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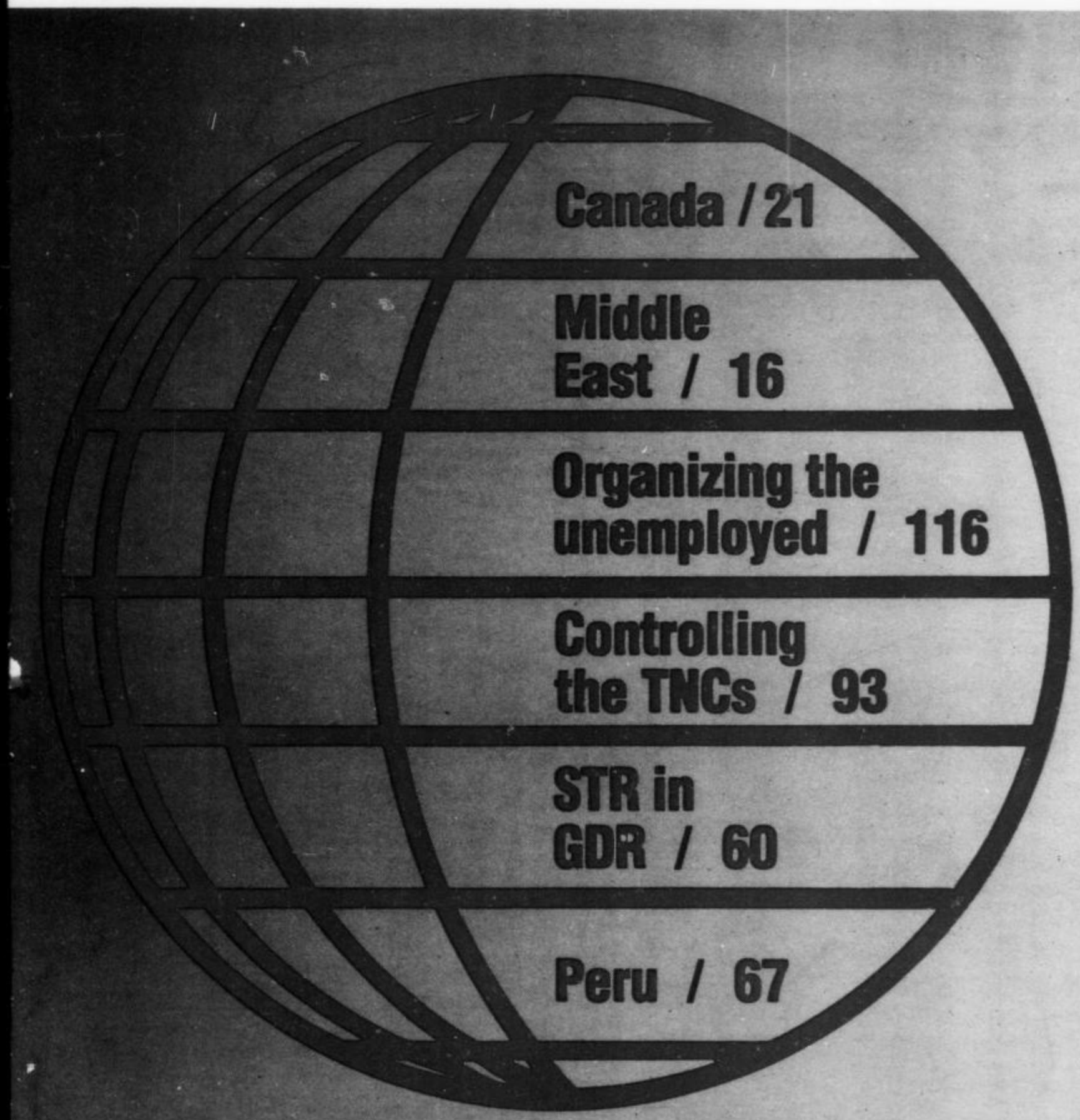

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COMMUNIQUE

On the Results of the Discussion of the Work of the International Journal *World Marxist Review*

A DISCUSSION of the work of *World Marxist Review,* a journal of fraternal parties, took place in Prague on April 12-15, 1988. Delegations of 93 fraternal communist, workers' and revolutionary democratic parties took part, namely: The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, the Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria, the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola — Party of Labour, the Communist Party of Argentina, the Socialist Party of Australia, the Communist Party of Austria, the National Liberation Front of Bahrain, the Communist Party of Bangladesh, the Communist Party of Belgium, the People's Revolutionary Party of Benin, the Communist Party of Bolivia, the Brazilian Communist Party, the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Canada, the Communist Party of Chile, the Colombian Communist Party, the Congolese Party of Labour, the People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus (AKEL), the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Communist Party of Denmark, the Dominican Communist Party, the Communist Party of Ecuador, the Egyptian Communist Party, the Workers' Party of Ethiopia, the Communist Party of Finland, the French Communist Party, the German Communist Party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Communist Party of Great Britain, the Communist Party of Greece, the Guadeloupe Communist Party, the Guatemalan Party of Labour, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, the United Party of Haitian Communists, the Communist Party of Honduras, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of Indonesia, the People's Party of Iran, the Iraqi Communist Party, the Communist Party of Ireland, the Communist Party of Israel, the Workers' Party of Jamaica, the Japanese Communist Party, the Communist Party of Jordan, the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea, the Workers' Party of Korea, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Lebanese Communist Party, the Communist Party of Lesotho, the Communist Party of Luxembourg, the Madagascar Independence Congress Party, the Communist Party of Malta, the Socialist Party of Mexico, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary

Party, the Party of Progress and Socialism of Morocco, the Mozambique Liberation Front — FRELIMO, the Communist Party of Nepal, the Socialist Unity Party of New Zealand, the Communist Party of Norway, the Palestinian Communist Party, the People's Party of Panama, the Paraguayan Communist Party, the Peruvian Communist Party, the Philippine Communist Party, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Portuguese Communist Party, the Romanian Communist Party, the Communist Party of El Salvador, the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia, the Senegal Party of Independence and Labour, the South African Communist Party, the National Democratic Front of South Korea, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Communist Party of Spain, the Communist Party of the Sudan, Left Party — Communists of Sweden, the Swiss Party of Labour, the Syrian Communist Party, the Tunisian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Turkey, the Communist Party of Uruguay, Communist Party — USA, the Communist Party of Venezuela, the Socialist Unity Party of West Berlin, the Communist Party of Vietnam, the Yemen Socialist Party, the Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front, and two more parties which are not listed here at their own request.

A report of the journal's Editorial Board and Editorial Council on the work of the *WMR* from December 1984 to February 1988 was submitted for discussion.

The participants in the discussion made a critical and comprehensive analysis of the work of their collective publication in the past 30 years, noted its importance and put forward concrete proposals for the renewal and restructuring of the *WMR* to suit the new conditions and requirements, and the requisite higher standard of theoretical and ideological work and the need for exchanges of experience and information among the fraternal parties, fighting for peace, democracy, national liberation, independence and social progress. It was noted that the journal should face up more fully to the new realities and problems in the spirit of a creative Marxist approach to the more relevant problems of social development with due regard for the specific conditions of individual countries and regions. Coverage of ways of averting a nuclear catastrophe, of disarmament, above all nuclear disarmament, the correlation of the struggle for peace and the struggle for national and social liberation, and also socio-economic development, were specially discussed as were questions of the Communists' dialogue and cooperation with all peace-loving, democratic forces. Many parties noted the importance of new political thinking nowadays.

The need was stressed to heighten the theoretical standard of the contributions and the standard of information, to improve the presentation of material with the aim of enhancing interest among readership.

Participants in the meeting suggested that the Editorial Council take measures aimed at greater democratisation of the editorial structures on a basis of collegiality, equal rights, respect for the opinions and views of every party in the spirit of non-interference in their internal affairs and internationalist cooperation.

The discussion proceeded in an open, comradely atmosphere.

The Political Vanguard of Restructuring

Chudomir Alexandrov — member, Political Bureau, CC Secretary, Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP)

THE overall goal of the Conception for the Further Construction of Socialism in Bulgaria, drawn up by the July 1987 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and discussed, expanded and endorsed by the National Party Conference[1] in January 1988, is to make Bulgaria a state with a high level of socio-economic and cultural development. The Conception contains major basic provisions and outlines a contemporary model of building socialism. It also identifies the more important ways and means of translating this conception into practice.

The task is to steer Bulgaria to the forefront of the scientific and technological revolution so that it should rank among the world's leading nations in labour productivity and the national income growth rate. It is necessary also to raise the living standards, to tap all the creative and intellectual potentialities of the nation and to provide qualitatively new conditions for the comprehensive development of the individual and the full-scale realisation of human potentialities and talents.

The need for the formulation of the Conception for the Further Construction of Socialism in the People's Republic of Bulgaria was prompted by new realities at home and on the world scene.

The Bulgarian people under the leadership of the Communist Party have made immense progress in the period of socialist development. The time since the April 1956 Plenary Meeting of the Bulgarian Communist Party has been especially successful: the national income has grown more than eight-fold, the fixed assets of the national economy more than ten-fold, and social labour productivity has risen 8.4 times. The living standards of the working people have kept improving: the consumption of food, non-food products and services has grown several times and the average wages and real incomes along with pensions and social security payments and benefits have been constantly increasing.

The model of building socialism that was used in our country, however, gradually began to exhaust its potential. The growth rates of socio-economic development had slowed by the mid-1970s to early 1980s and bureaucratism, which had afflicted some of the levels and elements of the social management system, started to influence cultural and intellectual life as well. A major cause of these and other adverse tendencies was that the old model had grown too 'tight' and in some ways had even become a brake on the growing creative activity and initiative of the working people and on the realisation of the potentialities inherent in the socialist system.

We know from first-hand experience that isolated decisions cannot bring about drastic change in the integral process of social development. To succeed, it is necessary to have a comprehensive conception and a clear

view of the entire range of problems. So the Conception approved by the BCP makes it possible to apply common principles of restructuring in all the fields, to take consistent practical actions stage by stage and to dovetail specific decisions.

It became possible to draw up the Conception as it is today also thanks to the impact of renewal in other socialist countries, especially the Soviet Union's perestroika.

The new model of building socialism in Bulgaria, I must stress, in no way amounts to any revision of the basic principles of Marxism-Leninism, including the view of socialism as the first phase of the communist socio-economic system. It is the other way round: our Conception relies on Marxism-Leninism. It is an extension and development of the basic principles of building a developed socialist society that are written into the BCP Programme.[2] At the same time the new fundamental document goes beyond some of the programme postulates, which makes it necessary to discuss and adopt amendments to the BCP Programme and Rules at the next party congress.[3] The Bulgarian Constitution, approved in 1971, also has to be revised.

The Conception takes into account what is common to all the socialist countries, but also relates to the specific features and factors of Bulgaria both in a broad historical context, in the first post-revolutionary years and when a developed socialist society was built. That is why the Conception, we think, fits our country only.

The main aspects of the Conception for the Further Construction of Socialism in Bulgaria are as follows.

The point is first and foremost *better to take account of and to stimulate the effect of such objective law-governed processes* as the assertion and improvement of integral socialist property, the balance between the productive forces and the relations of production and between the basis and the superstructure, planned societal development and the leading role of the Communist Party. The implementation of the Conception is providing favourable conditions for the energetic use of the factors which play an especially important role today, such as the scientific and technological revolution, the law of value and relevant commodity-money relations, the growing role of the mass of people as the makers of history and the expansion of democracy and self-government.

The Conception pertains to all rather than individual aspects of social life. The methodological aim of that document is to reflect both the laws of socialist society and the main domestic and international factors, to translate the laws into principles, and those into concrete mechanisms of the further construction of socialism.

When these plans are carried through, the country will achieve economic growth of a qualitatively new type on the basis of the further development of socialist property as an integral but multi form whole, far-reaching structural change, the technological renewal of production and new cost-benefit regulators of economic activity. The diverse forms of socialist property will be placed under the same economic conditions, the 'anonymous' character of state property and the alienation of producers

from it will be overcome, and there will be no bureaucratic interference in the affairs of work collectives.

A paramount role will be given to commodity producers and to their independence, initiative and interest in providing society with goods and services. They will be given real power as the main subject of economic development on the basis of broader rights along with explicitly defined duties and responsibilities. The state will retain the strategic guidance of the economy, regulate the interests of commodity producers through norms, and harmonise their needs with those of society.

A social and cultural policy for the good of the working people is a priority under the Conception. Man is in the focus of all the revolutionary transformations in society. The development of the individual as a socialist personality and the maker, producer and consumer of material, cultural and intellectual values is a major goal of restructuring and at the same time a factor of its success. The Conception envisions that conditions will be created in every urban and rural community for the comprehensive satisfaction of the growing material, cultural, and intellectual needs of the people.

The political system of society will undergo profound qualitative transformations. *Social self-governance* is the basic principle of the new model, and it is becoming the centre-piece of all our plans and efforts. By developing it, we intend to organise in an entirely new way millions of people building developed socialism in the country, to reinvigorate the people's energy, to involve them in politics and cultural and intellectual life on an even larger scale, to accelerate democratisation and to effect the historic transition from the power in the name of the people to the power of the people themselves. It is self-governing work collectives and territorial communities of people that will constitute the foundation of the entire social system.

Should these goals be pursued through evolution or revolution? Not just the party and state leaders but all the Communists, all the working people pondered that question when the new strategy was being chartered, The conclusion was drawn as a result of extensive and thorough scientific studies with reliance on the collective intellect of the party and the people that *there is no alternative to revolutionary restructuring and that it constitutes the only correct way of tapping the great potentialities of the socialist system in Bulgaria.*

That is why our attention is now focused predominantly on the further acceleration of the processes taking place in the country, at the synthesis of the class factor and that of the whole people, and that making the party's policy decisions the cause of millions of people who will devote their efforts and energies to it. The methods, means and forms of work typical of evolutionary development are to undergo qualitative change and be supplanted by revolutionary methods in line with the watershed we have reached, with the growing dynamics of societal life and with the unfolding of democracy.

The conception of the new model of socialism in Bulgaria incorporates also *new political thinking in international affairs, in finding solutions to the global problems of humankind, and in asserting equality and moral*

standards in relations between countries and nations. These principles were used as the basis for drafting guidelines for the foreign policy activities of the party and the state, for the further strengthening of the socialist countries' unity and for the assertion of the principles of peaceful coexistence.

The Bulgarian Communist Party, its Central Committee, and CC General Secretary Todor Zhivkov are at the head of the processes of renewal that are gaining momentum in the country. The Bulgarian Communist Party is the initiator, motive force, and guarantor of restructuring and the generator of ideas and proposals for further societal progress. The party, too, is restructuring itself in the overall process of renewal, with its political guidance of society and with inner party life being fundamentally modified.

The question of the place and role of the Communist Party in the socialist revolution and in building a new life is a basic issue of the theory and practice of Marxism-Leninism and of the working class and communist movement. The fact that *the leading and guiding role of the party constitutes a general law-governed feature of the emergence and development of the socialist system* has been proved theoretically and historically.

The Bulgarian Communists have guided themselves by that law throughout their struggles. Shortly after the victorious 1944 Socialist Revolution, the Fifth Party Congress mapped a correct course for the political vanguard of the Bulgarian working class. The April 1956 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee restored the Leninist principles and norms of party life which had been violated during the period of the personality cult and opened new vistas for the application of the creative energies of the Communists and all the other working people.

The BCP gained in prestige and became the commonly recognised leader of Bulgarian society as a result of the implementation of the Leninist general policy line of the party, which became the policy line of all the working people.

Translating the provisions of its Programme into practice, the party is developing consistently and acting as the political vanguard of the entire people, for which every prerequisite has been provided. Social homogeneity keeps growing and cooperation between classes and social groups keeps expanding. The awareness of the working people is rising naturally and consistently. Socialist democracy has been expanding steadily since the April 1956 Plenary Meeting. Socialist humanism has been given new dimensions, and the people are being assigned an ever more important role in the functioning of the social system.

As the Conception was being drawn up, it was important to analyse not just change for the better in the development of the party but also some serious problems, deviations, and even deformations in its internal life and in its exercise of the guiding role in society.

The point is that the principle of the party being the political vanguard of the working class and the people as a whole was being translated into practice — and still is in some instances — in inadequate forms and through inadequate mechanisms. Things went so far in some fields as to establish virtually uncontrolable, monopoly party rule. Some of the party

bodies became the 'top tier' of the state structure, as it were, the last arbiter in the solution of many problems within the terms of reference of other elements of the political system and actually turned into command centres. Some of the leaders arrogated the right to interpret laws at will and even to break them, and adopted flawed, bureaucratic methods of work. Such practices harm the party and the cause of socialism.

In his report to the July 1987 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee Todor Zhivkov supplied an in-depth analysis of those and other deformations, linked to 'the syndrome of misconceived party leadership', and lively debates on ways of overcomming them got under way in the party.

One of the basic principles of the Conception is that the party will continue under self-governance, too, as the leading and guiding political force in social life. In the new circumstances, however, it is not and will never be a 'tier', and echelon in the hierarchy of state power. That is why we think that a major task of restructuring in the party is to create prerequisites for the successful exercise by the party of its main and supreme function of *the political leader and vanguard of the working class and all the other working people, and to make their efforts to transform society on the road to communism conscious and organised.*

The party will exercise its role of political leader *by formulating the general policy line of societal development* and by expanding and deepening it organisational and educational work so as to make that policy line an own cause of the working people.

The party's leading role will continue to be played through the activities of the party committees and primary organisations in the *selection, deployment and education of cadres.* However, petty tutelage in any form over self-governing organisations in the competitive elections of their executives and specialists is inadmissible. A more long-term task is to create in work collectives and territorial communities an atmosphere in which they would place their trust in the worthiest people and display political responsibility for the consequences of the cadre decisions they take.

The functions of control vested in the party committees and primary organisations will be modified. Party control will be freed from elements of petty intervention in the work of other bodies and organisations and its task will be to monitor the main thing, that is, progress in the implementation of party policy and ways in which the self-governing organisations harmonise in their activities care for the common weal and the collective and personal interests of the working people.

The new realities of restructuring call for *new methods and new ways of party leadership.* The most important thing today, we think, is to ensure that it works no so much 'from without' as 'from within', through the efforts of executives and Communists working in the self-governing state, economic, and public agencies and organisations. It should work by force of example and through the vanguard role of the elective bodies and all the Communists in the formulation and implementation of party policy, and also through the creation of a political, ideological, and moral climate that would be conducive to the fulfilment of the party's goals and tasks.

The restructuring of party leadership calls for shifting the emphasis to grassroots work. Priority is now attached to the assertion of socialist self-governance and to the introduction and mastery of the new functions, rights, duties, and responsibilities of the self-governing work collectives and territorial communities as a major yardstick in assessing the quality of party leadership and its adequacy to new realities.

The present model of the party's functioning demands that the BCP as a whole and all its bodies and organisations restructure their activities on the basis of the principles that are objectively inherent in the party as a voluntary political organisation and set an example by democratising their own life.

Lack of broad democracy and frequently of principled criticism and self-criticism as a law of party development, and also overcentralisation have been more than once singled out at various party forums, in the past few years, especially at the 13th Party Congress, the July 1987 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee and the National Party Conference, as major shortcomings in the work of a number of party committees and organisations.

That is why Bulgarian Communists view the restructuring ot the party and its activities, first and foremost, as the speedy development of inner party democracy, which is important not just to the party itself but also to the enhancement of its stimulating effect on the processes of democratisation in society.

What then are the major directions of democratisation in inner party life?

To begin with, the guarantees of the independence of the primary party organisations in tackling concrete problems will be strengthened. We are getting rid of pomp and fanfare and central control is being restricted. What is worth noting specifically is that the process of restructuring in the party has started from below. The Central Committee intends to create conditions for the primary organisations to make full use of their rights, discharge their duties and carry out their responsibilities accordingly. As for the higher bodies, they should concentrate on those functions which the lower levels are unable to perform.

The development of direct party democracy will be promoted additionally. General meetings and meetings of delegates in the primary organisations have the right to discuss and assess the work of their party committees and make changes in their composition at any time.

More importance will be attached to elective bodies as effective instruments of collective political leadership. Practical steps have been taken to pare down the party apparatus and to do away with its being scattered and isolated departmentally and with its attempts to supplant elective bodies. Commissions concerned with basic areas of activities have been set up at party committees to replace the numerous apparatus departments and sectors; they are elements of collective leading bodies which work exclusively on a voluntary basis.

We are trying to recast the relationships between party bodies and organisations at various levels. *Those functions of leadership which until recently were vested by Communists in the elective bodies are now taken*

over by the primary organisations and their members themselves. This means that the party bodies will be 'open' to the participation of grassroots organisations and rank-and-file Communists and rely even more directly on the collective intellect and initiative in the formulation, adoption and implementation of decisions.

To further democratise the style and methods of party work we attach paramount importance to the activation of primary organisations so that they should learn to act without waiting for word from 'on-high'. The national conference directed the cadres to work with every Communist and non-affiliated person individually, to keep in close contact with people, to identify individual talents and problems and to respect human dignity. The task is to conduct a dialogue with them as with equals; it is necessary to foster in people a feeling of their being needed, of having their voices heard and their opinions heeded in decision-making, and of exerting practical influence at the workplace, in residential neighbourhoods and in their party organisations. This will doubtless help promote initiative and the desire to get personally involved in the current plans, without which the Conception will never be implemented.

We can therefore say that today we have *not just a strategy but also concrete directions and practical levers* to further democratise inner party life.

There should be no illusions, of course, as regards the true scope of the processes taking place in the party and in the country. They are complex and controversial, and often blocked by inertia and also by overbearing administration and bureaucratism in party work. Careerism, callousness and bossy overbearingness do not wither away of their own accord; those for whom this is characteristic try to adapt themselves to the changed circumstances and even to fit into the practical implementation of the Conception.

Another factor influencing the pace of restructuring is the degree to which people at the local level have grown aware of the need for it. The party bodies at all levels also have a role to play: some of them find it hard to give up their habit of intervening in everything and ruling by decree. The party committees can hardly be expected smoothly and swiftly to drop irrelevant functions and methods of work and to master the difficult art of leadership under conditions of unfolding democracy.

However, the party and society are optimistic about the prospects of restructuring. Its major motive forces have now swung into action, including the growing awareness, organisation, and activity of the working class and other groups of the working people, the enthusiasm of the party and Young Communist League members, members of the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union, unaffiliated people, innovators in every sphere of public life — in short, all those with a vital interest in the success of this historic initiative.

The role and responsibility of the Communists and executives are increasing especially. As democratisation and self-governance assert themselves and as the creative activity of the mass of people keeps growing, the Communist finds it increasingly difficult to be in the vanguard and to live up to the honour of being a member of the Bulgarian

Communist Party. It is only natural that in the course of restructuring the party will get rid of those who are unable to perform their vanguard role. It will not be a purge, of course: we seek to create a climate in which every person will be able to apply his or her abilities and to take a befitting place in the process of renewal. Demands on the Communists will grow along with the constant expansion of their opportunities to realise their creative potentialities in the party and in social and political affairs.

Work with the cadres remains an important priority for the party in the new conditions as well, but its contents will be qualitatively changed. The time is past when decisions on cadres were taken in secret and carried through regardless. Nomenclature listing can no longer be a protective shield and the guarantee of a senior post for anyone regardless of his or her contribution to the good of society; rather they will merely delineate the responsibility of the given party body for the implementation of the personnel policy. It is now necessary to build consistently a sound pool of cadres and to improve their education, training, and placement under conditions of public openness, broad discussion, competition and election without any tutelage of self-governing organisations.

Practice imperatively demands that executive posts be assigned to those who have earned people's respect by their high moral standards, energy and practical work. Todor Zhivkov's initiative, backed by the Central Committee and the National Party Conference, for *the introduction of the mandate principle in the formation of the elective bodies of the party, the state and the public organisations* will have a revolutionising effect on our personnel work; under that principle all the posts of leadership in the party, from the CC General Secretary down to the secretary of the primary organisation, may be held for two or, as an exception, three terms of office.

★ ★ ★

The Conception for the Further Construction of Socialism in Bulgaria is open to the initiative and creative endeavour of the Communists and all the other working people. An unprecedentedly large-scale discussion began in the party after the July 1987 Plenary Meeting of the BCP Central Committee on ways of perfecting the party so that it should effectively meet the challenges of our time. The political activity of the Bulgarian people has grown more than ever under the impact of that discussion, and this is the main indicator of the correctness of the course set by the party and the guarantee that the goals we have formulated will be reached.

[1] The convocation of national party conferences has taken hold as a valuable tradition in the Bulgarian Communist Party. Under the Party Rules, such forums discuss the more important, cardinal problems of party politics. The latest conference played an historic role because, taking place against the background of the deep-going restructuring of Bulgaria's socialist society, it summed up the results of the work done since the 13th BCP Congress (April 1986) and defined the major areas and tasks of renewal in every field of social life.

[2] The present BCP Programme was approved by the 10th Party Congress in 1971. — *Ed.*

[3] Under the current Rules, the next, 14th BCP Congress is to be convened in 1991. — *Ed.*

Representative and Competent

The Credentials Committee of the BCP National Conference checked the delegates' credentials, analysed relevant data and reported to the forum of the Bulgarian Communists that in accordance with the party's numerical strength — 968,729 as of October 1, 1987 — and with the representation ratio approved by the BCP Central Committee at its July 1987 Plenary Meeting, 3,226 delegates from all age and social groups were elected unanimously at regional conferences and at the Sofia city conference.

Those involved in the production of material goods were a majority among the delegates. They numbered 1,551 (48 per cent). One thousand delegates were industrial, construction, transport, communications, trade, material and equipment supply and service sector workers; 247 were employed in agriculture. Newly established self-managing economic organisations were represented by 1,261 delegates. There was also a total of 2,146 research workers and college graduates among the participants. Party organisations in the spheres of culture, education, health, sports and tourism elected 464 delegates.

Also taking part in the conference were 319 activists of the anti-fascist resistance movement, veterans of the September 1923 Uprising, defenders of the Spanish Republic, former political exiles, guerrillas, political prisoners and concentration camp inmates.

There were 2,579 delegates serving on party bodies of all levels; 1,130 represented Communists elected to government and civic bodies and organisations.

The age structure of the conference was as follows: 8.1 per cent of the delegates were under 29, 18.2 per cent between 30 and 39; 33.7 per cent between 40 and 49, 27.5 per cent between 50 and 59, and 12.5 per cent over 60. Almost 80 per cent of the delegates had a party membership record of over 10 years; 296 (9.2 per cent) joined the party before September 9, 1944.

The Credentials Committee concluded that due to this composition, the national party conference was a widely representative and highly competent forum fully empowered, under the BCP Rules, to take decisions on the matters discussed.

The Middle East: Solidarity Is Essential To Victory

Yakub Zayadin — General Secretary, Central Committee, Jordanian Communist Party (JCP)

THE situation in the Middle East is extremely complicated. Our region is now one of the more dangerous hotbeds of international tensions. Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and, backed and assisted by the United States, opposes the exercise by the Arab people of Palestine of their legitimate national rights to return to their homeland, attain self-determination and establish an independent state under the leadership of the PLO, their sole legitimate representative. The Iran-Iraq war has been going on for many years now, and its continuation benefits only imperialism and the Israeli ruling quarters. Imperialist countries keep dangerously escalating and their armed interference in the Persian Gulf. The situation in Lebanon remains grave.

On the eve of and right after the Arab emergency summit in Amman the situation in the Gulf area deteriorated sharply. Imperialist powers use Arab disunity, the Iran-Iraq conflict and the danger of its expansion as a pretext to justify the build-up of their military presence and change the alignment of forces to the detriment of the Arab national liberation movement.

An end to the war and withdrawal of the US-NATO forces from the Gulf will make it more probable to attain a just and durable settlement of the Mid-east problem on the basis of the Arab people of Palestine exercising their legitimate rights. This objective can only be secured by convening a competent international conference in which the permanent members of the UN Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO, would participate on an equal basis.

Against this background, the struggle for *militant Arab solidarity* has emerged as a task of the utmost priority. Several positive decisions were taken at the Amman summit — the resolutions on the Palestinian problem, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the convocation of an international conference on a Mid-east settlement. However, in matters relating to the US-NATO military presence in the Gulf and to the resumption of diplomatic relations with Egypt (given that the causes which led to the severance of these relations remain unchanged), the outcome of the Amman meeting was a rightward turn compared to the results of previous summits. We hold that the imperialists and our region's reactionaries have in this way advanced their policy.

The imperialist efforts to force Jordan to surrender and the pressure brought to bear on it are creating a crisis despite the collapse and abrogation of the Amman Agreement.[2] The United States and Israel are seeking a settlement that would ensure US control of our region and force the Mid-east countries into the trap of political, economic and military dependence. To Israel, which operates within the framework of strategic

collaboration with the United States, this kind of settlement would guarantee retention of the occupied Arab territories. Should that come to pass, the entire region would be drawn into the mainstream of the aggressive neoglobalist strategy imperialism is pursuing against the Soviet Union, other socialist countries and national liberation movements.

US imperialism and the rulers of Israel are promoting direct bilateral talks and separate deals after the Camp David pattern. High-level US officials — George Bush, George Schultz, Caspar Weinberger, Richard Murphy and others — visit the Middle East and keep harping on the alleged need for direct talks between Jordan and Israel. The Israeli ruling quarters are pushing in the same direction, in an effort to create an 'alternative to the PLO'. These tactics are aimed at dodging the issues of an international conference on a Middle East settlement, a proposal put forward by the Soviet Union.

The refusal to recognise the legitimate rights of the Arab people of Palestine and the right of the PLO to be their sole legitimate representative hampers efforts to eliminate hotbeds of tensions and exacerbates the situation politically and militarily. In this connection strong pressure is being brought to bear on Jordan, compounded by the appeasement policy of some Arab countries.

The issue of *Palestinian national unity* is of great importance to the JCP. Our position on this question is clear and sincere. Unity is an objective necessity: it is the chief weapon of the Palestinian people and of the entire Arab national liberation movement. Progressive and patriotic Palestinian unity is a blow to imperialism and to the occupation. The struggle of the Palestinian people for their legitimate rights can be successful only in firm alliance with the progressive Arab liberation forces and with all progressive forces across the world led by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Such is the essence of the position taken by the Jordanian Communists.

In this connection our party called on all participants in the 18th session of the Palestine National Council[3] to do everything possible so as to attain national unity on the basis of patriotism, anti-imperialism and the struggle against the occupation, to oppose separate capitulatory deals and to rebuff the policies of the United States and Israel and their attempts at promoting their own type of settlement of the Palestinian problem.

The JCP message was welcomed by all Palestinian patriots and progressives. We are exerting new efforts to help restore the alliance of Syria, the Palestinian resistance movement and the Lebanese national patriotic forces. Restored, this alliance would be a means for completely eliminating the effects of the May 1983 treaty between Israel and Lebanon. It would also contribute to the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied areas of Lebanon and to the strengthening of its territorial and national integrity. Besides, it would give a new impetus to the Arab national liberation movement.

Certain quarters have been recently hard at work to create an 'alternative to the PLO' — specifically, hatching schemes such as the 'development plan', the 'division of functions' scheme, and the like. Many politicians in the West and in Israel are predicting a drastic worsening of

the socio-economic situation in the Middle East. They maintain that the increased differentiation between social groups and classes and the decline in living standards will result in an upsurge of radical sentiments, of the class struggle and of action against imperialism and the occupation. That is why some time ago several such politicians began talking about the need to 'raise the living standards' of the people languishing in poverty in the occupied territories, in a bid to prevent a radicalisation of political attitudes and to reinforce what they referred to as the 'moderate trend'. This was to be achieved by promoting certain views and mass consciousness stereotypes which would be able to push the inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip into, as these theoreticians put it, "taking matters into their own hands", that is, distancing themselves from the PLO, from the Arab national liberation movement and from their friends and allies.

The Israeli government has adopted the 'development plan', and the imperialists are ready to back it financially. As work to implement it is starting, vigorous attempts are undertaken to enhance the role of certain social strata in the occupied territories and to draw some Palestinian spokesmen into a dialogue with the occupation authorities. Most of these spokesmen recognise the PLO and its role. But at the same time they try to make the organisation adopt the so-called moderate approach to the issues of the rights of the Arab people of Palestine, encouraging acceptance of a compromise that would suit Israel's leaders.

The 'development plan' envisages direct or indirect coordination between Jordan and Israel (the project can be translated into reality only if there is a bilateral agreement), a further 'division of functions' between them, and involvement of the Arab population of the occupied territories in this 'development' drive. The architects of the plan believe that this will weaken the PLO and improve the chances for the creation of an alternative Palestinian organisation.

Some Palestinian groups are trying to turn this situation to their own advantage. Playing into their hands are the lack of unity, of an alliance between the Palestinian resistance movement, Syria and the Lebanese national patriotic forces, and the numerous obstacles to the implementation of the decisions approved at the 10th session of the Palestine National Council.

The situation in Jordan itself is aggravated by economic difficulties due, among other things, to the decline of the oil boom. GNP growth rates have diminished, and personal incomes have been on the wane over the past three years. At the same time, the foreign debt is growing and so are the costs of its servicing: these payments have swallowed up all export earnings over the past four years. The deficit of the national budget and, consequently, the government's domestic debt are increasing. Foreign exchange earnings have gone down, causing imports to contract and adversely affecting development programmes. Some branches of the economy, particularly industry and agriculture, are experiencing serious difficulties because of mistakes in economic policy and unfavourable external trade conditions — the drop in prices for raw materials and the protectionism of the imperialist powers. The end of the oil boom has

reduced the volume of foreign aid received from the Arab countries.

All this has affected employment, education, health and the social services — in short, everything. The unemployment rate has risen. According to different sources, it is now between eight and 12 per cent. Some experts predict that in the early 1990s it may reach 30 per cent of the economically active population. Add to that the fact that more than one-third of Jordan's workforce (over 100,000 people) is employed abroad.

These facts reflect the country's *weak economic structure.* Besides, the deteriorating situation in the Gulf states, where most of the Jordanians living abroad work, will prompt many of them to return home. Unemployment will become not only a socio-economic but also largely a political problem. Today this malady has spread to all sections of the population, hitting university degree holders — physicians, engineers and pharmacy specialists — particularly hard. Industrial workers, both skilled and unskilled, are also affected.

The authorities are attempting a radical reform of *education* to cut costs, expand the network of private schools and raise tuition fees. Restrictions on university education at home and abroad are being introduced. Naturally, families with small incomes will be the first to suffer.

In *social security,* the situation is particularly grave with old age and unemployment benefits and other types of assistance. Since this sphere is fully controlled by the government, it often uses social security allocations for completely different purposes. For example, pension fund money is channelled into economic projects operating at a loss.

New *health* legislation has been promulgated to reduce the scope of medical services provided by the government free of charge. Fees are growing noticeably, and medical treatment is getting increasingly commercialised.

The socio-economic situation is closely linked with the problem of *civil rights*. The Jordanian Communist Party has always been fighting boldly and tirelessly for freedom and democracy, side by side with many sections of the national patriotic movement. The actual state of affairs with regard to democratic liberties has alternated between improvement and deterioration depending on the character of the struggle and on the impact of domestic and external factors.

The right to establish trade unions and other civic organisations has been secured despite the resistance of the authorities which resort to unconstitutional moves. Recently, the regime has invoked emergency legislation to dissolve the Jordanian Writers' League. A decision has been taken to disband the elected governing bodies of many civic organisations. The authorities go to great lengths to thwart the exercise of the constitutional rights to association in political parties, to freedom of thought, etc.

Martial law is still in effect, the constitution has been virtually suspended, emergency trials and courts-martial have replaced ordinary courts. Sanctioned by the Law on Defence, infringements on the liberties of citizens and organisations cannot be legally appealed. Martial law prevents tens of thousands of people from leaving Jordan, but they cannot

find jobs at home. Various security services are in fact running the country, and their role is growing.

Parliamentary elections have been recently announced in Jordan. Responding to an appeal of the progressive forces, including our party, the people expressed their readiness to take an active part in these elections. At the same time, together with other patriotic forces, we criticised the country's reactionary electoral legislation and demanded that it be amended. This concerns above all the repeal of provisions regulating the composition of electoral districts, promoting regionalism and fomenting interdenominational and tribal strife, as well as of those parts of the law that question the right of the PLO to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. We have also been harshly critical of various restrictions incorporated into the electoral law, particularly of articles empowering the security service to ban the nomination of any candidate whose views and convictions it regards with disapproval.

The appeals of the patriotic forces made people much more active in registering as voters despite a more complicated procedure and other obstacles. It became clear that the elections would not produce the result the government wanted but, on the contrary, would enable the electorate to express its opinion on issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Palestinian problem, civil rights and liberties and the socio-economic situation. Inevitably, this would lead to an upsurge of the mass movement. Having decided to put the elections off for two years, the authorities expect to take steps that would guarantee the desired result.

Jordan's progressive quarters recognise the *important role our party plays in politics.* The restoration of JCP unity is a moral and practical boost to all patriotic forces. The Communists are making a tangible contribution to the struggle for drawing up a common patriotic platform on major issues of concern to the people.

We are firmly rebuffing the policy which threatens to lead Jordan to surrender. We oppose the involvement of the regime in the efforts to create an alternative to the PLO. We work unswervingly to expose imperialism and Zionism for what they are.

Our party has proclaimed a national democratic revolution as its immediate objective. This revolution is to overcome Jordan's dependence on the world capitalist market, ensure civil rights and liberties and provide a fair solution to socio-economic problems. In order to attain these objectives, the Jordanian Communists are fighting tirelessly to rally together workers, peasants, the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, and the national bourgeoisie which has no ties to foreign capital. The JCP is seeking broad cooperation with intellectuals, religious figures and all other forces fighting against imperialism, Zionism and reaction, for freedom, democracy and social progress.

[1] Held in November 1987. — *Ed.*

[2] Signed by Yasser Arafat and King Hussein in February 1985, the agreement in fact envisaged Jordan being granted the power to represent the Palestinians. In April 1987 the PLO Executive decided to abrogate it. — *Ed.*

[3] Held in Algiers in April 1987. — *Ed.*

Canada's Volatile Electorate

William Kashtan — General Secretary, Communist Party of Canada (CPC)

POLITICAL life in Canada today is characterized by the working people's desire for change. This is important given that an election could take place either this fall or the spring of 1989.

It should be remembered that in 1984 when the last election took place, the Mulroney government received about 50 per cent of the popular vote and elected 211 of the 282 MP's in Parliament. That was the largest majority ever received by a political party in Canada. Now in its fourth year in office, the Mulroney government, while still holding a majority in Parliament, constitutes a minority in the country. A recent poll showed the Liberals with 40 per cent, the New Democratic Party (NDP) with 30 per cent and the Conservatives with 29 per cent of popular support. Recently held by-elections in three constituencies in different parts of the country resulted in electoral defeats for the Mulroney government and victories for the NDP in all of them.

There are a number of factors explaining this shift of public opinion. Tory deception, corruption and patronage stand high in the list. The credibility of the government has been seriously undermined. It created the impression that with its coming to power patronage would come to an end. Instead it has undertaken it on a massive scale. It created the impression of honesty and morality in government. Instead eight Cabinet Ministers either resigned or were forced to resign with two of them up under criminal charges.

