw jute, which means that within three years our farmers have lost Tk.990m.

The imperialists and their henchmen, the military junta, have plunged the people into poverty and dependence, and the country suffocates under a burden of debts. But who profits by this? Firstly, a handful of comprador bourgeoisie. During the independence struggle Bangladesh had only three multi-millionaires, whereas now they number over 2,000. According to our party economists' data, 35 fatcats own fortunes of about Tk.1 billion. Secondly, the civilian and military bureaucracy. Who has bought grand villas, and started trading at great profit? These are usually top army officers and generals.

The Communist Party regards the present system of exploitation in Bangladesh as neocolonialist, its instrument being the comprador and bureaucratic bourgeoisie, whose interests are closely linked with imperialist circles. The main sphere of activity of this bourgeoisie is commerce, which is why exploitation in this case operates through a cheap buy-up and export of local raw materials and a high-price purchase of

goods from capitalist states. Transnational corporations play the main role in this.

The domestic political scene is dominated by the prolonged military rule. The military governed until 1971, followed by a post-independence hiatus of a little over three years, and then, in 1975, military rule was reimposed. Irrespective of the 'party suits' of ministers, the government carries out the generals' orders. To maintain the existing system, the ruling class needs a military regime, which means no democracy, and a ban on mass meetings, demonstrations and so forth.

Bangladesh's big bourgeoisie, comprador in its nature, is not as strong as India's for example. The latter has a tradition of anti-imperialism, definite support among the masses and an accumulated experience of electioneering. The bourgeoisie in our country is not an anti-imperialist force because it depends wholly on foreign capital. It has no political traditions of its own and cannot win authority among the popular masses and so hope for victory in free elections. That is why the military machine is in use and the dictatorial system remains unchanged. The regime some times tarts itself up by making some changes to the electoral system, but its *anti-people nature* does not alter because of this.

Our party has always said that it is ready to participate in meaningful parliamentary elections. As is known, the last election in March was preceded by the imposition of martial law and a dissolution of Parliament. The opposition alliances demanded the resignation of President Ershad, but, despite a broad wave of strikes and protest rallies, the regime survived, with the help of clubs and bullets. In this situation the CPB decided to boycott the elections because they offered no safeguards for a free expression of the electorate's will. They were a sheer farce.

We are trying to react flexibly to a changing alignment of forces. We actively support the working-class, peasant, student and other mass organisations which want a more democratic, not Islamised society² and improved living standards; we also demand the release of the arrested Communists and other political detainees.

The Fourth CPB Congress, held in April last year, re-affirmed the possibility of unifying people of different persuasions, from Marxists to religious workers, in the current struggle for democracy. A re-edited Party Programme, approved by the congress, has set the task of working for a revival of the country through a *national democratic revolution which is socialist in orientation*. We perceive the way towards this goal as the creation of a national democratic front, which includes all anti-imperialist forces.

Twenty-three parties are now participating in anti-government actions for the establishment of democracy. The CPB considers that a *broad unity of the popular masses embracing different forces — from the workers to the patriotic bourgeoisie — is now possible*. Even the part of the bourgeoisie that collaborates with the present regime may join the anti-dictatorial movement, because resentment is growing among these circles too. University faculty members, prominent lawyers, the workers, peasants, agricultural labourers and the petty bourgeoisie are all involved in the struggle for democracy. Many of them have suffered imprisonment and

arrest. The driving force behind this essentially revolutionary process is provided by working people. It is mainly through their joint efforts that the foundations of the reactionary dictatorship are being shaken.

The struggle against the anti-people military regime now heads the agenda. But this does not mean that we shall throw off the shackles of neocolonialism simply by getting rid of it. Therefore the Communist Party believes that we must not limit ourselves to democratic changes — the working masses should be led on to further *class confrontation*. This is the challenge that now faces the Communists, and the CPB must play the principal role.

The bourgeois democratic parties in Bangladesh, despite their apparent popularity, have been losing their former political influence. Now we are not yet in a position to head the movement against the authoritarian regime, but, given a unity of left forces within the national democratic front, the Communists will become a serious counterweight to the bourgeois influence in it. This spring the CC CPB has critically examined its own policy and analysed in depth the positions of other parties. It has concluded that our role in the movement has increased and now we must initiate an anti-dictatorial front and march in the vanguard of the working masses. The party has no right to tag behind the bourgeoisie.

Guided by the decisions of the 3rd CPB Congress and its programme *The Bangladesh Way to Socialism*, we have stepped up our work among the masses, especially in the provinces. The party has put forward demands for a radical land reform, the establishment of fair prices for farm products and a guaranteed wage for work in the agricultural sector. In particular much has been done to rally the landless peasants and agricultural workers, who are gradually becoming an organised force and our support. The state had handed over about 10,000 hectares of land to farmers. This has already produced results. The Communists' influence in the countryside has grown: whereas several years ago the party had its organisations in 30 districts, today they operate in 60.

We have about 1,600 primary organisations and are constantly working to mobilise other sections of the population. Much attention is being paid to students, working youth and women.

Bangladesh is far from stable. The democratic movement is developing despite its ups and downs. Sometimes the bourgeoisie betrays the interests of the struggle against the regime and identifies itself with the military, and sometimes we ourselves err, but *objectively, the current political situation cannot exist for long*. The authorities are completely isolated from the people.

The ruling regimes in Pakistan and Bangladesh are the zealous exponents of the policy of imperialism in the region, the defenders of its interests. The forces of reaction are relying on them to destabilise this part of the Asian continent. Therefore the struggle for democracy and the independence of our country is inseparably connected with the defence of peace.

¹ The taka is the currency of Bangladesh (Tk.30.3 = US\$1).

² Following approval of the 8th amendment to the Constitution at the June session of the National Assembly Islam has become the state religion of Bangladesh. — Ed.

Labour in the Computer Age

New Approaches To Canada's Class Structure

Gerry van Houten — CC member,
Communist Party of Canada (CPC)

THE scientific and technological revolution (STR) has brought about a radical transformation of the productive forces in terms of both the materials and instruments of labour and of labour itself. On the one hand, the STR quantitatively and qualitatively increased the level of material production. On the other hand, it has reduced the relative weight of the industrial working class while increasing that of other strata of the working people.

In the capitalist world the STR, in the period since World War II, can be divided into roughly two stages. The signposts for them were the development of the first computer in 1943 and the invention of the microchip in 1971.

The first stage was characterised by the rapid and accelerated growth in both production and productivity of the heavy industries, manufacturing and transportation. Mechanization and automation were proceeding at such a rate in a number of industries that, by the early 1960s, fears were becoming widespread that automation would bring about a level of technological unemployment hitherto unknown. Apprehension among working people was so great that the question of automation and technological unemployment received a great deal of attention in the working class movement including the Communist Party.

Although unemployment was slowly creeping upwards during the 1960s, it did not materialize on the scale that was expected. There were three reasons for this. Firstly, the continuing relative prosperity of the capitalist economy during the 1960s ensured that the demand of the domestic and world markets continued to grow, thus creating new jobs despite the rapid growth in industrial productivity.

Secondly, the working people's successful struggle for more accessible education and health care in the 1960s coincided with the further development of the STR which required a better educated and healthier working class. Although the rate of growth of jobs in material production slowed down in comparison to previous decades, the rapid expansion of the trade and service sectors (particularly education and health care) was more than sufficient to take up the increasing slack in the industrial sphere.

In the 1950s and 1960s, computers had little impact on the productive forces because they were enormously expensive. Only governments and the biggest corporations could afford them. Other types of high technology were still in their infant stages of development.

