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Dear Reader,

With the year 1990 not far off, the international staff of *World Marxist Review* want to reiterate their appreciation of your continued interest in our journal. We hope that you will remain with us in the future as well.

Letters to the editor tell us that *WMR* has become more attractive: you say it is more relevant, lively, polemical and informative. We will do our best to make it even better reading. Our subjects, new and continued, will include present problems of theory, dialogue with representatives of various movements, the prospects of human civilization and ways of its development, the tenacity of capitalism, crisis phenomena in socialist society, problems of disarmament and ways of building a nonviolent world. We plan to give more coverage to complex processes in the international communist and working-class movement, to the history and work of the Communist International, and also to make better use of documents provided by fraternal parties. Our authors will be politicians, statesmen, party functionaries, scholars, writers, journalists, and our readers. Our idea is to make *WMR* open to exchanges of experience and views on a variety of subjects, and we hope for your support and contributions.

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INTERNATIONAL COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

The WMR Commission on the International Communist Movement and Exchanges of Party Experience presents another article in a series devoted to the way sister parties in different countries are reappraising the rapidly changing national and international realities and adapting their practical work to these changes. After contributions from the heads of communist parties in Bangladesh, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Lebanon, Canada and Finland,¹ today the leaders of Switzerland's and Ecuador's Communists set forth their views, as recorded by WMR staff members.

A BOLDER RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGES OF THE TIMES

Jean SPIELMANN

General Secretary, Swiss Party of Labour (PST-PAS)

To continue our analysis of the role and place of the communist party in today's world and, specifically, in Switzerland, our party's Political Bureau submitted a working paper to the Communists for discussion in June 1989.² We have drawn up and adopted a number of similar papers both on overall issues and on various aspects of the work we are pursuing to change society by making it more democratic.

The paper proceeds from the realities of the day, paying due attention not only to the technological revolution and the impoverishment of the Third World but also, on the one hand, to the effects of Reaganism, Thatcherism and neoliberalism and, on the other, to the contradictions in the socialist countries. These contradictions have become so acute that one can now speak about a crisis of socialism.

THE RIGHT APPRAISAL OF PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS

In the debate about the difficulties and contradictions encountered by the socialist countries, one can hear voices calling for a retreat, for less socialism and a greater role for the market. However, I think the prob-

lem lies in the fact that when socialism reached a certain crossroads, it took the wrong turn. Today, the objective is to rediscover the right road, avert crisis and social degradation, achieve full democracy, and involve the masses in political decision-making and in the promotion of new thinking.

New thinking is not limited to concern for peace (although this is undoubtedly its most important element). Aside from the current issues of arms limitation and disarmament, it involves a reappraisal of issues such as the threat to nature, environmental protection, the dumping or processing of industrial waste, excessive consumption in some countries (which, in some cases, is already harming human health) and hunger in others, as well as the squandering of the planet's resources.

All these issues are *within the mainstream of socialist thought*. I believe that socialism is in the best position to answer the more important questions in today's world. But before that, it will have to find a new identity, with solidarity and respect for the common good as its principal features.

Viewing the state and the prospects of the communist movement from this new angle, some tend to conclude that, having encountered the worst crisis in its history, particularly in the socialist countries, it is in

danger of losing its identity and reason for existence.

I cannot share this pessimistic assessment fully, although those who still refuse to face facts, and who forget the reality of economic laws, are in for grave difficulties.

Still, the contemporary communist movement is far from homogeneous: there are considerable differences and even contradictions within it. Some parties have a clear-cut programme of action which enables them to advance even against odds, while others, including those in industrialised Western countries, are still groping for a perspective and for an image that would appeal to young people. They have to work simply for their political survival.

I am convinced that Marxism-Leninism is capable of responding to the burning questions of the day—but only if we apply it in an innovative manner, with unflagging attention to objective realities which differ substantially from period to period and from country to country. The state of the economy, the political situation and cultural traditions—all these demand that in each specific case Communists devise their own approach to problems.

On the other hand, these days decisions adopted in one particular country invariably influence the situation in others. Such is the *contradictory dialectics of diversity and interdependence*. This means that we need debate, an exchange of ideas and a critical assessment of one another's experience.

In order to secure a new lease on life and regain its influence, it is particularly important for the communist movement to *define correctly the perspective of social progress* in each individual country and in the world as a whole. But this applies not only to Communists but also to all those who seek to change life for the better and, relying on their own people for confidence and support, undertake to fight for power or to retain it.

Decades have elapsed since the revolution of October 1917 prompted the emergence of communist parties in many countries—parties representing a distinctive ideological and political force of the working-class movement. The once widespread hopes that everything could be changed radically and at once have failed to materialise.

I doubt that in ushering in the era of socialism, the makers of the October Revolution wanted events to take the course they did, when an attempt was made to impose the same model of socialism on everyone. It was like forcing different people to wear a suit that did not fit them.

This attitude did nothing to advance the socialist cause. *Imposing one's will on others has never done any good anywhere*. Both the export of revolution and efforts to install this or that political system by force against popular will are sterile and unacceptable.

Today's realities are such that all you can accomplish by force is the domination of one part of society by another. Truly progressive change for the benefit of people can only be effected *gradually*, by improving on what is available. In this day and age, revolutionaries must feel the pulse of day-to-day life, transforming it step by step and relying on democracy and on the voluntary participation of every citizen in the process of change.

HOW TO WIN NEW POLITICAL GROUND

There was a time when the struggle was for a piece of bread and for elementary rights. Nowadays, although prosperity has yet to reach everyone there, people in the developed capitalist countries are concerned not so much with material well-being as with the *quality of life*, the future of their children, the purpose and motivation of labour, environmental protection, issues of peace and disarmament, and closing the gap between the rich North and the poor South—a problem which poses a threat to all humanity.