To this was added concern that the government is 'too close to the USA' and more than close to the main corporations in Canada. The previous government had undertaken to Canadianize the economic and foreign policy of Canada. A foreign investment review agency sought to control foreign investment in Canada which did not serve the national interest. It strove to lessen dependence on the US, by balancing it with a strengthening of trade relations with Western Europe, the Pacific Rim countries and the socialist countries. It began to distance itself from some US foreign policies. Domestically it undertook measures to lessen US domination in the oil industry with the aim of achieving 50 per cent Canadian control of this key sector of the economy.

This was not to the liking of the US Administration and the transnationals and found a reflection in the reversal of these policies by the Mulroney government when elected. In essence the Mulroney government replaced the policies of Canadianization pursued by the previous

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government with a policy of Americanization and increasing integration with US imperialism. Both the foreign investment review act and the national energy program were annulled. An open door to US investments was undertaken which found further reflection in the free trade agreement between Canada and the USA, signed in January 1988. A similar approach was taken in the field of energy. The US oil transnationals were invited back to Canada again and this was codified by the free trade agreement whereby Canada granted 'national treatment' to the US. The process of deregulation and privatization was also launched whose end result is to strengthen control and ownership of key sectors of the economy by both US and Canadian transnationals.

Free trade is more than a commercial and trade agreement. It lifts controls on US investments and the sale and pricing of energy to the US. An open door policy regarding US investments means increased control of the Canadian economy. It ties Canada more closely than ever to the US and to Fortress America. According to the authoritative Conference Board of Canada, the abolition of customs duties on US goods will cut Canada's national income by some three billion dollars a year for the next decade. This will inevitably result in a growing budget deficit which may reach the 40 billion-dollar mark by 1997. Economists believe that it can only be countered by higher taxes — which will adversely affect living standards. Free trade with the USA opens the door for an attack on the living standards and jobs of the working class. It would result in a drive to bring prices, wages and working conditions down to the level of the 'right to work' southern USA states.

In foreign policy the government has gone quite far in the further integration of Canada's defence, military and foreign policies with those of the USA. Whereas the previous government had released Canada somewhat from the bonds that tied it to NATO, the Mulroney government not only reaffirmed that bond but also strengthened it. Military expenditures for NATO have been increased. *A White Paper on Defence* is before Parliament which proposes to purchase 10 to 12 nuclear powered submarines ostensibly to 'protect Canada's sovereignty against an alleged Soviet threat' in the Arctic and elsewhere. This alleged threat was used to renew US Cruise missile testing despite the government's declared position that such testing on Canadian soil would be stopped as soon as the INF treaty was adopted. Rather than doing so, the government has gone out of its way to talk of an alleged Soviet threat as the excuse to permit continuation of the tests, a view not shared by most Canadians. These and other measures show that the government has embarked on an ever-increasing militarisation program at a cost of over $180 million over the next five years as part and parcel of a defence system for North America that will inevitably and inextricably tie Canada into the US nuclear strategy for North America militarily and politically. Such a policy undermines the possibility of Canada pursuing an independent role in foreign affairs.

Similarly, government spokesmen have sought to continue the cold war under the guise of an alleged threat of Soviet military aggression. It has less and less impact on Canadians. Perestroika and glasnost in the Soviet Union have had an impressive impact on Canadians as it has had on people

throughout the world. The USSR has advanced new peace initiatives aimed at radically lowering the level of military confrontation in the North, and the government would do well to discuss them.

It is claimed that there is no alternative to the course being taken, that the process of integration is inevitable, that there are no other options. But the fact is that the process of integration presently accelerating in Canada has stimulated a powerful people's movement in defence of Canada's sovereignty and greater economic independence. The trade union movement, the women's movement, the farm movement, the Liberal Party, the NDP, the Communist Party, other forces including bourgeois nationalist forces desirous of Canada pursuing an independent course, either in coalition or independently, are in different ways opposing the policy of continentalism pursued by the Mulroney government, are for a restructuring of the economy, the development of trade on a multilateral basis and in support of a policy of peaceful coexistence.

The Meech Lake Accord has brought about a fundamental change in the state structure of Canada. The powers of the provinces have been increased enormously at the expense of the central government. Each province now will have the right to veto any amendment to the constitution which seeks to recognize the right to self-determination of Quebec, the right to self-government of the aboriginal peoples, which seeks to enshrine the democratic rights of ethnic groups, which grants provincial status to the Yukon or the North-west Territories, or which seeks to reform the Senate.

The increased power of the provinces, the political decentralization of power constitutionally reinforces the propensity of some provinces to sell out their natural resources, including energy resources, to US imperialism. This accounts for the support of such provinces for the free trade deal, which sacrifices Canadian independence and sovereignty. This decentralization of power will deepen Canada's disunity.

The Meech Lake Accord which brought Quebec back into the constitution, recognizes Quebec as a 'distinct Society'. But 'distinct society' is a substitute for recognizing the right to national self-determination for Quebec.

In return for the 'distinct society' a Mulroney-Bourassa axis has been formed which the government hopes will give it the support of the majority of the people of Quebec while at the same time undermining the separatist movement in Quebec. While this movement, embodied in the Parti Quebecois, has been temporarily set back, there is no assurance it will disappear from the political scene. A truly democratic solution to the national question within the specifics of Canada is called for to accomplish this.

Meech Lake, like the free trade agreement, has not eliminated the contradictions and divisions in Canada. These divisions are accentuated by the economic policies of the government. Despite its claim of prosperity, the government is compelled to note the decline in the rate of growth which is taking place in Canada on the background of a possible recession in the USA. Such a recession would have its immediate impact on the Canadian economy due to the close inter-relationships of the two economies.

Unemployment continues, although unevenly, from province to province. In February, there were 1.1 million unemployed or 7.8 per cent of the workforce. While in parts of Ontario and Quebec there has been a decline in unemployment, this is more than made up by 12 to 18 per cent unemployment in other parts of the country, particularly in the provinces based on resources industries. Unemployment among young people is particularly high. Homelessness keeps on growing.

The farmers continue to face difficulties. Living standards are deteriorating. Wages continue to lag behind the rate of inflation. The outcome of the economic and social policies of the government has been a further accumulation of wealth by the few and increases in the number of those living in conditions of poverty.

In different parts of the country anti-labor legislation has been introduced to weaken the ability of the trade union movement to defend the interests of its members. In industries under federal jurisdiction the government has enacted back to work legislation and imposed settlements on workers to the advantages of the corporations. This has been the case in the railway industry and among postal employees. These measures have widened opposition to the economic policies of the Mulroney government and increased awareness by the workers of the need for political action. They have likewise given an impetus to the trade union movement to establish closer links with its democratic allies in the struggle against the government's policy of privatization and deregulation.

What is evident is that we have entered an uncertain and increasingly volatile situation in which the relationship of forces will decide whether the desire for change will lead to a turn further to the right or towards the left.

Within the Liberal Party a sharp struggle unfolded between different forces over the question of leadership and policy. Which direction to take? Continue on a right wing stance as it did in 1984 and suffer defeat as a result or move over to a left-centre position and thereby undercut the NDP? Under pressure from the 'grassroots' and to prevent the NDP from replacing the Liberal Party as the main opposition to the Mulroney government, it moved to a left-centre position. It finally declared itself in opposition to US Cruise missile testing on Canadian soil. It came out in support of a comprehensive superpower nuclear arms test ban treaty. It called for Canada to become a nuclear weapons-free zone. It proposes to downgrade the proposed submarine fleet from nuclear to diesel fuel. It calls for a multilateral treaty 'to halt the militarization of the Arctic and pave the way for technological, economic and environmental cooperation'. It declared itself for multilateral trade as 'free trade undermines Canada's sovereignty'. It called for increased trade, travel and co-operation between East and West. More recently it declared itself for sanctions against South Africa and a break in diplomatic relations with that country.

In domestic matters it endorsed the 'distinctive character' of the province of Quebec and supported its right of veto, the right to self-government of the Native peoples, this to be explicitly stated in the Constitution, and so on.

This turn to a left-centre position found its reflection in recent polls which showed growing electoral support for the party.

Of greater significance in a sense is the considerable growth of support for the NDP in all parts of Canada, including Quebec. The NDP had been able to break through on a provincial level and form governments in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

What is particularly significant is the support being shown for the NDP in Quebec. Again, if the polls are correct they show a marked growth of support for the NDP in a province where they have no members in the provincial legislature or in Parliament and where the trade union movement so far has resisted recognizing the NDP as its 'political arm'. How to explain this? Part of the reason lies in the apparent change in policy of the NDP on the national question while avoiding coming out for the right to national self-determination of the French-Canadian people. It has, like the CPC, developed a structure in Quebec which would conform with the specifics of that province. Moreover, the national sentiment which found expression in the Parti Quebecois has moved over to the NDP on a federal scale. It could well be then that in a federal election the NDP might be able to elect a number of MPs in Quebec.

The NDP has never before been able to elect more than 30-odd Members of Parliament federally. This time, if the polls are correct, they suggest that a growing body of Canadians have moved into the NDP camp.

Not only the polls but three by-elections emphasize this. At the same time the NDP victory in the three by-elections, while significant, should not be exaggerated. As a rule by-elections give the voters an opportunity to express their opposition to the government and its policies, knowing that this will not bring the government down. But in a general election where the issue is that of government, the results might be different. Nevertheless the three by-elections had a particular significance. They took place in three different parts of the country, led to losses both for the Tories and the Liberals, and stimulated hope that the same results might occur when a general election is held. The increased support for the NDP in all parts of the country shows there is growing dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the direct parties of monopoly.

The latest polls give high marks to the NDP for honesty and integrity, the party most likely to provide 'open and honest' government. In this connection six out of 10 voters, according to the above poll, said honesty in government 'will be the single most important factor in their decision about which party to support in the upcoming election'.

This view of honesty and integrity finds reflection in statements by some leaders of the NDP that this, including fairness, will constitute the essential thrust of their election campaign.

There appears to be a break from the traditional tweedledee and tweedledum position which has characterized federal politics in the past with the Conservatives and Liberals alternating in government. Now there is a growing body of public opinion which sees the Tories and Liberals as being somewhat the same, and looks for a change of direction. At this point of time they see the NDP as the parliamentary alternative to these old line parties.

Some of the media suggest that the increased support for the NDP is a temporary aberration which will work itself out. This somewhat short-

sighted view fails to see that what is shaping up is a process of political realignment that could open the door to the possibility, not yet a guarantee but a possibility, of even a minority NDP government.

Today both the Liberals and the NDP are discussing their attitudes to a coalition government. Spokesmen of both these parties have not ruled out such a possibility if no majority government is elected. This time the NDP has taken the position that if they support such a coalition it will be on the basis of being part of the government. What conditions will be exacted for this remains to be seen.

This idea of coalition government arises from past experience. In a previous federal election when Trudeau formed a minority Liberal government he was then supported by the NDP. When the situation changed in his favour and he felt he might win a majority government he called an election and in fact formed a majority government at the expense of the NDP which lost some seats. The same occurred in the recently held provincial elections in Ontario. The minority Peterson government supported by the NDP decided to call an election at a time suitable to the Liberal Party and won. Again the NDP lost some seats.

What is interesting to note is that while in Western Europe the trend in some countries continues to the right, evidenced in the various elections which took place in the recent period, here the tendency seems to be to move in a different direction, to the left, not to the advanced left, but leftwards, in a more progressive direction.

A factor one has to take into account is that the NDP has never constituted a government federally. Working people do not have the experience many have with social democratic parties in Western Europe. These parties have been in and out of government, and working people have seen what they can do and what they cannot do.

The desire for change in domestic and foreign policy is reflected in increased support for the NDP and corresponds with the growth of anti-US sentiment in Canada arising from sharpening contradictions between Canada and the US and with the growing sentiment for peace. This may be a factor in the NDP's recent statement on defence policy which came out again for Canada's withdrawal from NATO and NORAD, for cancellation to buy 10 to 12 nuclear powered submarines, an end to US Cruise missile testing on Canadian soil, opposition to Star Wars. It calls for making the Arctic a nuclear weapons-free zone. It was in effect a response to the Mulroney government's *White Paper on Defence* and reflected the considerable growth of anti-war and anti-nuclear sentiment in Canada, a situation for which the peace movement and our party can take some credit.

At the same time this NDP statement is not yet devoid of cold war thinking. There is no conclusion drawn as to where the source of the war danger is. Neither is there any mention of the new thinking advanced by the Soviet Union and its call for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000. This equivocal position of the NDP shows that the leadership of that party could bend to the pressures of monopoly and the neo-conservatives.

That this is a possibility is already indicated in the decision of the NDP

Council to refer back to their international affairs committee the question of Canada's membership in NATO and NORAD. Prime Minister Mulroney has already made it clear that Canada's membership in NATO and NORAD will be one of the main issues in the coming elections alongside support for free enterprise and the market-place. The government hopes that it could repeat what Mrs Thatcher did in the British elections and attack the NDP for leaving Canada 'defenceless' in face of an alleged Soviet threat.

There are also suggestions that the NDP might drop some of the planks of its economic platform. At previous conventions it had come out for nationalization of one of the banks, nationalization of the oil industry and of the DPR. It is now suggested they might retreat from that position, also in response to the neo-conservative drive against progressive measures of economic reform.

If the NDP yields to the pressures of monopoly and its mass media and throws its platform overboard, this cannot but undermine its electoral positions. Its strength lies in the democratic alternative it advances and fights for on the cardinal issues of peace, opposition to free trade with the US, in support of economic policies of full employment, including nationalization, directed to curb the power of monopoly and the transnationals, and in defence of the vital interests of the working people.

Experience in countries in Western Europe, experiences in provinces where the NDP was the government shows that the social democratic parties including the NDP are prepared to bend and capitulate before the pressures of monopoly and throw their election pledges to the wind.

This is all the more reason for a people's movement which our party has called for to make its appearance, strong enough to compel the NDP to stand by its election pledges. Such a movement is beginning to take shape in Canada with the trade union movement playing an important role in this process. Its effectiveness is yet to be tested. Our party sees such a movement as a non-parliamentary force, not as a substitute to the NDP, a force which could make a difference in deciding the outcome of an election.

Faced with an increasingly complicated situation, and considering the relationship of forces in Canada, the basic issues involved, that of peace and survival of Canada as an independent force, our party has called for critical support of the NDP in the coming elections. We say critical because there is no assurance the NDP will fight to the end for its program of democratic and social change. It is therefore important that our party explain this position to the working class and democratic forces. We will couple this with running 50 candidates in the election around our platform which dovetails immediate and longer term aims.

Our aim in the coming election is directed to help bring about the defeat of the neo-conservative government. If the democratic forces can unite in and outside of parliament, a new majority to the left of the Tories could be achieved, the neo-conservative threat stopped and the conservatives defeated. In this way a shift of political power to the working class and other democratic forces could be achieved. Such a result would open the door to changing the balance of forces and create better conditions for

continuing the fight for a shift towards democratic and social advance.

Politics is very fluid and very volatile in Canada. In its own way, it expresses the desire for change but not yet for fundamental change. Our aim in the coming election is to help bring together the social and political forces which desire change with the aim of bringing about progressive change in the direction of socialism.

Our Interviews

We Favour A Peaceful Solution Of The Cyprus Problem

Georgios Vassiliou — President of the Republic of Cyprus

Democratic elections of an independent candidate as head of state is an exceptional, if not unique, event in the electoral practice of many countries. How would you explain your success? What was essential to it?

I BELIEVE that the election of a person as head of state, like the coming of a party to power, depends on the needs of the times and of the society that person is called upon to lead.

Cyprus is today waging an anti-occupation struggle for the success of which the unity of the people and the leadership is essential. This was our message, which absolutely corresponded to the present-day situation in Cyprus and the will of the Cypriot people.

Unity is more feasible when it is called for by an independent candidate with no party commitments than by a party leader identified with a party and a specific ideology, which implies confrontation with other ideologies.

The effective support you received from AKEL prompted the right-wing press in the West to engage in all sorts of insinuations. What can you say on that score? How would you assess the role of AKEL in the socio-political affairs of Cyprus?

To some extent it was only to be expected that the right-wing press in the West would react guardedly to AKEL's supporting me. Because the West does not know the political and social reality in Cyprus, the positions of the

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Georgios Vassiliou, b. 1931, comes from a medical family. Studied at the universities of Geneva, Budapest, and London, and holds a doctorate in economics. Founded the Middle East Marketing Research Bureau, the biggest economic research centre in the region, in 1962, and a training centre for managers and computer operators, in 1984. Has written monographs on marketing.

various parties and the basis for political cooperation. The policy my government will follow in practice will remove any such reservations.

AKEL's role in the socio-political affairs of Cyprus is quite considerable. It is the oldest political party in Cyprus and has made a great contribution to the social and political progress of our country, particularly at the time of Britain's colonial rule, when it was the only organised political force in the country. To understand the Cypriot political scene one must understand AKEL's policy. It does not at present call for the transformation of society, and therefore has no problem of cooperating politically with parties or persons of different ideologies. What is of paramount importance for AKEL is to solve the Cyprus problem. This was the basis for its cooperation with Spyros Kyprianou and the Democratic Party in 1983, and the same applies to our cooperation today.

Could you describe the internal and external aspects of the problem of Cyprus? How do you think it would be possible to solve it? Do you plan to advance new ideas or proposals to that effect?

Speaking of the internal aspects of the Cyprus problem, we mean the constitutional and territorial issues which are related to the government of Cyprus. These aspects should be the object of intercommunal negotiations, since they directly and exclusively concern the interests of members of both communities — the Greek and the Turkish.

At the same time there are external aspects of the problem that have got to be settled before there can be a solution. I am referring to withdrawal of all Turkish troops and settlers, safeguarding the right of all refugees to return to their homes, and securing international guarantees for the country's sovereignty. These issues concern international law and should be settled by an international conference.

We are in favour of a peaceful solution of the Cyprus problem on the basis of the UN principles and resolutions, and the Makarios-Denktas and Kyprianou-Denktas High Level Agreements. In order to achieve this, Turkey should abandon her intransigent policy and expansionist designs.

The Cyprus government is determined to promote rapprochement between the two communities. The problem did not arise because of the existence of two communities, but because of the invasion and occupation of one UN member-state by another. Turkish Cypriots are also suffering as a result of the occupation and have a stake in peaceful co-existence and cooperation with Greek Cypriots. The solution we are working for would safeguard the interests of all citizens of the Cyprus Republic. Steps will be taken to promote a just and viable solution. But a solution will not be possible until the international community exercises effective pressure on Ankara to abandon its unacceptable positions.

What do you think of the initiative set forth in the Soviet Union's January 1986 statement on the Cyprus problem?

We agree with the Soviet proposal, which we consider very positive; it merits every possible backing. Since the Cyprus problem was basically

created by the invasion and occupation of one UN-member state by another, the most suitable way to settle the external aspects is to call an international conference under UN auspices.

What do you think about today's overall international situation? Do positive developments on the world scene, primarily in the sphere of easing international tensions and promoting disarmament, further a just settlement of the Cyprus problem? How could the Republic of Cyprus contribute to the solution of global problems, particularly that of defusing the nuclear threat?

From the very first, I welcomed the historic agreement between the Soviet Union and the United States of America, which has steered international developments in a positive direction.

The climate of détente between the two great powers constitutes a positive factor for the solution of local and regional problems which are a source of tension and pose a threat to world peace.

In this new climate more favourable conditions are arising for a just solution of the Cyprus problem as well.

Cyprus is a small country but its strategic and geographical position is very important. It may set an example of demilitarisation, which would also help the cause of nuclear disarmament. We have supported and continue to support the idea of turning the Mediterranean into a lake of peace through the abolition of all nuclear weapons deployed in the area.

The idea of demilitarising Cyprus reinforces in practice the cause of international disarmament. Our aim is to turn Cyprus into a place of cooperation for the whole of the Mediterranean and a bridge of peaceful communication between the continents surrounding it.

Background Information

For many years Cyprus has been a seat of international tension in the Mediterranean. Owing to its strategic location, the island has long been a target of colonialist and imperialist expansionist designs. From 1517 to 1878, Cyprus had been under Turkish rule, and thereafter became a British colony. In 1960, the long battle against foreign rule was crowned with success, and Cyprus became independent. But Britain saddled the country with a number of agreements that greatly curtailed her sovereignty. As a result, British military bases on the island were retained, and the Greek part of the population (78 per cent) was artificially contraposed to the Turkish (18 per cent). In spite of this, steps were taken in the Republic to democratise the political scene at home, to build up the national economy, and to improve the condition of the people. Foreign policy was based on the non-alignment principles.

In 1974, the military junta then ruling Greece carried out a *coup d'état* with the assistance of reactionaries at home and the secret services of the USA and NATO, resulting in the overthrow of Archbishop Makarios, the country's first president. Some time later, on the pretext of restoring order, Turkey occupied the northern part of the country or 36.4 per cent of its total area. In 1975, the Turkish community leader unilaterally established

the so-called Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, and in 1983 set up an independent Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, with Rauf Denktas as its president.

The Cypriot problem has been repeatedly examined at the UN, whose resolutions call for the withdrawal of all foreign troops from the island, a halt to interference in the country's affairs, and a negotiated settlement of disputed issues between the Greek and Turkish communities. Imperialist circles are hindering fulfilment of the UN resolutions in a bid to turn Cyprus into their military bridgehead. In contrast, the socialist countries are consistently in favour of the resolutions being carried out. This approach is evident in the Soviet Statement on the Principles and Ways of a Cyprus Settlement, of January 21, 1986. It envisages that the Cypriots should settle the matter on their own by peaceful means, that the island should be demilitarised, treaties and agreements curtailing the country's sovereignty scrapped, and an international conference called for this purpose under UN auspices with the participation of all parties concerned.

Under its Constitution, Cyprus is a republic with a presidential form of government. Legislative powers are vested in a parliament, and executive powers in a council of ministers, which is headed by a president elected every five years. In 1978 and 1983, Spyros Kyprianou, leader of the centrist Democratic Party, was elected president. In the past he was backed by the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus — AKEL on the basis of a patriotic unity platform. But in 1985, falling prey to imperialist intrigues, Kyprianou cut off cooperation with it. At the presidential elections in February 1988, AKEL and other progressive forces backed Georgios Vassiliou, an independent candidate, whose main rival was the leader of the rightist Democratic Rally party. Georgios Vassiliou won.

Christoforos Ioannides
representative on *WMR* of the Progressive
Party of the Working People of
Cyprus

for human survival

The Priorities In Our Struggle

Ernst Wimmer — CC Political Bureau member, Communist Party of Austria (CPA)

IT is an incontrovertible fact that mankind could be annihilated in any attempt to settle the historical issue between capitalism and socialism by military means, and the instinct of survival has compelled efforts to avert such a disaster and make it impossible, which brings the task of survival to the fore. But does it follow that the class struggle has ceased to be a generator of social development, or that it is even in conflict with the imperative of saving our civilisation? The answers to these questions are important both in the struggle for peace and for social progress.

Let us first clarify what could be called the basis of peaceful coexistence. Does it imply a conservation of the existing political, economic and social conditions? If it does, it is a hopeless endeavour from the very outset, because there have never been and never will be any means to freeze development moved by objective contradictions.

Let us also ask this question: does coexistence guarantee the victory of one system alone? If it does, it is bound to be rejected by the other. Is it, perhaps, a policy that does nothing to serve class interests generally? No, that is not true either. One thing is clear: peaceful coexistence compels recognition of the existence of the other side, and does not make any claims jeopardising its vital interests, i.e., it compels us to cease striving to achieve that which we deny the other side. It takes a lot of time to develop this approach, although some of the actual results are already there, for instance, the first Soviet-US agreement on eliminating a part of the nuclear weapons arsenal.

The Moscow meeting in November 1987 of representatives of communist, socialist and social democratic parties, and national liberation and other democratic movements attested to a considerable advance in comprehending the new problems, for there was both a broad and frank statement of positions that were in many ways identical, often different, and even opposite now and again. It showed the additional forces that could be involved for strengthening peace and continuing the disarmament process.

The adversaries of the Communists have accused them of turning peaceful coexistence into an 'instrument for attaining this self-seeking aims', simply because we are convinced of the ultimate triumph of

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socialism. But it does, after all, imply an understanding of the need to preserve peaceful relations between the rival systems, i.e., to channel the contest into competition and a political, ideological and moral debate, instead of military confrontation, and so eventually take the course of mutually beneficial cooperation.

The problem lies in the fact that peacemaking is inherent in only one of the two opposed social systems, namely, socialism, which means that peaceful competition has to be forced on those who still set the tone in the leading capitalist countries and who often cynically resort to diktat: the military-industrial complexes, the magnates waxing rich on arms manufacture, and their political abettors.

That cannot be achieved when acting from narrow class positions. There is a compelling need for a broad alliance of reason, and alliance of all those who regard survival as the top priority. But how is one to be guided by this supreme interest, while standing up for the interests of one's classes and strata? The balance between the tasks of preserving peace and defending one's class interests is a question facing both sides, even if in different ways, and even those who refuse to commit themselves to either side.

It is becoming ever more obvious that in a world divided on class lines an understanding can be reached on definite rules of behaviour for the sake of survival. But it is also doubtful that any capitalist government would come round, of its own accord, to halting the class struggle against the majority of the nation. Indeed, would any people give up the fight against fascist rulers, like those in Chile, or against an inhuman system, like that in South Africa?

Any content of peaceful coexistence will, of course, have an effect on the forms of the class battles in the individual countries, but it would be absurd to assume that 'internal peace', a miraculous resolution of the objective contradictions in this or that country, could be guaranteed when favourable international conditions for peace are ensured. Marx and Engels said at a very early period that the Communists "have over the great mass of the proletariat the advantage of clearly understanding the line of march, the conditions and the ultimate general results of the proletarian movement".[1] The communist parties have become parties of the working people and the proletarian movement has become the basis of state policy of some countries; that is why the Communists now have a wider view of world history. And so it is the duty of the Communists to strive most thoroughly to comprehend the problems facing mankind.

Some important conclusions have already been drawn, even if with some delay. It would, for instance, be adventurism to assume that since the imperialist World War I led to the socialist revolution, World War II to the emergence of the system of socialist states, a third world war could be expected to lead to the 'final victory' of socialism and its triumph all over the world, instead of the annihilation of the whole of mankind. *The revolutionary movement, without repudiating its interests, believes that the preservation of life is the supreme priority, implying that one should not give up one's objectives, but bear continuously in mind, in advancing the class struggle, mankind's cardinal interest: survival.*

The 'epoch of transition from capitalism to socialism' is a formula which

originated when the socialist revolution was carried out in Russia. It is now obvious that this transition will be a longer one, and so in this context and in the light of practice, one should ask: will not internal contradictions assume ever greater importance as the contradictions between the two systems are resolved in an ever more orderly manner, and as the weight of the Third World is ever more pronounced? And will there then be more respect for the peoples' right to self-determination and transition to another way of life?

It is absurd to try to prove that the Communists' faith in the ultimate victory of their cause is allegedly a discredit to them, and that they should go back on it for the sake of 'harmony' of world order. Who among the leaders of the capitalist countries has not declared their system to be superior? Who among them has not laid claim to the capacity of overthrowing communism once and for all? Many of them regard socialism as an 'aberration of history'. It seems to be futile to insist on the abandonment of such views as a preliminary condition for peaceful coexistence, which merely requires that one's objective should be attained in such a way as not to jeopardise international security, and that is also in line with the course towards disarmament and a nuclear-free world, elimination of the nuclear threat and potential for attack, and establishment of a universal security system.

Some insist that if we are to strike the right balance between the struggle for peace and the class struggle, one should be abandoned for the sake of the other, or treated as the 'fifth wheel of a cart'. Life has shown the harmfulness of some attempts in the revolutionary movement to reduce every social phenomenon to a set of class interests, an approach that could be called 'class fetishism'. It was the wrong approach, but are we to go to the other extreme, and think only of mankind as a whole? Are we to fraternise with people under whom heads are still rolling? Are we to reckon only with the common interests, while forgetting that which divides us?

Indeed, monopoly capitalists can stand for peace to the extent that this accords with profit-making and the preservation of their system. But will they sacrifice their class interests? I think that the military-industrial complex bosses, for whom arms manufacture is a boon, would heave a sigh of relief if the struggle for peace were not carried on at all, or with less vigour. And that applies not only to them.

The capitalists of 'every calibre' and nation, whatever their political views, would rejoice if only that part of the class struggle remained which they themselves keep carrying on by every possible means everywhere, though never calling it a class struggle. What would be better for the exploiters of the less developed countries if, for the sake of world peace, they would be guaranteed for all time the possibility of unhampered enjoyment of their privileges? *When we contrast the struggle for peace and the class struggle; we tend to strengthen the positions of the opposite side, to create more favourable conditions for it, to the detriment of the balance of forces necessary for maintaining peace.*

Those who want to limit defence of peace to actions by one class are not entitled to refer to Marxism, but those who believe that class antagonisms

are no longer the main motive force of social development (and that if they are, it is of little import for peace), risk making unpardonable concessions to capital.

Let us consider Austria. A broad protest movement got under way in response to the drive by capital, the cutbacks in social and education appropriations, the privatisation of state enterprises, and the winding up of workplaces and shutdown of enterprises in the country. This protest movement reached a peak on October 24 last year, when a 40,000-strong demonstration was staged in Vienna. In this context some have assumed that there is place for only one big movement in a small country, so that all the other protest movements will have to dissolve in it. But what is inevitably forgotten in such an approach is that such movements have interconnected but basically different objectives.

The Austrian *peace movement* seeks to have an influence on the government's foreign policy to make it pursue a consistent policy of peace and neutrality, and to stop according with the opponents of détente and disarmament. But it does not want to become the focus of inner-political opposition. It merely wants to take account of some 'finer' points, such as the difference between Chancellor Vranicky, who has rightly opposed conventional arms 'compensation' for missiles, and Defence Minister Lihal and his colleagues, who seek to impel Austria to build up its non-nuclear arsenal, as NATO wants it to do.

Does that mean that *the other movement — that of economic and social protest* — should artificially emphasise the differences between the Chancellor and the ministers? After all, whatever their concrete roles, they share the responsibility for capital's drive. This movement should be aimed directly against the entire government coalition, the social partnership idea, and the trade union leaders who impede the expression of economic and social protest. In short, it should be aimed generally against those who initiate and conduct capital's offensive.

Take another example. The largest general students' strike in Austria's history got a stab in the back from the leaders of the students' union, who gave in to the most worthless ministers, while the most influential factions of the union went so far as to coordinate their double-dealing actions with the government and the ruling parties. This scandalous behaviour effectively nullified the results of weeks of strike action by higher school students. But the fact is that these same student leaders could have played a positive role in the peace movement, without altering any of their inner-political tenets.

Indeed, it is not easy to sort out what is going on in society today, especially in view of the often misleading and false indicators. Errors are fairly dangerous because of the multiplicity of intertwined contradictions. The same persons, groups, factions, or classes have different and often opposite functions on various issues; those who are opponents in one case may be allies in another. It is an oversimplification to give attention to one front only, while forgetting about contradictions in another sector, and to be guided by the 'either — or' principle, instead of the 'not only — but also' principle.

Any straightforward demarcation or even opposition of global, general

democratic objectives and of the tasks of the class struggle would have grave negative consequences for the working class movement and its revolutionary vanguard.

Whenever difficulties arise in the comprehension and solution of actual problems, there is a spate of day-dreams among those who like to circumvent real problems. There is a longing for 'a totally new theory' which could obviate the hard task of determining and weighing up the various interests, and identifying the possible scenarios, consequences and perspectives for action. However, theory must start from all the existing trends, from the whole set of intertwined and diverse contradictions, instead of an arbitrary selection of them. *Indeed, peace is most important of all, but peace is far from everything. Moreover, if one is to be able to change the world, one has to rescue it, and to change it for the sake of rescuing it.*

It is now more or less generally recognised that if the peace movement is to attain its goals, it needs to be above class in character and content. But there is also this other view: the peace movement should not deal with class problems at all. That is something we naturally cannot accept. This idea, first, implies neglect of the fact that the danger of war is rooted in imperialism, and is caused, not least importantly, by the strivings of the military-industrial complex for power and for profit. Second, it tends to ignore the close connection between militarisation and the curtailment of democracy, and between the arms build-up and the squandering of resources, labour and energy, and a worsening of living conditions. Third, it says nothing about the factors that are of exceptional importance for determining both the main efforts and the effectiveness of the movements themselves.

Some ask: Are the aggressive character of imperialism and belief in its peaceableness compatible? I think that there is a confusion here of two notions: peaceableness and the capacity for peace. Had imperialism not been capable of peace under any conditions whatsoever, peaceful coexistence would have had no prospects before it. It is possible to set up a coalition of reason because most people, and in the imperialist countries as well (including the monopoly circles), want to survive. Meanwhile, a minority, but a powerful one at that, stands to gain from the drive for military superiority. This minority seeks to carry on its game by means of intrigues, threats, and blackmail.

If we truly want to create such a coalition, it is altogether wrong, and even harmful, to make peaceful coexistence contingent on basic changes in Western society. What is more, socialism will not allow anyone to dictate any similar conditions to itself. *Peaceful coexistence does not, of itself, guarantee either 'internal peace' or victory for either of the social systems. It does not prescribe any ideological armistice, for any attempt to do so would fail. But we have the duty to reject the notion that peace and coexistence are possible only between states living in accordance with the same rules and principles.*

When analysing the connection between the struggle for peace and the class struggle, one inevitably comes up against this question: to what extent can monopoly capitalism be changed through reform? Which of its most inhuman, extremist and destructive manifestations can be blocked?[2] How

amenable it is to reform is determined by many factors: the nature of this or that business, the limits for social manoeuvring, the capacity of the capitalist system to adapt, and in particular, the alignment of forces. Trying to predict the scope of reform with absolute precision would be as scientific a pursuit as astrology.

When considering the extent to which capitalism could adapt to peaceful coexistence, one should not forget that there is simply no alternative. To claim that 'adaptation is impossible' means, in effect, accepting the prospect of mankind's demise. On the other global problems there is also the mounting imperative of shaping international relations as a system under which these could be solved in the light of the conception that this world of ours is one and indivisible. Closer cooperation between the states and peoples of the Third World could compel transnational capital to make concessions.

The important successes of the policy of peaceful coexistence and disarmament could well increase pressure in the capitalist countries in favour of domestic reforms and the potentialities for putting them through. It is all the more important then to clarify to what extent the working class and its allies could use capitalism's capacity to adapt in their own interests so as to improve the conditions of the struggle for their emancipation. It would be wrong to assume that such a situation would make revolutionary parties irrelevant. After all, from the ruling circles' standpoint, the purpose of reform is to keep the system going and, if possible, to make it stronger. Indeed, those who cherish the hope of 'outwitting' capitalism by means of reform are bound to be taught a hard lesson by life sooner or later. Can one expect the capitalist system, after all, to purge itself of mass unemployment? The record, especially that under the scientific and technological revolution, makes it quite obvious that it cannot do so. One can also hardly expect capitalism to become a factor for developing every human capacity so long as there is exploitation, so long as a large section of society is deprived. It is useless to expect to see 'broad democracy' where a few have a tight grip on the means of production and so also on political power.

What kind of reforms could be effected, which of the negative elements could be reduced or neutralised, what kind of gains could be made? This ultimately depends on *how widely the class struggle is carried on not only by the working class, but also by the entire mass of victims of the state-monopoly system; on how social consciousness and the balance of forces change; on the prospects for transforming society that are opened up.*

The limits to what can actually be done within the system could well be fluid, although any reformist activity is hemmed in sooner or later by the need to preserve the social system and keep it going, and by the greed of the ruling circles. The biggest mistake even of the best scenarios of Austro-Marxism consisted in dividing history into phases when 'nothing could be done except reforms' (and when there was a need only of reformers), and phases when revolutionaries could 'come in handy'. History has always proved the very opposite: successes at the phase of deep transformations are also determined by the 'potential' built up in the periods of 'calm' development.

The realities in Austria today bear witness that there is no substitute for the revolutionary party both in resisting the counter-reforms backed by the Social Democrats who have switched to conservative positions and in putting forward a political and social alternative. There is, therefore, good reason why those who carry on a resolute class struggle are in the front ranks of the dedicated peace fighters without claiming, however, any monopoly on the truth, ideas, or initiatives.

In summing up, let me emphasise once again: oversimplification and the use of ready-made formulae lead to a loss of distinct orientations. In this sense, formulae like 'engagement', 'bringing to the fore' and 'subordination' are most inadequate for comprehending the intricate interaction between the struggle for peace and the class struggle.

The developing situation within the country and on the international scene requires greater efforts along both lines and their close coordination with an eye to the specifics of each. The two (and I stress the *two)* priorities in activity — the struggle for peace and resistance to the offensive by capital — as defined by the CPA's 25th Congress in 1984, were reaffirmed three years later by its 26th Congress, and the Austrian Communists still demonstrate their commitment to this policy.

[1] See Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 6, p. 497.

[2] The same question now also arises over the capitalist powers' inequitable relations with the Third World, which result in growing debt, hunger, backwardness or lag in the less developed countries, to say the least.

The Peace Movement In Australia

Hannah Middleton — member, CC Executive Committee, Socialist Party of Australia (SPA)

IN recent years, the peace movement in Australia has seen a growth in the numbers of people involved and has also begun to take a more political direction as a result of the conscious work of progressive organisations. The movement includes members of various political parties, trade unions, church groups, academics, professional workers, women and youth groups. All are united by the common aim of preventing a nuclear war.

There are a number of well-established peace organisations and there has been a proliferation of locality peace groups which are not affiliated with any of the national organisations. There are organisations of doctors, nurses, teachers, scientists, artists, lawyers and other specific work groups for peace, there are trade union committees and migrant community peace groups.

The breadth and numerical support for the peace movement was graphically illustrated by the seven per cent vote won by the Nuclear

Disarmament Party (NDP) in the 1985 Federal elections. More recently, Robert Wood was elected to the Senate as a NDP candidate and Jo Vallentine, standing as an independent peace candidate, was re-elected to the Senate.

While the establishment of new peace groups is an indication of the growth of the movement and the involvement of many more people, the diversity of organisations creates a challenge, particularly when it comes to coordinating all the forces to act together.

The strengthening of bodies which will be able to coordinate the activities of all peace organisations and have the prestige and policies capable of uniting all the peace forces is an important task. Without this, the full effectiveness of the peace forces will not be achieved.

Since the early 1980s, the peace movement in Australia has increasingly focused on issues which more clearly reveal the objectively anti-imperialist nature of the movement — against Star Wars, against Australia's nuclear visitors, for the removal of the US bases, and so on.

In addition, much work has been carried out around questions of regional solidarity, making links with the anti-imperialist and anti-colonial independence struggles in the Pacific region.

There has been a marked change in attitudes towards the USSR and its role in the peace process. A few years ago, most in the peace movement either attributed equal responsibility for the arms race to the 'two superpowers' or did not perceive the USSR as being capable and/or willing to play a major peace-making role.

The majority of participants in the peace movement in Australia today would still question the motives of both 'superpowers' but would simultaneously acknowledge the fact that the ball seems to be almost always in the US court. It has become considerably more difficult for those who try to advance an anti-Soviet position in the peace movement.