In the 1950s and 1960s, Canada's class and occupational structure witnessed the continuation of the trend which began at the turn of the

century, although at a much more accelerated rate. Due to the growth of monopolization and mechanization of the countryside, not only did the share represented by farmers in Canada's work force fall, but also their absolute numbers. In 1931 farmers accounted for about 1.1 million working Canadians (20 per cent). In 1981, there were only 481,600 farmers constituting just over four per cent of the working population.

Though the 1950s and 1960s saw a growth in the absolute number of the industrial proletariat, its share fell from 38% of the work force in 1931 to 32% in 1971. Moreover, the industrial proletariat underwent substantial restructuring as the number of construction, processing and manufacturing workers increased substantially while the share represented by forestry, mining and transportation workers declined.

In contrast, clerical, trade and service employees more than doubled their number between 1951 and 1971. Their share of the work force increased from 27% to 35%. The number of professionals almost tripled with educators and those who worked in health care accounting for most of this growth.

The second, present stage of the post-war STR is characterized by the widespread introduction and use of new technologies, particularly those arising out of the invention and commercial application of the microchip. Advances made in the 1970s and 1980s in computer technology provide an outstanding example of this phenomenon.

Canada's first computer was built in 1951 at the University of Toronto. Containing hundreds of fragile parts and occupying a room the size of a lecture hall, it consumed enormous amounts of electricity and frequently broke down. Thanks to microchips, computer-processors can now be plugged into an ordinary outlet and placed on a desk. Small as they are, they are far more powerful and more efficient than the 1951 computer ever was. Moreover, it became cheap enough so that small businesses and even individuals could afford them. But most importantly, whereas the 1951 computer required a large number of skilled workers to operate and maintain it, the modern desk-top computer can be operated by people who are otherwise unfamiliar with computer science and requires relatively little maintenance. *On an all-Canadian scale, this and other new technologies radically transformed the productive forces. Inevitably, this had an impact on the country's class and occupational structure.*

During the 1970s, the industrial proletariat continued to grow in terms of absolute numbers. It actually grew at a slightly faster rate than the labour force as a whole. Interestingly, there was very little change in its internal composition although it ought to be noted that the weight of processing and manufacturing workers within the industrial working class increased somewhat. Their share increased still further in the first half of the 1980s due to a large leap in the export of Canadian manufactured and semi-processed goods to the US. Meanwhile clerical, commercial and service workers grew ever more in number.

Teaching and health care also saw a sharp decline in their growth rate in the 1970s, only one-quarter of the rate they enjoyed in the 1951-1971 period. Government cutbacks in health care and education were the immediate causes of this phenomenon but a more fundamental reason is to

be found in the growth of technological unemployment and the *de-skilling of jobs*.

Micro-electronics, whose basis is the microchip and new telecommunications technology, created whole new categories of jobs (computer programmers, systems analysts, etc.) but it also eliminated more jobs than it created or simplified them so that little skill was needed. For example, in the year that the microchip was invented, there was a wide gap between the well-paid, highly skilled, male-dominated craft of the typesetter and the usually poorly paid, semi-skilled, female-dominated job of the office secretary-typist. Word processors changed all this. They have revolutionized the printing industry to such an extent that, through in-house facilities, corporations can by-pass many stages in publishing and printing that were once done in print shops using the still female, still poorly paid typist who, with training in the programming of a computer, can handle the work once done by a middle-typesetter.

The new technologies have also exacerbated the long-term tendency for unemployment to rise. While there are fluctuations in unemployment resulting from capitalism's economic cycle, technological-structural unemployment is playing an increasing role. In the past two decades, each new cyclical crisis has been preceded by a boom whose level of unemployment was higher than the previous boom. In 1979, the last boom year before the 1980-1982 economic crisis, unemployment was 7.5% and then subsequently rose to almost 12%. Five full years of the boom phase in the economic cycle had only managed to reduce unemployment rate to 7.8% by early 1988. In this connection, the 27th CPC Convention, held on May 20-23, 1988, emphasized that the continuing high level of unemployment is being used by monopoly capital to maximize its profits at the expense of the working people.

In point of fact, the percentage of unemployed would be much higher if it were not for the fact that corporations are increasingly resorting to the use of *part-time workers*. By 1987, the number of part-time workers exceeded two million. A very large proportion of these workers wanted full-time jobs but could not find them.

There were two main reasons for this leap in the growth of part-time employment. Firstly, real incomes were declining, thus compelling the last great unused reserve of labour, women, to enter the labour market. Two-thirds of all part-time workers were women and most of the remainder were young men. Secondly, employers were taking advantage of this situation to avoid the payment of fringe benefits. Since part-time workers generally earn lower wages and rarely enjoy company benefits such as dental and medical plans, insurance and pensions, employers have a very strong incentive to hire part-time workers as a means of saving 'labour costs.' Contributory benefits paid to full-time workers often amount to 15% to 25% of the latter's income.

While the STR of the 1970s and 1980s increased the number of unemployed and de-skilled whole categories of jobs, it also promoted the formation of new categories and led to the rapid expansion of still others. Consider that, in 1961, there were only 700 systems analysts and computer programmers in all of Canada. In 1971, there were more than 22,000 of

them and this increased almost another three times to 61,000 by 1981 and continued into the first half of the 1980s due to the rapid spread in the use of computers and word processors throughout the economy. A faster growth rate was registered among engineering technologists and technicians whose number more than quadrupled in the 1970s although the rate of growth subsequently slowed down. Although these statistics would initially seem rather impressive, in fact Canada lags far behind other developed capitalist countries. In 1983, Canada had 2.7 research scientists and engineers per thousand labour force. The Netherlands, Sweden, France, Federal Republic of Germany, the US and Japan had 3.7, 3.9, 3.9, 4.8, 6.4 and 7.4 respectively.

The root cause of this situation is Canada's dependence on high technology imports to satisfy most of its domestic demand. That is why there is a big demand in Canada for workers who know how to operate and repair computers and other high technology equipment, but a rather small demand for those who develop them, including basic research.

The second phase of the STR has not only restructured the composition of the working class, it has also led to the *rapid expansion of the petty bourgeoisie*. In 1969, there were 128,300 companies with assets of less than \$10 million as compared to over 1,000 companies with assets over \$10 million. In 1983, there were 394,200 of the smaller companies and 3,700 of the larger firms, most of which were owned by Canada's small number of diversified monopoly corporations. Indeed, in 1983, 500 corporations controlled 3,200 firms whose total assets accounted for almost half of all corporate assets in Canada, a substantial increase from the 42.9% the top 500 held in 1968. In other words, corporate concentration proceeded simultaneously with the growth of the number of small businesses.

Furthermore, although the growth rate of trade and service occupations slowed down considerably compared to the 1960s, two-thirds of the new small businesses were established in these two sectors. This trend was even more accentuated in the construction industry where the number of firms with assets of less than \$10 million increased by 3.5 times. Combined, these sectors accounted for 80% of the growth in the number of small businesses. This left its imprint on the composition of labour, its face, nature and inner structure.

In other words, the structural changes in the Canadian economy and in the composition of the working class *has confronted the trade union movement with a new situation*.

Firstly, the growth of technological unemployment has given corporations a decided advantage in their struggle against the trade unions. In the labour market, the supply of workers far exceeds the demand even during the boom phase of the economic cycle, thus providing monopoly with a large pool of workers who are compelled by economic necessity to accept any work, poorly paid, part-time, in order to make a living. This situation has made it much more difficult for organized workers to demand higher wages and more fringe benefits. It is commonplace for the employer to demand concessions from the workers for whom the central issue is not so much more wages but job security.