All these issues have become levers of political change. Those who fail to grasp the new realities and to act vigorously along these lines, who still stress purely material interests, are doomed, I believe, to a political demise. The fact that, at the outset, the communist movement was *oriented on defending the poorer sections of the population by redistributing the wealth created in society* is perhaps one of the reasons why doubts have now surfaced about this movement's continued reason for existence.

True, the Communists have done a great deal to improve the lot of the weakest and least protected. For example, we were the first in Switzerland to launch a struggle for the rights of the aged and for a better pension system. We received considerable public support. But now that the problem has lost much of its gravity, many of our fellow travellers have lost their interest in our party.

Paradoxically, having secured improvements in this or that sphere, we lose our base among those concerned. I am not saying that we should no longer defend the weak. A "new poverty" has appeared in Switzerland: since society is advancing at "two speeds", "prosperity" bypasses many people, and we are on their side. But if we confine our activities to their concerns alone, we are sure to end up *on the periphery of the political scene*.

The objective is to win *new political ground* and to study the needs and interests of modern categories of workers—those who work not so much by hand as by brain, and those employed not only in economic production itself but also in the service sector. Their numbers are growing, and they show no tendency to

identify with the working-class movement.

There will always be outcasts under capitalism, and this is a thing to remember. But it is also important to understand that in a developed society these people are a minority, moreover one not always clearly committed to progress. If a political party seeks to take part in the running of the country, *it cannot rely on such a minority alone.*

This does not mean that we are giving up our ideal—that of creating a society in which everyone would be guaranteed a decent standard of living and thus be able to assert his or her potential. But we know what resulted from efforts to impose a crudely egalitarian system at an average, often minimal, level. It was "barracks communism". Even if one tries to raise everyone to the highest possible level, there will always be those who do better than others.

This is why we are opposed categorically to any attempts at enforcing crude egalitarianism and making a principle out of it. Inequalities do exist, and we must fight to allay them. But we regard the *idea of solidarity* as the principal means of achieving this end. Crude egalitarianism means mediocrity and stagnation, while solidarity and emancipation are signs of society's sound morals and a means of social improvement.

NOTHING SO TRAGIC AS STAGNATION

Unlike the Social Democrats, the environmentalists and other progressives favouring solidarity, the Communists are so far the only ones who have been able to change relations of ownership radically, socialise the principal means of production and create objective conditions for far-reaching social and political change.

Today, the question is whether the ruling communist parties have coped with another task—that of running their society so it could really *surpass capitalism in all fields* and open up prospects for a brighter future before the human race.

Unfortunately, an answer in the affirmative is so far impossible because of the economic difficulties, the sway of bureaucracy and the social stratification that plague the countries of so-called existing socialism. If, for example, a nation is no longer able to harvest its sugar beet crop, process it and fill the shops with the end product, one can scarcely speak of any outlook for prosperity.

The 27th Congress of the CPSU raised very important issues of Soviet society's further development through a drive to overcome a dogmatic approach to socialism and the sway of bureaucracy, to enhance mass initiative and to separate the functions of the party from those of the state. The record has shown, however, that resolutions and speeches are not enough, that a clear-cut programme of change is es-

sential, and so is *tangible progress*, however moderate.

The difficulties encountered by socialism do not mean that the Communists have no future. In the developed capitalist countries, they seek to expose shortcomings, put forward specific proposals and stimulate a popular struggle to have them implemented. By combating in this way the more odious manifestations of capitalism, the Communists promote genuine socioeconomic and cultural progress and democratisation of the existing system.

I hold that capitalism owes some of its economic successes to the *opposition* which is made up of Communists, Socialists and other left forces. Such an opposition is absolutely essential. Bureaucratic practices and stagnation in the socialist countries are, perhaps, largely due to the fact that under the dictatorship of a single party, all critical opposition, all manifestations of disagreement with official policy were suppressed for decades.

It is true that these countries, most of them previously registering a low level of socioeconomic development, have scored considerable achievements since the October Revolution. In some areas, one can even note their unprecedented progress. Had there been no mistakes and crimes committed during the Stalin years and the period of stagnation, these accomplishments could have been still more impressive.

I do not think that all Communists should be blamed for the harsh experience of the past. Nevertheless, the fact remains that against the background of certain achievements, society has become stratified and stagnant, and development has slowed down everywhere. I see the *dogmatisation of socialist theory and praxis* as one of the reasons for it.

For example, the category of the market was rejected completely. What is wrong with it if it helps stimulate production and fill shops with goods? Just think how long all initiative, all new ideas and all responsible attitudes were suppressed. Things went so far that many people in the socialist countries ended up questioning the *very ability of the Communists to manage society.*

Profound changes are now under way in the Soviet Union. We can see that this path includes many difficulties, and that mistakes, some serious, are being made. But I am sure that leaving things as they were would have been a still greater mistake, in fact a tragedy. *Any movement is preferable to stagnation.*

I maintain that perestroika will succeed if the whole people participates in it as vigorously as possible. Little can be accomplished by a minority working "from above". The important thing is for people to realise that change is both necessary and possible.

Every communist party is free to do what it regards as useful. But, be it a ruling or an opposition party, the people may *give it a vote of no confidence* within the framework of a democratic procedure. We Communists must *accept this democratically expressed popular will*. I think that it will also enable the socialist countries to advance.