While they are not the only factor, the Soviet peace initiatives have undoubtedly played the major role in bringing this shift about. Another factor is a widespread perception of Reagan as dogmatic, reckless and dangerously rigid.

Other influential factors include the example set by New Zealand in banning nuclear ship visits and the treatment it received from the USA as a result; the development of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the different attitudes taken by various states towards signing the protocols to that treaty.[1]

The results of the Gorbachov-Reagan summit in Washington, and the signing of the agreement eliminating intermediate-range nuclear forces have been welcomed by the peace movement in Australia. Like so many people around the world, peace activists here are delighted by the consummation of the first ever agreement which eliminates an entire category of nuclear weapons.

Much of the work done to prepare the medium-range missile treaty will be applicable to any treaty on strategic nuclear arms which follows it. There will be little scope for nations to refuse to agree to provisions for which this medium-range treaty has already set the precedent.

As well as the optimism created by the INF agreement, many peace

activists recognise that it covers only four per cent of the world's nuclear stockpiles. This is not a time to relax for there is still a long way to go.

In addition, there are some particular responsibilities which the peace movement in Australia is beginning to deal with.

The INF agreement involves the removal of what are reported to be over 100 Soviet medium-range nuclear missiles in the Asia-Pacific region. However, it has become clear that the US is planning increased deployment of sea-launched Cruise missiles (SLCM) in the region. The SLCM build-up is clearly a key to Pentagon plans for circumventing the cuts in nuclear stockpiles the medium-range agreement requires.

The current US negotiating position is to 'drive the Soviets out to sea' — to force them to place more strategic nuclear missiles aboard submarines and other vessels. Pentagon planners are clearly counting on an edge in anti-submarine warfare which would allow the US to pre-emptively destroy what would then have become the Soviet Union's most important nuclear reserve.

Given these developments, the importance of US naval forces in the Indian and Pacific Oceans — and the US bases in Australia which provide target information, firing orders and so on — will inevitably increase. This demands that the peace movement in Australia *continues and intensifies its struggle for a nuclear-free Australia, without US bases or visits by US nuclear-capable warships and planes, and for the Indian and Pacific Oceans to become nuclear weapon-free zones.*

The role of the Labour Government remains inconsistent, complicating the work of the peace movement. On the one hand the government has sponsored a number of progressive resolutions at the United Nations and other international forums and has voted against SDI and for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty. It has endorsed in principle a nuclear-free Pacific.

At the same time, it retains the US alliance as the cornerstone of its foreign policy and has strengthened relations with the US military-industrial complex. It led the moves to limit the effectiveness of the Treaty of Rarotonga. The government came out against a complete ban on the transit of nuclear armed and powered warships and successfully argued in favour of the right of each signatory nation to decide whether it would provide port facilities for such vessels. Its recent *Defence White Paper* has reaffirmed Australia as host for US bases — which are being expanded and upgraded, including to play a role in the US Star Wars plans — and permits privately sponsored SDI work.

The Political Statement adopted at the Fifth Congress of the Socialist Party (October 1984) says: "As a part of the peace movement the Socialist Party and its members not only play a part in the various peace organisations and coalitions but also carries on its own work, activity and propaganda for peace in its own name and independently."

Dealing with the Socialist Party's particular tasks, the Political Statement says: "The Party explains and defends the peace policies of the USSR and the other socialist countries and has the responsibility of combating anti-Sovietism which is the main weapon of imperialism in justification of its war drive."

The Political Statement also says: "The Party has a consistent anti-imperialist position, works for the national independence of Australia and believes that the Australian Government must pursue an independent and non-aligned foreign policy, freed of the US alliance and the obligations such as arise under the ANZUS agreement."

The founding conference of the Australian Anti-Bases Campaign Coalition (AABCC) was held in December 1986. Since then, the Coalition has emerged as a dynamic force in the peace movement nationally. Over 150 organisations have affiliated to the coalition which unites in action all the political-ideological strands in the peace movement today. Countrywide protests at the major US bases were planned and coordinated by the AABCC in October 1987, a considerable achievement for a group less than a year old. In 1988, a major focus of AABCC activity will be the US base at North West Cape, a naval communications facility which is able to transmit nuclear first strike orders. The base is a communications station for US nuclear submarines in the Indian and West Pacific Oceans. The 20-year-old agreement for North West Cape expires in June 1988 and the Australian Government has the right to close the facility.

The Coalition will also participate in anti-warship protests during 1988. This campaign will culminate in nationwide protests during the Bicentennial Naval Review in October 1988 when warships from a large number of countries will be visiting Sydney.

The role of the bases in US first-strike plans and in Star Wars is not understood by most Australian people. Many do not know the location of the US bases in Australia or even of their existence.

As a result, it is necessary to link opposition to US bases in Australia with other, more commonly accepted issues already present in the peace movement. The anti-warships campaign is an example of this process.

There is growing opposition in Australia to nuclear warship visits and considerable support for the New Zealand Government's ban on such visits to its ports.

A link can be made, for example, between the US policy of fitting its warships with up-to-date Tomahawk Cruise missiles and the role the US bases (Pine Gap and the Watsonia network particularly) play in selecting targets for these Cruise missiles. Similar links can be made between the role of the US bases and the visits of B-52s and US nuclear submarines to Australia.

Recently, there has been a growing tendency for the peace movement to go beyond an exclusively anti-nuclear framework and to give greater empahsis to social justice issues in the region and the relationship between disarmament, development and independence.

This tendency may well increase in 1988, Australia's bicentennial year, when the peace-justice linkage will be heavily promoted through the Aboriginal land rights issues and related questions of Aboriginal, Australian and regional independence and sovereignty.

The linking of anti-bases campaigns with the Aboriginal movement's demands has the potential to improve the anti-imperialist content of the peace movement by concentrating on the common 'enemy'.

The anti-bases movement can become a major theatre for the forces

involved in the left unity process to give expression to their unity in action, to add their strength to the movement.

The AABCC's successful coalition structure underlines the fact that the Australian peace movement can grow in a united way, agreeing to act on issues and areas of political priority. Such unity will help the struggle for a nuclear-free Australia, securing the future of the country and the region and its peoples.

[1] Of the nuclear powers, only the USSR and the PRC have acceded to them. — *Ed.*

June 1, International Children's Day

Our Future Looks At Us Through Children's Eyes

EVERY step towards peace arouses hope. Every concrete proposal is one more hindrance to war. My husband Olof Palme worked hard for peace and disarmament. Today there is a prospect for replacing fear of the future with confidence.

Children are completely dependent on adults. Our future looks at us through children's eyes. They are full of reproach and pain. Like adults, children suffer under dictatorships, become refugees in their own countries, and perish in the flames of armed conflicts.

Recently, a young woman and her unborn child were killed in a Palestinian refugee camp. Why could they not be protected? In Mozambique bandits hired by the racist regime of South Africa, forced a little boy to kill his own father, after they had first cut off his fingers. And there was nobody to stop the fanatical monsters! In Southern Africa and the Middle East, in Nicaragua and Afghanistan, and in many other places, children are exposed to the brutal violence of war. And workshops that should be producing toys cannot even manage to make enough artificial limbs for all the tiny patients.

The two superpowers have reached an agreement to destroy their intermediate range missiles. A large number of people and huge resources are now free to serve peaceful development. When Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov was in Sweden, he visited our largest dairy. He summoned a member of his party to take a closer look at some of the machinery. This official had earlier been responsible for intermediate range missiles; now he would be making machines for dairy farms. My own longing for peace may have led me to overemphasise this positive example. But it meant a lot to me.

It is our duty to relieve the suffering to which children are subjected by war, illness and privation. We know what conditions children need to thrive. Resources are needed to see to the health and education of children and their parents. Let there be less weaponry and more milk!

Lisbet Palme
Chair of the Swedish UNICEF Committee

'Born To Be Happy'

Francisco Gamboa — member, Political Commission, People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica, PVP representative on *WMR*

JOSE MARTI's simple and moving statement that 'Children are born to be happy' has become a militant slogan of the Cuban people in their struggle for freedom and independence. I am convinced, however, that we can by rights see it in broader terms as the ideal of the Communists, of all those who are concerned for the future of mankind and strive after peace and justice. International Childrens's Day, marked every year on June 1, repeatedly brings to mind the need to work unsparingly to make Jose Marti's dream come true.

Our struggle would have been of little value, had it not had the task of making children happy as one of its main aims! This does not merely come from one's heart of hearts or from the parental instinct but stems from the understanding that children are our future, the seeds of a new society, whose edification depends on their sound upbringing, education, and health.

But the gap between aspirations and reality is still so big! Sad figures tell us that children, who are the most defenceless creatures in the world, still constitute the more destitute section of the population. These statistics appeal to reason and trouble people's conscience. Naturally, I don't mean here the socialist countries, though far from all problems have been solved there too. They, too, have to do a great deal for the sake of happy childhood. It is highly indicative that last February a regular plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee discussed the need to transform the entire system of education. The CPSU has the problem of education among the most urgent issues to be tackled in the course of renewing all aspects of life. The participants in the plenary meeting expressed their concern over the fact that the share of allocations on education began falling in the country in the past few years. The building of schools was also following a downward trend. A mere 56 roubles per student are spent on purchasing and utilising educational technology, which approximately is half the required sum. Another serious problem facing the Soviet Union is a shortage of pre-school centres, especially in the regions and republics with the highest population growth rates.

The list of similar examples can be continued.

Meanwhile, it is a fact that starvation, epidemics, homelessness, and many other misfortunes befalling children in the capitalist world, in even the richest of its states, have been eradicated in a society where the working people are in power.

According to data provided by specialised UN agencies children constitute one-third of the present 5,000-million-strong population of the globe, with 600 million of them living in poverty and 200 million starving. Every day, 40,000 children die of starvation, chronic malnutrition and related diseases. Every fifth child in the industrialised capitalist and the developing countries dies before reaching five years of age, whereas in Asia, Africa, and Latin America starvation, poverty and diseases take an annual toll of 14 million children's lives. Seventy-five million children have to work hard to earn their living, five million of them in the United States.

These appalling figures nevertheless fail to reflect the existing situation in full. UNICEF reports that 140,000 children died in the course of military operations in the countries bordering on South Africa in 1986 alone. According to the most conservative estimates, 120,000 people lost their lives in Lebanon, where the war is still raging, with children accounting for more than one-third of the losses.

Every day, newsreels bring bloodcurdling reports of the murderous atrocities committed by Reagan's mercenaries in Nicaragua, and again children figure prominently among the victims. The number of children mutilated, missing, and killed as a result of wars, repressions and other crimes perpetrated in the name of the ideals of the so-called Western democracy keeps growing in Nicaragua, Angola, Mozambique, and the occupied Arab lands. Not so long ago the Beirut-based newspaper *Al-Nahar* published an announcement by Lebanese unemployed Ahmed Tavashee, which read: "For sale: eight small children. Price: their fare out of Lebanon to ensure their survival." 'For sale' here is a grotesque symbol.

At the same time I wonder if our readers know of the enormous scale of child trade: tens of millions of children are sold every year for the overall sum of billions of dollars. Last January facts were made public of the existence of a secret market in Honduras and Guatemala, in which children were sold as donors of 'spare parts' for organ transplants. The buyers are, of course, to be found in the US, Canada and other capitalist countries. Indeed, long live bourgeois democracy!

The deeper we go into these problems the uglier truths we unearth. Taiwan has toy factories where children, who had been sold or abandoned by their parents, work and live. For months on end they assemble toys of the same type but never had nor will they ever have a toy of their own. Nor do they know the meaning of the word 'play'. Reports of children of six years old or so trading themselves evoke nothing but horror and indignation. Brazil alone has no less than seven million girls engaged in prostitution.

In the capitalist countries people are overwhelmed by a powerful flow of ideologically processed information, alien to the principles of humanism. The entire system of upbringing and education effectively exposes the growing individual to stereotypes engendering prejudice, submission to injustice, and blind obedience to the existing order of things and wasting

away creative impulses. The immature child's mind still incapable of resisting this injurious influence is contaminated in a subtle way with the seeds of hatred and alienation for them to flourish subsequently in an unjust society, torn apart by internal conflicts, violence and racial, national, religious, and sex discrimination.

The mass media often play the most unseemly role in poisoning children's minds. Children are being brainwashed in many a way but it is radio and television that do it most actively. Audio and video poison is gaining in its destructive strength. Even in the poorest and most destitute quarters one can see children sitting, as if in a trance, in front of TV-sets. Of course, far from everything they come into contact with in this way has an adverse effect, damaging their development. But the balance of good and bad influences is obviously tipped in the undesirable direction.

According to American public organisations opposing propaganda of war and violence, 80 per cent of commercials in the country advertise war toys and games. It has been estimated that an American child watches on average 800 war-related commercials and 250 similar cartoons a year, which constitutes a direct aggression against children's minds. *WMR* has recently received a letter from Harold Heller of California, who is genuinely alarmed that as long as our children are being brought up in the spirit of enmity and hatred, no one can guarantee stable relations of peace and good neighbourliness.

Today, in many parts of the world where aggression and exploitation remain a reality, children, too, engage in the struggle for their future. They are fighting in the occupied Arab lands, Nicaragua, and El Salvador. How many of them, who were 'born to be happy', have to join ranks with grown-ups? These boys and girls have actually been deprived of the right to childhood, trampled underfoot by society, itself based on injustice and crime.

'Children are born to be happy.' Oh, how far we are from the desired goal! Hence the prime duty of the revolutionaries to children is to ensure them a happy future, which, first and foremost, presupposes struggle for peace to avert a nuclear catastrophe. Of all the misfortunes threatening our children, our envoys to the third millennium, war is the most horrible one.

If only the politicians in charge of world affairs could constantly think of the plight of children suffering from hunger and injustice, I think, they would find it easier to act in the spirit of new thinking, as is required by the grave international situation of our day.

Struggle for nuclear disarmament, the reduction of other types of weapons and the radical curtailment of military spending has a direct bearing on the solution of underdevelopment problems. The discrepancy between the children's needs and arms expenditures is monstrous. Every minute 150 children are born in the world and simultaneously almost $2 million are spent on arms production. From the outset, the tiny human beings have deadly weapons aimed at them. That is why the cutting of military budgets and the utilisation of the money thus saved to give real aid to the poorly developed countries will make it possible to alleviate some of the causes of poverty and social injustice.

'Children are born to be happy.' Every revolutionary working sincerely

and selflessly towards a happy future for mankind identifies the children of his or her homeland and eventually those of the entire world with his or her own children.

Can mothers and fathers have a loftier ideal than that of a world free from the threat of war, above all nuclear war? But there is also another dream without which happiness is unthinkable — the dream of life without exploitation and oppression, arbitrariness and violence. We Communists and all the revolutionaries strive to attain precisely these goals. We work towards a just world, in which the coming generations would be able to realise in full their abilities and potentialities. These aspirations often provide a link between generations, cementing families and turning parents and children into allies.

Naturally, we Communists would like to enlist the growing generation in the struggle for a socialist and communist future. But the task is not all that easy, since every coming generation has its own ideas and views of the situation in the world. It is only truth, sincere respect, personal example and faith in a better future that can win them to our side. Let children themselves speak up and make their choice! After all, they are born to be happy!

the socialist way

Facing The Truth

Dao Dui Tung — Alternate member, CC Political Bureau, CC Secretary, Communist Party of Vietnam

THE Communist Party of Vietnam has scored some major successes in its theoretical thought in leading our people's struggle for freedom and independence for more than half a century. The party formulated the slogan 'Nothing Is More Valuable than Independence and Freedom', and the two-banners theory 'For National Independence, for Socialism'. We also elaborated the doctrine of revolutionary methods and of the art of strategic and tactical leadership. In the period of the socialist revolution, the party relied on its theoretical conceptions to formulate the correct line for simultaneously carrying on three revolutions: in the relations of production, in science and technology (the key sphere), and in culture and ideology. That, we believe, has been the main prerequisite for the Vietnamese people's victories.

The Sixth Congress of the CP Vietnam in 1986 made a realistic assessment of the situation and cemented the key revolutionary gains in socialist construction and defence of our homeland, and in fulfilling our national and international tasks. It also drew the fundamental conclusion that the economic and social situation in the country has not yet been stabilised, because of the mistakes and shortcomings in analysing the state of affairs and in determining the long-term goals and ways of attaining them. The Congress dealt, in particular, with the structure of the economy, primarily that of production and capital investments, the transformation of the relations of production and the unduly drawn-out period of administrative-bureaucratic centralism.

We believe that these mistakes and shortcomings are rooted in less than adequate ideological thinking. Our consciousness has lagged or has failed to meet the demands of theory concerning the transition period, industrialisation, socialist transformations, and the mechanism of administration, distribution and circulation. The objective character of the laws of commodity production has not always been taken into account. Old and obsolete dogmas were also manifested in the solution of other problems. We have got down, therefore, to *renewing our thinking* so as to overcome the difficulties and to fulfil the tasks set by the Congress.

The CPV's course of renewal is, naturally, closely connected with world development, which is everywhere rapid and entails great changes. The scientific and technological revolution has proceeded on an unprecedented scale. The forces of socialism have sought to demonstrate more vividly and with greater conviction their advantages over capitalism. The world abounds in intricate and contradictory phenomena, whose interaction is now more visual, rapid, and powerful than ever before. The decisions of the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union confirm that "The *concrete* economic and political situation we are in, and the particular *period* of the historical process that the Soviet society and the whole world are going through, require that the party and its every member display their creativity, their capacity for innovation and skill to transcend the limits of habitual but already outdated notions".[1] Vietnam is a component of the world community, and that is why, in the present dynamic situation, our party likewise seeks to find new approaches in elaborating its strategy, being always guided by the need to combine the power of the nation with the power of the epoch.

What are the lines along which our thinking needs to be renewed? The Sixth Congress of the CPV said that "our Party must fully grasp the revolutionary and scientific nature of Marxism-Leninism, inherit the invaluable revolutionary ideological and theoretical heritage of President Ho Chi Minh, Comrade Le Duan and other leaders of our Party, absorb the theoretical achievements, the new and rich experience of fraternal parties and the scientific advances of our times. We must promote theoretical research work, systematically sum up the work of socialist construction and national defence, draw correct conclusions, do away with erroneous or outdated concepts. To renew thinking does not mean negating the theoretical achievements that have been recorded, nor negating the universal laws of socialist construction and the correct lines

that have been defined, but on the contrary, it does mean complementing and developing those achievements."[2]

We shall have to review our ideas in many spheres. Some once-correct assessments of definite phenomena no longer accord with present-day conditions and need to be updated. For instance, during the war against the US aggression for saving the country, when the working people's motto was 'Everything for the Front, Everything for Victory', we relied mainly on patriotism, mass enthusiasm and commitment to socialism. Nowadays, especially in economic construction, we believe that it is necessary to take due account of the results along with the growth of socialist consciousness, and to attach more significance to economic interests as an important inducement in the revolutionary mass movement.

We think that we shall also have to take a fresh look at the law-governed uniformities and general theoretical principles. I must admit that we have made less than skilful use of the law of correspondence of the relations of production and the character and level of the productive forces, and have allowed haste in socialist transformations, and underestimated the role of commodity production.

However, some propositions, the party says, still apply, such as the basic content of the conceptions of the simultaneous conduct of three revolutions and the people's right to collective economic management. But the reality is in constant flux and these proposals will, therefore, also have to be amplified in accordance with the new situation.

One could say that *we are now reviewing the system of our ideas about socialism.* Some views, which had once been correct, but which no longer accord with the present conditions and which are connected with earlier mistakes, have to be corrected and amended. We have been trying to do away with everything that has not stood the test of time, to render abstract notions into more concrete terms, to perceive what is new and correct, so as to have a fuller and more precise concept of socialism. That cannot, of course, be done in a short time.

In the light of this quest, the renewal of thinking is essentially a part of *the cultural and ideological revolution,* and here an important basis is provided by the documents of the Sixth Congress and subsequent plenary meetings of the CPV CC. We have made use of various forms in an effort to get the party and the entire people to comprehend and realise in action the decisions of the CPV and to acquire new ones by overcoming outdated views.

This process is neither easy nor simple. The old thinking has existed for many years and has had an effect on party propositions, policy, and the economic management mechanisms. The result was the shaping of a conservative mentality, which has naturally refused to accept the restructuring. The renewal of thinking depends, therefore, not only on the level of theoretical knowledge, but also on everyone's personal qualities. It is common knowledge that men and women are unable to shed their old views overnight or to give up the way of life under which they often received various benefits and realised their personal interests. The renewal of thinking, it is said in the documents of the Sixth Congress, is a complicated struggle which proceeds within the party, within the state

apparatus and public organisations, within the people, within every institution and sector, and within each one of us.

From this it also follows that *ideological work must be more consistently oriented towards a qualitative perfection of the individual and the shaping of a new morality, development of patriotism and proletarian internationalism, with efforts to generate the powerful revolutionary energy of cadre workers, party members and the popular masses.*

In the long and hard struggle, the CPV has forged a large contingent of party cadres with a profound spirit of creativity; they have always been in the front ranks of the battles to liberate the nation, unite the country, and build socialism. Most of the cadres, Communists of various generations, are committed to the common cause, take a selfless stand for the people's interests and are prepared to fulfil their internationalist duty. Many of them died an heroic death in the war years, while others are carrying on the struggle. Their self-sacrifice, their militant and steadfast spirit are the pride of the party and the people. But for this contingent of front-ranking and model cadres, the CPV would have been unable to guide and mobilise all the Vietnamese for winning the great victories of the past and present.

But while the main mass of cadre workers have a high political maturity, the knowledge, skill and moral qualities of some Communists are still inadequate, and they have even been inclined to mistakes and failings.

In recent years, the revolutionary spirit of some party members has waned, and a sizable part of them has lost its standards and degenerated. This phenomenon was subjected to serious analysis by the CPV's Sixth Congress, which regards it as an important cause that prevented the party leadership from being equal to the tasks of the new stage. Over the past ten years, more than 190,000 persons have been expelled from the party, most of them for deviation from party norms, and for moral degradation. These people proved unable to keep pure their status of Communists, failing to improve themselves and forgetting their revolutionary ideals. Some of them became dishonest, became seduced with the prospect of material gain, and encroached on socialist property. Others abused their power and official position in an effort to obtain special benefits and privileges and acted arbitrarily with respect to the popular masses. Still others violated the rules of inner-party life, trampled on the democratic rights of subordinates, committed breaches of discipline, and spread bureaucratic practice. This malaise originated in a situation in which the party, with the plenitude of power, proved unable to engage in constant and persevering education of its cadre workers and all other Communists.

This undesirable development of negative phenomena had very grave consequences and did much harm to state and collective property. There was an erosion of moral values, of the party's combative spirit and efficiency of the state apparatus, of the popular masses' trust in the party leadership and belief in the advantage of the new system. Apart from everything else, this is a serious obstacle to the fulfilment of party decisions, and it tends to open up breaches for ideological subversion by the enemy.

This situation took shape for objective and subjective reasons. The objective reasons are that Vietnam is still at the initial stage of the

transition period, with small-scale production prevailing in the country, many non-socialist structures remaining in the economy for a long time, and evident signs of survivals of the old ideology. Besides, one should recall, our enemies have carried on a very cunning struggle against us.

Nevertheless, the party has given special attention to the subjective reasons. For far too long the country has been run by means of bureaucratic-administration centralism; mistakes and failings have occurred in economic and social policy in the practical guidance by the party and the state, which were not corrected in due time; there have been shortcomings in cadre work and party control over the activity of the Communists and in the appointment and use of specialists. Not enough attention was given to fostering communist ideals and revolutionary morality. The CPV Rules and the laws of the state have been broken. The principles of moral self-improvement waned among party workers and other Communists, and some high-ranking leaders failed to set an example to their subordinates.

The situation requires that the CPV should do more to develop high moral standards among members of the party apparatus and all the other Communists, and to combat the negative trends. The Sixth Congress decided to launch a *campaign for cleansing and keeping pure the ranks of the party and to get rid of immoral acts among government officials* so as to create favourable conditions for overcoming the bureaucratic-administration methods, going over to socialist economic calculus, and stabilising every aspect of economic and social life. It is, in fact, a *real ideological struggle* between social and individualistic interests, between renewal and stagnant conservatism, directly bearing on the contest between the two ways of development: the socialist and the capitalist, and designed to resist enemy subversion.

The tasks before us were clearly formulated in a resolution of the CPV CC Political Bureau adopted in 1987 on cleansing the party bodies and the state apparatus, making party organisations more militant in working for healthier social relations. This means consolidating the positions of the working class and enhancing its ideological consciousness in the spirit of the renewal expressed in the decisions of the party's Sixth Congress, asserting the communist ideals in everyone's mind, with revolutionary élan, a sense of responsibility, an urge to serve the interests of the people, a high standard of discipline and organisation, and moral qualities in the spirit of Ho Chi Minh's precepts: "Industriousness, thriftiness, honesty, service to the society's interests, and selflessness".

The party intends to work to raise the skills and professional knowledge of the Communists in accordance with the new requirements, to combat every negative phenomenon, the waning militancy and sense of responsibility, conservatism and stagnation, and statements and actions falling short of party requirements. We have been carrying on a resolute drive against embezzlement of state property, bribe-taking, speculation, smuggling, dissipation, abuse of power and official position to gain special benefits and privileges, bureaucratic practices, petty tyranny, self-isolation from other people, harassment and arbitrary acts with respect to the popular masses. We believe that those who have degenerated should be

relentlessly expelled from the party and the state apparatus, and strictly punished.

We hope that these measures will help to strengthen and improve the activity of party organisations, to make the CPV more militant and state administration more effective so as to realise the working people's right to collective economic management and successfully fulfil the economic and social development tasks set forth by the Sixth Congress, combining the cleansing of the party with fulfilment of political tasks, and tying in the measures being put through in the party, the state agencies, and society as a whole.

Criticism and self-criticism within the CPV have proceeded with a drive to cleanse its ranks and carry on party construction on the 'Everything is rooted in the people' principle. The party and other organs concerned have simultaneously been checking, correcting and controlling information, etc., with comrades' courts and re-education measures having an important role to play. Negative facts are publicly discussed in the press and on the radio. Public opinion is being mobilised to combat anti-socialist phenomena and actions, in defence of honest people and support of good works. Harassment for criticism is prohibited, but there is a struggle against slander and falsification under the guise of criticism.

Strict punishment is being meted out to cadre workers who have made mistakes and blunders, regardless of their official status, but we draw a distinction between offences committed for the purposes of personal gain, and those which may be unwittingly committed by the supporters of renewal when taking risks for the interests of the society. It is important, we believe, to conduct this process skilfully, with firmness, but with circumspection as well, preventing any discrepancy between word and deed, emphasising what is paramount and carrying every endeavour to the end.

The drive to cleanse the party ranks, which began after the Sixth Congress, is to be completed in 1990.

If the renewal of thinking is to succeed and the revolutionary spirit of cadre workers and other party members is to be enhanced, much has to be altered in the sphere of ideology as well.

We believe that much will depend on *the expansion and higher quality of information work, so as to ensure every citizen's right to receive vital information*. The Sixth Congress decided that the people must know everything, discuss everything, implement everything and verify everything. That can be achieved only if there is adequate information, so that *wider openness* is becoming one of the main lines for improving our information work. In the past, some facts and problems were hushed up, but they are now being openly discussed in the press in line with the principle: 'Give the right assessment to the situation and tell the truth'. We have been taking steps to overcome the numerous shortcomings in our propaganda work: until recently we spoke much about our successes, but said little about our shortcomings.

Special attention is now being given to *expanding the two-way process* in which the voice of the party is carried to the people, while the voice of the masses is carried to the party. We strive to end the practice of dictating

from above, and we have already made some headway: members of the leadership at various levels and in various departments now meet with the working people to carry on a dialogue. Agencies studying public opinion collect more remarks and proposals from citizens, analysing letters to the editors of newspapers and the radio, to party organs and state agencies, and so on.

Information work in the country is consistently designed to widen glasnost. Two years ago the central newspapers started sections under these captions: 'Our Proposals for the Party's Sixth Congress', and 'Rostrum of Truth and Frankness'. *Nhan Dan*, the organ of the CPV, has a section entitled 'Must Be Done Right Away', carrying articles with the well-known signature N.V.L., in which individuals and collectives making mistakes and committing breaches of legality are criticised in the light of the actual facts.

Direct and active participation in the drive against negative phenomena is a new feature indicating the truthfulness of the proletarian press. It and other mass media have not only been reporting good deeds without delay, but also branding as ignominious the outrages and shortcomings in daily life and criticising erring cadre workers and party members. The decision to start a wide campaign in the press to criticise negative phenomena meets the pressing demands of the popular masses: they want the degradation and degeneration of individuals to be cut short, protection for honest citizens, efforts to take care of and safeguard socialist property, practice social justice and re-establish order and discipline. The result has been *the people's growing trust in the party, whose ties with the masses are ever more solid.* The press has also become more attractive as it renews itself, with a higher level of political consciousness and sense of social responsibility among journalists. Here the party spirit, involvement of the masses and justice are wedded in a single urge.

If the line of renewal and greater effectiveness of ideological activity is to succeed, *theoretical work* must be enhanced. The CPV attaches much importance to the study of Marxism-Leninism, with an in-depth mastery of its revolutionary and scientific substance. We have made a close study of the fraternal parties' theoretical advances and the experience of perestroika in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. A free, democratic, and open atmosphere has been created for research. Practice shows that the promotion of discussion, criticism and self-criticism does much to help produce new solutions. The truth does not spring from any ready-made recipes, but from comparison, discussion and even, perhaps, from a clash of differing views.

In short, the renewal of our ideological activity helps more fully and more successfully to advance socialist democracy.

In its forward movement, our revolution has made gains and won a fine reputation, but it has also now and again made mistakes and had shortcomings. For a truly Marxist-Leninist party it is important to face the truth and display the will to correct shortcomings so as to keep moving

forward. The CPV now has greater confidence than ever before in its own strength, in its cadre workers, in all the other Communists and the entire people. It is fully resolved to renew society and boldly to advance to cope with the new important tasks and so to justify the people's trust.

[1] *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Moscow, 1986, pp. 5-6.
[2] *6th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam*, Hanoi,1987, pp. 152-153.

Reviving The Cooperative Movement

Leonid Abalkin — member, USSR Academy of Sciences; director, Institute of Economics

A nationwide discussion of a draft Law on the Cooperative Movement is under way in the Soviet Union. The bill is aimed at promoting and expanding the cooperative economic effort in the restructuring of Soviet society. A mechanism for the legal protection of cooperative democracy is being devised, and so are economic, organisational and legal principles governing the activities of all types of cooperatives, their rights and duties and their contacts with government and economic management agencies. It is also to institutionalise our firm rejection of past views and dogmas that distorted socialism and were alien to it — the 'administration by decree' method of economic management, the overwhelming preference for uniform public ownership, and the disdain of cooperative forms of socialist ownership.

This article has been written to examine theoretical aspects of the development of the cooperative movement under socialism.

THE cooperative movement, with its rich content and diverse forms, is going through a renaissance in the Soviet Union. Its revival at this stage is natural and logical. It is part of the CPSU programme for perestroika, for a radical renewal of Soviet society.

Public opinion has responded with great interest to the question concerning the role and place of the cooperative movement in the economic system of socialism and in its future development. Scholars and experts in practical matters are discussing the issue, and different, sometimes diametrically opposed, views are clashing. Some regard the promotion of the cooperative movement as a step forward; others see it as a retreat.

The debate is acute because it is not simply the organisation of cooperative cafeterias or barber's shops that is at stake. *The way we assess the potential and the historical mission of the cooperative movement is*

linked indelibly with our vision of socialism itself. Therefore, in tackling the problems that arise, we draw on lessons of the past and reappraise the fundamentals of economic theory. This applies above all to Lenin's 1923 article 'On Cooperation'.

It is only a little more than eight pages long. But the ideas set forth in it have for decades been arousing creative thought and stimulating research. Today, they are a beacon to us in our practical work. This means the article contains something that is everlasting and vibrantly topical to this day. It is a *novel* understanding of the essence of socialism, an understanding stemming from practical experience.

During the 1920s, Lenin kept returning to the thrust of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and to the realities it produced, and he kept ordering the latest books on the cooperative movement.[1]

His final, definitive view of the role played by the cooperative effort in socialist society was outlined in his last articles. Having concluded that "for us the mere growth of cooperation . . . is identical with the growth of socialism", he stressed that "there has been a radical modification in our whole outlook on socialism".[2]

Therefore, it was not a change involving only details, not an effort to merely specify previous theoretical provisions.

A Radical Modification of Our Whole Outlook

A radical modification of our whole outlook on socialism is a serious matter. What did that modification actually change? To answer this question, one should note that Lenin performed his analysis of the problem at two levels. The first was dictated by the needs of the day — involving ordinary peasants in the drive to build socialism and getting them into the "habit of book-reading". Therefore, being an "efficient and capable trader is quite enough to be a good cooperator".

All that was very important during those initial and extremely difficult years when a new society was beginning to assert itself. But the essence of the radical change in the understanding of socialism was connected with the other level of Lenin's analysis — with the view of socialism as a "system of civilised cooperators", with the need to have "most of the population organised in cooperatives" (not only peasants).

The new understanding of the cooperative movement was indeed a radical change of outlook, and not only in theoretical terms. Provisions of the RCP(B) Programme adopted four years earlier were still fresh in the memory of those to whom Lenin's article was addressed. The programme was a guide to mandatory action. It dealt with the need to "keep steadily replacing trade with planned, nationwide and organised distribution of goods", and to promote a series of "measures expanding the sphere of operations in which money is not involved and paving the way for the abolition of money". There were references to the goal of ensuring "equal remuneration for any work", although "higher remuneration of experts" was supposed to continue for a while.[3] The cooperative movement was regarded merely as a form of transition to a nationwide network of consumer communes capable of distributing goods by "strictly centralising the entire distribution apparatus".[4]

At that time several major theoreticians maintained that "the cooperative movement lives and dies together with capitalist society" and that "in socialist society, it will become extinct together with other organisations which emerged during the sway of capitalism in order to combat it and its effects".

Obviously, compared to those views, Lenin's understanding of the cooperative movement was indeed a radical modification of the way socialism was perceived. *The essence of his new attitude lay in the fact that the socialist nature of the cooperative movement was recognised and socialism itself was described as a system of civilised cooperators.*

Various cooperatives developed rapidly in production, trade, supply, marketing, finance, crediting and the services during the 1920s. In the years that followed, however, Lenin's understanding of the cooperative movement was largely distorted and consigned to oblivion. The approach to socialism and to the democratic ways of building it also came to be seriously deformed. Methods of administration and management by decree emerged and became widespread.

Lenin's rich legacy was mostly reduced to collectivisation of agriculture. In the course of the collectivisation drive, the simpler forms of cooperative organisation were abolished (in rural areas), and collective farms were in fact brought under government control. Housing cooperatives disappeared for many years. In 1960 producer cooperatives were eliminated completely, although in the mid-1950s they comprised more than 114,000 workshops and other industrial factories employing a total of 1.6 million workers. These cooperatives produced 40 per cent of all furniture, up to 70 per cent of all tinware, over 43 per cent of all knitwear as well as other goods. Producer cooperatives maintained 100 industrial design offices, 22 experimental laboratories and two major research centres.

Note the arguments marshalled to justify the abolition of producer cooperatives. Its advocates proclaimed the objective of making better use of industrial capacities and reducing production costs, and they spoke about "eliminating duplication and overlapping in the work of state-run enterprises and producer cooperatives". In this way they were suppressing competition, a powerful motive force of economic progress. In the years that followed, the slogan of combating duplication of functions was also emphasised many times. In fact, this served to eliminate economic competition in manufacturing, research and technology. Consider the havoc the consequent rise of monopolistic trends wrought in industry and marketing.

One must note that the 'arguments' were a considerable step back from the earlier theory which warned against the curtailment of cooperative production and trade. One of its basic viable precepts recognised the need for competition between state-run and cooperative enterprises as an important safeguard against monopolistic phenomena.[5]

Returning to Lenin's understanding of the cooperative movement in socialist society, one should stress that, typically, he regarded this question in a broad socio-political context. *In his last works, Lenin invariably linked the development of the cooperative movement with the democratisation of the social fabric, with raising the cultural level of the masses, making*

extensive use of the commodity-money relations and mastering the market forces. The clue he found to the cooperative phenomenon solved a problem that had plagued many socialists.

The Solution

In scientific socialism, economic interests have always been seen as the motive forces of social development. At the same time, it should be clear that the domination of private interests inevitably leads to chaos, to a tremendous waste of social labour and, sooner or later, to society's stratification into antagonistic classes and exploitation of one group by another. Only socialism can overcome antagonistic social relations and ensure planned and highly efficient development of economic production.

Under socialism, the common and essentially collectivist interest of society or of an association comes to play the leading role. However, that does not at all cancel the powerful force of personal interest. *The problem is to combine them and to ensure, on a new basis, more effective incentives to labour and social activity.*

This was a problem over which Lenin, too, racked his brains, and only in his last works did he arrive at the conclusion that in the cooperative movement "we have found that degree of combination of private interest, of private commercial interest, with state supervision and control of this interest, that degree of its subordination to the common interests which was formerly the stumbling block for very many socialists".[6] Here, not only the reference to the degree of combination of interests but also the point about state supervision and control are very important. Significantly, supervision and control are exercised by the socialist state which is based on collective ownership of the means of production. This is what makes cooperatives genuinely socialist.

Lenin linked his new understanding of the cooperative movement with the transition to NEP, maintaining that with this policy in force, involvement of the population in cooperatives would already produce everything that was necessary to build socialism. Today, *referring to the revival of the cooperative movement, the CPSU sees its large-scale development as an integral component of perestroika, of the radical renewal of Soviet society.*

The strength of the cooperative movement lies in the fact that it is motivated by powerful economic interests and that, at the same time, it dovetails and harmonises different interests. It helps to blend the general with the specific, the common with the personal, and it is a good school for democracy and self-government. Failure to observe cooperative principles in the building of socialism inevitably alienates the worker from the means of production and breeds indifference and passivity. As a result, public property loses its potential and invites a careless attitude, while socialism becomes incapable of ensuring greater economic efficiency than private capitalist enterprise.

The advantages of the cooperative movement are not only economic but also social and psychological: it fosters a feeling of involvement in a common cause and a truly thrifty, proprietary attitude to the means of production, to labour and to its fruits. When these advantages are

disregarded, management inevitably becomes bureaucratic, and economic and social efficiency declines.

The cooperative movement is reviving in the Soviet Union in all its diversity and with due regard to the new conditions and requirements. As Mikhail Gorbachov said at the Fourth All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers in March 1988, "we should recreate cooperatives not in their old, often quite primitive forms but promote a modern, sophisticated cooperative movement extensively integrated both internally and with state-run enterprises and organisations. We need efficient, well-equipped cooperatives capable of producing high quality goods and services and competing with domestic and foreign enterprises."[7]

The new, modern approach to the cooperative movement and the awareness of its superior opportunities and diverse forms have not appeared out of thin air. They are rooted in well-established traditions going back far into Russia's past. One often forgets that cooperatives were widespread even before the October Revolution. Besides, we are now drawing on the record of many socialist countries — the rich store of Hungarian and Bulgarian experience, the distinctive ways in which cooperatives operate in the GDR and the valuable pioneering lessons of China. One can also benefit considerably from the experience of other countries. For example, in Sweden, with its family farms, there are strong and highly efficient systems of agricultural cooperatives.