Secondly, the new technologies have severely eroded the memberships

of a number of industrial unions, especially mining, forestry, railway and printing industries. As the Policy Resolution of the 27th CPC Convention pointed out, this was directly connected to the fact that the new technologies have caused *new industries to come into existence while old industries, many of them unionized, have gone out of existence*. Monopoly capital is thus using the STR to undermine the traditional bases of the industrial trade unions. Big business also hopes that these structural changes in the economy will create more favorable conditions for undermining the rights and activities of the labour movement.

Thirdly, the emergence of new job categories and the rapid growth of certain others has placed before the trade union movement the question of organizing the unorganized not only in the established tertiary industries but also the many unorganized workers whose workplaces make extensive and intensive use of high technology. The new technologies have made it possible for corporations to build a large number of highly specialized small plants with very few workers instead of a small number of large plants with many workers. These conditions make it easier for management to control the workers and frustrate union attempts to organize them.

Fourthly, the new technologies have substantially increased the ability of the transnationals to take flight to low wage areas both domestically and internationally. Transnationals readily use the threat to run away to force workers to reduce their demands or even to make concessions.

Fifthly, the labour movement has to concern itself with the fact that a large part of Canada's high technology industry is oriented on providing parts for the US arms industry. In Canada, this industry represents the most pro-US section of Canadian monopoly capital. It is prepared to sacrifice Canada's independence and the living standards of its people for the sake of making big profits in the US arms market.

Sixthly, defending social programs against the cutback policies of the federal and provincial governments has become more directly connected to the defense of jobs and living standards. Although the governments would never say so publicly because it would be political suicide, in practice they take the attitude that the unemployed and semi- and unskilled do not need education — therefore the cutbacks. Consequently, such people do not need as high a level of health care because uneducated or partially educated workers who become sick or die can easily be replaced from the large reserve of unemployed and part-time workers.

Seventhly, the growth of unemployment and part-time work encouraged the federal and provincial governments to side openly with the corporations against the trade unions. Undermining the collective bargaining process, weakening trade unions rights and frequent use of legislation to break strikes are all aimed at curbing the power of the trade union to defend the interests not only of their members but also of Canadian working people generally, and subordinating them to the narrow profit-oriented interests of the transnationals.

The changes that have been brought about by the STR in the class and occupational structure of the labour force have necessitated a *change in the strategy and tactics of the Communist Party*. Communists are faced not only

with new issues within a transforming industrial working class but also with the special and specific concerns of those sections of the working population whose weight in society has increased.

Canadian Communists bear in mind that different social strata by their nature pursue different interests and that most Canadians do not yet connect their own concerns with those of others. The very difficult task facing Communists — and one must also add here the trade union movement — is to unite these different currents into a single powerful stream that can effect progressive political change.

In recent years, the labour movement has developed closer ties with the women's movement, the Native peoples and local and municipal organizations. These and other organizations have united in their opposition to the free trade deal negotiated by the Mulroney government with US imperialism. However, such alliances need to be solidified and include the broadest sections of Canadian society including political parties.

What objectively unites these various social currents, including some sections of monopoly capital and small businessmen, is the common struggle, although in different forms, against US transnational domination and the ruling pro-US section of Canadian monopoly capital whose policies threaten the Canadian people's economic and social well-being and the country's independence.

That is why Communists call for the formation of a *people's movement*, a *people's coalition* outside the neoconservative Parliament as the best means, given objective conditions and the level of the people's political consciousness, to effect real progressive change. Communists do and will continue to play a very important role in the struggle of the Canadian people for a better life in an independent and sovereign country.

Christ Was The Name Of The Political Prisoner

Liberation Theology and Marxist Ideas

Professor Stepan Mamontov —
WMR Staff member

"I could define the church of the Liberation, or the Theology of Liberation as the reintegration of Christianity with its roots, with its most beautiful, most attractive, most heroic and most glorious history, and that, I could say, of such a magnitude that it puts an obligation on the whole Left in Latin America to take account of it as one of the most fundamental events that have taken place in our epoch."

Fidel Castro'

AT the close of the millennium sociologists are faced with this paradox: in a world that has witnessed some impressive triumphs of philosophical materialism in the process of the scientific and technological revolution and the urge for social change, there is a marked revival of the religious consciousness, especially in the deprived, 'peripheral' countries. There are any number of examples: There is the mass involvement of believers in political life under religious slogans in Latin America and in the Arab East; the emergence of diverse 'churches' and sects in the developed capitalist world; and the continued, and ever growing activity of the clergy in some socialist countries where the church either tends to cooperate with the authorities or has not abandoned its opposition activity.

This is a fairly wide process whose general causes can only be guessed at. Apart from the greater activity of the church itself and the spread of irrationalism in the bourgeois mass media, there are certainly some more serious causes, such as the cost of the precipitous progress of science and technology, the degradation of the natural environment, the psychological weariness of the masses from the pragmatism and ever greater callousness of the 'machine' civilisation, the horrors of present-day devastating wars, and, most importantly, the threat of mankind's nuclear annihilation, which is seen as fulfilment of the Biblical prediction of the 'end of the world'. In various parts of the globe one will also find some local, regional factors which tend to awaken religious activity in accordance with Lenin's well-known idea that "political protests in religious guise are common to all nations at a certain stage of their development".² Considering that protest can be either conservative or revolutionary, the causes, role and objectives of, say, the Islamic fundamentalist movement are not like those which are characteristic of the denominational trends in Christianity, notably, Catholicism in Latin America.

Some time in the middle of this century, or, to be more precise, after the victory of the Cuban Revolution, Latin American Catholicism, which brings together roughly one-half of all the Catholics of the world, became an 'experimental field' for new ideas and the main area where religious dogmas, i.e., the policy of *aggiornamento* proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), were being renovated. It was in Latin America, a region of crying social contradictions, that there appeared truly popular mass organisations of believers — grassroots Christian communities — which revived (in changed historical conditions) the ideals of primitive Christianity, of its political fighters and martyrs, and which suggested the emergence of a 'new' church and a 'new' religious spirit.³

It was, in effect, an incipient split within the church between those who wanted the church to cleanse itself in something like a 'perestroika' of Catholicism, consisting of the grassroots clergy and the most deprived section of the believers, on the one hand, and the Roman Curia, which, it is only fair to say, managed to tone down the imminent conflict at the Second and Third Conferences of the Latin American Episcopal Council, which were held in 1968 and 1979, respectively, and which wrote into their documents many of the proposals of the renovators.

The adoption by millions of Latin American Catholics and some members of the local hierarchy of anti-capitalist, and sometimes even of

revolutionary positions, a process watched with alarm by the Vatican, was yet another symptom of the general crisis of capitalism, of which the official church had long been a solid bulwark.

The Sources of the New Trend

The process in which ecclesiastical institutions adapted themselves to the economic and political realities of the modern world necessarily had a profound influence on the ideology of the church and on Christian dogmas. Traditional theology ceased to meet the requirements of the day mainly because it was out of touch with life, with the vital interests of the oppressed masses of believers, and with the requirements of historical practice. There was good reason why Pope Pius XI said that the deepening gulf between the working people and the church was a 'great scandal', and the consequent crisis of the Catholic creed led to the emergence of a number of renovation theologies whose main feature was an urge to tie-in theological constructs with the social changes affecting mankind. The details apart, there were, for instance, the 'theology of secular realities', the 'theology of history', the 'theology of development', the 'political theology' and even the highly radical 'theology of revolution'. But the most influential of these and the best known everywhere, including broad non-religious circles, was *liberation theology*, which spread in Latin America in the mid-1960s as the quintessence of the experience of grassroots Christian communities.