The right of every nation to choose its own path freely (which is what Fidel Castro referred to during his meeting with Mikhail Gorbachov) is a major demand of our age. If people maintain that socialism has failed and want to return to what they had before, they must be able to do so—just as they can, if they want, call for a transition to socialism in capitalist countries. The choice is made possible by democracy, and only by democracy.

Our forecasts that capitalism will inevitably impede economic and technological progress have not been confirmed. Perhaps it was a mistake on the part of Communists in some countries and at certain stages to have been guided by the principle of "the worse, the better" and to have resisted the objective process in the course of which the productive forces of bourgeois society developed and improved.

We in Switzerland have always fought only against the negative aspects of capitalism. For example, we regard colonialism in its old and new forms as totally unacceptable. In this spirit, we are promoting international solidarity so as to eliminate the system of colonial oppression. We oppose the use of advances in science and technology to impose the political will of some countries on others, particularly in the Third World.

We have always connected all social gains with higher labour productivity, greater economic returns and *better operation of the entire economic system*. The Communists have never been opposed to progress in science and technology. However, it also produces negative consequences for man which must be combated. Economic growth should be subordinated to the imperatives of protecting man and his environment.

Communists are accused of advocating a wholesale etatisation of the economy, of all means of production and of economic decision-making. That is not true. We want the state to play a stronger role in social regulation, not in economic management. Some socialist countries have paid dearly for the mistaken confusion of the social and economic functions of the state. Our approach is different.

In our party documents we are developing a new concept of social progress in conditions of pluralism and of a degree of social consensus. We should pay closer attention to environmental imperatives, people's cultural traditions and moral values and, in the economic sphere, to realistically assess the role of

the state and the opportunities for regulating commodity-money relations.

These are not just improvements but far-reaching transformations. The problem is to define our concept of socialism and of the *revolution's character*, of how it can be attained and how control over the means of production can be established. We believe that it is not enough merely to elect members of parliament and invest them with legislative authority. Democracy should spread to the economic sphere.

Far-reaching transformations call for revolutionary decisions. While the Social Democrats, with their reliance on class collaboration alone, sometimes secure improvements, and even substantial ones, nowhere have they been able to make capitalist economic development serve society. This is why they are now experiencing a crisis as grave as the Communists': it is easier to ensure class collaboration when the economy is picking up steadily and there is enough to be shared. However, industrial restructuring and the ousting of many traditional producers by the TNCs are creating numerous socioeconomic problems. This is when *class collaboration loses its material basis and, consequently, its reason for existence*.

Another reason for the crisis among the Social Democrats is that they have always contrasted their democratic values with the authoritarian practices of the ruling communist parties and the suppression of civil liberties under socialism. They identified communism with a desire to seize power by force, to install a minority dictatorship. But the processes now occurring in the socialist countries are depriving the Social Democrats of this argument and cutting much of the ideological ground from under their feet. This is why they have to reflect as much as we do on their political survival.

KEEPING THE SOCIALIST IDEAL IN SIGHT

One hears today that communist parties have turned social democratic and that there is no difference between Communists and, say, Left Socialists. Theoretically, this is possible. But in actual fact we should not forget that social democracy becomes, of its own free will, a *manager of the capitalist state*. This is no longer a situation in which a possible consensus is sought to achieve progress in a particular area: this is genuine class collaboration.

Take the example of the French Socialists, who ruled the nation together with the Communists within a left majority for some time after 1981. They succeeded in proving that the Left could indeed secure progress in some areas. But they tackled economic

issues by applying capitalist techniques. Moreover, they showed that they were no less determined than the capitalists to deal harshly with striking workers. The socialist cabinet continued the colonial war in Chad and took part in the bombing raids on Lebanon together with the Americans. In other words, little was left of socialist ideas and principles.

Those who are committed to these ideals must be ready to sacrifice something for them, for the sake of new relations with the developing countries, for peace, for social transformations and a democratisation of the economy. This is precisely where differences surface between members of the social democratic leadership in government and the rank-and-file Socialists with whom we cooperate daily on the basis of common interests.

When we can work together or share cabinet seats in a canton or region, change becomes possible. The Communists cannot cope with it going it alone. Together with the Socialists and others, the Communists will change society, but without losing sight of the fact that the end goal of socialism is to *improve people's lives*, eliminate domination and violence, and establish new international relations.

Irrespective of ideological disagreements, *prospects for joint action by the progressive forces are opening up*. Since 1971, our party has been pursuing a policy of popular unity—which is unthinkable in Switzerland without cooperation with the Socialists. There is also another factor which must be taken into account. While professional politicians are covered constantly on television and in the press, people are increasingly losing interest in political parties and in elections. However, they are by no means neutral in their views and actions: they participate in powerful social movements, including strikes. This is a new phenomenon no party can afford to disregard.

This is also true of the socialist countries. For example, miners' strikes in the USSR have shown that besides the political will for change which is obvious within the party leadership, the working people use their own means to press for perestroika's acceleration. This is added proof that communist ideals are not empty words when they are backed by tangible action by the working people. These people, whether in Switzerland or in the Soviet Union, are urging far-reaching transformations.

ANY ADVANCE IS A SMALL REVOLUTION

How, then, is society to be transformed in industrially developed countries such as ours? There is no alternative to the *creation of a pluralistic majority with new objectives for change*. This implies a union of Communists, Socialists, environmentalists and all

those who reject the sway of capital.

Action based on class collaboration alone is not enough. Every tool of democracy should be used and, I keep insisting, so should revolutionary practice—"revolutionary" not in the sense of expecting a great future victory, but of *working daily among the masses*—on the shop floor, in offices and in the community.