Two Aspects of the Cooperative Movement

There are two main aspects to the cooperative movement as it is now being developed in the Soviet Union. First, its revival is connected with *promoting different forms of cooperative economic management. Collective, group-based appropriation* (their salient feature) produces diverse forms of cooperative ownership which emerge and grow in industry, agriculture, trade, public catering and the service sector.

However, although the development of the cooperative forms of economic management is very important and promising, they are only a part of the broader complex and multifaceted process of today's cooperative revival. The other aspect in question concerns the scale on which *cooperative principles* are applied. These principles make it possible to *combine public and personal interests through group (collective) interests.*

This latter aspect is reflected in the transition to full economic cost-effectiveness, in work-team and family contracts and in other methods of rational economic organisation and management which are acquiring a nationwide importance. They are essential to the realisation of Lenin's attitude to socialism as a system of civilised cooperators based on joint ownership of the means of production.

Naturally, what we need is a *socialist* cooperative movement. It will be strengthened by an extensive application of general cooperative principles and by the promotion of the movement's general economic qualities. Socialism does not reject past experience and its accomplishments. On the contrary, the tremendous potential of socialism stems from its ability to inherit and absorb the greatest achievements of humanity.

It would be a mistake to regard the present development of the

cooperative movement in the Soviet Union as a mechanical effort to complement the existing forms of state-run economic activity and fill the gaps in the current organisation of the economy and of its management. The cooperative movement is an integral component of socialist renewal. It is essential to the progress of socialism. One would be justified to conclude that today *more cooperation means more socialism.*

State-run enterprises and cooperatives now shape their relations on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and competition. At the same time, state-controlled public property retains its leading role due to its nature and its actual place in the national economy.

Cooperative principles are entering all spheres of the economic reform which seeks rational forms of economic management to ensure effective functioning of state property. This search is linked with the objective of bringing the principles of complete cost-effectiveness, self-financing and self-management into full play. Cooperative principles are particularly valuable when applied in grassroots worker collectives: the latter throw the connection between personal and collective labour into bold relief and enable each worker to directly influence the quality and efficiency of labour.

The future of the cooperative movement depends in many respects not only on how the diverse forms of its organisation are updated and expanded but also on how its fundamentals are restored and how successfully the existing cooperatives operate.[8] It is now particularly important to eliminate the bureaucratic trends that have infiltrated this sphere, to purge it of elements of rigid state control and to give free rein to enterprising initiative. This will give a new and powerful impetus to the realisation of the opportunities inherent in the cooperative movement.

New cooperative forms are developing vigorously in the production of consumer goods, in the reprocessing of scrap, in trade, public catering and services. So far, only the first steps have been taken but, despite the difficulties that arise, considerable progress has been made. Almost 14,000 new cooperatives have been launched over the past year. In some cases, state farms revert to the status of collective farms, and cooperatives based on leases of state property are set up. It has proven quite useful to transform several small state-run brickyards into cooperatives. Similar developments are occurring in the service sector too.

However, most cooperatives are newly established organisations of voluntary workers. With many people — students and those employed in the state sector — work in cooperatives is a sideline.

The cooperatives that are springing up help most social and personal needs more fully and make it possible to use manpower more efficiently. But they also perform other, highly important social functions. First and foremost, they act as a counterforce opposing the monopolist status of government-run enterprises. This provides the consumer with freedom of choice in spending his income. A basis is created for *economc competition* — competition for the customer's preferences, for meeting his demands better. Here, too, one has every reason to say that more competition of this kind means more socialism.

The cooperative movement discharges an essential social function by

providing a basis for the integration and direction of individual labour which has recently been given a considerable boost. The record shows that regulation and effective use of such activities is ensured through linking them closely with cooperative enterprises and organisations.

The sphere of consumption offers great opportunities to cooperatives. For example, housing construction cooperatives are involved in the tackling of a complex social problem — that of providing every family with an apartment of its own — by drawing on public initiative and incomes. So far, the share of cooperatives in housing construction is small in the Soviet Union. It is much lower than in many European socialist countries. Naturally, the traditions and the distinctive features of each nation play a part in this, but one must not underestimate the significance of enhancing the role of cooperatives in this sphere.

Of course, the revival and development of the cooperative movement in the USSR is not advancing along a smooth and easy path. It encounters difficulties and bureaucratic obstacles. It has its contradictions, and zigzags cannot be ruled out either. Cooperative efforts may give rise to negative phenomena if, under certain conditions, the interests of some particular groups prevail. But like a sapling fresh from the nursery, the cooperative movement needs attention, care and support, and its experience should be studied.

Given the social resources of the cooperative movement, its considerable advantages and its economic compatibility with the economic system of socialism, we expect it to develop rapidly in the coming years and decades. *The cooperative movement has a great potential for the renewal of socialism and for asserting its tremendous historical advantages.*

[1] In January 1923 the books Lenin ordered and received included: N. Meshcheriakov, *The Cooperative Movement and Socialism. A Collection of Articles,* Moscow, 1920; F. Staudinger, *Marxism and Consumer Cooperatives,* Moscow, 1919; I. Zassen, *The Development of Cooperative Theory Under Capitalism,* Moscow, 1919; A. Chayanov, *Main Ideas and Forms of Organisation of Peasant Cooperatives,* Moscow, 1919; M. Tugan-Baranovsky, *The Social Basis of the Cooperative Movement,* Moscow, 1916; and S. Prokopovich, *The Cooperative Movement in Russia, Its Theory and Practice,* Moscow, 1913 (all in Russian).

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 33, p. 474.

[3] Quoted from V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. 38, p. 437 (in Russian).

[4] Ibid., p. 440.

[5] This point of theory was reflected, specifically, in the 1946 Resolution of the USSR Council of Ministers on Promoting Cooperative Trade and Expanding the Production of Food and Consumer Goods by Cooperatives. "Consumer and producer cooperatives," the resolution said, "do not compete with state-run urban retail trade which has become monopolistic to the detriment of commerce. The absence of healthy competition between state-run and cooperative retail trade in urban areas hampers the expansion of trade in farm produce and consumer goods." (*Party and Government Resolutions on Economic Matters,* Vol. 3, Moscow, 1968, pp. 350-351, in Russian.)

[6] V. I. Lenin, *Op. cit.,* Vol. 33, p. 468.

[7] *Pravda,* March 24, 1988.

[8] Cooperatives take many forms. Suffice it to say that by the end of 1986, the number of Soviet collective farms totalled 26,300. The 12.6 million people working on these farms produced more than one-third of the country's agricultural output. Besides, the 417 fishing cooperatives that now exist account for 25 per cent of the total catch of fish and other marine products. The system of consumer cooperatives comprises 381,000 retail outlets and 105,400 public catering facilities, and its share in the total volume of retail trade is 26.2 per cent. There are also numerous and different cooperatives in the service sector.

The Only Unemployed We Met

About those who further scientific and technological progress in the GDR

DURING our trip to the German Democratic Republic, we encountered only one unemployed. It was the painter robot 'given the sack' at the headquarters of Means of Automation, a manufacturing combine, in Berlin's new area Marzahn. He stood immobile in a bustling sector where they make household appliances. The workers' verdict had been final: 'Obsolete.'

A new, more perfect robot was operating nearby. The plant had bought computer hardware for it but had designed software and the mechanical device on its own. Means of rationalisation will be simpler to make when it starts the in-house production of electronic components and computers. This has already been decided on. More robots will fill its shops then to perform more complex operations, but this causes no fear among the plant's workers. The robots here do not threaten people with unemployment, as in the West where effective technology drives them out into the street.

Our interlocutors in the plant's party committee spoke of full employment as an inalienable gain of socialism. But a number of social problems will have to be solved to maintain it in the conditions of scientific and technological progress. This calls for a well-thought-out state structural policy with rightly placed and rightly timed investments; it must be linked to the use of labour resources, concrete plans in the field of education, and measures that enrich the content of work. In creating new jobs, researchers, planners and designers understand that they shape a new social setting and this helps, in turn, to merge science and technology with social progress. Socialism's humane nature is thus becoming ever more tangible.

Our conversation in the party committee began with the 'human aspect' of the problem. And this fully accorded with the concept advanced by the Socialist Unity Party of Germany: raising living and cultural standards through a blend of economic and social policies. Its Eighth Congress in 1971 made this the focus of all its efforts.

Based on Key Technologies

Secretary of the plant's party committee Klaus Reddmann and other party leaders introduced us to this concept.

As a strategy for the period ending in 2000, the 11th SED Congress (April 1986) called for closer links between socialism's advantages and today's progress in science and technology. To intensify production a difficult but correct path has been chosen: introducing key technologies on a large scale. This means a quick absorption throughout the economy of

new ideas in electronics, in the automation of design, engineering and management, in the use of nuclear energy, in the development of new materials and structures from living cells . . .

At the combine we took a look at those who create management information systems, equipment for ocean-going ships and rolling mills, transport control devices, and emergency generators. Young assembly workers said of these last: "We are now sending five such machines to Nicaraguan hospitals as a token of solidarity."

The chief vehicle for implementing the party line at the plant, explained Reddmann, is "our organisation's *Kampfprogramm*" or Fighting Programme. They acquainted us with this plan, adopted by a general meeting of the Communists. It has four sections: ideological work; state plan fulfilment and the social aspects; the Communists' activity; and measures to enhance the care for socialist property and strengthen discipline and order. This clearly shows a drive to foster creative thinking and inculcate in people a sense of being the masters of their works.

Each of the programme's twenty pages maps out routes for target fulfilment. We learnt, for example, that the plant was going to adopt, in 1988, seventy-five design, engineering and management systems, update 400 jobs, release 332 workers for new production lines, and retrain 1,574 employees in the handling of modern equipment, as well as assuring the quality of deliveries for the rolling mill at Stary Oskol, USSR, and a cement plant in New Mugher, Ethiopia. We also had a look at the plans for greater political dialogue with the youth and to improve the work of the House of Culture and organise summer recreation and an in-house catering service . . .

The Communists are now trying, without substituting the management, to find appropriate forms for the solution of each problem. Quite often, especially when it involves an issue of plant-wide importance, they form ad hoc party groups.

A typical example: the creation of an automatic multi-storeyed warehouse for parts and components, the GDR's most advanced. Productivity at the combine's headquarters plant is expected to more than double thanks to this. But though the construction had been done in time, erection and start-up fell behind schedule. It was then that an ad hoc party group was set up.

"It includes Communists from various sectors and is headed by a deputy secretary of the plant's party committee," said Reddmann. "Each of its members is helping speed up inauguration in practice. The group regularly reports to the committee, which thus both directly organises and monitors Communists' work at this trouble spot."

It was interesting to learn from whom major techno-scientific undertakings, such as the output of microelements and computers, emanate. We were told that a state plan had set the target for their production. But what is then the role of mass initiative? It shows itself in the way the plan has been shaped. Three-fourths of the targets 'from above' consist of management's submissions, but they are based on staff proposals. Up to 1,200 suggestions, collected for several months, came in through the trade union for the 1988 plan.

Combining party, management and staff initiatives is already producing results. Within a year, the plant has renewed almost a third of its output with the help of electronics, reducing the costs by 5 per cent and raising productivity by 12 per cent.

But how, we asked in the party committee, do you induce people to become personally involved in the scientific and technological revolution?

Our interlocutors were outspoken. True, the inducement is the hardest of tasks, but it has to be done to avoid the spread of formal attitudes. People must be persuaded, educated and organised, and you need to promote their creativity. We observed a high level of ideological motivation at the plant. Incentives, naturally, are provided for. But there is no practice of public criticism there: this may offend an employee's pride, they say, and is therefore counterproductive. A comparison of indices is seen as a reliable method here. The party organisation therefore openly confronts the best performances, discussing them in great detail — at meetings, in the press and in audio-visual presentations. Those who have better indices deserve emulation; the organisation recommends their experience and helps to apply it.

Explaining the integration of SED economic and social policies, party units strive to show the marked impact on working and living conditions of a vigorous application of new technological ideas. We saw a striking example at Robotron, an office equipment plant in Sommerda. Its employees had successfully mastered the production of step motors for robots, and overfulfilled last year's output target for printing devices by 10,000. In the same year they got 353 new flats, this bringing the total of the plant's rehoused families over the past decade to 1,100, a good illustration of the fulfilment of the party's aim of solving the housing problem in the country by the year 1990.

But back to Means of Automation. Here they praised the enterprising group of budding researchers led by Gernot Forster. At twenty-seven this talented engineer, who already holds 20 patents for light guide equipment, has been appointed the head of a newly-founded microelectronics laboratory.

And they are especially proud of Robert Greulich, a seventh-form pupil. The plant newspaper *Impuls* carried his photograph: a shock-headed teenager explaining to foreign visitors his invention — a machine for the assembly of consumer electrical gadgets. Robert operates it when he comes to the factory to work once a week on a paid basis as required by the school programme. He has already received the certificate of a full-fledged employee.

In a classroom of the in-house trade school we made the acquaintance of Uwe Stern, a Dresden Technical University graduate. He had been sketching on a personal computer a programme for his first lesson when we came in.

"We sent Uwe to study. Now it is his turn to train others," smiled the party secretary.

The school's head added: "The senior comrades often look in on us. They do not forget how they studied here themselves. Now the secretary's

son has also enrolled. And, in addition, the secretary himself taught at the school for a whole fifteen years."

These facts from the biographies of our interlocutors reflected in their own way the approach in the GDR to personnel training and retraining. Experience is passed on as new knowledge is accumulated. It is significant that people are eager to learn to handle computers. A special subject, the Basics of Automation, was introduced in vocational schools in 1986. Computer classes are being set up everywhere. It was intriguing to hear that for the first time in its 40 years, UNESCO last year called its international congress on vocational training precisely in the capital of the GDR.

Much of what we saw and heard shows an understanding of the individual's ever-growing role. The plant, in the firm belief of our interlocutors, is not merely a site for the use of 'abstract manpower'. It moulds characters, unites and sustains people spiritually and materially, and enhances socialist social consciousness.

Theory Goes Hand in Hand with Practice

To be sure, technological progress does not hinge on industry's efforts alone. Science does quite a bit in its own right. We talked about this at Berlin University, the alma mater of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, with many of its scientists.

Harry Smittan is as energetic, thorough and reliable as a first secretary of a university party committee with the rights of a district committee should be.

"First of all," he said, "we're now puzzling over how better to orient our research towards the highest world achievements. While the university has obtained many first-class results, for example in micro- and opto-electronics, social science and medicine, to advance further means to encourage new discoveries and inventions that would meet socialist society's requirements. And for this purpose we need a still more intimate science-industry relationship, moving theory closer to the needs of practice.

"But researchers' joint work with enterprises is not an easy proposition. Sharp disputes occur between the partners, opinions clash, sometimes we have to regroup our research forces and they are far from limitless. It is even harder when we have to change our mind in time and 'bet on another horse', that is, drop an outdated project."

The party committee wants to give this work a systematic character and openness, and is finding ways to involve all the party members in it. Here they regularly hear reports on how Communists fulfil their research assignments and, as at Means of Automation, create ad hoc party support groups for the projects undertaken. By the way, one of these groups has been organised in conjunction with the combine.

"Now," said Volker Deutlich, who is in charge of scientific work at the university, "about half of our research and engineering personnel is directly linked with industry and, moreover, most of the scientists, even while fulfilling its orders, are engaged in what amounts to fundamental research. As a result, up to two-thirds of our scientific potential is geared

to a high-technology future. Over 150 contracts have been signed with industry."

Does such an arrangement pay off?

Leading scientists and party workers say 'yes'. The forces are distributed in such a way that neither of the two major areas — basic or applied research — is in the position of a Cinderella. Under contracts, the scientists work more purposefully and obtain quicker returns. The university is also pleased to be able to earn 48 million marks in just two years. The money will go into its rationalisation fund, and for social and cultural needs.

Without a contemporary awareness of the role of scientific and technological progress, we were told, the GDR would not have achieved in the 1980s the high indices noted by a recent plenary meeting of the SED Central Committee. There are already 43,000 automatic design, engineering and process control systems in place, and in the past two years alone 80,000 office and personal computers have been produced. With this emphasis on science and technology, the average yearly rate of national income growth is twice as high as that for industrially advanced capitalist states.

We had the opportunity to see for ourselves that responding to the exigencies of the scientific and technological revolution, the GDR has carried out a drastic overhaul of management, of which the system of combines has become the key element. It is the backbone of the economy. The combines, legally and economically independent, look after all their marketing as well as production operations. With the transfer to them of considerable, earlier autonomous, research capacities the scientist has become a direct and equal participant in the labour process. All of this has helped remove the hurdles between science and practice, and the flow of mutually enriching ideas has markedly accelerated. At the plant in Marzahn, for example, in just two years they have established their own research and engineering centre with a staff of 2,000.

A land of less than 17 million and not rich in minerals is certainly bound to appreciate the value of scientific and technological progress. "Nature has not endowed us with any resources, except our brainpower," joked an interlocutor. But, jokes apart, we seriously discussed the nation's ability to concentrate on major areas of endeavour. Today's complex tasks call for just this, as well as for international cooperation.

Karsten Koitz, the university's party secretary responsible for academic work, declared:

"We can absorb key technologies and cope with the overall tasks of scientific and technological progress only through international cooperation, primarily within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). We have signed 79 agreements with foreign universities, including in all capitals of the socialist countries. The aim is joint studies plus an exchange of experience and of lecture courses."

At the institute of physical chemistry which we also visited, Professor Martin Bülow echoed this thought:

"We do not yet have enough research capacities. On the other hand, scientists in the fraternal countries at times duplicate each other. There is only one conclusion to be drawn: that we should cooperate more closely.

The CMEA's comprehensive programme for scientific and technological progress is a fine plan, but, unfortunately, it has for physical chemistry only some laser-related offers and this is not enough."

We heard many interlocutors express the wish for greater cooperation with the fraternal countries. It guarantees the GDR not only markets and raw-materials supplies, but also helps it become a leader in many research and engineering fields.

Our impressions can be summed up as follows: all-round attention to science, its efficient management in combination with production, and active participation in international cooperation are the mainspring for GDR scientific and technological progress. The key to it is in reliable hands.

Education of Party Cadres

In the building of the SED Central Committee's Karl Marx Higher Party School, on a street opening to the Spree, unique information centres occupy almost an entire hall. With an obligatory, even though small computer, with a data bank and with extensive documentation, these centres were set up not so long ago, through the efforts of the school's researchers and students and the leaderships of industrial combines.

Specialists in microelectronics, automation and biotechnology, economists, and students of the practice of party work helped us understand the function of this academic unit in the system of SED personnel training.

"We by no means attempt to show to our students in detail the material aspect of the scientific and technological revolution," explained Georg Ebert, head of the socialist political economy department. "Our goal is to spread the experience of the party units of the best enterprises in the science and technology drive. We strive to give a deep understanding of STR strategy and of the social implications that this revolution has for the world's two opposing systems."

At the party work information centre, we managed to have a talk with the school's deputy director Otto Novak and researcher Johannes Anke. They spoke about the impact of key technologies on the conditions of work, on its content, and on the thinking of people. Once a robot enters the workshop, employees become greatly different. Heavy, tedious manual work disappears. People familiar with the means of automation, programmers, specialists in modern communications, electronics experts, and nuclear power engineers all require new knowledge and skills; a growing creativity pervades their work. This calls for redesigning the labour process and the mutual relations in production groups. We see a heightened awareness and more discipline. But though living labour diminishes, moral and psychological stresses increase. So rest and leisure must also change. All of this has to be considered in party work and the social sphere.

"In primary organisations we often have to explain that there is no absolute recipe for getting everybody actively involved in the scientific and technological revolution," observed Novak. "Think, endeavour — and if you run into contradictions, search for ways to overcome them."

Contradictions? Yes, as signs of growth. For example, the number of young would-be applicants for computer-related jobs exceeds by far the available openings. On the other hand, far from everyone, particularly the middle-aged, is prepared to retrain or be relocated when computers take over. Socialist society patiently helps them find the best option, and no one is left without a livelihood. At the same Means of Automation, for example, they are now developing new product lines and starting to make components and consumer goods. Second, they are increasing the working in shifts. Well, when the offered jobs do not suit one, necessity steps in. The most important thing is that any worker can retrain: in this five-year plan alone, the GDR will have created or refitted up to 1.3 million jobs. The vacancies are waiting to be filled . . .

Maximum closeness to practice is the training motto of the party school. We looked through its diplomas, some of which, figuratively speaking, are worth millions of marks. Thus, two students from Jena worked out a scheme for interaction between a combine and the local authorities that in just two years has helped solve many of that city's social problems. Or take Berndt Nauert, a member of the party committee of a tool-making plant at Schmalkalden. His party school diploma paper centred on the design of an automatic sector for the production of blades for mowers. He then spent two years in a workshop erecting the machinery. As a result, productivity at the factory has more than trebled, causing profits to more than double. Earlier scarce, these goods are now in plenty.

There are quite a few graduates of the school among the nearly 700,000 communists engaged in the furtherance of science and technology as members of research teams, ad hoc party groups or commissions working under the auspices of factory party committees. Having deepened their knowledge of Marxist-Leninist theory and acquired a better awareness of the needs of society, they get down again to practical work as local political leaders.

These notes, we hope, do not create the impression that the application of new science and technology ideas in the GDR goes without a hitch. Needless to say, we were told the facts of life as they are. Otherwise scientists would not have pointed to the instances when money is available, but there is no way of buying the research equipment. Or a plant manager would not have shared his concern over a supplies delay or the competition from Western firms. Or a party committee secretary would not have complained that it is sometimes impossible to enlist workers in the fulfilment of the most complex jobs as that requires special training. Or a chairman of a trade union committee, touching on social issues, would not have expressed the wish to see more and better consumer goods in the shops.

It was there, in Marzahn, that at the entrance to the plant we saw a poster: "Key technologies must become our springboard for achieving prosperity."

What decides everything is that people know the prospects, the opportunities and their tasks. The knowledge makes them stronger.

Bert York
Communist Party of Great Britain
Igor Biryukov
WMR staff member

the party

For A Revolutionary Alternative To The Government

Jorge del Prado — CC General Secretary, Peruvian Communist Party (PCP)

NEARLY a year has passed since the Ninth National Congress of the Peruvian Communist Party and we can now take another look at its results and check its conclusions and decisions against developments in our country.

Our View of APRA[1]

The background against which the Congress was held was rather tense. Just before it a national strike had been called by the General Confederation of the Working People of Peru (CGTP) in protest against the socio-economic course and hesitant and actually anti-popular measures of the Garcia government. The debates at the Congress also bore witness to critical developments: many delegates, predominantly middle-level functionaries, took a radical anti-APRA stand in contrast to the theses and report of the Central Committee and to the policy line of the PCP.

Having summed up the results of the two-year rule of APRA, that reformist bourgeois party, the Congress concluded that its economic policy differed but little from that of the previous cabinet: the only innovation was a limit on payments towards foreign debts (the share of the export revenue used to service foreign debts had been cut from 60 to 27 per cent) and some constraints on the inflation growth rate. The structure of

Jorge del Prado (b. 1910), a leader of the international communist movement and a disciple and associate of J. C. Mariatega. Joining the PCP in 1929, he became a CC member in 1931, was elected member of the CC Political Commission and Secretariat in 1942 and CC General Secretary in 1966. He is a Senator of the Republic since 1980 and the author of several books on the communist, working class, and trade union movement of Peru.

dependent capitalism and the sway of transnationals remained unchanged. Trying to revive production, the administration has put its stakes on private investment, primarily on 14 major local financial groupings. It would like to abrogate the rights won by the people, brutally suppresses mass actions and protests and would not cooperate with the working people in seeking solutions to long-overdue problems. Unemployment is on the rise in the country, the cost of living is going up and real wages are shrinking. Another aggravation of the economic crisis is round the corner. The APRA government has not tried to introduce even isolated progressive reforms in spite of the need for fundamental change. Rather, its actions testify to its desire to broaden privileges for the oligarchy and imperialism.

What is the explanation of APRA's abandonment of its anti-imperialist platform?

The 1985 election gave APRA most of the parliamentary seats, the presidency and the right to form the government. The entrenched Right, however, still controls the commanding heights in the economy and the legal system, its loyal servant, corrupt and rotten through and through. The tenor in the repressive arms of the system, the army and police, is set by those who take their cue from the Pentagon. They resort to the same old arguments and methods of institutionalised terrorism to fight the Sendero Luminoso,[2] to carry out wholesale unwarranted harassment of the peaceful population, to declare a state of emergency in various parts of the country, and to hunt down leaders of workers', peasant and student organisations and left-wing parties. The Peruvian brass, guilty of the wholesale extermination of people in the Accomarca, Llocllapampa and Soccos villages and of mass brutalities and executions by firing-squad of imprisoned Sendero Luminoso guerrillas (and not them alone), have just one purpose, that of establishing their control in the whole of Peru and toughening and extending emergency measures so as to establish a shadow army-police cabinet. Moreover, the APRA authoritarian leaders and army reactionaries tend to strike an alliance, which is likely to pave the way to the gradual fascistisation of the regime.

At the same time, we cannot help mentioning and supporting the attitude of the Garcia administration to Sandinist Nicaragua which is fighting off imperialist aggression, to the struggles waged by people in Latin America and the Caribbean for their sovereignty, against the fascist dictatorships of Pinochet in Chile and Stroessner in Paraguay, and for the restoration of genuine democracy. But that is not enough to subscribe to APRA's definition of its government as 'democratic, popular and revolutionary'.

Although the current Peruvian leadership is customarily considered Social Democratic, it is not quite so. Rather, it is a bourgeois desarrollo-ist[3] government with some desire for reform which would like to breathe new life into the capitalist system with international Social Democratic support.

Our party made the conclusion at its Congress that *the alliance of the local pro-imperialist oligarchy, the corrupt senior officialdom, and the reactionary military remains the chief and most dangerous enemy of change.* APRA's ambiguous policy should be countered as well, not because it is

worse or better than that of its predecessors but because various concessions to the Right help bolster its influence in the state machinery, restore its political dominance and give it fresh opportunities to re-establish its control of the government.

Left Unity Must Be More Dynamic

Now that the regime is quickly losing its prestige and the trust and understanding of the working people and of its own voters, it is more and more important to strengthen and develop the United Left Alliance so as to turn it into *an organisation with an explicit programme of revolutionary, anti-imperialist, and democratic transformations,* an organisation capable of forming a government and, moreover, taking and handing to the people all power with a view to deep socialist-oriented change.

But the alliance has to resolve quite a few problems and overcome serious difficulties before it is able to assume such a responsible role. Alfonso Barrantes, an independent politician, has resigned as chairman of the alliance and it is now necessary ultimately to put an end to irrational high-handed and arbitrary leadership, megalomania and hegemonism of some of the allies, which are doing damage to the United Left. Restructuring at all levels in the alliance is possible only if genuinely democratic norms and principles of collective leadership are respected. The alliance's local committees should be reorganised and made more dynamic by joint efforts and all their activities — both party members and non-party people — should be registered and issued membership cards.

In October 1987, the fifth expanded meeting of the National Steering Committee of the United Left was held on the proposal of our Congress. It passed a number of decisions, approved some organisational changes, and reduced the representation of the member parties in the governing bodies of the alliance, replacing some of the party members with independents. An important development was the establishment of a commission to prepare the First National Congress of the United Left, scheduled for September 1988, which is to revise the programme and government platform of the alliance, explicitly to define its strategy of struggle for power and approve its rules.

The idea of establishing a National People's Assembly has been welcomed by the trade unions, peasant and student organisations, intellectuals, housing associations and people's self-defence committees. In our view, its chief functions should be a search for ways of resolving the more urgent problems of Peru and coordination of the working people's actions. The Assembly is called upon "to lay down firm programmatic and organisational foundations of a broad popular, democratic, progressive and anti-imperialist front fighting for power. It would be a united mass front which should not duplicate or contend with the United Left but complement and develop it".[4]

The Ninth PCP Congress made the proposal that an Assembly be established with the leading role of the General Confederation of the Working People of Peru, recommended that ties be strengthened between the United Left and various public organisations at every level, and also suggested that before the Assembly is convened, the General

Confederation of the Working People of Peru, the General Peasants' Confederation of Peru, the Confederation of Peruvian Peasants and the Peruvian Young Communist League hold their Congresses (the General Confederation of the Working People held its Congress in October 1987). The decision was taken to call upon other parties in the alliance and non-party people to give practical support to the idea of establishing the National People's Assembly and jointly to draft its policy documents.[5]

To Rectify Shortcomings and Overcome Difficulties

Our forum closely analysed the present situation of the party and its performance in exercising its vanguard role. The delegates considered, in the spirit of constructive criticism and self-criticism, the errors and failings of the guiding bodies, first and foremost the Organisational Commission, and commended the achievements. They noted, specifically, that inner party democracy had been strengthened in spite of persisting shortcomings and that gross violations of the Leninist norms of party life that had taken place before the Eighth (Extraordinary) Congress in 1982 had been done away with.

The PCP has now reached a qualitatively new level. Its influence and prestige have markedly grown and grassroots work has become much livelier. The Communists, it should be said, are the only party of the United Left to have avoided splits or any other grave consequences of the inaction and vascillation of United Left leaders.

The numerical growth of the party, however, leaves much to be desired against the background of these achievements: we have had just 1,500 new recruits in the past few years. Such a situation falls completely short of the requiremennt to have Communists and party cells in major proletarian centres and in strategic points of anti-imperialist class struggle. The ideological standards of our cadres have not been adequately upgraded either. That is why the Congress formulated the task of "working out and carrying through measures to recruit new members, . . . to introduce at all levels studies of the foundations of Marxism-Leninism and political education classes . . ."[6] The need was also pointed out to take organisational steps against the contingency of a fascist coup so as to enable the party to carry on its struggle clandestinely and to preserve its positions in the midst of the people and in the united front.

The delegates approved measures to invigorate the core of the party leadership, to upgrade plans, and to assign duties more efficiently in order to ensure progress towards our goals. That was why new people were elected to the Central Committee and some of the comrades, unable for one reason or another to cope with their duties, were replaced.[7]

New Stage

Developments in the country in the post-Congress period, specifically the political crisis late last year over the debates on and promulgation of legislation to nationalise the private banks and insurance companies, confirmed our conclusion on the aggravation of social contradictions and the growing polarisation of forces. The state's participation in the crediting and financial system has been confined to the role of the capitalists' partner

while the decree itself is being artfully used by the oligarchy as a legal loophole for its machinations as a result of the doubts, vacillation, and pliancy of the government (which the people could see for themselves when parliamentary debates were given TV coverage). While the administration has shown itself weak in the face of the threats and pressure of the Big Capital and imperialism, the Left has formulated a clear and consistent policy line for the nationalisation of the banks and for the protection of the interests of the working people and small shareholders. The Aprists' support is melting away while the Right, conversely, is regrouping and gaining strength. At the same time, people are growing more sympathetic towards the Left. Bent on scaring the public and preventing mass action, the more reactionary sections of the authorities, armed forces, and police are toughening repression and even use fascist-line paramilitary gangs.

Undoubtedly, *we have entered a new stage of struggle,* which will be sharper and fraught with graver dangers, but also far more promising as regards prospects for the consolidation and advance of our party, the class-based trade unions, the United Left and the entire popular alliance.

The PCP's principled positions, its participation in parliamentary battles and in mass actions in the streets and at the workplace for the nationalisation of the banks and financial capital, and its joint and concerted actions with the other left forces have played an important role. We have always given energetic support to the working people's public organisatons and have been instrumental in the convocation of the Eighth Congress of the Confederation of the Working People of Peru. The Communists' contribution towards overcoming the signs of a crisis in the United Left has proved in many ways decisive. *The single front of revolutionaries has been considerably strengthened politically and organisationally* as a result. The Fifth Expanded Meeting of the United Left National Steering Committee confirmed the correctness of the party's strategy and tactics as approved by its Ninth Congress.

Objective analysis shows that it would be no exaggeration to say that the Peruvian Communists' latest forum and the class battles that followed became another milestone on the road towards a revolutionary alternative to the government.

[1] A political party established on the basis of the Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana in 1931. Its current official name is the Peruvian Aprista Party, although it is still know as APRA in the everyday political language. — *Ed.*

[2] A terrorist grouping formed along the lines of the Pol Pot gangs in Kampuchea. — *Ed.*

[3] From the Spanish *desarrollo,* meaning development. Under this nationalist bourgeois reformist theory, it is possible to accelerate the socio-economic development of Latin American countries and to ensure their economic independence within the capitalist system. — *Ed.*

[4] *Por una alternativa revolucionaria de poder. Sumario del IX Congreso Nacional del Partido Comunista Peruano,* Lima, 1987, p. 64.

[5] The successful holding of the National People's Assembly last November confirmed in practice the correctness of the course adopted by the Congress.

[6] *Por una alternativa revolucionaria de poder. Informe del Comite Central al IX Congreso Nacional del Partido Comunista Peruano,* Lima, 1987, p. 38.

[7] Comrade Jorge del Prado was unanimously re-elected General Secretary of the PCP CC. — *Ed.*

The Path Of Revolution, Democracy And Peace

Mehmet Karaca — CC Deputy General Secretary, Communist Party of Turkey (CPT)
Osman Sakalsyz — CC Political Bureau member, Workers' Party of Turkey (WPT)

THE process of unification of the two major militant detachments of our working class, the Communist Party of Turkey and the Workers' Party of Turkey, which began late last year, is an historic landmark. As a result of that process, the general secretaries of the two parties returned from European exile in a bold move intended to help the democratic forces regain the initiative from the authoritarian regime. Also, a draft programme of the United Communist Party of Turkey has been drawn up.

The goal which has been formulated, the legalisation of the communist movement in the country, is related in such a way to the drafting of the new programme that it could be implemented in a more favourable situation. But it would be wrong to think that the contents and form, goals and premises of the programme have been shaped with an eye to legalisation. As WPT General Secretary Nihat Sargin has stated, "what it amounts to is a modern strategic course worked out jointly on the basis of new thinking" rather than a 'compromise' between the two parties or a combination of their earlier programmes.

The draft has absorbed, on the one hand, the experience of our parties, including the lesson of the Communists' defeat as a result of the 1980 military coup. On the other hand, it is a reflection of new ideas generated by the international communist movement. It is our good fortune that the search for ways of making Turkey a modern democratic state has coincided with the immense process of revolutionary renewal in the Soviet Union, which has inspired us and strengthened our resolve to speak about scientific socialism in the language of the peoples of our homeland.

Mankind today is being increasingly confronted by pressing global problems which transcend the boundaries between classes and social systems. The threat of nuclear war is the paramount problem. There also are environmental pollution, hunger, disease, etc. Never before has the fate of one nation or state been intertwined so closely with the fates of all

M. Karaca (b. 1945), was active in the trade union movement; one of the leaders of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions, DISK, at the end of the 1970s; after the military coup of 1980 was forced, as a member of the CPT, to go underground and later emigrate to France.

O. Sakalsyz (b. 1947), a lathe operator by training; at sixteen began to cooperate with the WPT, which he joined in 1965; was secretary of the party's Central Committee responsible for foreign organisations as well as work among mass organisations; after the military coup of 1980 emigrated abroad.

the other nations and states. All the nations, all the political movements, and, first and foremost, the class to which the future belongs have a need for new thinking in this complex, controversial and increasingly integral and interdependent world of ours. The world is facing a mortal danger now, so the historic mission of the working class has grown in scope: along with accomplishing a social revolution, it is to save mankind from annihilation.

Our strategy of peace and democratic renewal is determined by two factors: on the one hand, the need to contribute to safeguarding world peace and to abolishing Turkey's status of arms-bearer of US imperialist policy; and on the other, the need to contribute to the democratisation of the country. The two goals are objectively interlinked and the struggle for democracy is inseparable from the struggle for peace.

Turkey has been ruled by undemocratic regimes ever since the 1980 military coup. Washington's positions in the country are stronger than ever while Ankara's policy is determined to a large extent by the military-industrial complex of US imperialism and by its course of confrontation and neoglobalism.

Since that time our people have lived through different forms of oppression from the ruthless and openly terroristic military regime to the present-day authoritarian rule exercised from behind the front of parliamentarism. The latter, it should be noted, is different from the former. Civilian representatives of the monopoly bourgeoisie have more direct access to power in the Ozal government than in earlier administrations and the opposition too has broader opportunities. Some of the democratic parties, although facing repression, can work legally, a possibility which has been denied to the left revolutionary forces. The present parliament is nowhere near effectively expressing the will of the electorate. Only one-third of the voters cast their ballots for the ruling party in the latest elections — but it got nearly two-thirds of the seats in parliament. The parliamentary representation of two democratic parties can nevertheless be viewed as a success. Although the militarist forces have not lost their influence and although the present civilian government often matches them in the ruthless suppresion of democracy, the democratic opposition is growing more courageous and energetic.

The Turkish human rights movement has become more vigorous throughout the first half of this year. Well-known writers and scientists have issued an appeal for solidarity with democracy, which was signed by thousands of intellectuals. Political prisoners and their families have been protesting against injustice. Progressive members of parliament have participated in actions as well. Workers on the shop-floor defy anti-union legislation and are mounting struggles in specific forms for their vital interests, relating it to the demands for the democratisation of all life in the country.

The government has been compelled to revise its earlier stand and sign the anti-torture conventions concluded at the UN and West European levels. One more victory is a governmental decree forbidding the humiliation of political prisoners, from which Kurds used to suffer most.

It is perfectly clear that only a *resolute struggle for democracy and human*

rights can bring about guarantees of respect for these legal norms. As many as 187 opponents of the dictatorship sentenced to die are on the death row. Jails are overflowing with thousands of political prisoners and communist activity is still punishable by dozens of years in prison. Such laws are a mockery of freedom of thought and conviction. The government has taken under its wing the torturers of our general secretaries.[1]

The Ozal cabinet is aware, however, that the growing will of the people for democratisation cannot be stifled forever. Torture, political prisoners, and the ban on the Communist Party are also impediments to Ankara's bid to join the Common Market. That is why the government is implementing a controlled and limited process of 'democratisation'. But foreign policy is not going to be revised in any way because the government represents the interests, first and foremost, of the part of the Turkish Big Bourgeoisie which has grown stronger under the military dictatorship and would now like to make it to the international scene without jeopardising cooperation with the more reactionary forces of imperialism. The civil authorities want very much to gain in prestige and influence vis-à-vis the military. At the same time the ruling class would not give up the guarantees of its dominance that are provided by the army, that 'last argument of the kings', and wants always to be able to use armed force in a crisis, that is, when the oppressed refuse to reconcile themselves to their lot any longer.

Our task today as we see it is to *wrest the political initiative from the government's hands* and give it to the progressive forces, and to remove the straitjacket from the process of democratisation. It is necessary to break the diabolical cycle in which, since the 1970s, one military putsch has been separated from another by periods of limited and sick democracy.