It was first presented as a system of views based on a 'critical reflection on historical practice' at a meeting of Latin American theologians at Petropolis (Brazil) in March 1964 by the Peruvian priest Gustavo Gutierrez, who in 1971 published a fundamental work entitled *Theology of Liberation. Perspectives*,⁴ as a kind of manifesto of the new trend. Within less than two decades, its ideas have rapidly spread among believers of other regions of the Third World, showing yet once again that religious 'free thinking' had a direct social connection with the tragic condition of the peoples in economic dependence on imperialism.

In Africa, this trend has variously made its way into Zaire, Tanzania, Ghana and, especially, South Africa, where the 'Negro theology of liberation' is closely bound up with the fight against apartheid. In India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Philippines and South Korea, locally dominant religions — Buddhism and Islam with their numerous ramifications — have also been under the influence of the new liberation ideas, which first originated in Latin American Catholicism. The Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians was set up in 1976 as evidence of the mounting religious solidarity.

Interest in the liberation theology has also been steadily growing in the developed capitalist countries, and not only in intellectual circles, but also among the most deprived strata of the working people, the 'new poor' of the highly industrialised society: the unemployed, the old-age pensioners, and the immigrant workers, to say nothing of the religious participants in the ecological and anti-nuclear movements.

The switch of emphasis from promises of a 'paradise in heaven' to practical action in building a 'paradise on earth' is one of the strongest

elements of the new creed. The liberation theologians have taken a marked step from doctrinal and futile dogmatism to a philosophy of action for the sake of flesh-and-blood human beings. The successes of the liberation theology, which is undoubtedly moving towards new political thinking, and which, judging from reports in the world's press, is fast becoming ecumenical, are due above all to its organic connection with life and its ramified roots in the popular masses, especially among the fairly patriarchal population of the less developed countries.

Three Levels of Liberation

While there is an abundance of writings on this topic, it was Gutierrez who first set forth the clearest and most widely accepted religious interpretation of the worldwide liberation process, and this work is worth considering at greater length, especially since his scheme of things shows the points (and even zones) of contact between the liberation theology and Marxism.

Who then is to be liberated and from what? And what is the role of the new theology? The answers to these questions will help understand, among other things, the idea of a strategic alliance between Marxists and believers which has been repeatedly urged by Fidel Castro. But first let us consider one of the common features of the liberation theology and the materialist approach to the world. It is not contemplation or meekness, but an active attitude to this 'vale of tears', with the prospect of life in the hereafter, as promised by the traditional church over the centuries. The well-known Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff says: "Interest in heaven does not imply forgetfulness of the earth; on the contrary, heaven depends on what we do on the earth and with the earth."⁵ Gutierrez quotes Marx's well-known idea that "the philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it",⁶ accepts the idea and openly recognises the influence of Marxist thinking on modern Christian theology; he has repeatedly stressed its connection with social practice ('orthopraxis' in contrast to 'orthodoxy'), and has defined the liberation theology as a doctrine which "does not confine itself to thinking about the world, but seeks to make itself an element of the process through which the world is transformed".⁷

Indeed, it is extremely necessary to transform the world: at the lowest estimates, in the Third World countries alone, there are 500 million people who suffer from hunger; one billion live in abject poverty; 1.5 billion have no access to minimum health care; 500 million are unemployed and under-employed; and 814 million are illiterate.⁸

Gutierrez and his followers believe that their task is not only to condemn this state of affairs but also to carry on a struggle for the liberation of mankind as 'God's People', a struggle on three closely interrelated and interdependent levels: *the socio-political* (liberation of the oppressed classes and peoples); *the historico-anthropological* (liberation — in the course of history — of the sovereign human being in every dimension); and *the religious, or sacral* (liberation from sin, and life in unity with God). When analysing these three levels of 'integral' liberation, especially the first of these, the liberation theologians make wide use of social sciences, notably of historical materialism.

On the socio-political level, the call for liberation is based on recognition of the crucial Marxist proposition concerning the character and motive forces of social development, and a few quotations from the writings of Gutierrez and the Boff brothers will show just how unbiased their approach to the Marxist view of history is. Gutierrez says, with Marx, that the main point is "the division of mankind into oppressors and oppressed; into proprietors of the means of production, and those who are despoiled of the fruits of their labour; into antagonistic social classes . . . The class struggle is a fact, and neutrality in this matter is impossible." The point is to "abolish the appropriation by a few of the surplus-value created by the labour of the many, instead of waxing lyrical over social harmony. To build a more just, free and humane socialist society, instead of a society of conciliation and apparent and false equality." Those are the tasks facing mankind, Gutierrez believes, and adds: "The building of a just society now necessarily means conscious and active participation in the class struggle which proceeds before our very eyes . . . One must clearly see that denial of the class struggle is tantamount to siding with the dominant sectors. . . When the church rejects the class struggle it objectively acts as a part of the ruling system." Further on he says that "any attempt to evade the struggle for a more just and more humane world is the greatest infidelity to God".⁹

And here is the Boff brothers' view of the historical process: "Poverty is a product of the economic organisation of society, which exploits some — and these are the working people — and *excludes* others from the system of production — and these are the underemployed, the unemployed, and the entire mass of the marginalised . . . In this interpretation, which is also called historico-structural, poverty fully appears as a *collective* and, besides, as a *conflictive* phenomenon which requires its abolition in an *alternative* social system. The way out of this situation is effectively a *revolution* seen as a transformation of the foundations of the socio-economic system. Here the poor man appears as the 'subject'."¹⁰

However, when considering the liberation theologians' 'class' approach to history, one should bear in mind that they often depart from the strictly scientific view of class, and divide any society into the oppressors generally and the oppressed generally.

The liberation theologians have some other interesting statements testifying to their urge to tie in their ideas with practice, something that opens up definite prospects for cooperation with the left, which is already under way in many Latin American countries, among them Chile, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Brazil. Replying to the question of 'How the moment of action is construed', the Boff brothers speak of the need "to define *strategy and tactics* . . ., to articulate the action by God's People with that of *other historical forces* present in society . . .; and to *call for action* to raise the people and to lead it to the struggle so as to overcome the point between decision and execution".¹¹

Liberation *on the historico-anthropological level* also implies the Marxist approach to the question of man as a product of history and of labour activity. Gutierrez and his followers regard the evolution of man as an uninterrupted process of liberation in the course of which people consciously determine their destiny, impart dynamism to desirable social

changes and widen their horizons. And that is naturally impossible without a "development of all of the dimensions of man. Of man making himself in his own life and in history. The gradual winning of a real and creative liberty implies a permanent cultural revolution, the building of a new man and the emergence of a qualitatively different society."¹²

The objective and result of the process in which man is liberated on the historical level is the creation of a new moral model of man, whose present imperfection is evidenced by mass violations of human morality. That is recognised both by theologians and by Marxists, seeking to find explanations for human weaknesses and ways to overcome these. The main point which makes the liberation theologians akin to the Marxists in their view of anthropogenesis is the crucial influence exerted on it by a given social formation, and that is the context of the critique by the left-wing church (which is also shared by the Pope) of the injustices of the capitalist system and its sustained and benevolent interest in socialism as a possible social alternative in creating the 'new man'.