There is no conflict between this and the idea of the broadest possible social consensus or the primacy of universal human values over purely class-based ones. The mission of the Communists is to further progressive decisions as much as they can.

Without claiming to be the sole representatives of all hopes, we must nevertheless be in the front rank of the struggle to make them come true. By conducting a dialogue and by rallying the public around a common political platform, *we seek progress for democracy in every area, and any such advance, no matter how little, is a small revolution*.

Swiss society can only be transformed by having every decision approved by the greatest possible majority. This work requires a lot of time and effort, but it yields results, and this is the path we intend to follow. However, we do not intend to make do with what the other side agrees to cede to us within the framework of class collaboration. Any success should be not only consolidated but also developed. *New and far-reaching demands should be advanced*.

Together with the restructuring efforts in the socialist countries, this outlook for progress is no longer consonant with the *historical rift in the working-class movement, primarily between Communists and Social Democrats*. I would not overdramatise the differences which remain at the theoretical level and in the forms of political action. After all, things cannot improve if there is no criticism and no comparison of different viewpoints.

To me, the essential thing is to promote a common understanding of the fact that we can advance only as an alliance of all the forces opposed to the system of capitalist domination. But this does not imply any identity of the programmes. Moreover, I believe it is no longer possible to work with political programmes drawn up at party headquarters. We seek grassroots unity through a democratic dialogue and through the involvement of the masses and of every individual in decision-making.

I hold that any political party, including a communist one, makes no sense unless it proceeds from the realities of its country and puts forward specific proposals for improving people's daily lives, particularly in the social dimension. In our case, however, its principal mission is to *offer an alternative to capitalism and, in a socialist society, the communist party should work to improve this society*.

The Communists should therefore lead in the struggle not only to improve the position of the working people but also to develop society's productive forces and promote progress in culture. There is a need for a continuous theoretical search and ideological renewal. Marxism is not a dogma which can be applied to any reality. It exists to help us gain a profound insight into our changing world.

WE NEED EVERYONE'S POTENTIAL

The record shows that political openness is an imperative: we should include non-Communists in our electoral tickets and involve in a dialogue those who, even if they do not share our views and are prejudiced both against our party and against the socialist countries, are ready to work together with us on some specific issues. In the course of such joint work they are often surprised to see that we have answers to many problems of concern to them. This is how, by combining theory and praxis, the PST-PAS recruits new members and avoids marginalisation.

The party is not an end in itself: it is a tool for transforming society. Its foremost objective is to help involve as many people as possible in this process. We hope that new members will join us, contributing their energy and culture. We will not ask them whether they read a newspaper or go to church on Sunday morning. The main thing we want from them is active participation in the discussion of party policy, a critical approach and a personal touch.

The documents adopted by the PST-PAS at its congresses are a sum total of these individual views. As far as involvement in their implementation is concerned, each activist, quite naturally, deals with what he or she has an aptitude for. The party's task is to use the potential of its activists as effectively as it can. We do not force people who have joined a political organisation of their own free will to do what they do not regard as useful.

Hence our concept of democratic centralism. It means ensuring complete freedom and comprehensive scope in debate, so that *not a single idea be ignored or suppressed*. After a decision is adopted,

those particularly close to it work to implement it. *The only thing which is unacceptable is when a group of members acts in violation of a collectively approved policy.*

We rely on the will, enthusiasm and ability of everyone to contribute to the implementation of this or that decision. But if, at a certain stage, a person is no longer willing or able to conduct party work, he leaves, but no one can drive him out of the party. *It is inadmissible to apply party sanctions to a Communist who does not agree with the generally accepted decision on a specific essential matter, and who takes no part in its implementation.*

Some may be nostalgic about the "good old days", when the leadership decided that everyone was to take part. Well, the majority did fall in, but the results were poor. Let there even be fewer activists, but let them be really motivated and competent. After all, you cannot force anything on people who gain no privileges from their party membership, who devote their free time and effort to party work and who often get into trouble because of it.

The principles of complete independence, freedom of action, pluralism and critical dialogue are taking root not only in individual communist parties but also within our movement as a whole. It is sometimes claimed that we are thereby distancing ourselves from the Communists' international solidarity which, for decades, was guided by the slogan of proletarian internationalism.

The Swiss Party of Labour has no intention of advising or lecturing others. We take part in international meetings of Communists and in the political and theoretical discussions within our movement on the basis of mutual respect and noninterference in the affairs of other parties. Each of them is responsible to its own people. History will judge who is right.

¹ See: *WMR*, Nos. 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 1989.

² *Une présence active pour les nouvelles perspectives*, PST-POP, June 29, 1989.

EVER IN SEARCH

Rene MAUGE MOSQUERA

General Secretary, CC, Communist Party of Ecuador (PCE)

The concept of new thinking is a newcomer to the contemporary world scene. However, its ideas and their practical political application have now emerged as a major factor of international relations. They have evoked a widespread response in world public opinion and in the positions taken by various parties, governments and movements. They are the subject of lively debate in political and academic quarters. Without attempting any sweeping generalisations, I would like to state my view of several issues under discussion—specifically, the correlation between Marxist-Leninist theory and new thinking.