The programme of the United Communist Party of Turkey calls for democracy based on the active role of the masses and holds that only free expression of popular will is the source and foundation of political power. Parliament therefore should be formed in free elections and rely on various democratic organisations. No state institution can claim a place above such a parliament and it is high time an end be put to the intervention of the military in politics. No party or grouping can secure the victory of democracy single-handed. To defeat its enemies, it is necessary to rally together all the forces, with each group being important in the common front of struggle. It is only by relying on the mass of people and on the organised working class that the supreme goal of democracy, genuine people's rule, can be achieved in the country. The only effective guarantee of that rule is that the people take power, use it energetically, and make it work.

The Turkish Communists view their new programme not just as a list of long-term goals of struggle but as a guide to day-to-day action as well.

If we proceed just from the economic and material circumstances of Turkey, we may draw the conclusion that the country already has the 'essential minimum' to set out to achieve socialism. Although vestiges of the pre-capitalist formation have not yet been fully eradicated in Turkey, economic backwardness has not been overcome and simple commodity production is still widespread, we have *capitalism of the middle level of development.* National monopolies have emerged and, cooperating with

transnationals, have increased their role in the economy and the state. One can even say that elements of state-monopoly capitalism are emerging in the country. But these predominantly economic factors are not enough to turn the mass of people towards socialism, towards revolution. There is a need for an appropriate realignment of political forces; the present balance of forces is not right for raising the question of revolutionary power capable of changing the class character of the existing state. There is neither a revolutionary situation nor even any sign of its early emergence in Turkey today. Neither is the subjective factor of revolution ripe as yet and there are no conditions for raising the level of organisation of the working class and the level of its alliance with the other forces to secure victory in the foreseeable future.

The most formidable obstacle to the growth of the awareness and organisation of the working class and all the other working people is the absence of democratic structures. They are neither formalised legally nor do they have firm social roots. That is why priority is attached to the task of *creating and consolidating a democratic regime.*

It is possible to translate our strategy of peace and democratic renewal into practice both partially and as a whole through the implementation of far-reaching reforms, *which calls for the cooperation of the broadest possible political forces.* A government capable of carrying through such reforms most consistently would rely on a coalition in which the United Communist Party of Turkey could take part. We think that such a course, directly aimed at reforms, is new and differs from the conventional policy line: it links today's realities to a revolutionary perspective for the future.

To understand Lenin means creatively to apply his methods in concrete reality. The essence of Lenin's strategy lay in finding ways of advance from the existing situation to a socialist revolution. The working class cannot wait passively for the emergence of a 'revolutionary situation'. It is a task of our strategy to contribute even at times of relative calm to effective steps forward and to prepare the mass of people for revolutionary processes of the future, and also to raise other political forces to a level appropriate to such processes.

Our strategy of peace and democratic renewal is a strategy of reforms rather than revolution. But *it is revolutionary,* not reformist, for Turkey today.

To foster democracy in social life means to develop a political culture in the people and to make it an essential civil tradition. We consider it an important task to prevent national and general humanistic culture from slipping into decline, into which it is being pushed, and to help develop a new, democratic political culture. The reactionary militarist forces of our country have caused much harm in this respect. Hatred and vengeance towards other nations, chauvinism and religious intolerance were being fostered in the Turkish people along with obeisance to the United States and 'the American way of life', selfish individualism and moral degradation. They were trying in this way to suppress the people's energies, to kill their sense of solidarity, and to prevent protest against injustice from being realised in social opposition.

The programme of the United Communist Party of Turkey calls for the

renewal of the national culture of the Turkish and Kurdish peoples on the basis of historical heritage, which can breathe new life into it and enrich it with the values of democracy, humanism, and patriotism. These values must be used as a base to develop a new political culture of the Left, and gradually to project it to all the democratic forces and to society as a whole. Its basic aspects are an unbiased attitude, tolerance for those who hold different views and have religious and philosophical persuasions differing from one's own, respect for each other's values and assets, an ability critically to take stock of one's own positions, renunciation of stereotypes, having an open mind to creative quests, and condemnation of terrorism in any form, including state terrorism.

The better the mass of people and political forces assimilate this culture, the harder it will be for the enemies of democracy, the pro-American, reactionary, and militarist circles to destabilise the situation in the country, and to camouflage their recourse to violence with prejudice and feelings of hatred and vengeance. The further consolidation of a political culture in society will depend on the growth of the working class movement and its influence on the life of the country. The democratic and humanistic-minded patriotic intellectuals are natural allies of the working class in defending the national cultural values and in the assertion of a new, democratic political culture.

Is it possible to formulate realistic and concrete goals which would combine class interests with common human and national ones and forge unity between broad strata of the people? Our *national security policy* answers this question with an emphatic 'yes'. We believe that our security is inseparable from that of our neighbours, the region, and the world as a whole.

Turkey has a special dependence on the US even within NATO. The American nuclear weapons on Turkish territory are not just the gravest threat to ourselves but also a source of global danger. Washington is building new facilities in Turkey to be used illegally and piratically by its 'rapid deployment force' and it is expanding its bases. The USA is trying hard to make us accept nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles of new types, which would undermine the effectiveness of the Treaty to Eliminate Intermediate- and Shorter-Range Missiles. There are plans to use Turkish territory for Star Wars as well.

The programme of the United Communist Party of Turkey envisages a ban on the deployment of nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles of new types in the country, the removal of all nuclear weapons from its territory, and an end to US military presence. Turkey's NATO policy should promote its own legitimate security interests and contribute towards stronger world peace and universal disarmament on the basis of equal security, including the simultaneous dissolution of both military alliances. Such a policy, we think, can mobilise for peace efforts a broad spectrum of political forces, including those who would like Turkey to remain in NATO but oppose the country's dependence on US imperialism.

Revolutionary restructuring in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries inspires us to form our own concrete perceptions of socialism that would match the historical, social and cultural features of our country and

take account of its specific characteristics. The main goal of the United Communist Party of Turkey is to build a communist society. Its first phase, socialism, is *an alternative to the present situation in the country*. Socialism, relying on social justice, dynamic and planned economic growth and the best possible use of individual initiative, can supply correct and long-term answers to the major questions facing society.

There will emerge in socialist Turkey a rule of the working class and other working people which, in Lenin's words, "is *a million times* more democratic than any bourgeois democracy".[2] We want the rights and freedoms won by the working people in long battles to be broadened and raised to a qualitatively new level. There will be not less but more freedom in every sphere under socialism. There will be freedom of speech, with the excception of the propaganda of war, terror, and racist and chauvinistic views, and freedom to form political parties, provided they respect democracy. Socialist Turkey will be a secular state with respect for the freedom of conscience and of religion; people of all religions and faiths and atheists will live in it like brothers on the basis of tolerance and mutual respect. The leading role in society will be played by a working class enjoying the trust of the overwhelming majority of the nation and relying on an alliance with those parties and organisations which accept socialism and act within the framework of a constitutional democratic system.

We believe that a transition to socialism in Turkey will occur without a civil war. This is not to say, of course, that it will be brought about by a series of reforms alone and that for this reason the question of changing the class character of power is no longer on the agenda. A socialist system can be established only as a result of *a resolute and organised struggle of the working class and all the working people,* as a result of a revolutionary process. The draft programme says that the concrete stages of this process can hardly be identified in schematic plans today. It will be shaped by the vigorous and creative activity of the working class and all the other detachments of the labour army. The road to be travelled by a revolution will therefore depend on the degree of influence exercised by the Communists and all the other left-wing and democratic forces, on the strength of their unity, and also on the vigour and forms of the enemies' resistance.

It is our conviction that our avowed goal of making a revolution by peaceful means is in accord with the circumstances of our age and especially the future, when a transition to socialism will become the order of the day in our country. We believe that reason will prevail over the threat to the very existence of our earth and that serious efforts will be made to create an international system of collective security. In such a world, where wars of aggression will be ruled out, it will be possible to push back militarism with its methods of gory violence. But it will take serious shifts in *the alignment of the political forces in the country,* making it impossible to unleash bloody terror anew, for a favourable international situation to contribute to the progress of a revolution by peaceful means. An essential condition here is the assertion of democratic traditions as an inalienable aspect of social life. The programme of the United Communist Party of Turkey outlines not just the goal, that is, the triumph of socialism

by peaceful means, but also the paramount means of achieving it, namely, a strategy of democratic renewal which simultaneously is a strategy of carrying out a revolution by peaceful means.

The United Communist Party is one of the working class and one of the democratic parties of the country. Its goals and principles are inseparable from the goals of the working class and the principles of democracy. It does not want a special status or privileges either today or in the future. We do not claim to have a monopoly of truth or to be guaranteed against errors, respect the positions of other democratic forces and are always ready to join unbiased discussions.

CPT General Secretary Haydar Kutlu has noted that already at the very start of the merger of the two parties "we decided to leave out of our discussions the very important but rather involved question of which party is the vanguard of the working class of the country today. Neither the CPT nor the WPT claim that role in their bilateral discussions or in contacts with other left parties." Awareness of our responsibility stems not from some special status of ours but from the understanding that we are a party which upholds in any circumstances the vital interests of the working class and the other working people; a party which has set out to put an end to capitalism by revolutionary means and to build socialism; a party which bases its policy and organisational structure on the principles of Marxism-Leninism; a party which has a role in the international communist and working class movement as an internationalist party.

We object to the view that the time-tested principles of scientific socialism are 'outdated' and oppose their interpretation as ossified and immutable dogmas. We are trying to apply the ideas of scientific socialism in the concrete circumstances of Turkey and continuously to enrich them in the spirit of the achievements of modern science and new thinking, thus ensuring that they meet the needs of practice.

Lenin's teaching on the party of a new type is relevant to us. We follow his precepts and combine broad inner party democracy with united action. The Turkish Communists want to work legally in the country. Legality, incidentally, is the best environment for the flourishing of inner party democracy. But even though we still are unable to have the disgraceful ban on the Communist Party lifted, we will continue creatively to develop new methods and forms of activity in order to minimise the restrictions imposed by our illegal status and expand inner party democracy as much as possible. Such democracy, based on diversity and on the contribution of all the Communists to policy-making and therefore to our collective wisdom, will promote unity of action and strengthen the Communists' conscious discipline.

While all the progressive forces should, like a mirror, show to the people tomorrow's democratic Turkey, our task is even taller: *the United Communist Party is to become for the people a mirror of socialist democracy.*

Addressing the February 1988 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, Mikhail Gorbachov said " . . . Our great teachers revealed the objective basis of common human values and dialectically linked them to social and class ones. Now all this is becoming the pivotal line of practical

policies." In their new programme the Turkish Communists are combining in practice the task of being a party of revolution and simultaneously a party of democracy and peace.

[1] Having returned to Turkey on November 16, 1987, Haydar Kutlu and Nihat Sargin were immediately arrested, jailed and tortured. Both Communist leaders face long prison terms. — *Ed.*

[2] V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 248.

The Communists And Youth

New Approaches Offer Better Prospects

Why have few new people joined the Swiss Party of Labour since 1968? What do the party organisations do in order not to appear to be closed sects of sorts in the eyes of the new recruits? These are but two questions out of a host raised in the report by the youth commission of the SPL Central Committee to the 13th Party Congress (1987). The Swiss Communists' concern for this state of affairs found expression precisely in the formation of the commission, which was asked to analyse the problems and mood of the younger generation and also the possibilities for the party to interact with it and ways of attaining the goal.

WMR editors asked **Anjuska Weil,** a member of the Political Bureau of the SPL CC who heads the youth commission, to speak about the conclusions drawn from that analysis. We also asked **Alain Bringolf,** SPL CC member and a municipal council leader in the small town of La Chaux-de-Fonds, to share with our readers the concrete experience of the work conducted by the local party organisation among young people.

Anjuska Weil: We Are Not Enemies, to Say the Least

The influence exercised by the party is not the same in different cantons of the Swiss Confederation. The Young Communist League is fairly active in the German-speaking part of the country, Geneva and the Vaud canton. The tangible difference in political and language traditions between different regions also affects the mood and behaviour of the young people and their attitude to the Communists.

For example, in the early 1980s there were clashes between the right-wing bourgeois authorities and violently rebellious youth in Zurich, the country's financial centre. Brought to despair by their hopeless attempts to find jobs or inexpensive housing and by the indifference shown by the authorities to their needs, young people from the poorer strata took to the streets.

At that time we sought to support their just demands and charges made

against the existing system and unequivocally denounced police repression. Without trying to curry favour with them, we sought to establish the first links of fruitful dialogue with young people.

It is hard to say whether our partners were influenced in any way. At any rate, none of them joined our party. We now meet at various undertakings, demonstrations of international solidarity or against the arbitrariness of the authorities, and during other actions. And I feel we are not enemies, to say the least. But is it enough? Or will we be able to accomplish something bigger?

Our commission members are of the opinion that people in their twenties are now more inclined to be individualistic and conformist. Some young people have espoused neoconservative sentiments and convictions. These people have been 'programmed' to make a career and to succeed in life as they put it. This holds true both for those who come from middle-class families and for those from the working-class families.

Some, however, do not confine themselves to striving after personal success and are not afraid of openly criticising the existing system. Their number is comparatively small. They, too, often tell us that what the Communists suggest is on the whole correct and yet for more than sixty years now we have been unable to translate our suggestions into life. Under the impact of such sentiments young boys and girls often swing to extreme radicalism and eventually join marginal groupings.

We think that both our party itself and its work with youth should be seriously renewed. In our complicated and controversial world people rarely come to consistent political struggle and the mastering of the Marxist world outlook in a straightforward way. More often than not it is through emotional shocks, a search for answers to questions besetting young people and involvement in concrete actions by various social movements. It seems to me that we Communists will have no real rapport with the youth unless we pay more attention to these movements and be more active in them.

I mean here the solidarity actions with the peoples of Central America, South Africa and Palestine suffering from oppression and imperialist aggression and also solidarity with immigrant workers and political refugees from other countries in Switzerland itself. Hatred towards them kindled by the ruling bourgeoisie often evokes the opposite reaction among young people rejecting (irrespective of their social status) such a patent and humiliating manifestation of injustice. Problems of war and peace and environmental protection are now the concern of people of all ages, especially the younger ones, who readily join the ranks of the anti-war and ecological movements.

This is the reserve, from which we can and should derive fresh forces. At the same time, the analysis carried out by our commission shows that many politically active young boys and girls working in different initiative groups and committees are loath to join any party, and the SPL is no exception. Lengthy and patient persuasion is called for to convince them that their work within the party can be useful and effective.

Who then do we find among our new recruits? For the most part they are students and hired labourers, least of all those who are traditionally referred to as the working class. Quite a few come from mixed families,

with one parent being a foreigner, or from immigrant workers' families. Many of them are full of enthusiasm characteristic of their age and fresh ideas on problems, such as, for example, the effect of scientific and technological progress on social life.

We deem it a task of paramount importance to promote the inflow of young people to the party. The Young Communist League is of help in this: its activists find it easier to find a common language with their age-mates for they know better youth problems and feel what forms of work can attract people. And still we are in no hurry to invite these activists to join our ranks. They are of greater use to our common cause as members of the Young Communist League. Young people willingly take part in preparing and conducting annual festivals of the party press and in supporting the Communists in solidarity committees and anti-war movements.

In the cantons and regions with practically no Young Communists new recruits to the party primarily come from various traditional and unconventional social movements. Those who show concern for the development of our society, for the situation and the needs of the people get to know the programmatic goals of our party, its analysis of the situation and activity and take part in individual actions. Some of them, though not many, join the party ranks afterwards.

Alain Bringolf: New Trend in Membership

We can hardly say that the La Chaux-de-Fonds party organisation makes any special efforts to attract young people. For about a decade now we have been trying to pursue the policy of utmost openness and broad cooperation with other forces not necessarily sharing our views. It should be said that the young people positively prefer this policy.

To my mind, they are reluctant to join the Communists for several reasons. To begin with, they refrain from joining any organisation whatsoever, especially the SPL which maintains friendly relations with other communist parties, including those in the socialist countries, where until quite recently the situation was far from perfect. Our banner does not always seem attractive.

This is not to say, however, that we are going to furl it. Far from it: we have openly stated and continue stating our aims and what we fight for. But in our contacts with people we try to avoid abstract theorising and doctrinaire lecturing. We discuss concrete problems of concern to the people, including the young people. Needless to say, this is easier done on a regional level than on the national one.

Using this advantage, the Communists of our party organisation engage in active dialogue with all those disposed to it. We do not impose on them our precepts or solutions but look for them together with our interlocutors who agree with us if only in one thing, namely, that capitalism offers no real prospects to the people. Those who cooperate with the SPL reject the omnipotence of money, especially manifest in Switzerland. An anti-capitalist understanding is already something from which we proceed to discuss how to act and what ways and means of struggle to choose.

In our analytical and political work we try to show clearly the

interdependence of different problems and to explain the integral concept of social progress. This enables us to connect logically all sorts of local and temporal problems with the social system itself, that is, with capitalism and its imminent evils.

However, it is our profound conviction that this analysis should be carried out only through dialogue and an exchange of ideas. Young people willing to engage in a discussion hate to have absolute truths thrust upon them, even if these are indisputable for us. It is highly important to let everybody speak up, to hear the arguments of our partners and to compare them with ours, before arriving at conclusions.

I recall a young man telling our party section meeting not so long ago why he was with us. Searching for answers to problems besetting him, he turned to various forces from the Revolutionary Marxist League (Trotskyists) to the ecologists. It was only among the Communists that he found genuine understanding and felt that he could say what he wanted without coming up against a biased attitude, that those people wanted to listen to him and to look for solutions together with him.

Such an approach to youth proved fruitful. But it primarily attracted students who, apart from party activities and meetings, had a rich intellectual and cultural life of their own. Unfortunately, the situation among the workers is not so promising. Why so?

For far too long we have been telling the people that the problems of their working conditions and wages would be at least partially resolved as soon as they gave support to the party and voted for it during elections. Today, we see that we were wrong. The party can only give correct guidelines of struggle to be waged by the workers themselves in close contact with other social forces rather than single-handed.

To a certain extent, the working class movement in Switzerland has been disoriented. For years on end its only objective was to get as much as possible from the industrial boom, which took place in nearly all West European countries in the post-war period. At the same time it failed to consider the problems of participating in production management and sharing the responsibility for the state of the economy. We are pondering over these problems today, eager to analyse them in depth and to work out wider approaches. It should be said that our efforts are evoking response primarily among young people who are not disillusioned with the bitter experience of the past, which had pushed many older people out of the political mainstream.

As far as I can judge, this readiness to conduct an open and unbiased dialogue will help the Communists to overcome gradually the painful process of aging, which has struck some West European communist parties, including the SPL. In the past few years the situation in our town has virtually been reversed. The new recruits to the La Chaux-de-Fonds party organisation are almost exclusively young people and those in the 30 to 35 age group, while the people advanced in age are in smaller numbers.

Four years ago, it took us great efforts to make up our lists for communal or national elections, whereas at the very first meeting which discussed the problem this year twenty people expressed readiness to be on the SPL list, the overwhelming majority of them being young Communists. We now

face an entirely different task, that of seeing to it that the veterans do not find themselves forgotten. As a matter of fact, the age problem is no longer a headache for our party organisation.

Today, we do not seek to enlist new party members at all costs. It is more important, from our point of view, to direct the young people's energy to progressive and socially useful undertakings. Let them engage in concrete actions and campaigns together with us or in parallel. Time will show whether they eventually join our ranks or not. Young people are aware of such an informal approach and appreciate it.

Let me cite some of their actions here. The townsfolk take an active part in different demonstrations against xenophobia and in support of the rights of immigrant workers, of whom there are many in La Chaux-de-Fonds. The people, especially young ones, keenly responded to injustice suffered by the bank personnel forced by the administration to work at night without corresponding remuneration. A mass demonstration of protest was held in their support. Young boys and girls eagerly take up environmental protection problems. Even though the ecologists are active in the town, they nevertheless often turn to us. They apparently find it reasonable that the Communists do not confine themselves to calls to safeguard, say, the forests but put the problem in the context of the vital interests of the working people and the entire population.

Young political activists learn much about the SPL through mutual efforts in these and other directions, getting to know Communists in person. We invite our new friends to our party meetings. They come, listen and draw conclusions. Some never come back again, while others return again and again, take part in our actions and in the long run become close to the party and even join its ranks.

But this spontaneous inflow of new members is hardly reliable without systematic education, first and foremost, in the form of problem discussions. We seek to avoid the notorious 'stiffness', which, regrettably, is still characteristic of some of our party functionaries and may scare away the young people for a long time, if not forever. It seems that we have managed to avoid it in La Chaux-de-Fonds, which, I believe, has also contributed to the change for the better.

Information

WMR Introduces

CHRISTIAN SELESTE
General Secretary, Guadeloup Communist Party

THE 9th Congress of the Guadeloupe Communist Party this March elected Christian Seleste to be the party's General Secretary.

Born in Capesterre Belle Eau, Guadeloupe, to an agricultural worker's

family in January 1948, he received a secondary education, and became an employee of a real estate insurance company.

He was active politically from an early age. In 1967 he joined the Guadeloupe YCL, and in 1968 became a member of the Guadeloupe Communist Party. In 1968 to 1988 he was secretary of a YCL organisation, municipal counsellor, and secretary of the Capesterre Belle Eau party organisation. In 1972, he was elected member of the GCP's Central Committee, and in 1976 member of the party's Political Bureau. From May 1980 he was secretary of the party's Central Committee.

The 9th Congress of the GCP, at which Christian Seleste was elected General Secretary, after a keen discussion set the long-term objective of phased advance to an independent socialist-oriented Guadeloupe for the first time in the party's history.

International Contacts

A Step Towards Closer Cooperation

MUTUAL satisfaction over the nature of relations that prevail between the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Italian Communist Party — friendly, equal, open, and considerate — was expressed at a meeting between Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CC CPSU, and Alessandro Natta, General Secretary of the ICP, on March 29 in Moscow.

The parties devoted special attention to the question of détente and cooperation in Europe between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty, the EEC and CMEA, and Eastern and Western Europe. The two leaders agreed to form a mixed research group open to other European political forces.

The ongoing renewal of Soviet society and foreign policy in a spirit of genuine democratisation in all spheres, Alessandro Natta said, would contribute importantly to a new evolution in international affairs. That is why these efforts are welcomed not only by Italian Communists but also by the public at large all over Europe.

CPC-CPI Relations Renewed

The Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of India have renewed relations broken off 24 years ago, the *Renmin ribao* wrote in a report on the April 1 meeting of CC CPC General Secretary Zhao Ziyang with a Communist Party of India delegation headed by Rajeswara Rao, General Secretary of the CP of India National Council. The CPC leader said he hoped that inter-party ties would expand.

Speaking of bilateral relations between communist parties, Zhao Ziyang stressed the importance of mutual understanding. The opinions of parties cannot be identical on all points, he said, because they operate in different conditions and see problems from different angles. It is therefore normal

that there should be differences and disputes between them. The main thing is to find points that Communists have in common despite the differences, and never to impose their opinions on others.

Rajeswara Rao was in favour of expanding relations between the CPI and the CPC on a basis of independence and non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

In All Spheres

A 1987 foreign relations review and policy guidelines for 1988 of the RCP and the Romanian state were published recently in Bucharest.

During 1987, RCP General Secretary Nicolae Ceausescu had 28 meetings and talks at home and abroad with heads of state and government, and also with 20 party chairmen and general secretaries. Thirty-five political and economic documents were signed or agreed at summit level.

Mutually beneficial cooperation and solidarity with all socialist countries were singled out as the key objective of the country's foreign policy. Special importance was attached to talks and to agreements concluded during Nicolae Ceausescu's visits to Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland, and the summit meetings in Romania with party leaders of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, and the German Democratic Republic.

The Romanian Communists hold that the people's struggle for disarmament and peace requires fresh impetus and that further efforts to conclude new agreements should be made, leading up to a gradual elimination of nuclear armaments, termination of nuclear testing, prevention of any militarisation of outer space, prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons, and a considerable cut in conventional armaments, armed forces and military expenditures. It was desirable, the policy paper said, for talks to begin soon between Warsaw Treaty and NATO countries in which other European states could also take part.

The RCP is determined to promote still closer ties between all communist and workers' parties, and work for their solidarity and cooperation. It intends to tighten unity that would rule out interference in the affairs of other parties, ensure respect for the principle of equal rights and independence, and the right of every party to work out its own political line, its own revolutionary strategy and tactics, to suit concrete conditions.

Criteria For Mutual Confidence

The Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) working group, formed in the autumn of 1984 under an agreement between the chairmen of the two parties' parliamentary groups, has come up with an initiative designed to strengthen confidence and security in Europe. A joint statement on criteria and methods to establish structures for mutual confidence and security in Europe was adopted at its February session in Warsaw. It notes that the potential of armed forces equipped with the latest types of nuclear and conventional weapons exceeds by far the two military-political alliances' security needs here.

Maintaining the current dynamics of armaments absorbs incommensurably large human, material and financial resouces, heightens the risk of military conflict, and impedes political, social and economic development on the continent. The need has ripened, the PUWP and the SPD hold, to take steps to lower the troop and arms levels, to further reinforce confidence, and to have the surprise-attack capabilities eliminated in the first place. Imbalance and asymmetry are to be removed by way of disarmament, not of rearmament.

The joint statement again draws attention to the working group's earlier proposal for a European council on the enhancement of confidence-building measures which could serve as a forum for dialogue.

In Brief

ANGOLA

A national conference on upgrading the work of governing MPLA — Party of Labour bodies endorsed a plan initiating a system of patriotic paramilitary education. It also discussed a new procedure for recording the social background of party members. The conference reviewed the preparations for a nationwide exchange of party cards.

ITALY

A national conference of ICP members elected to local administrative bodies bannerlined, 'For a Better Urban Life: Efficiency Morality, Civic Rights', was held recently in Florence. It discussed ways and means of combating the ongoing local crisis of administration. The party thought the time had come to reform the state apparatus and revise the functions and rights of regional, provincial, and city administrative bodies.

ROMANIA

As of December 31, 1987, the Romanian Communist Party had a membership of 3,709,735, of whom more than 55 per cent were workers, more than 15 per cent peasants, and more than 20 per cent belonged to the intelligentsia. These figures are from documents issued by an RCP Central Committee Plenary Meeting held on March 28-29.

VIETNAM

At a recent meeting in Hanoi editors of the party papers of Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea — *Nhan Dan, Pasason* and *Pracheachon* — agreed on close coordination in handling propaganda assignments. The most important area of work, they emphasised, was to promote peace, national independence, democracy, and socialism, and help turn South-east Asia into a region of stability and cooperation.

ZIMBABWE
An extraordinary congress of the country's second largest party, the Patriotic Front (ZAPU), has endorsed an agreement merging ZAPU with the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union — Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). As pointed out by ZANU-PF leaders, the one-party system is to be introduced by 1990, prior to the next general elections.

exchange of views, discussion

Lessons Of Socialist Orientation

Review of Discussions at an International Symposium in Prague

The participants in the *WMR*-sponsored international symposium in Prague on ways of socialist orientation in countries of Asia and Africa concentrated on the little researched aspects of that subject. Their discussions centred on problems of relations between the Communists and the revolutionary democrats and on the causes of the retreat of revolutionary and liberation processes.

GUINEA was following the road of socialist orientation for over a quarter century, **Semou Pathe Gueye** (Senegal Party of Independence and Labour) said, but then readily changed tack. Perhaps our accepted standards under which we do not hesitate to classify one country or another as socialist-oriented are in some ways flawed.

In the view of **Naim Ashhab** (Palestinian Communist Party), confusion with the classification of some countries as socialist-oriented is sometimes caused by the continued mistaken approach which ranks as such, even those countries where social progress has in effect already been blocked.

The objective and subjective factors of building socialism have not yet taken shape in the developing world, **Ali Ahmed El Tayeb** (Communist Party of the Sudan) noted. The formulation of socialist programmes and slogans by the leaders of, for instance, Arab countries often is not translated into any practical measures to prepare the ground for advance towards socialism. And are possibilities for such an advance at all realistic? Sometimes negative factors that transpire at the early stages of national

democratic development become decisive and contribute to the eventual abandonment of the stated socialist course. The experience of the 'first-generation' socialist-oriented states is in many ways instructive.[1] National democratic processes in Egypt, Algeria and Syria supply ample evidence for an understanding of the present-day fate of non-capitalist development.

Controversial Experience

Egyptian Marxists still show much interest in problems of socialist orientation, **Kamel Mohamed Magdi** (Egyptian Communist Party) said. One reason is that our country was among the first to launch major anti-imperialist measures and socio-economic reforms (shortly after the 1952 revolution), which had an impact on neighbouring states. Yet the superstructure was not drastically overhauled and the socialist ideas proclaimed were eclectic. Gamal Abdel Nasser never revised his own interpretation of socialism or his special attitude to Marxism and religion.

The patriotic revolutionaries' anti-imperialist programme was nurturing a socialist tradition in Egypt. The growth of the public and cooperative sectors put constraints in the first half of the 1960s on the spontaneous development of capitalism. In other sectors, however, that process went ahead, with the parasitic stratum of bureaucrats growing. Real transformations, in the view of our party, never went beyond *national democratic reforms* and it would be an exaggeration to consider them anything more than that.

Well-justified hopes were pinned on the revolutionary democratic regimes which emerged in some countries of Asia and Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, **Naim Ashhab** said. They introduced radical reforms, strengthened the positions of the public sector, encouraged public activity, and took steps to promote their ties with the socialist world. The communist movement of the time, however, took a rosy view of those phenomena, we think, and appraised the realities superficially. The influence exerted by socialism from the outside was exaggerated, while the importance of subjective factors and endemic features of social evolution was belittled. The radical steps taken by the ruling regime, it was believed, all but offered an imminent possibility of embarking on the socialist road.

The problem we faced at that time was quite concrete, **Ali Malki** (Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria) said. What attitude should we take to the socialist choice proclaimed by the regime and should we call upon the people to support it? It should be noted that our party was banned after independence (1962). But we did not hesitate to give our support to that course because the homeland now had a real chance to embark on the road of socialist orientation. That choice was favoured by the new socio-economic circumstances, by the isolation of the liberal bourgeois trend, and by the progressive evolution of the views of the revolutionary democratic forces. The socialist choice had to be asserted in numerous trials and acute socio-economic and ideological struggles preceded any success on that road.

But the socialist choice did not win an ultimate victory and was always in jeopardy. Tendencies towards retreating from the progressive course have become permanent in the 1980s. Yet whatever the course of subsequent

evolution, we must not underestimate the importance of the socialist choice for building a new Algeria. It had primarily an anti-imperialist and democratic meaning and met the vital needs of the mass of people. The radical transformations that were introduced were to some extent anti-capitalist, but in our view, this is not yet sufficient ground to consider consistently democratic measures to be socialist.

Socialist orientation as a contemporary form of non-capitalist development is taking shape in far from easy circumstances, Prof. **Christian Mahrdel** (German Democratic Republic) observed. Whereas speakers before him had noted the lack of sufficiently mature subjective factors, he pointed to a number of objective factors which had a braking effect on the emergence of new revolutionary democratic structures.

For example, the solution of common national and general democratic tasks in anti-imperialist struggle depends on the socio-economic and political goals that are pursued by the new regime. On the other hand, however, steps towards those goals are hard to take. Countries in the group under consideration remain dependent on the capitalist economy, and imperialism is continuously resisting the social thrust of the processes of national liberation. Domestic advocates of pro-imperialist development do not lay down their arms either. Meanwhile, the socialist system has limited opportunities for giving all-round support to revolutionary democratic states. The controversial impact of the struggle between the opposite social systems on those regimes should be taken into account as well. As for guaranteed continuous development along the road of progress, the speaker stressed, it can be achieved at a later stage.

The participants in the discussion agreed that *the development of the revolutionary democratic trend in countries of Asia and Africa is controversial.* Yet they noted its viability and its diverse manifestations at various stages of the liberation struggle. Success of the socialist choice depends to a large extent on the situation among the revolutionary forces as a whole, including links between the revolutionary democratic leadership and the communist parties (where they have worked for decades).

The Ebb and Flow of Cooperation

Satiadjaya Sudiman (Communist Party of Indonesia) posed the following question: is it correct to characterise as national democratic those regimes which try to dominate communist parties or downright persecute them?

The history of relations between the Communists and the national democratic forces (including their more radical wing, the revolutionary democrats) can hardly be called cloudless, **Georgi Kim** agreed. There are objective reasons for such a state of affairs as has been observed more than once: both appeal to the same social audience, namely, the peasants, workers, and lower classes. Rivalry has caused more than one clash of interests, for example, when the ruling regimes have tried to dictate to mass organisations, including those linked with the communist parties. Regrettably, there is not yet enough positive experience to speak of any *integration of interests* or long-term interaction of the Communists and the national democratic forces in individual countries. When such alliances

break up, prospects for democratic, let alone revolutionary democratic development become blocked; one example is Iraq, where the authorities have been terrorising the Communists ever since the 1970s. Progressive orientation, naturally, has no room for police and command methods and if the authorities resort to them, it is not the socialist choice.

It was once erroneously believed that revolutionary democracy was an alternative to the existing working class parties, **Khalid Hammami** (Syrian Communist Party) said. We have no right to deny either the radicalism of those who advance approaches other than the Communists' to the key tasks of a revolution of liberation or the substantial anti-capitalist potential of a segment of the revolutionary democrats. But the practice of Syria has demonstrated, strictly speaking, that that potential is limited. A course of socialist orientation can be pursued consistently only under the leadership of a vanguard party of the Marxist-Leninist type. We openly disagree with the view under which Syria was until recently listed among the socialist-oriented countries.

Although many Communists were imprisoned for up to five years each under Nasser, we always backed the anti-imperialist social and economic reforms that were being introduced in Egypt at that time, **Kamel Magdi** said. The leader of the Egyptian revolution was opposed to the existence of an independent Egyptian Communist Party and wanted all the socialist forces to be united. In 1964 the Communists called for union with Nasser's followers in a joint organisation on the basis of scientific socialism. Some time later the party took the decision to disband itself with a view to uniting with the revolutionary democrats. But things turned out differently. Nasser failed to consolidate the newly-established Arab Socialist Union, which remained a loose and socially heterogeneous organisation. The liquidation of a working class party as an independent force was for our country a bad mistake which did it much harm. After Egypt's defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, the Egyptian Communists began to rebuild the party and it was back on its feet by the mid-1970s.

The participants in the discussion agreed with what their Egyptian colleague had said and stressed that cooperation between the revolutionary democrats and the Communists and their parties should proceed on a fully equal basis while its substance should materialise in progressive reforms backed by the alliance of those forces. Under no circumstances should concessions be made when it comes to the *independent and autonomous existence of a working class party*.

Many patriotic groups in Algeria have realised in the past few years that independent activities of the working people and their organisations constitute a decisive factor of the national democratic revolution in the country, although previously society's attitude to that problem was different under the influence of the ruling party's hegemony. We had to make strenuous efforts over the years to defend the organisational and political independence of our party, **Ali Malki** said. Propaganda pressure and an array of methods, from peremptory instructions from 'on high' to 'friendly advice', were used to make the party disband itself even before the National Liberation Front became a vanguard party. In the 1960s, as was noted by previous speakers, the idea of the self-dissolution of

communist parties and their organisational merger with revolutionary democrats gained some currency in the communist movement in the region and its proponents were often guided by lofty motives. But we always held that the Communists should preserve and, moreover, strengthen their parties if they wanted the socialist choice to be pursued consistently.

The question is posed even sharper in reality, the speaker continued. Since there is no organised coalition of all the progressive forces in our country and since democratic norms and procedures are yet to be established, a part of those forces find themselves discriminated against. Even the radical anti-imperialist forces in government, which continue to pledge their commitment to the socialist choice and to the interests of the working people, underestimate the importance of democracy. This inconsistency, incidentally, is the main political cause of the weakening of the Algerian revolutionary democrats' positions in the past decade and their loss of initiative in the government.

As regards the relations between the revolutionary democrats and the Communists, **Georgi Kim** stressed, what is needed is a well-thought-out and balanced tactic which could help define the limits for possible compromises while preserving the *main factors* that cement the alliance of the two, namely, their loyalty to a common programme of radical domestic and anti-imperialist transformations and its vigorous implementation by joint efforts. It is of course important to know the point beyond which concessions would be at odds with the interests of the working class and of progressive development as a whole.

For Relations of Alliance

Discussing the problems of 'second-generation' states embarking upon the road of socialist orientation (1970s-1980s), participants noted several basically new aspects in their experience.

First, there were ideological differences. While in the 1960s-1970s the progressive Arab and other regimes pursued various brands of the non-Marxist socialist doctrine and leaned towards 'national socialism', in the later period the revolutionary democrats turned to scientific socialism, to Marxism-Leninism.

Second, reliance on loose organisations which only had a formal shell of unity (e.g., the Arab Socialist Union in Egypt) as the political base of the regime was abandoned. The establishment and consolidation of vanguard parties of the working people (in Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia and South Yemen) became the core of the policies pursued by the new-generation revolutionary democrats.

Third, the socialist choice itself became more radical: it had come to mean, first and foremost, transformations in the interests of the working people and to embrace virtually every field of life of society. The regime was consciously acting as the vehicle of the will of the mass of workers and peasants.

Fourth, the course of close cooperation and interaction with the socialist community that is followed by the progressive governments not only stems from the practical goals and needs of their countries but also signifies the

conscious ideological choice of revolutionaries, who rely on a scientific doctrine.

These features put together, speakers noted, testify to *a qualitatively new stage* in the development of the phenomenon of socialist orientation.

It is natural for the vanguard of revolutionary democracy to embrace scientific socialism, **Badamyn Lhamsuren** (Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party) said, and there have been more than one such instance in history. This evolution is promoted today by several factors, including the growing international influence of socialism and the ideological and political work of communist parties in countries of Asia and Africa over the years. We should not discount, however, the formidable difficulties in the way of translating the socialist choice into practice, especially underdevelopment, the speaker continued. Social stratification in the group of countries under consideration impacts among others, on revolutionary democracy, which is exposed to the influence of petty-bourgeois nationalist, religious and other ideologies as well as to that of scientific socialism. Not infrequently, revolutionary democrats embrace just individual aspects of Marxism-Leninism or merely take up slogans, and lack the ability to creatively apply revolutionary theory to specific processes.

The history of the past three decades, nevertheless, shows that the revolutionary democratic tendency remains *in the forefront* of processes of revolutionary transformation in countries of Asia and Africa and draws on deep-lying social sources. Several speakers noted, inter alia, that that tendency had a very broad class base, including the bulk of the peasantry, a part of the working class, and petty bourgeois strata (artisans, petty traders, etc.). Radical views and sentiments are especially widespread among the urban middle strata, which often are the more important and dynamic social group and the bulwark of revolutionary democratic leadership. They are for the most part public servants, students and the underprivileged sections of the armed forces. Sometimes the military intelligentsia is the leading and guiding force of revolutionary democracy. These social forces continue to play an important role and the communist parties of the region have to reckon with this fact. By cooperating with revolutionary democracy as the political mouthpiece of primarily the non-proletarian lower classes and the urban middle strata, the Communists can broaden the common struggle against neocolonialist dominance and for stronger national independence, democracy and social progress.