Here is the view of one of the most influential Latin American prelates, the Mexican Bishop Sergio Mendez: "I believe that the socialist system accords to a greater extent with the Christian principles of true brotherhood, justice and peace . . . I do not know which form of socialism Latin America will choose, but it is a line it should follow. For my part, I believe that it should be a democratic socialism."¹³ The Boff brothers are somewhat more circumspect when they say that "the liberation theology yearns and struggles for a new society in this world: a society . . . alternative both to capitalism and to socialism, a society free and liberated, in short, a society of free people."¹⁴

Such statements by these prominent religious leaders and by other liberation theologians do not at all imply that they are prepared unconditionally to approve all the models of existing socialism. Indeed, their attitude to many such models is fairly critical, mainly because of the well-known moral and material failings in socialist construction connected with the crimes of Stalinism and Mao Zedong's 'cultural revolution', with the economic difficulties, the underestimation of human rights, national or religious peculiarities, and so on.

One should also take into account that the liberation theology movement is politically checkered, and includes some avowed anti-communists, who claim — together with many other religious-minded people — that 'gross materialism' and 'neglect' of man's spiritual life and the abiding humanistic values, ultimately embodied in God, are the chief 'sin' of existing socialism. That is why Gutierrez, for instance, quotes with sympathy Ernesto Che Guevara, who wrote that "the building of socialism and communism is carried on not just to have perfect factories", but for the benefit of the 'integral man', who takes shape in the process of material production.¹⁵

Prospects for greater mutual understanding and cooperation with the most democratic and far-sighted section of the religious circles are naturally being opened up by the current transition of the international communist movement to the new political thinking, with emphasis on general human values and the urge for dialogue with various ideological

partners. As Fidel Castro has repeatedly said, "We could perfectly well subscribe to virtually all the commandments of the law of God", which "are very similar to our own ideals".¹⁶ Communist morality and social practice do not rule out recognition of the moral postulates of Christianity and merely clear them of their idealistic, 'divine' interpretation. Of this Gutierrez is well aware, and when looking at the history of man's gradual liberation and 'salvation' through the utmost development of all his 'ethical dimensions', he refers to the writings of young Marx and says: "It would, however, be a mistake to assume that this view of human values is proper solely to Christian writers. The horizons of Marxism also show an identity of views."¹⁷

The markedly anthropological approach to history, in contrast to the traditional religious view of it as a product of 'divine providence', is also expressed in the presentation by the liberation theologians of Jesus Christ in more human terms, and here they echo some of Engels's ideas about primitive Christianity,¹⁸ stressing its revolutionary character and kinship with modern mass movements of believers. One of the main tasks of 'Christology', the liberation theologians believe, is "not only to study the commandments of Christ, but also his actual life as a fighter and champion of the poor so as to understand its actual historical meaning in the context of the mass action against the rule of the Roman Empire. Consequently the liberation theologians regard divine and 'secular' history as a single whole, and that is why Frei Betto offers the aphoristic statement that all the liberation theologians, including himself, are followers of the political prisoner whose name was Jesus Christ, while the mission of the new church, according to Gutierrez, is to politicise the masses by evangelising."¹⁹

The connection between the liberation theology and Marxism is fairly obvious on the socio-political and the historico-anthropological levels, but the religious, or sacral, level is mainly one of theological casuistry. Indeed, the atheist and the revolutionary accept the obvious tasks of fighting for the freedom of the oppressed classes and peoples, and for the liberation and utmost self-realisation of the individual as the product of an historically given social environment; liberation ('salvation') from 'sin' and 'life in unity with God' are quite another matter.

The concept of 'sin', like the concept of 'God', does not fit into the materialist view of history, but even here there is a substantive link between the liberation theologians and Marxism. They regard 'sin' not only and not so much as a vice of the individual, but as a socio-historical 'ecumenical' evil rooted in the unjust organisation of society. "Sin lies in the social structure of oppression, in man's exploitation of man, in the domination and slavery of peoples, races and social classes. Consequently, sin presents itself as a total alienation and the root of a situation of injustice and exploitation . . . Sin demands a radical liberation, and this necessarily includes political liberation."²⁰

The view of 'sin' as an organic product of a definite social system which is essentially 'sinful' also casts doubt on the 'holiness' of the official church, which on the whole caters for the ruling class. That is why the writings of many liberation theologians contain fairly sharp, now overt, now covert,

criticism of many of its vices, which spring from its rigid hierarchical structures, its élitism, its lack of inner-church democracy, and the loss of contacts between churchmen and the people. Leonardo Boff writes: "The church is overly, one could say neurotically, preoccupied with itself, and so has lost all interest in the great problems of men . . . No matter how this may irritate those who now stand illegally at the church leadership, the institutional church has failed to stand the test of power."²¹ It is true that the successes of the liberation theology and the movement of the grassroots Christian communities, together with the Vatican's fairly tolerant attitude to these new movements, testify that the condition of the church has many facets: within it there is a coexistence — even if not without signs of a division — of the conservative majority and the radical, here and there revolutionary-democratic minority (including some members of the hierarchy), striving to create a new and truly popular church which, according to progressive theologians, is to lead to liberation on the religious level.

Charges and Justifications

The bold theological thinking, the resolute choice in favour of the oppressed masses and the altogether demystified view of the development of society have caused a fully understandable response on the part of the official church and the most conservative section of the clergy. Despite the Vatican's cautious public assessments of the liberation theology (including acceptance of some of its propositions) some religious circles take an openly hostile attitude to it. They have made the following charges, formulated by what was once the Inquisition, and is now the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, and these were quickly pounced upon and blown up by the right-wing Catholic press: the liberation theologians have made uncritical use of the Marxist ideology; they have demythologised and historicised the figure of Christ too much; they have politicised religion; they have promoted a division in the church; they have opposed its social doctrine of class peace, and have put theology at the service of revolution.

The liberation theologians have met this criticism head on. They assert that they have used Marxism not as such, but merely as a methodological 'instrument of research' which takes account of the economic, class, and ideological factors behind man's oppression. The Boff brothers say: "The liberation theology remains resolutely critical of Marxism. Marx (like any other Marxist) may be a fellow-traveller, but never a teacher."²² But in assessing the figure of Christ and urging its strict scientific historical study, Gutierrez warns that it would be wrong to regard him merely as a man who had once suffered for his political convictions, because there is a need to reckon above all with the 'divine' universality of his commandments: "The life and death of Jesus do not become less evangelical for being connected with politics"²³, writes the Peruvian theologian.

Perhaps the gravest and most dangerous 'sins' of the liberation theologians, from the standpoint of the traditionalists, is their urge to set up some new church, which allegedly leads to a division of the old one. The liberation theologians have flatly rejected this charge, and have

emphasised their loyalty to the Roman Curia. But they have kept repeating that, regardless of what the clergy may will, the Catholic Church remains deeply divided as a reflection of the actual division of society, and that "only by breaking with the existing unjust system can it become credible to Latin Americans in its message of love carried by the Christian community".²⁴

The liberation theologians recognise that class struggle is inevitable in an antagonistic society, and so effectively reject the social doctrine of the church, which calls for cooperation between capitalists and workers. But the charge that this tends to cast doubt on the universal Christian principle of love for one's neighbour is rebutted by Gutierrez as follows: "Love for all men does not at all mean avoiding confrontation or maintaining a fictitious harmony between them. There can be universal love only when solidarity with the oppressed also sets itself the goal of liberating the oppressors from their own power, from their ambition and from their own selfishness . . . It is only by liberating the oppressors from their own inhumanity, by liberating them from their own selves that they can be loved. And all this can be done only by resolutely opting for the oppressed, i.e., by fighting the oppressor class."²⁵

Some estimates suggest that believers make up about two-thirds of mankind, and even more in the Third World countries, including Latin America. It is in this dispossessed and suffering part of the globe that the voice has been raised in defence of social justice by the liberation theologians, who believe that it is their duty to serve everyone who is in need of their solace and support, and not the bourgeois state or any privileged stratum. Many of their postulates proclaimed on behalf of the 'new church', which is emerging in heated debates, do not contradict the humanistic ideals and the conclusions drawn by creative Marxism, which are borne out by life itself. They are also largely consonant with the new political thinking, which rejects religious intolerance. One must agree with the assertions by the most far-sighted liberation theologians that there is no fatal inevitability of the church being subordinated to narrow class interests: "The church can support and justify rupture with the historical bloc and offer itself for revolutionary service."²⁶ That opens up invaluable prospects for dialogue and cooperation between Marxists and believers.