According to Frederick Engels, Marx's "way of viewing things is not a doctrine but a method. It does not provide ready-made dogmas, but criteria for further research and the method for this research."¹ For his part, Lenin said that "we do not regard Marx's theory as something completed and inviolable; on the contrary, we are convinced that it has only laid the foundation stone of the science which socialists *must* develop in all directions if they wish to keep pace with life."²

The changes that have been occurring in the world during the latter half of the 20th century have been remarkable in their depth and magnitude; their analysis leads us inexorably to a serious reappraisal of several postulates we have habitually believed to be immutable. As Mikhail Gorbachov rightly pointed out, "the vitality and the creative potential of Marxism-Leninism do not mean that literally everything written by its founders has an absolute and eternal significance. No, truth is always specific. Many ideas, including major ones they advanced in specific historical circumstances, belong to their own time. They have done what they were supposed to do and become part of history. But the principal ideas belong to the future and they still require the proper application to life—with regard, of course, for the new circumstances."³

The correlation between new political thinking and antidogmatic Marxism-Leninism is therefore obvious. At the same time, new political thinking has inherited all the authentically humanistic trends of contemporary social thought.

True, Marxists are not the only ones to have grasped the inadmissibility of nuclear war, and the threat of an environmental catastrophe was first per-

ceived in circles far removed from Marxism. But it is no accident that Marxists were the ones who put forward new thinking as an innovative and integral political concept—consistently humanistic, free from any group or national limitations, and at the same time realistic and devoid of any utopian rhetoric. This was a manifestation of the scientific character of Marxist thought and its humanitarian and internationalist ideals.

However, this does not mean that new thinking can only be shared by Marxist-Leninists, that we have a kind of monopoly on it. Such an understanding of its correlation with Marxism lapses into sectarianism, making it impossible to rally together, on the platform of new thinking, representatives of different classes and exponents of diverse philosophical views, religious creeds and ideological and political trends. The objective of new thinking lies precisely in finding in the concerns and convictions of diverse ethnic, social, class-based and other groups a common denominator or universal component which would prompt them to unite for the sake of human survival. Everyone needs new thinking; it is open to all cultural traditions and to different philosophical and political currents—just as Marxism is open to a creative comprehension of new realities.

Of course, new thinking neither covers nor seeks to cover all the problems dealt with by Marxist theory. Above all, it offers a theoretical analysis of those salient contemporary realities that are determined by the coexistence of two social systems in an integral and interdependent world and by the aggravation of humanity's global problems.

One should stress that it is impossible to consider the ideas promoted by new thinking as the ultimate truth or to transform them into a new dogma. On the contrary, they should be discussed widely as an incentive to expanding our knowledge and looking for new solutions to the world's problems. *Constant quest and the creative development of theory and policy are a fundamental feature of new thinking.*

One cannot fail to see that the development of Marxism has followed an uneven course in recent decades: for a number of reasons, including the particularly pressing gravity of the issues of war and peace and other global problems, Marxists were more active and more prompt in defining a new attitude to them than to

other theoretical and political questions. Many of these problems have yet to be analysed theoretically in the light of new experiences; and any understanding of them is still weighed down with obsolete dogmatic notions. As a result, the integral nature of our theory has been upset, and eclectic elements have surfaced in it.

Of considerable importance in this connection is the fear voiced by some comrades that new thinking may justify a policy of "containing" the class struggle against imperialism and the monopolies. We are convinced that this fear is utterly groundless. The struggle against the monopolies is being waged by the workers of capitalist and developing countries, and there is nothing either in the ideas of new thinking or in the policy it underlies that is opposed to this struggle. Nor (contrary to what our critics claim) is there any sign of an indifferent attitude to the problems of social progress in the capitalist world. The only important thing to understand is that it is inadmissible to tackle the tasks of social progress through confrontation between states.

The objective is not just to prevent war between countries belonging to different social systems but to ensure their all-round cooperation and renounce the projection of the class struggle onto relations between them. Naturally, the fundamental contradiction between socialism and capitalism remains, but it is now wholly confined to the sphere of competition and peaceful rivalry from which conflicts between states should be ruled out.

In developing the philosophy of peace, Communists have also taken a fresh look at the correlation between war and revolution. In the past, war often touched off revolutionary explosions: witness the Paris Commune, a kind of echo of the Franco-Prussian War, or the Russian Revolution of 1905, in which the Russo-Japanese War was a catalyst. World War I caused a veritable revolutionary storm which culminated in the October Revolution; World War II resulted in a new revolutionary wave in Eastern Europe and Asia and gave a new impetus to the anticolonial movement.

This reinforced the Marxist-Leninist logic: imperialism inevitably generates major armed conflicts which, in turn, create a "critical mass" of social discontent (the revolutionary situation) in certain countries. Hence the prediction, to which Marxists remained committed for quite some time, that if imperialism were to start World War III, the inevitable social upheavals would bring down the capitalist system and usher in an era of universal peace.

But now that conditions have changed radically and nuclear war means only universal destruction, Marxists have concluded that the causal relationship between war and revolution has disappeared. The outlook for social progress has become "compatible" with

the prevention of nuclear catastrophe.

One should also stress that the policy of peaceful coexistence creates the best conditions for socialist development, the successes of which form a major contribution by the socialist countries to worldwide social progress and to the way the aspirations of the world's working class are translated into reality. This policy also furthers democratic change in the non-socialist world. New thinking is guided precisely by this Leninist understanding of the socialist countries' internationalist duty.

The impression is that certain genuine adherents of Marxism-Leninism have adopted an unjustifiably narrow view of proletarian class interests and tend to contrast them to those of other sections of the working people and to universal human values. Otherwise it is difficult to explain why certain quarters of the working-class movement are suspicious of the idea advanced by new political thinking about the priority of universal values over class-based interests.