In the Sudan, **Ali Ahmed El Tayeb** said, a group of consistent revolutionary democrats do not hesitate to ally themselves with our party, and are active in peasants' and youth organisations, and in the trade unions. There are democratically-minded officers and men as well. All those forces are part and parcel of the truly popular movement, and they are in evidence in other African countries as well. But even though revolutionary democracy is able to lead the liberation process, it would be wrong, we think, to belittle the role of the working class and its party under the pretext that the proletariat is numerically weak. The Sudanese Communists' experience indicates, for example, that a clear-cut class position is very important in defending the cause of democracy and

progress: otherwise it would have been impossible to overthrow the dictatorial rule in the country.

The social dimension of the policy of alliances at the national democratic stage looks even more impressive, **Christian Mahrdel** pointed out. Since the neocolonial conditions of exploitation are still in existence, there is *a common democratic interest* of the diverse class forces, including a segment of the local bourgeois proprietors, in overcoming backwardness and dependence. Their aspirations have an objective anti-imperialist thrust.

To illustrate this point, **Semou Pathe Gueye** cited the example of his country, Senegal, where contradictions between foreign capital and national business interests came to a head. The ranks of the supporters of the non-capitalist choice will grow along with the upswing of the liberation struggle. The national democratic revolution in countries like Senegal, the speaker continued, objectively tends to evolve into a revolution of a new type, namely, an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist revolution. He stressed the great importance of the experience of vanguard ruling parties for Africa. The Senegal Party of Independence and Labour considers it an achievement of the peoples and democratic forces of the continent that should be supported, defended, and carried further.

The participants agreed that differences of class approach and world outlook can make an imprint on the elaboration of a common platform by the Communists and the revolutionary democrats in one country or another. It is important in every such instance to try *to concert common interests* through a flexible formula that would be aimed at accomplishing the tasks of the national democratic revolution. What is needed is to counter the rule of foreign monopolies and to achieve truly democratic participation of the popular forces in the formulation and pursuit of a national patriotic policy, in ensuring civic freedoms and the right to establish progressive organisations and political parties and to have them carry out their ideological and political work without any restrictions or tutelage. In other words, it is necessary to work out a formula of unity that would enable diverse left and national democratic forces to work in the spirit of equality and independence towards the socialist ideals.

[1] A report on that subject was made by the Soviet scholar Georgi Kim. (Georgi Kim, 'The Socialist Orientation: Theory and Practice', in *WMR*, No. 11, 1987, p. 144). — *Ed.*

Can The Transnationals Be Controlled?

World Marxist Review has dealt several times with the adverse effects the domination of the transnationals has on national economies and on the working class. Action aimed at curbing their sway is clearly in order. It can take the form of a struggle waged by workers at TNC factories in different countries for greater international solidarity, closer cooperation and joint and concerted initiatives against the TNCs.[1] However, as the record shows, that is not enough. The working class also has to fight for alternative policies to be adopted

by national governments, for strict public control over TNC activities to be exercised by the state and by democratic organisations. How is this to be achieved, in what conditions and at what stages? These questions were addressed at a round table attended by members of the Economic Committee attached to the Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain: **Sam Aaronovitch,** Reader Emeritus, South Bank Polytechnic, London; **Ben Fine,** Reader in Economics, Birkbeck College, London University; **Bert Ramelson,** CPGB representative on *WMR;* and **Peter Samson,** Economics Lecturer, City of London Polytechnic. Also taking part was Professor **Stanislav Menshikov,** *WMR* staff member.

Although the participants in the round table discussed mostly the situation in Britain, they also touched upon more general issues involved in the theory and strategy of the struggle waged by the contemporary working class. An abridged transcript follows.

THE discussion started with a theoretical assessment of the current relationship between the nation-state and the multinational corporations.

Stanislav Menshikov. Because of the dominant positions in the world economy and their ability to manipulate vast resources beyond national borders, the TNCs have become an economic force comparable and even superior to some individual nation-states. There are many examples of representatives of transnational capital directly participating in national governments. But there are many areas of conflict between the multinationals and the nation-state. For example, regulation of economic reproduction by the government, as well as government social spending have, on the whole, a domestic thrust. But the TNCs try to minimise these functions of the state and instead develop those that serve primarily multinational interests, that is, global expansionism.

To sum up, the actual situation is complex and contradictory. In the past, state-monopoly capitalism was defined as the fusion of the bourgeois state with the monopolies. Is it legitimate to describe it today as the fusion of the state with the transnational monopolies?

Fusion With Whom?

Sam Aaronovitch. One cannot maintain the proposition that state-monopoly capitalism can be simply described in terms of the fusion of the state with the multinational monopolies. It would be too simplistic. In real life, for instance, the Thatcher government is representing the interests of both national capital and the transnationals, including those making Britain their home base.

Bert Ramelson. I doubt the advisability of using the phrase 'state-monopoly capitalism' at the present time. We have really reached a stage of capitalism where the global market is the determining factor of behaviour of the multinationals, and this is influencing the behaviour of various national governments, maybe in conflict with each other. In some cases, public opinion in Britain tends to coalesce behind the nationally-based multinational (Pilkington), which is threatened by a takeover bid of

the Americans. In other cases, an American multinational, which with state support and encouragement takes over Caterpillar of Scotland, in a matter of months decides to close it, because it did not fit in with its plan on a global scale. The question is how it is possible to minimise the harm that the multinational company does to the working class.

Ben Fine. In conflicts between capital and labour, the state supports capital, whether transnational or not, as well as introduces measures on behalf of the working class and the people more generally. The idea of fusion is not one I would theoretically begin with, either. But as a popular presentation of the nature of the period in which we operate, there is clearly substantial integration between the captains of transnational industry and the civil service, the politicians.

Sam Aaronovitch. The term 'state-monopoly capitalism' itself has a lot of difficulties in it. The popular presentation could lead to rather misleading ways of looking at the processes which are actually taking place. The multinationals are not a homogeneous group. They come in every shape and size, they have conflicting strategies. For example, in the US there is a great battle going on over what American trading policy should be — protectionist or liberalised. And it is not clear that the Reagan administration policy can be simply identified as if it were acting in the trading interests of the multinationals.

Ben Fine. I disagree. The concept of state-monopoly capitalism is a valid description of the world capitalist system as it is at the moment. It includes two crucial aspects. One is the dominance of the transnational corporations at the level of world capitalism. Second is the tremendous tendency towards state economic intervention. These elements may interact in different ways in particular countries. What has been said here is not an argument against the concept of state-monopoly capitalism.

Stanislav Menshikov. In the 1930s the main purpose of state economic intervention was to reach an equilibrium predominantly within the national economies. Therefrom came the efforts to use economic capacities more fully and to reduce unemployment. With the advent of neoconservatism in the 1970s and 1980s the slogan was to reduce state intervention and give as much freedom as possible for capital, particularly freedom to move across national borders. This mode of thinking is connected with the globalistic point of view, from which it is not that important whether employment is promoted in Britain or elsewhere, whether a plant remains in operation or not, or even whether major industries are permitted to live or die. The tendency both in the economies and in the policies and ideology of the ruling class is towards globalism and transnational interests.

Sam Aaronovitch. The very comparison of the relative power of the transnationals and the national state is not valid. A transnational corporation, however large, remains a private company and is subordinate to the authority of the state, not vice versa.

Bert Ramelson. I object. Due to the enormous concentration of multinational capital, which operates on a global scale, it is misleading to assume that one single state is in fact in a position to be able to influence the multinationals. The current system is moving into a 'multinational-dominated capitalist market'. The old terminology no longer adequately

describes the actual situation.

Peter Samson. Ramelson's definition leaves the state completely out. I agree that the term 'fusion' brings a lot of confusion. Some multinationals are acting more in the interests of the working class in a country like the UK than some national companies. I would prefer to discuss the need to control monopoly capital and the multinationals, particularly financial capital, rather than say that the foreign multinationals are the greatest danger.

Ben Fine. Take a look at how the transnationals relate to the problem of mass unemployment. They have been very active in promoting new technology, they have invaded the service sector and are widely utilising women as part-time labour. All this leads to transformations in the nature of jobs, to de-skilling.

Bert Ramelson. There are also many dangers to the traditional ways in which the working class is defending its interests in a capitalist system. The transnationals are a major force in having influenced the Conservative government to introduce legislation designed to destroy the trade union movement.

Peter Samson. Much of non-multinational capital would also want the trade unions destroyed. The Thatcher anti-trade union policy is not an instruction by the multinationals, it is in the interests of other monopolistic forces too.

The Nation-State on the Wane?

Sam Aaronovitch. We all agree about the immense extent of the internationalisation of productive and finance capital. There is now virtually a privatised international financial system created in the Eurocurrency markets. And this is precisely why the role of the state remains very important. Suppose you have a severe financial crisis. Who is going to pick up the ticket in every particular country? If the state is not strong enough to do that, then there is either going to be international coordination, or there is going to be mayhem in the economy. Attempts at deregulation will have to be followed by attempts to reregulate in some form or other.

Ben Fine. Interventions that are being made now by the supposedly laissez-faire governments, such as that of Mrs Thatcher, are in fact different types of state intervention, but interventions which are to promote the interests of transnational capital. If we take major economic policy issues in Britain like deindustrialisation, the privatisation of major parts of British employment, the very problems of unemployment and inflation, of our relations with the Third World, the question of peace and the defence industries, all of them are closely tied to the role of the transnationals.

Sam Aaronovitch. The multinationals choose to source their output in different countries, blocking up the established linkages which already exist in those countries and thereby weakening the ability of the economy to operate effectively within the boundaries of the nation-state. The actual vertical structure of production gets to some degree disrupted on the national basis. In Britain, even before Thatcher, the damage done was considerable and not at all easy to deal with.

Ben Fine. I agree. Attempts at national integration and planning come into conflict with the fact that capital is organised on a global level.

Bert Ramelson. I want to emphasise the point that I consider crucial. Is the state in a position to determine the policy in the interests of the people? Can it do so at a time when the major economic decisions are being taken by firms whose major interest is to maximise the global corporate profit? If we are serious in believing that it is posible to start transforming the state away from a capitalist development, it cannot be assumed to happen on a world scale. Due to the law of uneven development, it will never be possible to have simultaneous development of economics and of the political consciousness of the workers in different states. Therefore we must fight for the ability of the state to implement policies in the interest of the people in their country. There is no point in setting priorities, whether it is employment or restructuring industry or whatever it is, if the government could not, even if it wanted, implement those policies without the agreement of the multinationals. In the past, efforts in this direction have been made by Labour governments and they have been forced to give up the task very quickly. If we do not indicate how we can prevent the multinationals from frustrating these policies, then we are deceiving the people that it can be done.

Sam Aaronovitch. The actual economic structures of a lot of countries have now become so heavily involved with economies of other countries in production and trade that an individual state can no longer totally determine what it is going to do on the basis only of organising everything from within its own national economy. I am talking about a government which wants in some form or another to regenerate or reinvigorate the economy from the standpoint of the interests of the majority of the people. Cooperation will be necessary between states which are different in character, at different levels of development, and pursuing very different political objectives, both capitalist and socialist.

Bert Ramelson. I disagree completely. It is not a question of cooperation between governments, but of the very possibility of the state opposing multinationals and succeeding in doing so.

Sam Aaronovitch. Cooperation between states would be necessary, in part, to overcome the opposition of the transnationals. But states would not be able to avoid trying to find ways of cooperating with the TNCs themselves too. What happens if the multinationals refuse to play with those kinds of policies? This is a very serious issue.

Stanislav Menshikov. Transnationalisation has progressed also in the area of military production. SDI is one form of bringing together various national military-industrial complexes and trying to attach on a permanent basis British and other foreign firms to Pentagon contracts. At the same time US concerns have become large contractors for the British defence ministry. How does this influence foreign policy?

Bert Ramelson. Different groups of transnational capital are vying for control of British defence industry companies. The consequence is that defence and therefore the foreign policy of the British government is often dependent, as in the more important case of the Trident, on the fact that US multinationals produce these weapons.

Ben Fine. I agree with Ramelson. The transnationals, as a result of their position as armaments producers, have an influence on foreign policy, which is not open to any democratic inspection at all. In Britain, there is a tremendous concentration of large contracts with a very small number of very large firms who also have an overwhelming weight in research and development in defence. And there is an increasing transfer of personnel between the multinational corporations in the defence industry and the armed forces.

Sam Aaronovitch. But there is no fatality in the power of the multinationals. If, for example, under certain circumstances the government decides that some measure of détente is necessary and some degree of demilitarisation is called for, then it would be wrong to say that it is inevitable that the transnationals will be able to sabotage and prevent that from occurring. One transnational's interest in the military defence complex is another transnational's disadvantage.

Ben Fine. Transnationals do not necessarily dictate foreign policy directly, though it is true from time to time. But they have a broad interest in opposing progressive forces all over the globe, and this interest arises from overall imperialist strategy.

Where to Begin?

Stanislav Menshikov. Socialist countries also deal with transnationals, even have joint enterprises with them. It is clear that they can be controlled within the framework of a planned economy, because the state is sufficiently powerful to make them observe the legal framework under which they are to operate. But how can they be controlled within the capitalist system?

Ben Fine. There are two extreme approaches to this problem, both claiming impossibility of control. One is based on the situation in particular industries. Take the example of the car industry where production is regarded as already transnational. Any particular country would be unable to get the components, make the sales, obtain the technology, etc., independently of cooperation with the transnational firms involved. The other extreme is the idea that it is impossible to control the transnationals due to their overall political and economic influence.

Sometimes the two arguments are combined together. I believe that these approaches are extremely exaggerated. Even in the case of Britain where the influence of transnationals is quite high, the problem can be easily met in many sections of industry.

Sam Aaronovitch. I agree that there are areas where control is possible. But in others this would be very difficult — the cases where an industry is very dependent on export markets. Aerospace is one area where it would be very difficult to go it alone. To have an aerospace base of your own you would need a considerable period of time.

Bert Ramelson. It is true that there are isolated areas in which the government could take effective policy measures. But Fine's approach is wrong in that it tends to underestimate the nature of the problem. We will be making a mistake by concentrating on what appears to be easy and missing the whole point that within a short period of time the

multinationals can frustrate such attempts and create such economic chaos that nothing could be achieved. I am not challenging the possibility of doing concrete things by government decision. But the big problem is what to do to prevent the multinationals from creating an economic atmosphere in which the implementation of this policy as a whole, including the restructuring of our industries, is completely undermined.

Sam Aaronovitch. Your approach is not helpful. We should first establish in principle, that a government which would want to pursue an independent industrial policy, is not powerless. This point is very important. And then we can go on to consider whether it could do so in practice and how it should go about it.

Ben Fine. The concept of the transnationals creating chaos, introduced by Aaronovitch and Ramelson, is not particularly useful. That may happen in respect to small countries in the Third World, but is much more difficult to achieve in the case of industrialised countries. The transnational corporations may undermine measures of control unless there is a rolling programme of alternative policies in response to this. There has to be a general strategy partly determined by technical considerations, partly by political and economic mobilisation behind the particular measures concerned, in areas where we can hope to most successfully defeat the transnationals.

Even the elections of a government committed to mild progressive measures would immediately be faced by a flight of capital and opposition from the City. This happened in the 1930s and in the 1960s, and pressure was brought upon the Labour government in 1976 with the conditions imposed by the IMF. Hence the importance of control over finance.

Bert Ramelson. There can be no control of the financial sector if it is left to the multinationals. A precondition is the extending of the public sector to the financial institutions. Exchange control by itself may not be an adequate measure if those institutions remain in private ownership.

Ben Fine. I am not sure that public ownership is necessarily the issue here. If you nationalise certain financial companies, all you will find is a filing cabinet and a telephone, but all the assets will have flown. What is necessary is effective exchange control to prevent this from happening.

Sam Aaronovitch. The machinery that was available for exercising what exchange control existed has been destroyed. It would virtually have to be recreated, and it is not a simple matter. But there is no alternative to exchange control and to control over capital movement.

To Nationalise or Not to Nationalise?

Sam Aaronovitch. We obviously have serious differences on general and strategic issues. Let us perhaps look first at some of the methods of control and then ask ourselves what political preconditions are necessary for any of those methods to be implemented.

Bert Ramelson. I disagree. It is meaningless to discuss concrete schemes of control if we accept the status quo of the domination of the economy by the multinationals. One of the objectives must be to create at least a comparable economic power in the public sector which would be somewhat on equal terms with the multinationals in the struggle for the control of the

economy. The experience of the socialist countries shows that the multinationals have to be bound by contractual obligations and that there has to be a way of enforcing those. But in a capitalist country we do not have two independent parties entering into such contractual obligations. Legally they may be independent, but one of them — the state — is influenced by its opponent.

Sam Aaronovitch. Let me remind you that in Britain there were a number of propositions discussed during the 1970s, as suggested by the left in the Labour Party and by the Communist Party. There were two lines of thinking. One was to provide a countervailing economic force to the transnationals and other oligopolies[2] by creating specific state-owned firms which would compete with the existing private companies. A Labour Party document issued in 1986 indicates some of the industries where the government should have a large stake. These are the utilities, military production, aerospace, shipbuiling, oil and steel.

The other argument was that the state should enter into planning agreements with 200 leading firms negotiated with the involvement of the trade unions. They would cover investment, negotiating rights and working conditions. We should find out why both these proposals are no longer supported.

Ben Fine. To be effective, the setting up of planning agreements should be based on a well-thought-out industrial policy and an extended public sector.

Bert Ramelson. Agreements of this kind should be given the force of law and be enforcable within British courts. One should not rely just on carrots, but also on the stick.

Sam Aaronovitch. Returning to the idea of nationalisation. I do not think that it is necessarily the only crucial way in which a government can seek to control affairs. There are examples of governments who exercise some degree of control over penetration into their national economies by laws and regulations which do not involve owning those particular sections. Nationalisation does not necessarily solve the problems that you want to solve. Nationalisation may be run by people who do not sympathise with your aims anyway. You may not know how to run a particular industry and will make a chaos out of it. Interlocking of public ownership with other forms of control may be practically more effective and more desirable under certain conditions.

Peter Samson. We were talking about control at a stage well before a chance for a socialist society and socialist government can be considered. At the moment it is necessary to find particular ways of controlling the financial firms first of all. If we lump in with that everything else, then it seems to me that we are in error.

Ben Fine. We should not be looking only at the policies of a left government alone. We ought also to be concerned about the development of popular movements against the transnationals, irrespective of the nature of the government in power. In the British context this argues for public ownership. Politically conscious workers in a TNC plant about to be closed want the state to guarantee their jobs and continue employment.

Sam Aaronovitch. Unfortunately, it is not possible to equate the preservation of jobs with public ownership. The most obvious cases are, of course, the shipbuilding industry, coal, railways, all publicly owned, all of which have seen the biggest reduction in jobs in the UK economy. Nationalisation was used to carry out large-scale rationalisation of the work force. Workers seeking to preserve their jobs are not looking to nationalisation as the big answer.

Ben Fine. In 1970, headlines were made for a year for workers in the Upper Clyde challenging the right of a private firm to close its operation. But then the Upper Clyde enterprise was nationalised and the workforce decimated under the nationalisation label.

Sam Aaronovitch. Another important issue is the dependence of jobs on the existence of branch plants of multinationals. Their closures raise a number of policy issues for the government, for local authorities, and for regional boards. For example, the Scottish National Assembly has demanded a bigger role for the Scottish Development Agency. These issues have come up without people even thinking of a left Labour government. We need to bring into play a whole series of proposals to deal with the multinationals without believing that nationalisation is the slogan under which the masses would rally.

Workers' Representation

Stanislav Menshikov. A number of control measures have been suggested by Communists in other countries, namely, legislation providing specific procedures for the closure of plants, the creation of employee councils, workers' and public representation on boards of directors, and steps to legitimise employee contacts with workers in plants of the same multinational in foreign countries. Are these suggestions applicable to Britain?

Peter Samson. Employee councils with control functions over management are perhaps too strong a demand for the immediate future. But it would certainly be necessary to think in terms of trade unions, community, as well as government representation on the boards of directors of multinational companies.

Ben Fine. It is difficult to object to such measures. But that does not solve the problem at all. The history of capitalism is riddled with all sorts of legislative measures, but they have been implemented only due to a strong trade union movement. Workers' representation on boards in the context of very strong and militant trade unions is very different from workers' representation in other circumstances.

Bert Ramelson. Britain's workers are nowhere near a realistic discussion of participating in the management of a multinational. Our first step would be to establish a common approach by the trade unions towards the multinationals. At present the Minister for Scotland is only allowed to talk to one director of a US company who comes all the way from Chicago and to plead with him not to close a plant. A government-appointed director who cannot be excluded from any discussion inside the multinational is the only way in which the people can at least be kept in touch with what is going on.

Peter Samson. In the Westland affair the culprit on the board was a government man, Sir John Cuckney, who was in charge of the helicopter company and sold it to a US transnational. Ramelson, apparently, is thinking of another, future government, way ahead.

Moving Towards Socialism

Stanislav Menshikov. Control of the multinationals is seen by many in the context of moving towards socialism.

Sam Aaronovitch. There is quite a crisis developing in the communist movement as to what people mean by socialism. It has been very much dominated by what is familiarly known as existing socialism. The quite strong view is that that is not the path the communist movement should take. But it is there, and, being there, it dominates a great deal of the exchange of the arguments. A lot of the things which were identified with socialism, like the extensive kind of state ownership and control, socially directed, are seriously in question. This has also affected our attitudes to nationalisation.

Bert Ramelson. There is a section in the labour movement which feels that there are deficiencies in the way socialism has operated in the Soviet Union and some of the other countries. But the concept of socialism cannot be divorced from public ownership of the major means of production, distribution and exchange. This is fundamental to anyone who calls himself a socialist. There are more people than ever before in the labour movement who believe in the objective of socialism. The Right in the Labour Party have never accepted that. Their concept of socialism, divorced from public ownership, has always dominated the Labour Party. But there is a considerable Left which has this other perception. The trade union cadres, the Labour Party activists and the Communist Party still mostly believe in the public ownership concept. But certain sections who previously accepted that have recently become demoralised and began to doubt that and tend to think about socialism more in terms of social values.

Ben Fine. Let us stick to the subject we are discussing. I disagree strongly with Aaronovitch that something new is going on in relation to socialism and concepts of it. The ideas that he put forward are not particularly new. These ideas may appeal to new social forces, but the interests of such groups, too, can hardly be reconciled with the power of the transnational corporations.

Sam Aaronovitch. It is true that there is a wide common interest cutting across various social groups and certainly from the standpoint of the working class in challenging the power of the multinationals. There is no quarrel about that. But inevitably, when you are looking at what has to be done and thinking in terms of a transition to socialism, you have to be clear in your mind about that notion. In olden days, when we spoke about public ownership we nearly always meant nationalisation normally done at the level of the central state. I do not want to suggest the abandonment of the basic concepts of socialism, but I am certainly no longer going along with the notion that changing the structure from private ownership effectively to state ownership solves all problems.

Peter Samson. There are three areas for debate. First, the nature of capitalism, the length of life it has. The time perspective has changed enormously from what the Communists used to feel and think, 20, 30, 40 years ago. So what are the strengths and weaknesses of capitalism, including the multinationals? Second, what is the strength of some of the social forces which come up hard against the multinationals? Third, the vision of socialism matters, a vision which takes from the good experiences in the Soviet Union and elsewhere, but which also rejects what is not an adequate path to socialism in Britain. Unless you refresh that vision and make it stand up more, your alternative to the rule of the multinationals is not sufficient.

Bert Ramelson. It is not possible to develop a transitional strategy unless you know what your objective is. This does not mean that you have got to have a detailed plan, but you have got to have a clear vision. The vision of socialism is not necessarily how it works itself out in certain countries. There are features common to socialism worldwide — a society based on public ownership of the major means of production, democratically administered and controlled, which makes possible the development of the superstructure of socialist values. This may vary from country to country, from industry to industry, from region to region, from time to time. But you cannot maintain a struggle for something you are unclear about.

In lieu of a conclusion. Two different viewpoints surfaced in the course of the discussion. One proceeds from the premise that the modern nation-state cannot cope with the TNCs going it alone, even having developed a relevant programme of action and trying to implement it. National economies are so interdependent that effective control of the TNCs would be impossible without cooperation with other countries. This refers to Left governments pursuing alternative policies to benefit the masses. But even with such governments still in the future, the working class and its allies can and must demand partial control — through government and trade union representation on the boards of directors and participation in decision-making on the future of enterprises, on jobs and investment; through severe restrictions on the flight of capital; and through public access to information about what is going on withing the TNCs.

The other view is that without a sizable expansion of the public sector, all attempts at control will remain ineffective. This refers both to partial measures and to the more purposeful activities of Left governments. The burden of controlling the TNCs will have to be borne mostly by individual nations whose policies should centre on nationalising certain key companies and banks — that is, on steps to limit the sway of the transnationals within the general framework of the capitalist system.

Although both these points of view appear compatible, the question arises of whether nationalisation (even partial nationalisation) serves as the central slogan behind which the working people and other social forces affected by TNC domination can be rallied. On this point, sharp differences emerge. Opponents of nationalisation hold that, in Britain, this idea has been discredited. The Left has also felt the negative impact of overcentralised economic management in the socialist countries and of their previous practice of exaggerating the role of state ownership. In

pondering the prospects of the struggle waged by the working class, some British Marxists maintain that the socialist model should offer a more flexible combination of national, municipal and other forms of ownership with indirect control methods and different economic policy tools.

But that is actually the path the Communists of the socialist countries have now embarked upon, although under completely different conditions. The main aspects of their quest include democratisation, autonomy of enterprises, a rational combination of planning and the market, workers' initiative and direct participation in management, as well as the development of the cooperative movement.

Naturally, there is no absolute or ideal model to be emulated. As we can see from the discussion, a British model of socialism clear and close to the masses is yet to be drawn up. The exchange of views on controlling the transationals helps us identify specific avenues of the struggle for a radical transformation of society.

[1] For more details, see Antoine Herrero, 'A United Front Against the TNCs', in *WMR*, No. 2, 1987: and 'TNCs and the Working Class. Collective Interview with Representatives of the Working Class Movement' in *WMR*, No. 4, 1987.

[2] Oligopolies are monopoly concerns competing with one another within a single industry. — *Ed.*

Communists And Social Democrats

A Frank Discussion

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In recent years communist and social democratic parties have been reappraising the realities of today's world and looking for effective solutions to global, regional and national problems. A fresh attitude is being adopted to the character, objectives, and framework of cooperation between these two currents of the international working class movement. There is also much that is new in the assessment of their past relations, of the roots of present differences and of opportunities for overcoming them.

World Marxist Review has asked Comrades Erkki Kauppila and Seppo Heikki Salonen to share their views on these and other issues.

The official posts of the participants are given as of early 1988. — *Ed.*

The Finnish Phenomenon

E. Kauppila. I think we may begin by reminding our readers that the situation in Finland is largely unique: our two parties have been cooperating in various spheres for more than 20 years, albeit unevenly. In this sense, relations between Finland's Communists and Social Democrats are not typical of Western Europe.

Back in the 1960s the CPF and the FSDP held talks and agreed on a wide range of issues — the objectives of the nation's foreign policy, the development of relations between Finland and the Soviet Union, the unity of the trade union movement and many economic and domestic policy problems.

In assessing this agreement of 20 years ago, I can now note with satisfaction that problems of importance to the working people have been tackled according to plan. The Communists and the Social Democrats succeeded in unifying the trade union movement, and major changes have occurred in social, educational and cultural policies. However, far from everything went the way it should have. For example, the efforts of the Left parties to update the nation's constitution and legislation have been blocked completely by the centrists. Nor have we managed to negotiate steps aimed at curbing the sway of big capital. Those, incidentally, were the issues which raised the biggest obstacle to better relations within the Left.

Nevertheless, I personally think that if the past decades brought some economic benefits to the Finnish working people, it was partly due to the agreement reached and the joint action undertaken by the leading Left parties in the 1960s and 1970s. Although it is true that many problems remain unresolved and some negative trends in domestic policy have even intensified.

While understanding and joint action have been on the rise in recent years, political developments pose new problems. Our two parties maintain a permanent dialogue at all levels — from the party leaders to factory organisations — and we collaborate closely in joint, mass working class organisations. I do not believe that our attitudes to major international issues produce any special differences. But difficulties do arise with regard to domestic politics.

Our differences increased after the FSDP and the National Coalition Party jointly formed a government. We would not want our relations to deteriorate, but the present situation with regard to government creates additional difficulties for cooperation between our working class parties. Meanwhile, current developments make closer cooperation imperative. Structural economic change is threatening sizable sections of the working people and even whole industries, and these problems equally affect both Communists and Social Democrats.

S. H. Salonen. The Finnish situation is indeed distinctive. Finnish history shows that in the past, a great deal was achieved when the entire working class movement pooled its efforts. We have universal suffrage and a society in which culture and social services are available to everyone irrespective of his or her income. But, while on the subject of the past, I would also stress the fact that under Finland's multi-party system, the Social

Democrats and the Communists invariably shared power in the government with bourgeois parties.

You are right when you say that far from all problems were solved then. Meanwhile, new ones have arisen. For example, the Social Democrats are now part of the government, but the Communists are in opposition. It follows that our two parties cannot pursue common objectives in the sphere of government. Besides, the CPF has split into two parts, and this has made joint action of the Left more difficult. I believe that such joint action at government level will only be possible after the Communist Party restores it unity. Now that we are facing a rising rightist tide, the Left's fragmentation is felt particularly acutely. In the opinion of the Social Democrats, the numerical strength of the Left is so limited in Finland that its division into several more parties does great damage to the working class movement. Today we need a solid Left front as never before.

E.K. I don't think I can agree with you fully on some of the points you have made. It is now indeed necessary to ensure Left unity. As for the CPF and the FPDL,[1] internal consolidation is under way within them. In turn, this will help increase the influence of the Left as a whole.

As far as government policy is concerned, the FPDL and the Communist Party could, in principle, collaborate with the Social Democrats and with the centrist bourgeois parties in the government even now, if we could agree on a platform. So far, however, it is difficult to imagine that an earnest effort to rally all these forces behind the government programme can be successful. On the other hand, today's ruling parties — the FSDP and the Coalition Party — proceed from the premise that their joint term will last for at least another four years. Therefore, one cannot expect any tangible opportunity for a return to the cooperation of the Centrists and all Left forces at government level in the foreseeable future. Still, I am profoundly convinced that the creation of a cabinet on this basis should be regarded as our common objective. After all, this solution was adopted repeatedly during the post-war decades, particularly when Finland found itself in difficult straits.

S.S. Nevertheless, our parties continue their cooperation in certain spheres. We work side by side in the trade union and cooperative movements, jointly own banks and share the same Athletic Union.

Naturally, there is no comparison between the roles played by the trade unions and by our parties. Within the trade union movement, our cooperation is confined to specific objectives — democratisation of industrial relations, shorter working hours, greater rights for workers at factory level, as well as proper wages.

Municipal policies are another sphere in which we collaborate, although the picture is different in different places. In some municipal councils the Left always agrees on common objectives, but in others Social Democrats and Communists are engaged in tough competition and there are no contacts between them.

At any rate, however, cooperation between our two parties is clearly important for the future. Neither the Social Democrats nor the Communists can achieve much going it alone.

E.K. I don't doubt that. I would only like to note that talks between our

parties' leaders have recently become infrequent. The decision of a FSDP congress allowing cooperation with the CPF only on certain issues and within joint organisations is one of the reasons.

I think the interests of the Finnish working people and of the nation's progressive development make it incumbent on the Left parties to maintain constructive relations in matters of domestic politics and to resume talks on cooperation, even if that appears quite difficult today. Still, there is a good basis for tackling this task: a comparison of the recently updated programmes of the FSDP and CPF shows that even with serious ideological differences, their positions coincide on many specific issues.

And now a few words about the role the newspapers we represent play in relations between the Communists and the Social Democrats. Fortunately, Finland is one of those capitalist countries where a working class press has survived. Given the sway of the bourgeoisie in the mass media, we are in the same boat, fighting to preserve our newspapers. It is also true that, since we represent different political parties, we are certainly in conflict with each other. But the important thing is that our newspapers are in conflict with the bourgeoisie, and on many major issues of national politics we proceed from virtually identical positions.

S.S. I am afraid that, regrettably, our newspapers air their differences more often than they cover issues on which we agree. We clash constantly over domestic political questions, although on some of them we have learned how to fight together. This situation must be connected with the very concept of the mission of the press — the questionable view that 'bad news is what we are after'. No one gossips about a happily married couple, but if a husband beats his wife daily, this sets the neighbours tattling.

E.K. I don't know if we resemble such neighbours, but our newspapers' shortcomings are indeed many. Among the more noticeable is, I think, the fact that neither *Kansan Uutiset* nor *Suomen Sosialdemokratti* has become a forum for a discussion of major international issues with which mankind is concerned. Besides, we do not exchange views on ideological questions often enough. I hope our dialogue today will go at least some way towards filling this gap.

International Cooperation: Disagreement Must Take a Back Seat

E.K. At this point I think it would be useful to say a few words about our common past: both the Communists and the Social Democrats have a rather difficult history going back 70 years. For a long time, our two currents held no discussions at all, each saw the other as a rival, and our extremely infrequent contacts were full of hostility and confrontation. Looking back at that period today, one realises what harm it did to the working class movement. Without going into further historical detail, let me simply mention the fact that a split in the working class movement enabled fascism to rear its head in Europe.

Reflections over the past help one to understand how much better the situation is today. The communist movement as a whole has concluded that all nations are interdependent and that there are global problems confronting us all — prevention of nuclear war, elimination of economic

underdevelopment, hunger and poverty, preservation of a balanced environment and the like. Recognition of these as priority issues implies that their solution calls for the broadest possible international cooperation.

I think that there has been a considerable degree of rapprochement between communist and social democratic parties precisely over these issues in recent years. In this respect, the Moscow Meeting held to mark the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution was very important, and so are the results of cooperation between the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD).

S.S. I believe we should reflect on those factors which have helped bring the Social Democrats and the Communists closer to each other in recent decades. These factors are connected with mankind's biggest problems. That is the sphere in which both sides hold similar or identical views.

I agree with Kauppila that preservation of peace and elimination of nuclear weapons is the foremost of these problems. Environmental pollution comes next. And then there is the third, also extremely important issue — the developing world. The Social Democrats and the Communists agree that the blame and the responsibility for the plight of the Third World is on the industrially developed nations. I think that we'll be able to collaborate effectively on these fundamental global problems.

E.K. In Finland's distinctive conditions, there is understanding between the Communists and the Social Democrats not only on the global problems but also on some other international issues — such as the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the North of Europe. We also assess the peace movement similarly. Finally, we are unanimous that economic, political and cultural cooperation with our neighbour the Soviet Union serves Finland's national interests. For objectivity's sake one should note that the country's bourgeoisie has a similar position on this issue.

S.S. I would mention another distinctive feature. The FSDP is a member of the Socialist International which vigorously develops its ties with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and with the ruling parties of other socialist countries — with the possible exception of Albania. Our experience in this field forms part of the Socialist International's body of knowledge. Of course, we are not an exception — for instance, the SPD is active too. But I would venture to say that no one is equal to us as far as regular cooperation and discussions with the ruling communist parties are concerned.

E.K. True, both currents of the working class movement have moved closer to each other on many issues lately. This closeness is very important — although we still have our differences, and the list would be quite long if one put one's mind to enumerating them. These continue to be mostly ideological. For example, the society that has developed in the socialist world is apparently 'unacceptable' to the Social Democrats. For our part, we hold that Finland's Social Democrats do not in fact strive for socialism or radical reform and are content to improve the workings of the capitalist state.

But there is not complete unanimity on several issues within the social democratic movement itself. I believe that the views of Social Democrats

in the NATO countries differ considerably from those held by, say, the FSDP. Would you agree, Comrade Salonen?

S.S. Of course there are differences, and their causes are different too. Take the differences in the philosophies of Social Democrats and Communists in Western democracies. These are largely rooted in the fact that we are vying for the support of the same part of the electorate. That is certainly the case in Finland too.

Then there are the differences between the communist parties of the socialist countries and the social democratic movement — mostly over democracy, civic liberties and the credibility of the one-party system.

However, I disagree with the notion that serious differences are connected with our critical attitude to the kind of socialism now established in a whole group of countries. I think that on both sides we have become more cautious about suggesting a definite type of system for this or that country. Discussion of these questions prompts us to look for new objectives, new ways of asserting socialist values. And if it is true that, as they said in ancient Greece, 'you cannot step into the same river twice', both the Social Democrats and the Communists should test and accept this truth.

I maintain that we should try to better grasp the arguments marshalled by the other side, to understand the motives and the objectives of policies other than our own. Let me tell you a story to illustrate my point. There was this town with a fire department staffed by professionals and led by a very energetic chief. But there was also a volunteer fire company. Once the volunteers were the first to arrive at the scene of a fire, and they put it out. Later the professionals came. Their chief surveyed the scene and said, "You went all wrong about extinguishing that fire".

What I'm driving at is that we should refrain from such hasty verdicts, from claiming that the others are doing something completely wrong — that the Communists are never right. The history of our relations offers many examples of how not to act.

E.K. True, history would make an excellent teacher if only we could learn from it. It would indeed give us valuable recommendations how not to conduct a dialogue.

I would say that in the late 1970s and early 1980s we Communists suffered from a certain deficiency of self-criticism and that hampered the development of discussions between us. It was particularly true in regard to what was happening in the socialist world. The dominant view was that all was well there — although in actual fact, a backlog of stagnation-related phenomena accumulated in the USSR and in some other socialist countries, and a pre-crisis situation was developing. Naturally, this dichotomy between official propaganda and the actual state of affairs did little to promote understanding between Communists and Social Democrats.

As concerns the discussions held between us, working class parties in the capitalist world, I agree that they are indeed affected largely by the domestic political struggle for the votes of the same sections of the electorate. Be that as it may, bitter ideological debate does not help when human survival itself is at stake. If we want to improve our relations, we

should concentrate on major issues on which different currents of the working class movement agree. But even that is not enough. There must be a dialogue and a degree of accommodation with our direct class adversary — with imperialism. In this connection, the recently signed Soviet-American INF Treaty offers a particularly graphic example.

S.S. The list of our differences is indeed long. We could well be buried under this lumber if it were let loose. So we'd better keep it secured safely.

E.K. I agree.

Impact of Soviet Perestroika

E.K. Finland's Communists reacted very painfully to the elements of stagnation that developed in the Soviet social fabric. That is why we welcome the changes our neighbours introduced in April 1985. When perestroika in the Soviet Union attains its major objectives, the appeal of socialism will increase. And, although people in Finland, including us Communists, realise that renewal will be an arduous process, their attitude to the Soviet Union has changed radically. Besides, there is the prestige of Mikhail Gorbachov. The course of historical development is indeed determined by the masses, but I think that in the socialist countries, too, individuals are coming to play an increasingly prominent role.

S.S. The series of developments in several socialist countries, commonly known as perestroika, has not only ushered in a new phase of economic change, greater democracy and glasnost. It has also opened the way for discussions of a new type with Social Democrats. It follows that this turn is of essential importance to international contacts.

The Moscow Meeting we mentioned earlier offered excellent proof of that. It was not a complete surprise for Finland's Social Democrats because our party was used to discussions held jointly with the CPSU. But I believe this meeting was an eye-opener for those Socialist International parties that had never before taken part in such a dialogue.