¹ *Fidel y la religion*, Conversaciones con Frei Betto, La Habana, 1985, p. 291.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, p. 243.

³ For details see Alvaro Oviedo, Stepan Mamontov, 'Theology of Liberation: A New Heresy?', *WMR*, No. 3, 1986, pp. 83-86. — *Ed.*

⁴ G. Gutierrez, *Teologia de la Liberacion. Perspectivas*, Lima, 1971.

⁵ Leonardo Boff, *Iglesia: carisma y poder*, Bogota, 1987, p. 179.

⁶ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 5, p. 5.

⁷ G. Gutierrez, *Teologia de la Liberacion. Perspectivas*, Salamanca, 1985, pp. 40-41.

⁸ See Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *Como hacer Teologia de la Liberacion*, Bogota, 1986, pp. 10-11.

⁹ G. Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, pp. 352-353, 355-356, 352.

¹⁰ Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, *op. cit.*, pp. 36-37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

¹² G. Gutierrez, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 156.

- ¹⁴ Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff, op. cit., p. 110.
¹⁵ See G. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 317.
¹⁶ *Fidel y la religion*, p. 258.
¹⁷ G. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 49.
¹⁸ See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Werke*, Band 22, pp. 447-473.
¹⁹ G. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 348.
²⁰ Ibid., p. 237.
²¹ L. Boff, op. cit., pp. 89, 90.
²² L. Boff and C. Boff, op. cit., p. 39.
²³ G. Gutierrez, op. cit., p. 309.
²⁴ Ibid., p. 181.
²⁵ Ibid., p. 357.
²⁶ Boff, op. cit., p. 164.

The Armed Forces: The People In Arms

The armed forces and democratisation are a problem whose pressing nature is being daily confirmed by Latin American realities. The establishment of the Organisation of the Military for the Democracy, Integration and Liberation of Latin America and the Caribbean (OMIDELAC) in 1986 was a noteworthy event in the social life on the continent. Elio Mercado Jarrin, who has held the posts of Peru's Foreign Minister and Defence Minister, took over the chair. On its Board of Directors are retired generals and senior officers from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Many Latin American officers still on active service collaborate with OMIDELAC.

Below is a conversation held in Caracas at our request between retired General **Elio Garcia Barrios** and retired Chilean Colonel **Efrain Jana Giron**.

Efrain Jana Giron. General, why was OMIDELAC set up?

Elio Garcia Barrios. The Latin American and Caribbean countries are going through a crisis which is without precedent in their history, a crisis of the economic order, the political order, the social order, and the military order. Our peoples also suffer from moral degradation. For all these reasons we who have sworn allegiance to the country were compelled to carry on the struggle for our countries' independence, sovereignty and system of moral values. For some years there had been a discussion of a plan to set up an organisation to unite our efforts to attain the great objectives of the fighters for the continent's independence: representatives

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Efrain Jana Giron was in command of the Talca provincial garrison at the time of the coup in Chile in 1973, and remained loyal to the constitutional Popular Unity government. He was imprisoned by the putschists and subjected to torture. He now lives abroad, and is a member of OMIDELAC's leadership.

of 12 Latin American and Caribbean republics met in Buenos Aires on April 14, 1986, to set up OMIDELAC.

E.J.G. I believe that it would be of great public interest to learn of the reasons for which the military men took the initiative in seeking solutions for these formidable problems.

E.G.B. The destiny of our armed forces and of our countries are closely linked. The armed forces are, theoretically, the bearers and guarantors of our national values. We have no Messianic aspirations at all and believe that our main task is to serve our country. Nor does this duty end at the stroke of a pen when we retire. All of us — not only the military, but also the politicians, economists, church leaders, mass media people, workers, other working people, trade unionists — must join together in defending the country. That is why civilians, all people of good will, can join OMIDELAC. Throughout history crises have sprung from the base passions of human egoism, and we believe that if it is overcome, the peoples will be happier and capable of having truly fraternal relations with each other.

Our declaration of principles lists the factors which pose a danger to the continent, among them the external debt, the activity of the various international bodies which we ourselves set up, and which have, in fact, become a tool in the hands of the 'Great Northern Neighbour'. We have urged the denunciation of the Inter-American Mutual Assistance Treaty as being juridically and morally defunct. It was signed in Rio de Janeiro in 1947 and was used exclusively to serve the interests of the Western hegemonic power as will be seen from the repeated armed interventions in the Latin American countries and Britain's recent aggression against Argentina in the Malvinas. In the latter case, the United States ignored the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the states party to the Treaty, and blocked the application of its provisions. It supported Britain and supplied it with material, diplomatic and intelligence aid. That is why we proposed that the Treaty, together with other obligations which tend to involve the continent in the East-West confrontation, should be denounced. Our declaration also expresses the desire to have any conflicts between our countries settled solely by peaceful means, and stresses the need for an integral defence system for the Latin American and Caribbean region to face any type of aggression. It should be a continental security system recognising that underdevelopment is the principal cause of the threat to peace, and should be designed for economic security and political and social stability.

Among OMIDELAC's basic objectives is integration providing, in particular, for the development of a viable infrastructure linking the Latin American countries, and here the armed forces could make a big contribution. For the sake of regional security in Latin America and the Caribbean, the armed forces should not confine themselves to defending the national borders.

E.J.G. Yours is a very interesting assessment of the mission of the armed forces, but is it compatible with the national security doctrine which originated in the United States and which was imposed on the Latin American armies?

E.G.B. The national security doctrine is based on the geopolitical postulate of a bipolar world, but it is alien to our peoples and armies. That is why we firmly reject this doctrine, which assigns to the armed forces functions that have nothing to do with the defence of national sovereignty. They are made to act as political supervisor over the rest of society, so that many Latin American armies have become forces of occupation in their own country. That is why there is this manifest separation between the men in uniform and the rest of the people. Let us not forget that the armed forces are the people in arms, and unless we march together, we shall not be able to deliver our countries from their prostration.

Our peoples' experience in recent decades shows the connection between the national security doctrine and the economic and military policies which have produced the mounting external debt and the growing dependence and foreign domination. We have watched with alarm conferences of commanding officers of the Latin American armies engaging in ideological reformulation and implementation of the tenets of this doctrine for the armed forces within the inter-American defence system built up by the United States.

It is designed for effective US control over its sphere of influence. A look at the basic principles of this inter-American defence system shows very well that the main role in the armed struggle against 'international communism' belongs to the United States and its NATO allies. The other American nations must, first, refrain from clashing with each other until the East-West conflict disappears; second, guarantee internal order in their countries by fighting the so-called Marxist infiltration and the consequent social disorders; third, collaborate in keeping open the sea lanes round the continent; and fourth, keep limited army contingents on the alert, and not for the purpose of actual combat, but to give a 'multi-national' character to the forces sent in by the hegemonic power to invade any country. We find massive confirmation of all that in the sad history of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regional seats of tension which have developed into an acute international problem have been highlighted by the events of the past six to seven years in Central America (notably in El Salvador and Nicaragua). US intervention in their internal affairs has had grave political, economic and military repercussions, and harmed our national sovereignty.