As they developed their theory of proletarian class struggle, the founders of Marxism did not see it as an end in itself: to them, it was a means of attaining the humanistic ideals of freeing society from the contradictions and the inhuman relations imposed on it by capitalism and of assuring humanity's all-round progress. Lenin noted that "from the standpoint of the basic ideas of Marxism, the interests of social development are higher than the interests of the proletariat."⁴ In our opinion, this precept should not be applied only to the realities of early 20th-century Russia or to the struggle against czarist autocracy: Lenin referred to the "basic ideas" of Marxism and analysed the tasks of the working class from this position.

By insisting on the priority of universal human values, new thinking is by no means contrasting them to the interests of the working class. After all, the working class is an integral part of contemporary humanity, and its stake in survival is as great as that of other classes and strata. The struggle of workers for higher living standards, guaranteed employment, democratic rights and freedoms and a restructuring of society is aimed at humanising the lives of people all over the world. Moreover, the *humanistic and progressive character of this struggle and the creative activities conducted by the working class may be considerably distorted, even lost, if class interests are divorced from the real day-to-day concerns of real people.*

The founders of Marxism saw classes and the class struggle as an objective reality and always analysed them against a specific historical background. To them, the class-based approach was not an end in itself or a "sacred principle", but a scientifically substantiated means of attaining humanistic ideals. If, as often happened in the past, this approach is converted into a lifeless dogma, it actually loses its Marxist char-

acter and serves to justify policies which have nothing in common with the humanistic essence of Marxism-Leninism. In particular, this danger is manifest in the history of the communist movement: for example, the policy of bitter confrontation, which the Comintern pursued for reasons of "class purity" against the Social Democrats, who were depicted as the "left wing of fascism", was a serious obstacle to working-class unity in the struggle against the fascist threat.

Today, *divorcing class-based objectives from universal human ones and having the former dominate all other political objectives is particularly dangerous in international politics.* The record shows that this approach results not only in a commitment to strongarm, confrontational means of tackling acute international problems but also in an exaggeration, under the pretext of "class principles", of great-power and nationalist attitudes in the foreign policies of particular countries and parties.

The idea about the priority of universal human values is important in that it provides a theoretical and ideological basis for a consistently peace-loving and humanistic policy and warns against extending the class struggle beyond the limits where it begins to pose a real threat to human survival.

At times one hears that the theoretical and practical combination of the idea that universal human values have priority and the principle of class struggle is an extraordinarily complex task for the working class. That may be so, but the difficulty is likely to be not so much objective as subjective, connected with the resilience of certain traditions and habits widespread in many organisations and with the inertia of obsolete attitudes. Still, no matter how this difficulty is explained, it must not obscure the need to resolve this problem because the future not only of the working class but also of all humanity depends on it.

Naturally, finding the right correlation between class-based and universal human interests and translating it into practice is the job of working-class organisations in every country, to be done on the basis of an analysis of the specific situation and of the alignment of social and political forces. We hold that this organic correlation implies at least a consistently progressive course on the domestic social and political scene and equally consistent support for all foreign policy trends that favour peace, disarmament and international cooperation and help towards the solution of global problems. In actual fact, these two aspects of the activities of the working-class movement largely coincide: in capitalist countries, militarist and aggressive trends are represented by reactionary circles with close ties to influential sections of monopoly capital.

At the same time we believe that it would be an oversimplification to identify the defence of universal human values with the antimonopoly strategy, mainly

because the mass social base of the two currents of the struggle and the spectrum of its actual and potential participants are not homogeneous. Not all the people or all the social and political movements active in the promotion of peaceful foreign policy and international cooperation are ready to work for radical social change. Besides, such an identification would underrate the antimilitarist potential of many bourgeois political currents and of that part of the bourgeoisie, including the monopoly bourgeoisie, which is unconnected with the military-industrial complex. This would also underestimate the capacity of working-class and democratic forces for influencing the domestic and foreign policy of the ruling class.

An effective policy for the defence of universal human interests can only be pursued on the basis of broad alliances comprising diverse social and political forces many of which may not share the values and ideals of the revolutionary working-class movement and may even be hostile to them. This conclusion is unavoidable if one acknowledges the gravity of the universal, global problems and the impossibility of delaying the solution until the revolutionary working-class movement succeeds in involving a majority of the population in the capitalist countries in the antimonopoly struggle. No one knows when this will happen, but everyone recognises the reality of the threat of humanity's self-destruction. *There are and there must be no political or ideological considerations in any way hampering action to avert this deadly threat.*

Of course, the task of society's revolutionary transformation and the socialist alternative to capitalism remain on the agenda of communist and workers' parties as a *strategic objective*. But we hold that its attainment is linked only with the specific situation in each country, and that it should not affect the basis on which universal peace rests. If a nuclear war breaks out, all objectives are rendered meaningless because it means the end of civilization as we know it.

At the same time, there are a number of problems which can already be tackled almost everywhere for the benefit of working people, that is, of most of the planet's population. I am referring to the safeguarding of economic, social and political rights for all people and all nations—doing away with unemployment and Third World underdevelopment; ruling out acts of aggression and regional conflicts; promoting genuine democracy and equality, and establishing civilised international relations.

Obviously, the Communists' historical and practical mission today lies in affirming the ideals and principles of a world which would respond to the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of humanity and isolate the more reactionary, militaristic, dictatorship-oriented and profascist forces of imperialism. It remains for the people in each particular nation to

decide whether the existing social order should be called into question.

Guided by the ideas of new political thinking, we Ecuadorian Communists have performed a creative analysis of our experience and of the distinctive situation in Ecuador, studied the mistakes and shortcomings of the past, and drawn up a new Party Programme. Adopted at our 11th Congress in 1988, it defined clearly the content of the present national democratic stage in the revolutionary process with due regard for the level of neocolonialist imperialist domination and of capitalist exploitation by the oligarchy.