As soon as FSDP delegates returned from Moscow, we took up the question of how such contacts could be continued. Naturally, this will be debated within the Socialist International. I would not venture to speculate about the juncture at which a common forum for discussions between Social Democrats and Communists will be established, but the Moscow Meeting did raise this question, and it is waiting to be answered. I personally think that the Socialist International will respond. Anyway, if the style of the Moscow Meeting is maintained in subsequent discussions, I am all for them.

E.K. We set great store by the initiatives aimed at continuing this broad dialogue, in particular the Flemish Socialists' proposal of a multilateral conference of Europe's communist and social democratic parties — although we are aware of the difficulties that may arise in the course of its preparation. The current situation in Western Europe makes it necessary to considerably expand international contacts involving all forces of the Left. European integration raises issues calling for improved Left cooperation. For its part, the CPF is doing all it can to promote such contacts at different levels.

Would you like to add anything?

S.S. Just a few words. There now exist favourable opportunities for developing such discussions — witness the joint seminar co-sponsored by the FSDP and the CPSU in Finland in November 1987. During this workshop, CPSU delegates suggested the drafting of a joint programme to outline the objectives requiring cooperation between European Social Democrats and Communists. So a basis for new meetings is available.

The rest depends on the course of the world's big politics. If great-power cooperation on disarmament issues keeps developing in the right direction, the world's nations can count on a positive outcome. I would hate to be mistaken, but I think the stars now augur well for the future.

[1] The Finnish People's Democratic League, a mass socio-political organisation for democratic cooperation established by Communists and the Left Socialists in 1944. — *Ed.*

viewpoints

The Working Class Against Social Injustice

How The Budget Cake Is Shared Out

Costas Kappos — CC member, Communist Party of Greece (CPG), Member of Parliament

IN any capitalist society the budget is an instrument for state-monopoly intervention in the economy for assuring the ruling class of its current and long-term interests. A vast share of the incomes of the masses is absorbed through the budget and is redistributed among the monopolies as subsidies or in other forms, is used to cover military expenditures, and also, to some extent, to fund social programmes.

In 1974, 14 per cent of Greece's gross national product was involved in the budget, and 36 per cent in 1988. Together with the insurance funds, the figure comes to over 60 per cent, and with 'parallel' budgets of the nationalised enterprises added,[1] we find that the government has in its management the lion's share of the GNP. It is a growing share, and this fact shows that state-monopoly capitalism has been evolving and becoming stronger. But these figures also mean that through the treasury, through taxation, the ruling class puts great social and political pressure on the masses.

The taxation system in our country is extremely anti-democratic and falls as an ever heavier burden on the people. It is an indicative fact that whereas over the past 14 years the GNP has increased 14-fold (in current prices), the amount of taxes — 22-fold; 70 per cent of this amount consists of *indirect* taxes (as compared with about 50 per cent in other capitalist countries). Indirect taxes are most unfair because their rates are fixed without regard for the property condition of citizens: they all pay the same price for a kilogram of sugar or a box of matches, regardless of whether their income is 500 drachmas or 500 million drachmas. Indirect taxes are the trickiest form of extortion from the people. I once asked a parliamentary official to get me a draft law from the archives relating to taxation. As he handed me the document, he said with some surprise: "What do you need it for? I myself have tax exemption, and pay nothing". Being exempt from direct taxes, he was altogether unaware that 30 per cent of every drachma he spent shopping went to the treasury.

But the bulk of the revenues from *direct* taxes (63.2 per cent in 1986) comes from the working classes, while only 23.1 per cent is levied on the entrepreneurs. The relative changes of these figures are also fairly eloquent: in 1960 it was 28.1 per cent and 50.8 per cent, respectively.

The growing payments by the working people into the budget as a share of total revenues could, to some extent, be due to the growth of the working class within the economically active population and the increase in the absolute amount of its incomes, but that does nothing to disprove the main fact: the percentage of taxes paid by the workers is higher than that of the capitalists, and the state sees to it that rank-and-file tax-payers pay on the nail. Meanwhile, the monopolies enjoy various privileges and are exempt from the payment of some taxes, to say nothing of the cases of tax evasion. Such is the evidence that *the taxation system has a class edge to it* and cuts across the interests of the broad popular masses.

Since Greece joined the European Economic Community it has been receiving from its funds net revenues into the budget coming to roughly 7-8 per cent of the total amount of income tax collected from the population. These are fairly sizable amounts, but here one has to bear two points in mind.

First, the use of these funds is under the control of EEC agencies and serves to adapt and subordinate the Greek economy to the interests of the transnational monopolies. Thus, the funding of the state programme for the development of the island of Crete provides for a halving of the olive plantations and vineyards, which means the fold-up of the production of profitable crops which are ideal for the local soils and climate.

Second, the uncontrolled expansion of imports from the EEC countries tends to increase Greece's foreign trade deficit and to flood its market with foreign goods, thereby expelling similar Greek goods and ruining small and medium-size enterprises. There is also the fact that EEC membership tends to invalidate the efforts to develop the country along its own independent way, and to implement nationwide programmes for the benefit of the working class and its allies. The EEC's intervention in the matter of building a large petrochemical plant in Greece is highly indicative: it was never built and the purchased machine-tools and

equipment are still rusting somewhere in warehouses in London.

We find, therefore, that Greece's membership of the EEC tends to curtail its national independence, which is not up for bargaining, as our party has emphasised.

It is a fact that some 200 billion drachmas out of the total of 2.4 trillion drachmas received in the form of income tax is placed at the *disposal of the capitalists,* who receive these funds in the form of compensation for bank interest on foreign trade credits, or in the form of subsidies, and also in the form of grants to loss-making enterprises, which the government has taken under its wing for the purpose of its export drive. There are also processors of farm produce. The monopolies are supplied by state enterprises with electric power and water at preferential prices (half the usual ones!). One should also take into account the fact that the capitalists have at their disposal a sizable part of the industrial infrastructure: roads, port facilities, etc.

Deliveries of machinery and raw and other materials imposed on the state, and government contracts are another important channel through which the monopolies siphon off funds from the budget: they total some 500 billion drachmas a year. Here the capitalists extract fabulous superprofits, and the awarding of contracts is often a scandal.

Greek and foreign monopolies receive colossal amounts in the form of interest on loans to the government and state enterprises. By the mid-1980s, Greece's external debt had more than trebled from the $5 billion in 1974.

A large part of the budget expenditure goes, directly or indirectly, into the coffers of the monopolies.

The government allocates a great part of its expenditures *for military purposes:* 7 per cent of the GNP, which puts it at the top of the NATO league, even ahead of the United States and Great Britain.

The Greek people would have agreed to bear such a heavy burden of arms spending if it truly served a defence policy aimed to ensure the country's genuine interests, its independence and its territorial integrity. However, the large military appropriations are now not geared to the tasks of national defence, but to NATO's military-economic strategy. That is why our party has objected to the passage of the corresponding items of the budget and to the waste of valuable resources, which merely go to increase international tension and pose a threat to peace.

Parliament has no control whatsoever over the way the Greek people's money is spent. For instance, the recent agreement on the purchase of 40 F-16 aircraft at a cost of over $1.4 billion was not put up for consideration by the law-makers.

Up to now, all the governments of Greece have practised the principle of 'hermetically' sealing the army from the popular masses. So long as the army has an undemocratic system (from the selection of cadres on political grounds to the ban on newspaper reading in the barrack-rooms) the deputies from our party cannot vote for the military items of the state budget.

We want a policy aimed *to ensure national independence, eliminate*

foreign military bases, withdraw from NATO and its military organisation in the first place, and peaceful cooperation with all the peoples.

Appropriations *for education* in Greece are small: an estimated 4 per cent of the GNP. But the main trend is the annual reduction in the share of outlays on education in the state budget: from 11.2 per cent in 1977, to 9.9 per cent in 1982, to 9.7 per cent in 1986, to 9.05 per cent in 1987, and finally, to 8.87 per cent this year. But the public demand has long been that at least 15 per cent of the budget should go into education.

Meanwhile, there are many failings in the infrastructure of education: secondary schools in the cities work in two shifts, and only one-half of the children have places at pre-school institutions. One-half of the primary schools have no more than one or two teachers, and in these conditions only children from bourgeois families, which can afford to pay tuition fees in private schools and at preparatory courses, go on to study in Greek or foreign higher schools. This tends to erect ever higher class barriers for the children of workers, peasants and members of the urban middle strata.

But the content of the education process is the most important thing, the Greek Communists believe. It has long since become outdated and reactionary. The CP Greece has been campaigning for modernising and democratising the education system, for better curricula and closer connections between education and production and social life.

There has been some renewal and democratisation in the country's higher schools through the efforts of the student movement, led by the Young Communist League of Greece, with its militant traditions of the liberation struggle against the fascist dictatorship. But the main problem — that of research and the training of researchers — remains entirely unsolved. Only 0.27 per cent of the GNP characteristically goes for these purposes, as compared with over 2 per cent in the industrialised capitalist countries. The result is that we virtually have no postgraduate institutions and a very small number of research establishments. A country with a population of 9.5 million has about 1,700 researchers, or roughly one for every 5,500 citizens (in the United States, one in 142). That is why Greece has markedly lagged in science and technology, which means that it is bound to remain dependent on the imperialist states, with all the grave consequences for the country's economic and social development.

The Communists attach primary importance to the qualitative, instead of the quantitative, aspect of the education problem, since even the appropriation of large funds for these purposes will not promote Greece's political and economic progress, if the content of the education process remains reactionary.

Nor can one regard as satisfactory the present level of spending *on public health* in the country: it gets 2.5 per cent of the GNP, less than in many other countries. There is virtually no public health care in the rural localities, and the hospitals are badly short of equipment and specialist personnel. One-half of the hospital beds in the country is in the private sector, and the state public health system and sanitary services fall short of providing services for the entire population. It is estimated that workers have to spend at least 7 per cent of their wages on medical services.

Another problem is social security for the unemployed, persons not

covered by insurance, and the poor. The situation here is desperate. The unemployed tend to become beggars. The social items in the budget are being continuously whittled down on the pretext of 'austerity' while the army of unemployed has increased in the past few years from 3 to 8 per cent of the economically active population, and may go up to 9.5 per cent this year, according to estimates by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development.

The budget is an issue of sharp class struggle, because taxes come mainly from the broad strata of the people, the working class in the first place, while the revenues are expended mainly for the benefit of the monopolies, the EEC, and NATO. In this struggle, the working class and its allies are pitted against the monopoly oligarchy.

The bourgeoisie has tried hard to reduce any preliminary discussion of draft budgets in order to cover up the sharpness of the struggle. Some items are being concealed from the working people, while the monopolies receive the necessary information in due time from their men in the state apparatus, and can use it to secure government contracts and to put through the decisions they want.

The draft budget is put before parliament only some 15 to 20 days before its passage, and is debated and approved within five days, with the deputies having no right to alter the draft. The CP Greece has demanded a mandatory preliminary scrutiny of the budget and the right of the legislators to introduce amendments before the final vote. Meanwhile, we have made use of other opportunities: as soon as the budget and the relevant documents are put up for approval by parliament, we organise action in the trade unions, the peasant associations, the student and other movements, and also in the organs of local government.

The aim of the struggle is to limit indirect taxes and raise the taxation of high incomes, end subsidies to the monopolies, cut back military expenditures, increase appropriations for education, research, public health care, and social and pension schemes, and do away with unemployment. Mass organisations have been adopting resolutions and petitions, staging rallies and demonstrations, and even strikes in some cases, to get the taxation system democratised, and outlays on social needs increased. This struggle goes on even after the budget has been passed.

CP Greece members of parliament, for their part, have addressed written and oral questions to the government and made use of the parliamentary rostrum to expose the class and anti-people character of the state budget, standing up for the interests of the working class, the middle strata of town and country, schoolchildren, students, and the unemployed.

In the course of the parliamentary debate on the present state budget in December of last year, the policy of the social-reformist party, PASOK, appeared 'in all its glory': its government has continued to pursue the policy of its right-wing predecessors, now and again in a worse variant. In a speech in parliament, CP Greece CC General Secretary Harilaos Florakis showed that the budget debate helps to see the overall picture of the state of the economy. The government has imposed on Greece a so-called stabilisation programme under pressure from international capitalist institutions, being guided by purely class interests, instead of national

interests; by reducing wages and lifting the ceiling on the growth of prices it has helped the capitalists to increase their profits to an unprecedented extent, and to engage in unprecedented speculations. And that has proceeded at a time when the volume of production has not grown, but shrunk, which, for its part, signifies a large-scale redistribution of the GNP in favour of the bourgeoisie and to the detriment of the working people.

Our party has declared that this year, as in the past, we have before us a patently anti-people state budget, which does not promote the country's further development but makes it more dependent on imperialism.

The Greek Communists express the interests of the popular masses and combine parliamentary and extra-parliamentary action in their sustained struggle for a fair distribution of the tax burden and a reorientation of state expenditures towards the needs of the working people.

[1] The State Electricity Generating Company, the Communications Administration, the Water and Sewerage Company, the Olympic Airways, the aircraft industry, etc.

A Crisis Of Employment, Not Of Unity

FRG Unemployed To Hold Their Federal Congress

Jochen Mandel — Board official, German Communist Party (DKP)

ON June 17-19, in Dusseldorf, West Germany's unemployed, at their second federal congress, will be taking important decisions on how to advance the organised resistance of the working people coming out in defence of their right to work.

Permanent mass unemployment is what has characterised the West German social scene ever since the crisis of 1974-75. This is also true of all other capitalist lands. Since the autumn of 1982, whatever the date juggling by bourgeois statistics, the number of just officially registered unemployed has not dropped below the 2,000,000 mark. Through the combined effect of cyclical and structural crisis, the jobless figures even in times of upturn has gone down very insignificantly, if at all.

Yet concern owners and their political lobby tell us that the unemployment situation, far from being 'all that bad', is 'but a minor issue'. And this at a time when in the spring of this year about 10 per cent of the able-bodied population in the FRG was officially listed as unemployed.

Actually there are far more people with no job opportunity than the massaged statistics would show. To the 2,000,000-plus labour-exchange

registrants add the several hundred thousand not covered by statistics because they are on job training or retraining, or skill upgrading schemes or have to change their trades. Tens of thousands of young people have been drafted into the Bundeswehr earlier than usual; over 100,000 foreign workers have had no choice but to leave the country; about 60,000 persons aged over 58 are officially out of the labour market; and 1.2 to 1.3 million people do not figure in the statistics at all. They are mainly unemployed school leavers or college graduates and the women who have ceased to register after years of futile search for work.

So a total of 15 million people have been at least once unemployed during the past twelve years, according to the estimates of the Labour Market Research Institute attached to the Federal Labour Agency in Nuremburg. That supports the conclusion drawn by the Eighth Congress of the DKP that *unemployment affects a third of the working class.*

The reserve army of labour also includes a growing number of persons with no firm guarantees, that is, employed for just a few hours a day or a fixed time. Often in this group are even those who have had to 'open their own businesses' with no real chance of succeeding. In fact, all these are kinds of long-term unemployment with only short intervals in between. All in all, trade unions estimate the number of employed without firm guarantees at about 6 million.

Unless effective steps are taken to raise employment, we shall see a further growth of mass joblessness during the next few years. In just the industries hit by a structural crisis — steel, shipbuilding, mining, the railways — over 200,000 more jobs are to go and in the rest of the economy, too, capitalist use of the achievements of the scientific and technological revolution threatens personnel cuts. Trade unions predict with alarm that the number of just officially acknowledged 'redundant people' may double over the next few years.[1]

Mass unemployment is one of the root causes of growing impoverishment and even pauperisation for a significant number of people in our country. The deteriorating terms of benefits payments, as well as other cuts in social spending have resulted in that, according to the Confederation of German trade unions (DGB), ever more unemployed have to be content with decreasing means. As of October 1987, 776,000 out of the 2.1 million people registered on the labour exchange were not getting a single pfennig from it while another 520,000 drew not a full benefit but much-reduced social relief, and then only after a humiliating means test.

Besides that, legislation allows certain categories to be denied financial aid, thus shifting much of the burden onto the shoulders of working family members. For example, 81 per cent of jobless married women have no benefit entitlement on account of their husbands' earnings. As a result, the budget of such families is often cut by half. About 2,000,000 people are deprived of even a hope for unemployment benefits and have to resort to social relief. It is not surprising that many have not got enough money to pay their rents in time. Evictions have become more frequent of late. In Cologne in just one year about 10,000 tenants have had their electricity

turned off. Those working have to pay higher sickness and pension insurance premiums.

Unemployment has a pernicious effect on the social behaviour of people. Increasing numbers of alcoholics and drug addicts and the growing incidence of grave diseases are directly linked to it. To a considerable extent, this is the result of psychological stress, of the bitter feelings of people who have been left with no means of their own. The number of suicides among the unemployed is 30 times higher than among those working.

But why, in spite of the dramatic consequences of unemployment, is there no mass protest among its direct victims yet? The answer is to be sought, first and foremost, in the ideological field. For the millions of working people in the FRG, just as in other developed capitalist states, protracted mass unemployment is a new phenomenon. After being subjected to ideological conditioning for years, the overwhelming majority of them no longer realise the social causes behind their difficulties. At first, people look for the source of their misfortunes in themselves. Quite often, taking the loss of work as a stigma, they try to conceal this from the people surrounding them. Some are of the view that participation in joint actions or initiative groups may reduce their chance of getting a new job or involve the danger of becoming labelled a 'professional unemployed' who is supposedly not interested in work at all.

Both employers and the government do everything to keep up the myth that the causes of unemployment are individual in nature. Before the last elections to the Bundestag, the Public Opinion Institute carried out a study designed to 'prove' that most of those who had lost work have 'voluntarily' given it up. To refute the findings of such 'investigations', it is enough to look up the official statistics published monthly. For example, in October 1987 there were only 171,000 vacant jobs for the 2.1 million job seekers, that is, 12 people aspired to each of them.

Another reason for the relatively weak resistance is associated with an illusory hope, fed by the ruling circles, that a permanent job may be round the corner. Assurances that unemployment is just about to walk away in significant numbers is one of the most frequently used methods which influence so many people.

Indeed, the authorities have quite a few devices which enable them to present unemployment as a 'minor issue' and to isolate the people affected by it. One has personally to appear at the labour exchange only once every three months and the benefit, if due, is transferred to a bank account opened for this purpose. The isolation of the jobless from mutual contacts seriously prevents them from realising the need to act together if they want to achieve their common aims.

A movement of unemployed has arisen and is gaining momentum in the FRG, nevertheless. This evidences a broadening of the ranks of those who will not passively submit to their position unworthy of man. There are now about 1,400 initiative groups and centres of unemployed whose activity in one way or another has taken on a socio-political character. Three hundred and fifty of them are trade-union, and the rest church-based or autonomus. But a 'church group' is by no means a religious group. The name merely

indicates who supports it financially and materially. These groups are often closely associated with trade unions.

Communists are actively involved in the effort of many initiative groups of all kinds, especially trade-union, and pay great attention to work among those who have lost one of the main human rights — the right to work. The German Communist Party sees unemployment as a class-roots problem and regards the work among the jobless as part of its policy oriented towards the working class. The Eighth DKP Congress has defined the struggle against mass unemployment as a major economic, social and public task. Its statement on this issue reads in part: "Since in the future a third of the working class will permanently suffer from mass unemployment, which makes more difficult the conditions of its struggle (the 'unprotectedness' of labour relations, the introduction of different forms of flexible working time, payment for work below the established rates, etc.), the importance of party activity among the unemployed is to grow." Later DKP Chairman Herbert Mies stressed the need to conduct work among those who for a short or long time are deprived of the opportunity to work, among the part of the working class who live on social benefits and have experienced want. This problem is given much attention in all governing bodies of our party.

Growing awareness of the identity of interests and, most importantly, of the need to act together has led to the convocation in December 1982 of the first federal congress of unemployed in Frankfort on the Main. This reflected not only their anxiety over their own fate, but also a determination to cooperate more closely to uphold their interests. After the congress, many new initiative groups and centres were set up.

The second federal congress of unemployed in Dusseldorf must, as noted in the minutes of a preparatory meeting, become an undertaking which will work out common social and political guidelines and demands for their movement and exert a mobilising influence on them. During the build-up to the congress, representatives of individual initiative groups and centres have arrived at a unanimous view that it is necessary to show the common interests of the unemployed and those who have jobs, a striving for joint action. Such a position is dictated by life itself when the workers of the steel plants in Hattingen and Rheinhausen and the Howaldt Deutsche Werft in Hamburg are acting jointly to protect their jobs. Also, a campaign to abolish the anti-social means test is being waged together. Most of the initiative groups have come to see that, in the face of one and the same enemy, they can only achieve their common demands by *uniting the efforts of jobless and employed and of their organisations* without regard to the differences in political and social views.

That was not always the case. For a number of years a sharp debate went on as to which demands to advance and how best to get them fulfilled. Was it the unemployed people's business, if any, to intervene in employment policy, for example? The answer to such questions depended on their attitude to the employed and the trade unions. One would think who, if not the trade unions and their members in production, can successfully demand the creation of new jobs, a considerably reduced working week, and the introduction of state employment programmes, which would

benefit all of the working people? But some held that the jobless movement should basically focus only on demands to alleviate the financial effects of unemployment. Here again we can trace a close relationship with the attitude to the trade union and political working class movement. For the proposed *Existenzgeld* (subsistence allowance), which employers' associations also did not object to, was being opposed to the stand of the trade unions, the DKP and the SPD: they were for the abolition of social relief and the means test, for the payment of a higher unemployment benefit. Contrary to the facts, some people asserted that the employed and the trade unions in principle were not interested in the welfare of those who have lost the opportunity to work. Therefore, so they claimed, it was impossible to unite with them, but it was necessary for the unemployed to found their own 'trade union'.

The joint fight for shorter working hours and in defence of employment has helped to overcome such views. Ever more of the unemployed and their initiative groups took part in it. The trade unions' increased orientation towards work among this category of people has also played a positive role; the still existing view among trade unions that they are the organisation of the employed is being gradually overcome. This has been greatly facilitated by the activity of trade union initiative groups. They deserve the full credit for establishing among the unemployed common positions geared to the demands of the working class movement as a whole; a coordinating committee for initiative groups and a society to assist the trade unions' work with the unemployed have been set up. These new bodies are winning ever greater recognition and support from the organised workers.

The initiative groups have significantly contributed to promoting comradely all-trends cooperation within the jobless movement. Each group can come out with its own views, without feeling that it is only being tolerated or 'driven to the wall'. Their increasing trust towards each other augments the movement's strength. The second federal congress of unemployed will confirm these processes.

[1] A sign of widespread sharp concern among the West German public about the fate of millions of compatriots who have lost the opportunity to work is the formation in February 1988 of a Circle of Solidarity Against Unemployment under the auspices of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB). It includes eminent political and public figures, trade union leaders, scientists, cultural personalities, and churchmen. Its Bonn Appeal to the population of the country decisively rejects the attempts by the Establishment to gloss over the employment situation, play down the effects of mass unemployment and becloud its causes. "Mass unemployment" the document points out, "is neither a natural phenomenon, nor a necessity. People bear responsibility for whether it grows or decreases, continues or ceases to exist. It is necessary to put an end to mass unemployment . . . We together want to clarify in what way public awareness of the problem of mass unemployment can be raised. We want to help increase public pressures so that the crisis of employment and its adverse effects are no longer regarded as only the inevitable costs of modern industrial society." — *Ed.*

Fire Focus On The Malvinas

Jorge Bergstein — member, CC, CP of Argentina, CPA representative on *WMR*

GREAT BRITAIN has again flexed its military muscle. At the time of writing, army, air force, and naval manoeuvres code-named Fire Focus had just ended on the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands.

Was Fire Focus meant as another reminder to President Raul Alfonsin of Argentina that Margaret Thatcher was determined to hang on to those scraps of land in the South Atlantic, or did it have other motivations? Before trying to find the answer, let us go back six years to when Argentina attempted to restore its sovereign rights to the archipelago and other related islands, and thus settle a long-time territorial dispute *de facto*.

The armed operation was mounted in April 1982 by the military dictatorship that held power in our country. The true purpose behind it is still unclear (hence, the many diverse explanations). But one thing is certain: the attempt at regaining land snatched by Britain in the past century generated a surge of anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist feeling in Argentina and the rest of the region, while its failure had, in the final analysis, brought down the dictatorship and given a start to democratisation in the country.

You will surely recall that the British government's retort to the Argentine landing was lightning swift. Impressive naval and air forces were deployed round the islands. British troops backed by the NATO countries, notably the USA, routed a poorly trained and poorly officered Argentine army that was essentially oriented on suppressing its own people rather than defending the country. In the 74 tragic days, the nation learned the bitter taste of defeat and bereavement. The sinking of the cruiser *General Belgrano* by the British well outside the zone of armed operations had taken a toll of nearly 400 lives.

In its head-on clash with imperialism, however, the Argentine people gained considerable political experience. They saw who was friend and who was foe. They learned, too, that in the fight for sovereign rights none should be neutral or indifferent. The Malvinas had been an agonising disappointment to those Argentines, civilian and military, who had hoped that if the United States did not come to their country's aid, it would at least stay clear of the conflict. A watershed arose between the contending sides. Argentina's old-time differences, and those of the rest of the region, with the USA and its NATO allies, rose to the surface.

For us and the other Latin American nations, the Malvinas were a symbol of spurned sovereignty. For the imperialists they became a back-up base for neoglobalism. Back in 1980, the US National Security Council released a study paper, *Free Ocean Plan,* which stressed the importance of Britain's South Atlantic presence to ensure control over sea routes across

three oceans. The paper posed the need to bring home to Britain the immense strategic importance of her grip on the Falklands (Malvinas) for the free world's security, especially if 'complications' should arise over the Panama Canal.[1]

It did not take much persuading. Britain hastened to restore her all but lost grip on the islands, and began building an expensive military base capable of accommodating nuclear weapons. Chilean dictator Pinochet and the Pretoria racists extended her considerable aid in transporting equipment and material.

The Malvinas' nuclear arsenal project galvanised the world public's attention. It imparted a new quality to the national liberation and anti-imperialist struggle of the peoples in our region, because this link in NATO's system of bases had turned the southern cone of the continent into an area of extra-high global risk.

The connection between the Argentine national wish of restoring its sovereign rights and the universal drive for disarmament and a nuclear-weapons-free world, has thus become more distinct.

After the 1982 war, Britain has with the overt and covert support of the USA and her other NATO allies demonstrated her determination to maintain her colonial grip on the Malvinas in diverse, often provocative, forms. Last year, for example, a 150-mile fishery zone was established round the Malvinas in contravention of international law, and inflicting serious harm to our economy.

Ever since it came to power, Argentina's constitutional government has repeatedly declared its willingness to negotiate with the British on the basis of various anti-colonialist UN resolutions. Here Argentina has the backing of the Latin American countries, notably Cuba and Nicaragua, the non-aligned countries, and countries of the socialist community.

But the Alfonsin government has gone no further than issuing declarations and protests, and making unofficial diplomatic moves. It turned a deaf ear to the demands of our Party and of other anti-imperialist and democratic forces, which suggested such concrete measures as, say, expropriation of British companies that own enormous tracts of land in Argentine Patagonia. The government opted for a different course.

The progressive public was gravely alarmed by reports of its secret negotiations with Britain, conducted at short intervals through the Swiss Foreign Ministry and involving the USA. The US mediation looks most suspicious, considering the treacherous US behaviour during the conflict and the support it gave its British ally all down the line.

In July 1987, after Alfonsin had visited Europe, the *Nacion* reported that the governments of Switzerland and the United States "were casting about for an Anglo-Argentine Malvinas solution, complicated by the 1982 war". It said Switzerland intended to "insist on dialogue between Argentina and Britain", with the United States "vigorously in favour of that aim".[2] Knowing the US posture on the issue, one cannot help wondering what sort of dialogue Washington has in mind and what aims it pursues.

Several Argentine parliamentary delegations visited London last year, and British Labour delegates paid visits to Buenos Aires. The information

on their results is most conflicting. But there are facts bearing out the opinion that Argentine policy is inconsistent.

The government pays lip service to disarmament and peace, and takes part in the non-aligned movement and the Contadora Support Group. On the other hand, however, it is seeking an accommodation with the United States and tends to worsen our country's dependent position. If proofs are wanted, here they are: payment of interest on foreign debts, compliance with World Monetary Fund instructions and those of the North American banks, and unconditional support of the notorious national security doctrine laid down at the 17th conference of American armies at Mar del Plata in November 1987.

In short, there is more than enough reason to be uneasy about the US mediation.

The imperialist states have for years nurtured the idea of fitting out their domination in the South Atlantic with the trappings of a NATO-like pact. But the Malvinas war had put matters out of kilter for them. The vigilance and resolution of the Latin American nations had prompted the governments of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay to come forward at the 41st UN General Assembly with a plan to make the South Atlantic a zone of peace free from nuclear weapons; the plan was officially registered.

Return by Britain of the captive islands became part of a struggle for this proclaimed aim of the vast majority of nations. The Argentine people are taking part in this drive — notably the revolutionary organisations in the Broad Liberation Front, which includes our party along with other left forces, many political groups, the trade unions and the student movement, human rights activists, and Malvinas veterans.

We Communists are convinced that the national demands are entirely legitimate. We have, indeed, in our Party Programme qualified recovery of sovereignty over the Malvinas and other historically Argentine islands in the South Atlantic as one of our prime objectives. The two basic demands are that the British should get out, that is, hand the islands over to Argentina, and dismantle the nuclear base.

We do not think any negotiations with Britain can be successful unless backed by the mass of the people. We also hold that US or any other mediation impinges upon our national interests.

There are those who oppose this approach. They suggest that the islands be decolonised and then leased whole or in part — meaning the part accommodating the military base. Some speak of a 'special autonomy' for the kelpers.[3] But there is one thing wrong with these suggestions: *no solution is acceptable if it leaves strategic control over the South Atlantic in the hands of those who are nurturing warlike designs.*

Seeing the ongoing militarist fuss over the Malvinas, we can only conclude that Britain is pursuing several distinct aims. The less elaborate ones lie on the surface: to check the mechanisms for the islands' armed defence in the event of an Argentine 'aggression', and to show that Britain is determined to keep them at any price. In that sense, the Fire Focus manoeuvres are a recurrence of imperial policy with the usual touch of anti-Sovietism.

But the timing of the manoeuvres, among other things, should put us on

our guard. They had obviously not been planned in advance, and were announced when the situation in Panama deteriorated and when US forces that had once taken part in the Grenada operations were dispatched to 'normalise' the situation in the Canal Zone. Another highly suspicious point is that the British exercises coincided with a build-up of the US contingent in Honduras and the 'unofficial' visit of South African missile-armed warships to Chilean ports. This last is doubly suspicious because the South African racists, like their Chilean fascist brethren, had been allies of the British militarists during and after the armed conflict of 1982.

Aren't these coincidences a bit too plentiful? Ascension Island, where the USA has a base, is still a transit station for the British. Yet today that barely visible speck on the map of the Atlantic is cast in a new role: it is the junction of the southern and northern flanks of the imperialist front embracing the countries of our region. In the south are the Malvinas and other islands annexed by Britain. In the north is the Panamanian isthmus and Central America, which are the region's trouble spots and targets of Washington's militarist activity.

We have every reason to believe that the Fire Focus manoeuvres were not conceived in London but rather on the Potomac in Washington. The purpose? To distract public attention from the US militarist exertions of bridling the 'recalcitrant' peoples of Central America and Panama. That seems to be the underlying reason for Fire Foucs. So it comes as no surprise that Labour MPs accuse the Tories of holding Fire Focus in repayment for US aid to Britain in 1982.

That is wholly credible. Had it not been for the US backing, the British would have been unable to carry out the landing on the Malvinas. And, conversely, if it had not been for Britain's backing, the United States would never have managed to buttress its position in Panama and Central America. That, indeed, is what the alliance of the major imperialist powers looks like in practice, with its strategy of tensions invariably aimed at securing socio-political revenge on a regional and global plane.

The public reaction to Britain's military games and the involvement in them of the United States could not have been clearer: disputes should be settled not by sabre-rattling but by negotiation. And one more thing: there should be no illusions about the 'peace-making' and 'mediation' of the imperialists. But it *is impossible to thwart militarist designs and secure peace and the restoration of trampled sovereign rights unless the peoples and governments act in unison. A regional anti-imperialist front is no communist propaganda slogan but an imperative of the times.*

[1] Hence the coincidence in time of the complicated situation in the Panama Canal Zone and the announcement by Britain of previously unscheduled military manoeuvres on the Malvinas, looks more than revealing. This point is raised further on in the article. — *Ed.*
[2] *La Nacion*, June 15, 1987.
[3] The appellation of British subjects resident on the Malvinas who are second-class people in the eyes of the metropolitan country.

Ignominious Failure

Antonio Diaz Ruiz — representative of the Communist Party of Cuba on *WMR*

The anti-Cuban resolution proposed by the US delegate was turned down by an overwhelming majority of votes at the 44th session of the UN Human Rights Commission held last February-March in Geneva. Cuba won an impressive moral and political victory. And what is the story behind this fact?

FOR more than two years now the Reagan administration has been conducting a campaign of slander against Cuba in the United Nations and bringing strong pressure to bear on representatives of many a country in a bid to gain support for its anti-Cuban moves. The mass media and pastmasters in manipulating public opinion have an important role to play in these provocations, whose aim is to mislead world public opinion and the participants in discussions at the UN and the Human Rights Commission and to use them in the ideological aggression against Cuba. Another obvious aim is to distract public attention from the violations of commonly recognised legal norms by the United States and some of its allies notorious for trampling underfoot elementary democratic freedoms.

Already in 1986 US representative General Vernon Walters sought without avail to push through a draft resolution on the 'violation of human rights' in Cuba at the UN General Assembly sessions. Having failed, he announced that Washington would continue its efforts in that direction. The anti-Cuban campaign continued to gather momentum.

At the 43rd session of the Human Rights Commission (Geneva, 1987) US delegate Jeane Kirkpatrick tried to prove that the socialist countries, Cuba included, had no respect for the right to self-determination by the people. This patent lie was repeated in the report made by the self-same Gen. Walters and in the 'evidence' given by a group of Cuban counter-revolutionaries who had become US citizens.

Despite blackmail, pressure and threats, the anti-Cuban resolution was turned down on that occasion, too, on India's motion on the ground that it ran counter to the interests of the Commission. The motion received ample support from the socialist, Third World and Latin American countries. The results of the vote demonstrated the dignity and sovereignty of the countries which, irrespective of their different ideologies and social systems, came out in defence of truth and justice. Reason triumphed over lies.

Nevertheless Reagan, Walters and their like failed to learn the lesson: their failure, on the contrary, provoked in them an outburst of ire. The US persisted in its anti-Cuban activity at the 44th session of the Human Rights Commission which has been concluded recently. On that occasion it resorted to even stronger pressure in an attempt to cause grave political and moral damage to Cuba. None the less it failed to undermine the prestige of my country. Despite all concoctions, it became clear to the

public that Cuba respected the physical and moral inviolability of the individual, including the persons who had violated the law.

This attitude was not merely formalised in the Constitution of the Republic, its Penal Code and the Regulations on the Penitentiary Regime but has been translated into practice since the time of the insurrection. We have always been decent towards the prisoners of war, never insulting or humiliating them, to say nothing of killing them. We have always treated them with dignity, given them medical aid and released them in the majority of cases. That was one of the factors of the moral prestige of the revolution and its rapid victory.

People are not humiliated, treated cruelly or tortured in Cuba. We do not use tear-gas against people, nor do we blow up cars or disperse people with clubs. Inhumanity is alien to revolutionary morality. This reality has been confirmed by many members of the world public, religious figures and politicians, functionaries of the United Nations and other international organisations, lawyers, criminologists and US Congressmen who have visited Cuba.[1]

The Cuban delegation demonstrated at the latest session of the Human Rights Commission that Cuba has no political prisoners. It holds in detention counter-revolutionaries who have committed grave crimes against their people, among them lackeys of the Batista tyranny, CIA agents, members of terrorist groupings, agents provocateur, bandits and mutineers. Amnesties granted have set most of them free ahead of time and given them a chance to be integrated in full in social life. There remains a limited number of counter-revolutionary prisoners who pose special danger to Cuba and the neighbouring nations. The list of 458 people with their names and places of detention was forwarded on March 6, 1988, to the President of the Human Rights Commission.

Cuba's participation in the international discussion of the given problem, including the First International Symposium on the Penitentiary Systems conducted with the assistance of the UN Latin American Institute for Crime Prevention, made people in many lands aware of the rigorous observance of human rights in my country.

Cuba managed not only to refute all accusations but also demonstrated that Washington had no moral right to talk about freedom or to denounce nations fighting for being the sole masters of their own destiny. The United States has never recognised the right to self-determination of people, though it has always been paying it lip service. It has always responded to the slightest manifestation of independence with interference in the domestic affairs of Latin American countries, subversive activity, the destabilisation and overthrow of governments. As the state which pursues the policy of pressure and blackmail, threats and terror towards sovereign states, their people and leadership, the US has no right to talk about democracy, especially in view of its brazen invasion of Grenada and the monstrous crimes against the Nicaraguan people perpetrated by the mercenary gangs in its pay.

It is legitimate to ask whether the United States practises no racial discrimination or persecutes its ethnic minorities and whether it has no racist or fascist organisations of the Ku-Klux-Klan type, whose members

torture and lynch Blacks and Indians fighting for self-determination. The government of such a country has indeed little right to speak about respect for the human being.

Let it be recalled that it was precisely the US 'human rights champions' who in their time organised, trained and financed Cuban counter-revolutionaries defeated at the Bay of Pigs. Today Washington is not averse to encroach upon the state institutions and sovereignty of Panama, aids and abets Pretoria's murderous racist regime and the Zionists in Tel Aviv who are killing Palestinian patriots. The US administration turns a blind eye on the crimes committed by the military police regime of Pinochet in Chile and by that of Stroessner in Paraguay. These 'human rights champions' are plundering the natural resources of peoples, dooming them to starvation and misery through fierce exploitation, plunging them into the abyss of an economic crisis and stifling them with immoral, unjust and unpayable external debts.

The Cuban stand of principle was expounded in no uncertain terms at the 44th session of the Human Rights Commission. The United States suffered a crushing defeat and failed to attain the desired goal. Four Latin American states with considerable weight and prestige in the world community — Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Argentina — made a constructive proposal, asking the Commission President and some of the member states to send representatives to Cuba to observe 'on the spot' how we respect human rights.

We are willing to receive such a delegation, just as we have received representatives of other organisations and personalities of high repute. We have nothing to hide nor make excuses for; such visits gladden us. What Cuba is not going to accept is any form of interference under pressure and in violation of our sovereignty.

Cuba's prestige is steadily growing. This June we are going to have an international seminar on 'Socialism and Man in Cuba' to mark the 60th birth anniversary of the great Latin American Che Guevara. We invite all the people who still have doubts to take part in it. We will show them everything and provide them with every opportunity to see both our accomplishments and the difficulties we have.

What are the conclusions to be made from the above? *First* US plans to sow distrust among the Latin American nations, to isolate Cuba and to obstruct the deepening process of integration and joint actions by Latin American states have been thwarted in Geneva.