OMIDELAC has declared its support for the public circles which believe that the Central American conflict is rooted in the injustice of its social structures, and which strive to re-establish peace in the region through negotiation, with respect for the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and self-determination. Central American problems should not be viewed in the context of the East-West confrontation.

E.J.G. What is your view of the impact of the huge external debt on the security of the continent from the strategic standpoint?

E.G.B. I believe that the external debt is an element of the aggression against Latin America and the Caribbean, and indeed against the Third World as a whole. It is a strategic instrument used by the hegemonic power for the purposes of its imperial rule over our peoples. The debt has ceased to be an economic or technical matter, and has become a political and even

a military problem closely tied-in with national defence. Metaphorically speaking, the external debt is a new occupation of our countries. The heroes of our liberation struggle in the nineteenth century led the patriots in the struggle for independence and sovereignty, shed their blood and sacrificed their very lives. We, for our part, have fallen short of their glorious legacy. The succession of rulers has doomed the Latin American peoples to poverty by building up a debt that falls as a heavy burden on the present and future generations. I believe that the debt problem should be solved in the light of the needs of national defence.

E.J.G. What is OMIDELAC's attitude to the democratic form of government? How does the national security doctrine harm democracy?

E.G.B. We have taken a consistent stand for democracy because it best meets the needs of the peoples and can be perfected. By contrast, the national security doctrine comes from abroad, is alien to the very spirit of the Latin American peoples, contradicts democratic principles and provokes clashes between the armed forces and the people. It is essentially repressive. That is why OMIDELAC defends the Latin Americans' democratic aspirations as formulated in the constitutions, and as expressed in their militant action for freedom and independence.

Democracy guarantees respect for human rights, such as individual liberty, human dignity, social justice, the right to work, health and education, i.e., everything that assures the peoples' material well-being, cultural development and protection of moral values. OMIDELAC urges the military to fortify democratic principles and to prevent the armed forces from altering the tasks of their basic mission as set by the heroes of our struggle for independence. The armed forces must be aware of our peoples' anguish and troubles. We have repeatedly urged a return to democracy by the fraternal countries ruled by military dictatorships. This democracy should not be a show or a screen to cover up the people's misery and insecurity. Its task is to ensure human dignity and human progress in practice.

E.J.G. What you have said, General, allows me to ask you about the situation in Panama, from which all of us should evidently learn a lesson?

E.G.B. The situation in Panama is certainly of great significance for Latin America and the Caribbean, which is why the peoples of the region cannot remain indifferent in the face of the aggressive attacks by the hegemonic power against that country. OMIDELAC's members have made a thorough analysis of the situation and have reached the conclusion that the events in Panama could have far-reaching consequences, which is why all the governments and peoples of the sub-continent need to act without delay. For the colossus of the North, the Republic of Panama is a strategic geopolitical centre of vital importance for its hegemonic interests in our region.

Let us not forget that the Republic of Panama has not yet won genuine independence and sovereignty, and throughout this entire century its heart has remained pierced by the imperial sword.

E.J.G. Do you not find it strange, General, that the United States tends to react most violently and aggressively with respect to Panama, something that we do not find in its approach to the tyrants and military dictators who

have ruled some Latin American and other less developed countries for years? The United States has never come out in defence of the popular masses oppressed by such political systems.

E.G.B. You speak of Panama in the same breath with countries run by dictatorships, but one should take an objective view of it, and reckon with its juridical and institutional character. I have studied the Panamanian Constitution and other recent documents and have reached the conclusion that what has happened to the government there is in accord with the basic provisions of its Constitution. I am not defending any individual leader, but am merely making an analysis in the light of constitutional law, which enables me to say that the acts of the commander of Panama's defence forces cannot be regarded as a putsch. Panama has a president and two vice-presidents who can replace him. The elected president was Ardito Barletta, who was subsequently removed from his post and replaced by the first vice-president. The powers of the Panamanian defence forces are determined by a juridical document which gives them a certain functional autonomy. No presidential decision can enter into force without the consent of the high command. That is why there is no reason to say that the events in that country amount to the establishment of a military dictatorship. One should not forget that the Panamanian armed forces are the most effective guarantor of the vital interests and the attainment of the national objectives of that country, which is practically under occupation by a foreign power.

The wars for our countries' independence belong to the past century, and when we find states fighting for their independence today we are alarmed, failing to understand that each nation has its own historical way and specific approach to its problems. The Panamanian armed forces have their juridical status which differs from that of the other Latin American and Caribbean armies. They are the most important barrier to the northern neighbour's attempts to establish its absolute hegemony in the country. That is why I believe that the Latin American and Caribbean countries should be most circumspect in assessing developments in Panama. There must be a resolute stand against the attempts to expel it from the Contadora Group¹. Contadora has played an effective role in preventing US intervention in Central America. One can easily imagine a war breaking out in the area, but no one knows how it will end. I am sure that without Contadora, Nicaragua would long since have fallen victim to aggression, and the whole of Central America would have become a field of battle. Panama's withdrawal would deal Contadora a mortal blow. One has to bear in mind that this group has always been an object of schemes by the power which wants it to disappear from the political arena. One need merely mention the incident over the Caldas corvette in the Gulf of Venezuela². The same forces are now trying to destroy Contadora by expelling Panama.

E.J.G. With respect to the conflicting Panamanian problem there arises this question: the United States has accused General Noriega of being involved in the drugs traffic. On the strength of what you have said, do you take a stand in his defence?

E.G.B. I am not defending any particular person, and I do not have the

facts to draw a definite conclusion. But I regard Noriega as a man who has taken a clear stand in the face of the acts of a power occupying his country. That is the light in which his activity should be assessed.

You mentioned the drugs traffic. In this context I should like to say the following: OMIDELAC members have reached an interesting conclusion from their permanent and exhaustive analysis of the international situation. Since World War II, the strategic centres of the imperial power have conducted two main lines. The first, which produced the national security doctrine, prevailed until 1982 and 1983; 'Marxism-Leninism-Maoism' was then the arch-enemy. Such was the pretext for the US great-power efforts to safeguard its own interests in our countries. Such disinformation is now no longer effective. No one is any longer terrified by the monster presented as 'Marxism-Leninism-Maoism', especially with the 'rapprochement' (a word which should be given in quotation marks) between the two world blocs. This line has now receded into the background and a new line called the 'drugs traffic' was conceived. Indeed, Marxism-Leninism and communism do exist, but not in the form in which they were depicted. The drugs traffic has been presented to us in a specific way in order to justify the intervention by a foreign power in our countries' internal affairs, and even the stationing of occupation forces in our country. Bolivian General U. Cayoja, a member of OMIDELAC, recently mobilised public opinion in his country in opposition to the US attempt to set up an enclave in the country's plateau on the pretext of combating drugs. The patriots succeeded in getting these army units out of the country, for their presence was an infringement of national sovereignty. But on the whole, the interventionist escalation is becoming ever more aggressive, and the worse thing is that it often has the support of the governments of the invaded countries.

One should not forget that even the fighters for Latin America's independence were at one time called bandits in an effort to discredit their noble cause. We now find something similar in the case of the Panamanian general, other military men and other prominent people in that country. Incidentally, Daniel Ortega and Fidel Castro have also been accused of involvement in the drugs traffic. Similar charges were also levelled at six or seven Venezuelan generals who have an immaculate reputation. That was an effort to smear not only those men, but also the armed forces as a whole. Let me stress once again that the moral values, dignity and fine traditions of the Latin American armies can be preserved only if their command respects the people's aspirations and never departs from the mission which is assigned to them under the constitution. We must constantly be vigilant and rebuff the new forms of intervention and the new ways and means being used by the imperial power centres against our people.