We do not regard as our immediate objective either a socialist or a bourgeois democratic revolution, recipes for which are being offered to us by certain quarters. We want an advanced democracy which would ensure a gradual development of the revolutionary process. At this initial stage, only the accomplishment of interconnected anti-imperialist, agrarian and democratic tasks will make it possible to lay the foundation for socialism.

The key issue is to win political power and form a revolutionary and patriotic multiparty government with a broad social base and firm roots in the masses. The working class, acting in close alliance with the peasants, will be the prime guiding force of the transformations to come; most of the population should rally around these two groups.

The national democratic revolution will have to democratise all political and socioeconomic affairs, seeking to replace the existing economic structures and end the sway of monopoly capital and the latifundistas. Its priority tasks include higher living standards for the masses, solution of the nation's more acute problems, respect for the rights of indigenous ethnic groups, and access to education and culture for all Ecuadorians.

Obviously, the path we have charted is not easy. The monopolies and the oligarchy will carry on trying to frustrate every step that infringes on their privileges. The reactionary onslaught can only be contained by mobilising all the people. It appears that we are also in for open confrontation with the extremist "all-or-nothing" elements—those who cannot understand the importance of the present juncture reached by our nation and the world as a whole.

We Ecuadorian Communists believe that in order to cope with the tasks before us, we should conduct a policy which would transform our party into a professional yet mass organisation for political action. Why have we set ourselves these objectives?

A professional party. If we want a revolutionary organisation which actively seeks power, we need well-trained cadres and experienced leaders who have devoted themselves to politics and who are working to

raise the level of the Ecuadorian people's consciousness and organisation, since this is a fundamental component of the revolution. We need people who have mastered Marxist-Leninist theory and the fundamentals of dialectics and who are capable of analysing national realities and understanding the alignment of forces in today's world. Without such a nucleus, the party cannot grow or develop.

A mass party in the Leninist sense of the term. This concept is linked with the training of our cadres and with greater activity on the part of all our organisations from the ground up. This means that our grassroots organisations ought to lead and mobilise the masses. We must become the sort of party to which thousands are drawn in order to evolve into Communists within it. No one becomes a Communist outside the party: this happens only within party ranks, and the development of communist consciousness is a very complex process.

To us, politics means action in defence of society's interests and, later, the taking of political power. We maintain that the party exists to struggle for power. If the party loses sight of this end, it begins to develop various "deviations", with mass organisations, trade unions and the like following it along the wrong track.

Also important is that a mass party, a party of action, is an organisation capable of finding common ground and cooperating with other democratic forces. We think that the art of the policy of alliances is in the ability to have real allies and find new ones. Let us see how our party works in this field.

We have contributed to the merger of the nation's three biggest trade union centres in the Workers' Unitary Front (FUT) and to the incorporation of other organisations into the movement for the defence of workers' rights. On the political plane, we can take credit for the establishment, during the previous Social Christian administration's term of office, of the Progressive Parliamentary Bloc, made up of Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, Socialists, populist parties, the Broad Left Front (including the PCE), the Popular Democratic Movement (MPD)⁵ and other organisations.

Today, we see *left unity* as the nucleus of broader alliances which should embrace all our democratic, patriotic and anti-imperialist forces. With this end in view the PCE seeks to unite different ethnic groups, strengthen the Confederation of the Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador, restore the unity of peasant movements and unite the middle strata so as to create a political front capable of taking power into its own hands and effecting the necessary transformations. The involvement of that part of the Catholic Church which is committed to liberation theology, of the patriotic and democratic sections of the military, as well as of the masses in the struggle for democracy

and a better future for the people has become an important step towards the unity which is central to the strategy and tactics of the Ecuadorian revolution.

Our struggle is unfolding in difficult conditions. The structure of political power in Ecuador has always been the base underlying the sway of the oligarchy, high finance and the imperialist monopolies. At different stages of contemporary history they have managed to isolate the PCE (which was founded in 1926). To prevent this from recurring, we should, I believe, create alliances, work among the masses, explain our programme to them, and form a united left vanguard. For this reason the PCE does not speak of hegemony. Nor does it discuss who should assume a vanguard status: we maintain that such debate is pointless because life itself and revolutionary practice will determine who is who. At the present stage, the Communists see their foremost task in rallying all forces around national objectives—those of strengthening Ecuador's independence and sovereignty and resisting imperialist forays.

Aware of the limited and weak position and contradictory moves of the present social democratic government, the PCE, unlike other opposition forces, has not adopted a policy of total confrontation with it. Without giving up Marxist ideology, our principles or our demands, we support the administration's efforts to alleviate the plight of workers and of the people as a whole. However, we are fighting against any steps designed to enhance the economic and political power of the local oligarchy or to allow the nation to become enslaved by the International Monetary Fund.

The Communists are working steadily to consolidate and increase the representation in Parliament of the Broad Left Front, wage and salary earners, peasants, teachers, artisans and the indigenous population. At the same time, the PCE is opposed categorically to any attempts at class conciliation and at demobilising, splitting or scattering the forces of the people because these efforts adversely affect their level of organisation and the struggle for their legitimate rights and demands.

The PCE tactic at the present stage is aimed at regrouping the left democratic forces and effecting urgently needed change so as to combat the sway of imperialism, the monopolies and the oligarchy. This

change should help prepare for the implementation of the social and national liberation project and for the affirmation of popular sovereignty.