Second, the threats made by the US delegation to take reprisals against many countries proved futile. The blackmailers gained nothing. No propaganda ballyhoo can cloak the ignominious fact that a certain Valladares was appointed the US representative to the Human Rights Commission which was an insult to world public opinion and the US nation.[2]

And, *last but not least,* it was not only Cuba but also the other socialist and developing countries that have scored a victory in Geneva over the hegemonistic aspirations of imperialism which sought to gain political capital but failed ignominiously.

[1] Many of them have pointed out that Cuba scrupulously observed its laws and international legal norms with respect to prisoners, who are, among other things, guaranteed paid work, family visits and even conjugal intimacy. — *Ed.*

[2] Armando Valladares, formerly a Cuban citizen, served in the police under the Batista regime and later on became a counter-revolutionary terrorist, engaging in all sorts of criminal machinations. At present he is the official US representative to the Human Rights Commission.

The Day That Brought Us Hope

Najmuddin Kawyani — Political Bureau member, Central Committee Secretary, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)

AFTER neary six years of complicated and arduous talks, accords on a *political settlement around Afghanistan* were signed in Geneva on April 14. The day so eagerly awaited by our long-suffering nation and by all honest and peace-loving people across the world, the day for which many of our finest sons and daughters paid with their blood and lives, has at long last dawned. It has brought us hope for an early transition to peace and security, and so it will go down in history as a day of radiant joy.

The instruments signed in Geneva include a bilateral agreement on the principles of relations between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, specifically on non-interference and non-intervention; a Soviet-US declaration on international guarantees; a bilateral Afghan-Pakistani agreement on the voluntary repatriation of refugees; and an agreement on mutual contacts to settle the situation relating to Afghanistan.

The Geneva package blocks the entire spectrum of possible moves to intervene in the internal affairs of our country — naturally, provided that all these accords are observed unswervingly. One cannot really overestimate the importance of these instruments. They signal an end to the undeclared war against Afghanistan, make it possible for refugees to return home, and enable the limited contingent of Soviet troops to withdraw to the USSR within a brief period.

These positive results were brought about largely thanks to the constructive and flexible stand of Afghanistan and the Soviet Union which displayed patience, dedication, political courage, and a high sense of responsibility to our nations. In broader terms, the situation around Afghanistan owes its favourable political settlement to the efforts of many countries. It is a victory of reason and of the national reconciliation policy, a manifestation of new political thinking.

We regard the signing of the Geneva accords as the first step towards the fulfilment of our people's long-cherished hopes for an end to bloodshed, to a life in peace and to better relations between the countries of the region — something that will benefit all of humanity. No wonder that in terms of its international impact, the package has been likened to the Soviet-American INF Treaty.

The success scored in Geneva proves that *political settlement is the principal way of untangling regional coflicts,* of promoting peace and of making non-military, non-violent methods of settling disputes a standard of international relations.

The Republic of Afghanistan, whose conduct was honest and open throughout the negotiating process, will do all it can to observe the Geneva accords scrupulously and oppose any and all violations of their provisions. We hope that aside from Pakistan, Iran — another neighbour of ours — will also accede to the Geneva agreements. One should note here that from time to time, Diego Cordovez, UN Under Secretary General and personal envoy of Perez de Cuellar, appraised Teheran of the course of the Geneva talks. Iran promised to accede to the accords if Afghanistan and Pakistan were to sign them. It is now time for tangible moves.

The landmarks leading to the Geneva agreements include the proclamation and implementation by the PDPA of the policy of *national reconciliation,* the statements of the Afghan and the Soviet leaders of February 8, 1988, and their joint statement of April 7, 1988. These manifestations of goodwill gave a new impetus to the political settlement of one of the more complex regional conflicts. One might recall that at the closing stage of the negotiations, Pakistan began to contrive artificial obstacles, demanding the formation of a caretaker provisional government in Afghanistan as a condition essential to the signing of the accords. But obviously, the question of forming a caretaker or provisional government is a matter for the Afghan people themselves to decide, and so demands of this kind are a case of gross interference in our country's internal affairs.

The leadership of the PDPA and the government of the republic are ready for a dialogue with the opposition. We are fully resolved to do all we can to make Afghanistan, in international terms, a peaceful, independent, non-aligned and neutral country and, internally, to combine a multi-party political system with economic pluralism. We hope that the opposition will heed the voice of reason and will not wish to continue the fratricidal war. But should the common-sense approach and the reconciliation process be rejected by the opposition, the Afghan people will eventually shape their future without it.

The Geneva instruments have acquired an international legal status. These largely new circumstances have dramatically increased the responsibility resting on all parties directly or indirectly involved in the political settlement around Afghanistan. Only irresponsible figures will ignore, reject or violate the standards and principles approved in Geneva.

Unfortunately, the Washington administration announced, before the ink was dry, that it intended to continue providing assistance to the so-called Peshawar Seven. Statements of this kind are hardly compatible with the obligations undertaken by the United States as one of the international guarantors of the settlement.

Nor can one reconcile Pakistan's pledges under the Geneva accords with President Zia Ul-haq's promises of continued support for the armed detachments of the Afghan opposition. Such moves add fuel to the fire of the war and aggravate the plight of the Afghan people.

We are therefore calling on the world's nations, progressive civic and

political organisations, and all people of goodwill to work to ensure full compliance with the letter and spirit of the Geneva accords and implementation of their provisions, thereby helping to bring long-awaited peace to Afghanistan.

We are particularly heartened by the fact that, loyal as ever to the historical ties and traditional relations of friendship with our country, the Soviet Union has reaffirmed its readiness to provide us with comprehensive assistance in any field necessary to Afghanistan — in creating the conditions for the return of our refugees, in rehabilitating the Afghan economy, and in our nation's economic and social development. The Afghan people will never forget this assistance.

We are looking ahead with optimism. The realistic policy of our country, the ardent commitment of our people to peace and to a new life, the activities of the 200,000-strong People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, and the international support we receive from our friends, primarily from our northern neighbour — all of these factors will guarantee the victory of the April Revolution and of the PDPA policy of national reconciliation.

Millennium of Christianity in Rus

The Church, Freedom of Conscience, Peacemaking

Pimen — Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

What, in your view, is the significance of the introduction of Christianity in Rus for Russian and European culture and history?

CHRISTIANITY took shape in Rus in the period of the development of Russian statehood, to which the historical destinies of the Russian Orthodox Church turned out to be closely linked: in a sense, Christianity provided, as it were, the ideological basis for the unified state; it helped in the gradual elimination of the old tribal divisions and the emergence of a well-knit people in Ancient Rus in which the Russians, the Ukrainians, and the Byelorussians subsequently had their origins.

The national consciousness was under the strong influence of the Russian Orthodox Church, and our ancestors felt that the whole of their life, both personal and public, was under the protection of the Christian faith. There was a religious dimension even to the struggle for the country's freedom. The Orthodox Church remained virtually the only force keeping the nation united, both as an ethnic entity and as a spiritual and moral

whole, from the 13th to the 15th centuries, under the Tartar-Mongol yoke, which threatened Rus with the complete loss of its national identity.

That is also how it was in the tense periods of trial in the history of Russia when it was subjected to external attack: the people were aware of the bonds of blood and spiritual kinship, so that the sense of patriotism welling up in the depths of the popular soul was leavened with Orthodoxy.

The baptism of Rus swiftly led to the flourishing of Ancient Rus culture: a great many finely architectured churches were erected, and they were skilfully ornamented with murals, frescoes, mosaics and icons. There are many other similar examples, among them the development of the art of choral singing and book illumination.

The clergy not only acted as guardians of the soul, but worked to spread literacy and knowledge. The monasteries offered opportunities for engaging in research. The records of monastery libraries show that most of the books were secular: chronicles, reports on pilgrimages, philosophical and military treatises, and classical works from antiquity.

The Church educated its flock in the spirit of Christian faith and morality. To this day, the characteristic features of Orthodox people are piety, zeal in prayer and the care of churches, acts of devotion, charity and good works. The Church expounded the meaning of sin, and indicated the ways of spiritual perfection and inculcated love for one's neighbour. The general civic order, including law, was also rearranged on Christian principles.

After its baptism, Rus joined the family of the Christian peoples and acquired a high international authority. Throughout the entire millennium there has been a mutual influence and mutual enrichment of the cultures developing on the common Christian basis.

The spiritual, historical and cultural influence of the event whose millennium we now celebrate goes well beyond the limits of our Church and of our country. One could say that the entire Christian world has felt the need to share our joy and to respond to the jubilee.

I should like especially to remark on three international scientific clerical conferences held by our Church which have made a considerable contribution to the study of the thousand-year history of Christianity in Rus. The first was held in Kiev in July 1986 and dealt with the ceremony of the baptism itself and with the initial period in the history of the Russian Orthodox Church. The second was held in Moscow in May 1987 on 'Theology and the Spirituality of the Russian Orthodox Church'. The third was held recently on 'The Liturgical Life and Ecclesiastical Art of the Russian Orthodox Church'.

Many of the reports at these conferences dealt with the missionary activity of the Russian Orthodox Church, and with the spiritual and cultural interaction of Rus and other Christian peoples. They yielded a wealth of material, which is soon to be published in several volumes.

We met with great satisfaction the report that the UNESCO General Conference has designated the millennium of the baptism of Rus as a major event in European and world history and culture and called on the scientific and cultural public in the states which are members of UNESCO to mark this significant event.

We regard that as an authoritative proclamation of our Church's real and valuable contribution to the development of European and world culture, which is our common heritage. We have a sense of profound satisfaction that the celebration of the millennium of the baptism of Rus is becoming a factor promoting the spiritual togetherness and mutual understanding of the peoples, and the establishment and strengthening of openness and peaceableness in their relations in the spirit of the Evangelical ideals of peace and love.

Could you describe the relations between the Orthodox Church and the socialist state, and the concrete areas and forms in which cooperation has proceeded, whether at home or in international affairs? How true are the claims that the Church in the USSR is being persecuted and the rights of the faithful are being violated?

I should say that the relations between our Church and the state are now quite normal. The decree on the separation of church and state, and of school from church is now 70 years old. We regard that as being natural, because church and state differ in nature. We have every opportunity for the pursuit of our ministry in accordance with ecclesiastical tradition.

The state has, at the same time, done everything necessary to ensure the vital activity of the Church, and has met its daily needs, such as the appropriation of funds for the building and restoration of churches, made available premises and materials for the making of church utensils, newsprint and printing works for its publications, and so on.

In response to our request, the Soviet government transferred to us in 1983 St. Daniel's Monastery in Moscow, on whose territory a monastery has been restored and the administrative and spiritual centre of the Russian Orthodox Church is being created. Two other cloisters were recently transferred to us: The Novovvedenskaya Optina hermitage in the Kaluga Diocese, an outstanding centre of spiritual life in Russia, and the Tolgsky Convent in the Yaroslavl Diocese, which is to be the home of priests and other members of the clergy who are advanced in years and who are in need of care and nursing.

These and many other facts of our everyday life bear witness that the claims about the Church being oppressed in the USSR are not objective. Cases of breaches of the rights of believers do occur, but these are, as a rule, the result of departures from legislation by individuals or local authorities. Breaches of the law on the part of religious organisations likewise occur. The central press has reported on these conflicts and has given them due assessment.

The observance of religious legislation is the concern of the Council for the Affairs of Religions under the USSR Council of Ministers, and it also conducts relations between the Church and the state, which are normal businesslike relations. We have always met with mutual understanding and support on the part of the Council for the Affairs of Religions.

As for the cooperation between believers and atheists, I should like to note, first of all, that, while the Church is separated from the state, believers are full-fledged citizens of our state and are involved in various aspects of their country's life on a par with other citizens.

This cooperation is multifaceted. Believers, the parishes, the dioceses, the Supreme Church Administration and the entire Church have always actively responded to the problems faced by society, they have not kept aloof from the solution of vital problems, and are daily involved in the country's affairs — morally, through material donations, and by their labour.

The Russian Orthodox Church is an active participant in many social organisations. The Soviet Peace Committee, the Soviet Peace Fund, the Soviet Committee for European Security and Cooperation, the Union of Soviet Societies for Friendship and Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, the Culture Fund, the Soviet Children's Fund and other bodies have among their members many dignitaries and clerical and lay members of the Russian Orthodox Church, who have been making a fruitful contribution to their activity.

Our readers would like to know about the attitude of the Orthodox Church to the socialist way of life and to the materialist world outlook. What do you think of the perestroika in Soviet society? Can religion help create a new moral and psychological climate and educate men and women with the loftiest moral qualities? Is there a dialogue between those who take the religious and the atheistic world view?

Let me stress, first of all, that the freedom of conscience principle is a legislated part of the Constitution of the USSR. We do not impose our views on anyone, and our churches are open to all who want to go in. We are prepared, at the same time, to carry on a dialogue on ideological matters. The main thing is that such a dialogue should not divide people, but should help them to gain a better understanding of each other.

As for the Church's attitude to the socialist way of life, our point of departure is that the purpose of socialism is to serve the good of every human individual. Ministering to man is our purpose as well. In some ways we take different views of this ministry, and in others they are identical. That is why cooperation is possible in many concrete spheres of life. The role and place of such common endeavour tends to grow especially when every aspect of life in society is being renewed.

In the past few years, the processes of glasnost and democratisation have given the country what could be called a second wind. We sense imaginative and purposeful creation in the economy, politics, morality, science and culture. The demands on the purity of the moral atmosphere of society have been raised, and spiritual life is becoming more diverse and profound. Truthfulness, responsibility and exactingness are being asserted with fresh vigour. Believers feel that this beneficial process is consonant with their own Evangelical ideals and welcome the government's course of the country's further economic and social renewal and perfection of socialist democracy.

The Soviet people's peaceful creative labour has the blessings of the Church, whose pastoral activity is largely devoted to fostering the civic activity and sense of responsibility of the children of the Russian Orthodox Church, their conscientious attitude to work, and their unflagging pursuit

of high ethical norms in personal and social life. In this sense, the Church is undoubtedly making a contribution to creating a sound moral and psychological climate in Soviet society. That is why, as religious people, we take especial note of the high purpose assigned to morality in the new system of orientations, and of the fact that the renewed system of values is centred on man as a socially active personality open to the perception and creation of great spiritual values.

Together with our fellow citizens who are not religious-minded we are imbued with a profound concern for the future aspect of our homeland. Our Christian activity is designed to serve the true well-being of our compatriots and all other people, and to help everyone to fulfil their high predestination of seeking "after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans, XIV, 19).

Reflecting on this mission, we note that its spiritual essence is immutable, while its forms are determined by the circumstances of the day and by the specific religious needs of our flock. We bear witness with profound satisfaction, for instance, that the perestroika has been having a positive influence on the development of church life as well, creating a more favourable atmosphere for its ministry. In the new conditions many of the questions and problems relating to the life of our parishes and dioceses have been solved to the satisfaction of all the parties concerned.

The changes under way in the country have extended the limits of cooperation between believers and non-religious citizens. The Russian Orthodox Church now maintains fruitful contacts with wide circles of workers in culture and science, and has the use of the mass media. It is now commonplace for dignitaries of our Church and for members of other churches and religious associations in the country to take part in various press conferences and public meetings, which gives everyone who is interested an opportunity to receive at first hand exhaustive answers to some of the questions which it was not the custom to air publicly in the recent past.

What are the relations between the Orthodox and the followers of other religions in the Soviet Union and in the world?

Throughout the entire thousand-year history of its existence, the Russian Orthodox Church has, in one way or another, come into contact with other religions, both at home and abroad. And today we have close cooperation with their adherents in our works for the good of our Homeland and for the strengthening of peace among the peoples.

The first Conference of the Churches and Religious Associations in the USSR was held at the Troitse-Sergiyev Monastery in Zagorsk in 1952, at the time of a dramatic increase of international tension, for the purpose of consolidating their efforts in strengthening peace throughout the world. Even then one could draw the conclusion that the kindred religious and moral positions of the various creeds, despite their doctrinal differences, could unite believers for fruitful cooperation in peacemaking. Since then such meetings have been traditional. Today, no one can any longer deny that the followers of the various creeds are united in their ministry to their

neighbours, near and distant, in their common civic and human striving to ward off the danger of war.

Our inter-creed cooperation with the churches and religious associations in the USSR has been steadily growing wider and stronger. We have also joined in peacemaking efforts with our numerous brothers who are followers of other creeds abroad. Our wide-ranging and frank discussions have led us to the unanimous conclusion, which abounds in hope and optimism, that there is now in all the creeds an urge for cooperation in serving the good of mankind and in solving its vital problems. We believe that this common effort is based on the recognition by the various creeds that the ideas of brotherhood, justice and peace are the supreme principles of human relations. There is also the inherent tendency of religious people to comprehend the meaning of human being, an effort which cannot be separated from putting these ideas into practice.

What is the view of the Russian Orthodox Church of the problems in the defence of peace today? What has the Orthodox Church been doing? What is your view of the future of civilisation?

Our view of the moral problems of war and peace today was most fully expressed in the epistle of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church 'On War and Peace in the Nuclear Age' of February 7, 1986. Without commenting on that document in detail let me merely say that we are now most keenly conscious that the idea of peace can no longer remain an abstract ideal; it must acquire the degree of reality which is inherent in life itself. For the time has already come when without peace there can be no life either. The time has come, accordingly, when the very idea of war must be totally excluded from international relations. The global threat to life demands of mankind global solutions as well. It is now more timely than ever before to replace the baneful mistrust and the barren rivalry by a coordination of all the efforts and of all the resources to create more favourable conditions both for the material and for the spiritual perfection of people.

In this situation we, believers, guided by our religious principles, are led to multiply our efforts to avert the danger of a universal nuclear holocaust. Evil demonstrates its power in dehumanised human relations and neglect of the ethical and moral values of civilisation. But evil has met and will continue to meet with resolute rejection on our part, because for us, Christians, peace is a supreme good.

Peace is the word used in the language of the Church to express the wish of every kind of good, the totality of good. It is also the concept used by the Bible to designate just relations between people, their cooperation and their right to enjoy the gifts of nature and the results of their own labour. We flatly reject hostility, exploitation and murder as a violation of divine law and regard peacemaking as its fulfilment. In other words, our Church regards the ministry of peacemaking as a form of its being, as the basis of its manifestation, as a necessary condition for fulfilling this precept of Christ's: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew, V, 9).

True to this commandment, our Church has worked hard in its daily activity to create a moral atmosphere in which any infringements on human life and dignity will become impossible. The Russian Orthodox Church, preaching and carrying profound and inalienable peace from its spiritual depths, continuously prays for the granting of peace to the whole world, and inculcates the ideas of peace in all believers. In this peacemaking, our Church is at one with the entire Soviet people, with all people of good will.

The forms of the Church's peacemaking ministry are now highly diverse. Divine service and sermon are outwardly the simplest, but also the most profoundly effective and never flagging form. The rule of our Church contains no divine service without prayers for 'the peace of the world'. Indeed, there is hardly a sermon or archipastoral epistle that does not in one way or another, directly or indirectly, enjoin the Christian to gather peace within himself, peace with his neighbours, peace in the collective, peace in society, peace between nations and peoples. This divine service and homily, in which the word 'peace' may sometimes not even be mentioned, helps to create in the congregation what is best and most important for the cause of peace: an atmosphere of active yearning for peace, for its preservation and consolidation.

Cooperation with Orthodox and other Christian churches and religious associations, and participation in the ecumenical movement, which is also expressed in efforts to strengthen peace, is an important element of the peacemaking activity of the Russian Orthodox Church, whose representatives have been making a considerable contribution to implementing the peacemaking programmes of the World Council of Churches, the Christian Peace Conference, the Conference of European Churches, and other ecumenical organisations of which the Russian Orthodox Church is a member.

The world conference 'Religious Leaders for Saving the Sacred Gift of Life from a Nuclear Catastrophe', which was held in Moscow in 1982, was the most significant of recent events in the peacemaking history of our Church.

It was attended by representatives of the Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Judaic, Buddhist and Shinto creeds, and of Sikhs, from almost 90 countries, and adopted a number of documents stressing the need for cooperation of all the religions and all people of goodwill for the establishment of peace on earth. By arranging the conference, the Russian Church imparted a fresh impetus to religious peacemaking activity on all the continents of the globe.

In pursuance of the ideas of that conference, round tables of theologians and experts, which are attended by prominent Soviet scholars and public leaders from our country and from abroad, are now held in Moscow every year, and there have been five such conferences up to now.

Numerous bilateral contacts with various Christian churches and organisations are a special page in the present record of the Russian Orthodox Church, and the important thing to note is that in all these meetings and conversations with representatives of these churches and organisations the most diverse aspects of peacemaking activity are always an important element of the dialogue.

Let me emphasise in conclusion that we are profoundly convinced of the ultimate triumph of the ideas of good and peace over the forces of evil and destruction. The religious views underlying this conviction induce us to raise our voice in protest against nuclear war, which could lead mankind to self-annihilation, and to call on all people of goodwill to brand war and the arms race as a crime against God and mankind.

I mentioned earlier some, perhaps the most important, facts, initiatives and tendencies in the activity of the Russian Orthodox Church aimed to preserve and strengthen peace in our unstable and eternally quavering human society. We are clearly aware that people of goodwill still have a long and hard way before them. Much needs to be done to create a world without international conflicts, a world in which the peoples will build their relations with each other exclusively on the principles of trust, friendship and brotherhood.

Irish Travel Impressions

James Connolly's Heirs

A MONUMENT to James Larkin, labour leader and one of those who organised the strike against the famous Dublin Lockout of 1913-1914, is surrounded by banks, offices, expensive hotels and boutiques in O'Connell Street, the main street of the Irish capital. Commenting on the paradox of a monument to a Socialist standing next to the shrines of big business, the Irish Communists I met explained that "socialist ideas have struck deep roots among our people, and they are closely intertwined with our traditions of fighting for national liberation."

That is borne out by another typical feature — the homage traditionally paid to James Connolly, an ardent Marxist revolutionary and leader of the 1916 anti-colonial uprising, who was with his comrades executed by a British firing squad. His portrait stands among family photos in Irish homes, in Dublin shop windows, on the banner of the Transport and General Workers' Union and in many other places. Many clubs and associations are named after him, there are plaques commemorating him, and you can hear his name mentioned often in the proud 'rebel songs' which are a regular feature of any gathering of friends in Ireland. 'James Connolly House' is the name of the building in East Essex Street where the Communist Party of Ireland has its headquarters. The CPI was formed in 1970, when the Irish Workers' Party which operated in the Republic of Ireland merged with the Communist Party of Northern Ireland.

Why, then, in a country with militant labour movement traditions, does the bulk of the working people still vote for the candidates of the two rival bourgeois parties while the Communists are still unable to win seats in parliament and on local representative bodies? What should be done so that the masses might hear the voice of those who consistently advocate

unity of the working people in the struggle for social emancipation and national liberation, those who seek to overcome the division of the country?

The CPI leaders and rank-and-file members explained: the Communists are not alone claiming the heritage of James Connolly. All parties lay claim to the legacy of the latter but few pretend to accept the socialist ideas of Connolly and his associates. By focusing attention on this still disputed heritage the two main parties — Fine Gael and Fianna Fail — divert attention from the revolutionary context of the Easter Rising in 1916. Other parties are re-discovering the revolutionary context and moving to realistic stances even though they are still fiercely hostile to one another. It is in the midst of this plethora of contradictions that the Communist Party shall, without convenable resources but in line with Connolly's socialist behests, struggle to build unity for the working class and to promote its social emancipation and national liberation. The barrages of prejudice can be overcome. And so they work vigorously, patiently and selflessly to bring this about.

We were driving along Dublin's street with Eoin O'Murchu, Vice-Chair of the CPI, member of the Political Committee of its National Executive, and editor of the *Irish Socialist* monthly. A busy man, he was in a hurry and kept glancing at his watch impatiently. But he answered my questions thoroughly and precisely, punctuating his comments about Dublin with pithy remarks about the political situation, ideological debate and distinctive features of the Irish labour movement rooted in its history.

"There's St. Patrick's, one of Dublin's major landmarks," he said, pointing out a masive cathedral of grey stone, built back in the thirteenth century. "Jonathan Swift was its dean. They used to call Ireland the 'land of saints and scholars' for a good reason."

'The Land of Saints and Scholars'

I had occasion to recall that phrase many times. In Ireland, you keep coming across the names of the author of *Gulliver's Travels,* of James Joyce, Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, William Butler Yeats, Sean O'Casey and Samuel Beckett — and not only on memorial plaques: the Irish like to quote their great countrymen both in political speeches and in casual conservation.

The phrase — 'the land of saints' — belongs to ancient history. One of the first countries to embrace Christianity (in the fifth century), Ireland was not invaded by barbarians in the early Middle Ages. It sent numerous missionaries to Europe and other continents. One of the people I met quipped that "we have long been exporting not only the unemployed but also the priests". He showed me a reference book recently published by the government: Ireland is now one of the world's leaders in the number of religious rites performed by the population (imagine: this statistic, too, is kept): its Catholic population of under four million (in both parts of the country) includes 18,000 monks and nuns and 4,000 priests;[1] there are 5,000 Irish missionaries working in 86 countries.

"All this inevitably affects the conditions under which the Communists pursue their activities," said CPI General Secretary James Stewart whom I

met at Connolly House. "The interference of the Church in politics and culture and its influence on the nation's way of life, always at a high level, have declined somewhat over the past thirty years. Still, candidates of many parties standing for parliament believe it necessary to secure the endorsment of the local clergy."

To this day, divorce is outlawed in the Republic of Ireland. The Church remains intransigent to any form of family planning, and clericalist views are also a factor in the selection of films shown and of television fare.

In a country divided not only in geographic but also in religious terms (Catholics are a majority in the South and a minority in the North), the Communist Party advocates unity of the working people representing different denominations around a programme of their joint action for jobs, against human rights violations, for national independence and neutrality.

"For example, the role we played in leading the struggle for human rights in the Northern counties," Comrade Stewart continued, "has helped us largely to dispel the anti-communist atmosphere which has been with us since the Cold War and which is endemic in the Catholic community. On the other hand, till the end of the 1960s, Catholic industrial workers accounted for only five per cent of our party's membership here, today their share approaches 40 per cent. We have won them over by example."

Remarkable changes are under way in public opinion. For years the word 'Communist' was synonymous with 'enemy of the faith' in the public consciousness. One who said he was a Marxist-Leninist aroused less hostility than he who had the courage to declare himself a Communist. Although anti-communist prejudice dies hard and the picture is patchy, I was told, it is increasingly difficult to set those who venerate St. Patrick (the legendary patron saint of Ireland) against those who have fought to translate the ideas of Karl Marx into Irish reality. The Irish missionaries who returned from Central America where they came into contact with liberation theology have also played a part in this conversion. Virtually everyone I met — from civil servants to the jobless — spoke of the positive impact of perestroika and other developments in the Soviet Union on Irish public opinion.

'I Live Over There in That Street'

The streets of Clondalkin, a working-class suburb in the western part of the capital, are rows of identical two-storey houses. This is the Dublin you cannot see in the travel brochures inviting tourists to visit the principal city of the Emerald Isle and to admire the masterpieces of Georgian architecture around Fitz William Square. Indeed, the first thing to which the local CPI activists drew my attention was the fact that there 40 per cent of the economically active population were unemployed.

Jean Roche came out to welcome us at her door. Mother of four and a member of the CPI National Executive, she has long been active in the Dublin branch of the Transport and General Workers' Union (the biggest trade union in the country) and in the women's movement. She has been elected a shop steward and recently become a well-known social campaigner in her neighbourhood. Her comrades believe that that is quite an important accomplishment in the circumstances: having already won

good ground in the trade unions and on the shop floor, the Communist Party still encounters difficulties in its activities in the neighbourhoods, and that is the prime obstacle to its success in elections.

In Clondalkin, however, the Communists have succeeded in making a name for themselves in the struggle against the state-owned Electrical Supply Board which cut off electricity from hundreds of homes whose tenants lost their jobs and could no longer pay for the service. The victims of the 'disconnection' lived in the cold and in the dark for weeks on end, and could find no protection anywhere. Jean Roche and her comrades launched mass actions, had thousands of people sign a petition of protest and encouraged press and television coverage. The ESB was forced to retreat, and many of those living in Clondalkin not only had their first contact with Communists but also saw that it was only the Communist Party which took the side of the dispossessed and helped improve their desperate condition.

We came to Clondalkin on the eve of a parliamentary election, an important test for the local party organisation. We accompanied Jean Roche, one of the CPI's West Dublin candidates, and her friends as they covered the neighbourhood. They went from door to door, banging on the knockers of each door to bring out the tenant (here door knockers instead of electric bells are the tradition).

"Good evening, my name is Jean Roche. I am the Communist Party candidate," she began. "You know me, of course, I live over there in that street."

Few of her rivals can make the same claim: candidates of bourgeois parties come here from wealthier neighbourhoods to seek only electoral support — and then disappear until the next election.

"These days canvassers from different political parties will be knocking at your door promising you moon and stars in return for your vote," the Communist candidate continued. "Tell them to cut out the guff and listen to what *you* want. People want jobs, people want to stop throwing our money at profit-hungry multinationals. Invest in our resources to provide jobs. We want the taxation not to subsidise the rich at the expense of the poor. Give the unemployed and social welfare dependents an income they can live on."

Not everyone welcomes Jean Roche, not everyone fully understands the different political programmes or the intricacies of the preferential electoral representation system. Others, while sympathetic to the Communists' views and admiring their contribution to the struggle against the ESB, for instance, admit openly that they will give their first preference to the candidate of another opposition party which is stronger and has a better chance of winning.

The growing activity of the CPI and its rising prestige at local level cannot yet be translated into electoral support. The hostile tactics of the rival parties play their role too.

For example, under the preferential system, the Communists of Clondalkin and of other districts call on their supporters to vote first for the CPI candidate and, second, for another, preferably Left nominee — say, a candidate of the Workers' Party.[2] Unfortunately, people often refuse to do

that and prefer to vote 'usefully'. They see ballots cast in support of the CPI as 'wasted' if the party is not successful. Earnestly and self-critically analysing the problems of the struggle to win over the masses and examining every last bit of positive experience, the Irish comrades conclude that "anti-communism may have disappeared as a factor at the door-step, but artificially inspired worries about Communists still play a big role."

A Marxist Chair of a County Council

Sligo County is located on the West coast and along the border with Northern Ireland. William Butler Yeats was in love with the harsh beauty of this area. He was buried there. "The land of heart's desire" is a Yeats quotation adorning the county's coat-of-arms. Lakes, cliffs, picturesque hills, striking rock formations, remnants of pre-Christian cult sites, beaches and harbours with holiday makers and windsurfers — all producing a poetic impression and making one wonder how there can be any problems or cares there at all.

But as he proudly showed me the beauty of the land, Declan Bree, chair of the County Council, kept recalling the things that were of concern to its people. I saw a railroad winding its way among the hills and leading south, to Galway — but no trains. The line proved unprofitable and was closed. The same fate befell the local airport.

"We don't despair," Bree said, "We are looking for new operators and hope that these facilities will come to life again."

He showed me another 'picturesque' feature of the local landscape — abandoned, dilapidated farmsteads. They are monuments to a tragic aspect of Irish history — to emigration. History aside, however, modern times have also left bitter emigration marks on Sligo County.

Near the administrative centre of the county some bright-coloured factory buildings caught my eye. They were silent and completely deserted.

"That's a typical result of transnationals' activities," Bree explained. "They open factories here for about ten years (as long as the tax concessions to encourage investment hold) and then transfer the operation to another country. Unemployment and dereliction are the only things left to us."

Declan Bree is not yet 40. His work began in the Connolly Youth Movement — the Irish YCL. In 1974 he was elected for the first time to a local representative body as the candidate of the Independent Socialist Group which had a communist cadre. The first steps of his 'political career' proved quite difficult. In rural areas, the priest has virtually the final say in most matters. Homilies against Communists were, until recently, a routine feature of church sermons. Today, however, Bree is not only a well-known figure: many activists of the bigger parliamentary parties might well envy his popularity. Wherever we went — walking along the street, stopping our car on a rural dirt road or dropping by a pub packed with young people — he was invariably greeted with friendly smiles, and people were obviously at ease with him, discussing international politics, Irish and local issues and all sorts of important and minor questions. I asked him how he was

addressed: was it 'Mr. Chair' or 'Comrade Chair' perhaps? "My people usually call me by my first name," he replied, grinning.

Indeed, Declan Bree in everyday life little resembles his official and rather formal election portrait — that of a solid alderman[3] with a gold chain on his chest. He is in fact quite unpretentious, quiet and frank both with unemployed youngsters and with businessmen equally.

What can local councils do to help solve urgent local problems? In Sligo I was told that their rights were very limited. According to law, the council elected by the county operates 'under the supervision of the County Manager' appointed by the government. Everything that is not included in the council's 'reserved functions' (decisions on general matters of policy and principle and on certain financial and budgetary questions) is automatically referred to this government official. But even within these limits, the Communist representatives do their utmost to uphold the interests of the people.

For example, Sligo residents are particularly sensitive to the issues connected with the country's partition: the country is adjacent to the boundary, and many people have relatives and friends 'on the other side'. On the initiative of its chair, the local council adopted a resolution protesting the practice of strip-searching in Northern Ireland while advocating the repeal of 'Section 31' — part of a law promulgated in the Republic of Ireland and infringing on a basic human right: freedom of speech — on the pretext of combating terrorism. The resolution aroused a nationwide response.

Declan Bree has many duties. He is director of the Socialist Advice Centre which helps the needy, and head of the local music association and of the Health Board's General Hospitals Committee. He also serves on the boards of many other local organisations and is active in the Irish Anti-Apartheid Movement and in the Irish CND. Election campaigns, too, take up much of his time.

In rural areas election campaigns have their distinctive features. With houses standing far apart, door-to-door canvassing is difficult.

"Church-gate meetings on Sundays are an essential part of any election," Declan Bree explained. "It is important for an election worker to check with the parochial houses in the constituency to confirm the times of Sunday masses."

As I was told in Sligo, candidates of the bourgeois parties feel quite uncomfortable if Alderman Bree is their opponent at such meetings.

Supporters of the Independent Socialist Group which nominates Bree as a candidate will analyse how many votes it receives at every polling station. At the headquarters of the group, I learned that when the ballots are counted, the group's election workers note which neighbourhoods and communities vote more heavily in favour of the Independent Socialists, which support them less, whose candidate was the 'first', 'second' or 'third' choice, etc. These figures make it possible to ascertain — with an accuracy of a few homes — where the canvassing activists were successful, where they will have to put in more work, and who is the principal rival in this or that area.

In the 1987 parliamentary election, Declan Bree stayed in the race

through the *sixth* — the one before last — round, or count, in which he won 10 per cent of the vote. He left behind several candidates of bourgeois parties whose support failed much earlier. They included representatives of the Progressive Democrats, of Fine Gael (then the ruling Party) and Sinn Fein (the republican party).

"Hope you'll be more successful in the next election" was the people's greeting to Bree in Strandhill, a coastal village we visited. The hall was packed: almost the entire village was there. The meeting was opened by the priest. On behalf of those present, he praised Bree's work as chair of the council. Then Declan took the floor. He spoke about the tax burden, about the financial difficulties of the council, about protectiong the environment and restoring the old local church, a valuable architectural monument. These were issues of local concern. His speech was free of empty rhetoric, of alluring promises or slogans. But he held the audience spellbound, and when he finished, a storm of applause broke out.

'Firmness of Principles, Flexibility of Tactics'

The patriotic pride of the Irish is legendary. Indeed, I have seldom seen such respect for the national symbols, folklore, literature and history — respect that is common to people in all age groups, in all sections of society and of all political persuasions. Green scarves, the green shamrock and the golden harp — the emblem of the Republic of Ireland — can be seen everywhere. And in their struggle to win the support of the masses, the Communists, too, stand as a patriotic force which fervently champions the national and cultural heritage.

Irish Gaelic is one of Europe's oldest languages. Colonial rule tried hard to suppress it and to supplant it with English. Since independence, progressive forces in the country have been working assiduously to revive and promote the spoken and written Gaelic language. The visitor immediately notices that all road signs and all signboards are bilingual. The CPI, too, supports the right of the Irish to know and to use the language of their ancestors. The party's *Irish Socialist* monthly and *Irish Socialist Review,* a theoretical periodical, regularly publish articles in Gaelic. Comrades from the CPI Executive proudly presented me with an Irish language copy of *The Communist Manifesto* which was printed for the first time in 1987. The work Marx and Engels wrote for the future can now be read in one of the oldest European languages — a fine testimony to the Communists' certainty of the bonds uniting the issues of national and social renewal.

Translating unity into practice is not easy, however. "If the Party is to achieve in reality the vanguard role in politics in Ireland," the 19th National Conference of the CPI noted in its resolution in 1986, "this will necessitate firmness of principles, flexibility of tactics and the ability to engage constructively with those in the labour and independence movements who do not share Communist views. This means we must seek to cooperate where possible with all forces who will travel a step of the road with us, while maintaining a principled and non-sectarian polemic to win support for the ideas of Marxism-Leninism."

As I reread this official document of the CPI, I thought not only about the big issues involved in the policy of alliances or about the complexity of relations between parties. I also recalled the people who were working selflessly to implement the resolutions of the party's 19th conference, who showed me the vitality of the strategy pursued by James Connolly's heirs. That was what prompted me to write these far from exhaustive travel notes.

Sergei Belenkov, *WMR* staff member.

[1] One might note for the sake of comparison that in the Republic of Ireland there is one doctor per 833 people and one priest per 975 people.
[2] According to Ireland's preferential electoral system, the voter indicates his order of preferences for the candidates in the ballot. In each round, the candidate securing the least degree of support is ousted, and his votes are distributed among other candidates according to the preferences expressed.
[3] An alderman is a person elected to serve on a local council in Great Britain and Ireland. — *Ed.*

In Memoriam

EZEKIAS PAPAIOANNOU

THE Communists of Cyprus and the world communist movement have lost a dear comrade. Comrade Ezekias Papaioannou, a dedicated fighter for social progress, national independence and peace, an internationalist and patriot, the man who headed the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus for all of forty years, has passed away.

His life was one of dedicated service to the noble ideas of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. He was born to a peasant family in 1908. In 1931 joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. Following the Franco mutiny, he went to Spain and fought for the Republic with the International Brigades. During World War II he took part in fighting the Nazi aggressors.

In 1943, he became a member of the AKEL Party of Cyprus, and his tireless activity soon earned him well-deserved prestige among the people of the island. In 1947, he was elected member of the party's Central Committee, and in 1949 the Political Bureau member and General Secretary. From 1960 to the end of his life he had been a Member of Cyprus Parliament, head of the AKEL faction.

Comrade Papaioannou was an old friend and frequent contributor to our international journal, and put in much effort to tighten links between the Cypriot Communists and *World Marxist Review*. His stirring articles dealt with topical issues of the world communist movement, anti-imperialist solidarity, and AKEL's struggle for the vital interests of the working people of Cyprus.

Fellow Communists all over the world will always remember Comrade Papaioannou as a devoted son of the working people, a patriot and internationalist, and a committed propagator of Marxist-Leninist ideas.

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