E.J.G. In conclusion, I should like to ask you about the view taken in Latin America of the agreements to reduce nuclear weapons in Europe.

E.G.B. They are undoubtedly of much importance for the Latin American and Caribbean countries. They could be regarded from the military standpoint as evidence of the great powers' new approach to the rest of the world, an example that should be followed by the so-called

peripheral countries, among which we belong. I will not make any final judgement or any forecasts for the future when it comes to initiatives of the two giants. One should not forget that these agreements resulted from pressure by world public opinion. Indeed, it is impossible to go on spending billions of dollars, pounds sterling or roubles on the instruments of death, while there are a great many people who die of hunger and live in indigence. These resources should be used to make living conditions more humane. That is why I believe that one of the OMIDELAC's coming sessions should consider the significance of these agreements for Latin America and the Caribbean. That will enable us to analyse in detail the motivations and objectives of the great powers.

Let me stress in conclusion: we, the Latin American military, have sworn allegiance to our national banners, and so have no right to take an irresponsible and servile attitude of onlookers over the tragedy of our peoples.

¹ A reference to US diplomatic moves. — *Ed.*

² A border incident in August 1987 caused by the appearance of a Colombian warship in a disputed area of the Gulf, which was settled diplomatically. It was seen by Latin American public opinion as an attempt to provoke an armed clash between two leading members of the Contadora Group, Colombia and Venezuela. — *Ed.*

Against Repression and Persecution

Stop The Terror!

ALARMING news keeps coming from Iran about new executions and tortures of patriots, champions of peace and democracy, about the intolerable conditions in which political detainees are being held in the prisons: overcrowding, lack of medical aid and sanitation, constant malnutrition, the endless humiliation by warders, and about the persecution of the prisoners' relatives.

We have recently learnt that another four Iranian patriots were executed on July 20. **Kiumars Zarshenas**, CC member, People's Party of Iran (PPI), and first secretary of the CC of Tudeh's youth organisation, had spent over five years in a solitary cell and was constantly tortured. **Saed Azarang**, an alternate CC PPI member, had languished behind bars for many years and suffered inhuman torture throughout. After long years of imprisonment, a woman patriot died a martyr's death: **Fatima Modaressi**, an alternate CC PPI member, active fighter for the ideals of our party and women's rights and freedoms. **Faramarz Soufi**, member of the Iranian People Fedayeen (Majority) Organisation, was also executed.

A statement issued by the CC PPI in connection with these new executions reads in part:

"This is an act of revenge on the Communists, who have long been warning of the destructive consequences of the adventurist policy of continuing the war 'to a victorious end'. The executions came at a time when the Iranian authorities have struck a deal with Reagan and other Western leaders to expand the links of the Islamic republic with imperialist states."

These new executions, after five-year-long tortures, of the patriots in Iran's dungeons show that the regime is spitefully taking vengeance on innocent people in its fear of a rising tide of popular protest.

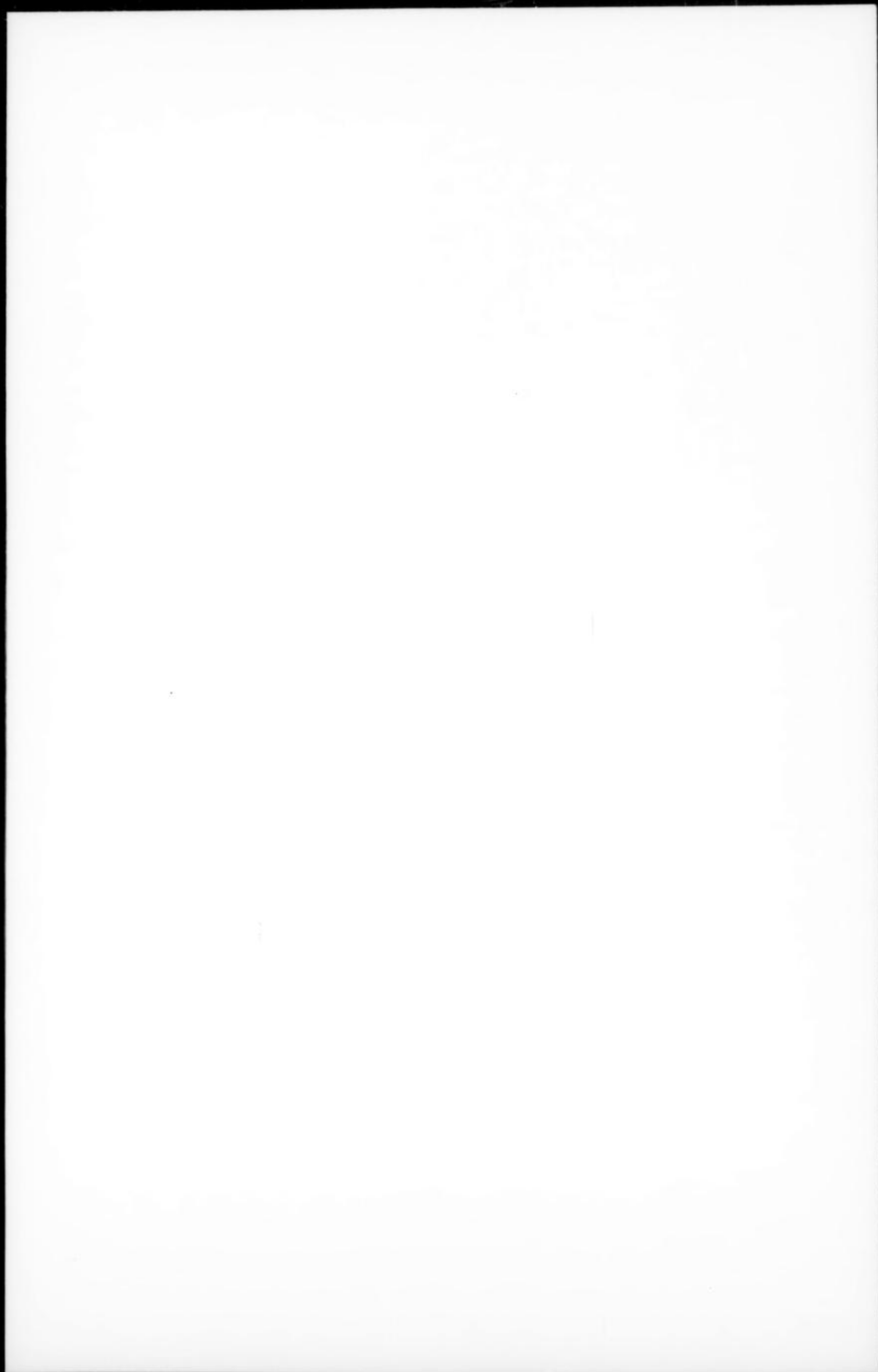
The policy for continuing the war has failed. It is the PPI that has constantly been exposing in a truthful and a well-argued way the criminality of this slaughter. The policy of the party is receiving ever wider approval of the people. Our slogans to end the war have enhanced its prestige among the masses. This is one of the main reasons behind the regime's increased animosity towards us and towards the patriots thrown into prison.

The PPI appeals to all fraternal parties and people of good will to voice effective solidarity with the Iranian patriots' struggle for democracy and for an end to the gross violations of human rights.

The Iranian political prisoners need your immediate and vigorous assistance.

Mahmud Azad

People's Party of Iran representative on WMR



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