The specific steps we demand from the social democratic government have already become, over the past few years, the militant banner of the masses and the democratic parties. Today, these steps are both necessary and possible. They are outlined in the *Alternative Programme for a Democratic and Revolutionary Way Out of the Crisis*, drawn up by the PCE. The central idea of this paper is to ensure Ecuador's independent development and protect the interests of the people. With this end in view we propose:

- * a moratorium on foreign debt servicing, accumulation of export earnings, and a stronger public sector of the economy;

- * higher wages and greater purchasing power for the people;

- * an agrarian reform and the recognition of the indigenous nationalities' social, ethnic and cultural rights;

- * strict respect for democratic liberties and human rights;

- * comprehensive support for the establishment of a New International Economic Order, a policy of peace and cooperation with all nations, as well as other specific measures.

The PCE believes that *this process can in no way be monopolised by the Communists or by other left parties. It should involve all those who link their future with the people*, with stronger sovereignty and complete independence for the Ecuadorian nation.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 506.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 4, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 211-212.

³ Mikhail Gorbachov, *Selected Speeches and Articles*, Vol. 6, Politizdat, Moscow, 1989, pp. 473-474 (in Russian).

⁴ V. I. Lenin, op. cit., p. 236.

⁵ The MPD is the political front of the Maoist "Communist Marxist-Leninist Party".



INTO THE 21st CENTURY

SECURITY VERSUS DOGMA

General of the Army PYOTR LUSHEV
Commander-in-Chief, Joint Armed Forces
of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation

WMR has put a number of questions to the military leaders of the two largest military-political alliances, the Warsaw Treaty Organisation and NATO. The positions and activities of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation in military matters are outlined below. Unfortunately, we have not had a promised reply from General John Galwin and thus cannot present the view from the other side for comparison.

■ ***Now that both sides have declared stronger security and stability with the lowest possible combat potentials to be their priority objective, what are you doing to achieve this aim?***

New political thinking and its offshoots, such as openness, dynamism and flexibility in the foreign policies of the allied socialist states, have had a beneficial effect on the entire system of state-to-state relations, helping to destroy those dogmas and stereotypes in relations between WTO and NATO that had grown up over the years.

The Warsaw Treaty countries have always believed that disarmament is the key issue of our time and the decisive factor in strengthening peace, security and trust, furthering detente and promoting broad international cooperation.

Disarmament is a two-way street, and both alliances have consistently stated their commitment to it. A good deal has already been done by the sides: the INF Treaty, the Stockholm and Vienna accords, and talks on various aspects of arms reductions would have been impossible without mutual goodwill.

Regrettably, the political goals and practical actions of WTO and NATO differ in several respects. A major "point of discord" is NATO's commitment to nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The Warsaw Treaty countries have more than once stated their readiness to reach agreement with the NATO nuclear powers on the step-by-step reduction and eventual abolition of their nuclear weapons. Their response was a programme (since postponed) for modernising tactical nuclear weapons. But at a time when

other nuclear weapons are being reduced, tactical nuclear systems assume a very dangerous destabilising role.

The Soviet Union unilaterally suspended nuclear testing and strictly observed its self-imposed moratorium; it has stopped the production of chemical weapons and high-grade uranium and reduced the production of weapon-grade plutonium. By the end of 1989, 500 tactical nuclear warheads will have been withdrawn from several Warsaw Treaty countries.

In their military doctrine, approved in May 1987, the WTO member countries stated that they would never be the first to use nuclear weapons. (The publication of this document was in itself an unprecedented step.) The defensive military doctrine of the socialist community is aimed at averting both nuclear and conventional war now and in the foreseeable future.

Now let us turn to the problem of conventional forces in Europe. Even before the Vienna talks the allied socialist states had announced substantial unilateral cuts in their armed forces and military budgets, and plans for the gradual conversion of their military industries. Large Soviet troop contingents were withdrawn from the GDR, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. By October 1989, the strength of the Soviet Armed Forces had been cut by 150,000 officers and men, 6,700 tanks, 1,100 artillery systems, 40 warships and around 600 warplanes. The armies of other Warsaw Treaty countries have disbanded some of their tank and air force units.

Regrettably, the NATO countries have not followed our example. On the contrary, even as we make unilateral cuts in our armed forces, some Western military leaders are

urging an increase in their attack potential, and this is making us very wary.

■ **What aspects of the latest session of the NATO Council (Brussels, May 1989) attracted your attention? And which of the proposals from the Bucharest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee (July 1989), and which of the steps taken so far, do you think merit support from NATO leaders?**

The jubilee session of the NATO Council demonstrated, I think, that the alliance is leaning more and more towards political dialogue with WTO. For example, in the implementation of the well-known proposals contained in the Harmel Report,¹ the emphasis has been shifting from military to political measures.

At their Bucharest meeting the Warsaw Treaty members generally approved the additional proposals on reducing conventional forces in Europe that had been made by the NATO countries in Brussels, and characterised them as serious and constructive. In many ways they accord with the position of the socialist countries, in particular the proposal to reach an early agreement on conventional forces in Europe and to carry out agreed reductions by 1992-1993. The Warsaw Treaty countries have accepted this timeframe with no intention of dragging their feet.

The participants in the Bucharest meeting also took note of a certain evolution in the NATO countries' approach to tactical nuclear weapons. So the fraternal socialist states reaffirmed their proposal, made last April, that separate talks be initiated on these weapons. And there is a pressing need for these talks. The USSR suggests that the Soviet Union, the US, Britain, France and those countries which have nuclear weapons deployed on their territories discuss in depth the entire range of relevant issues in order to find mutually acceptable solutions. If the NATO countries enter into talks on tactical nuclear weapons, the USSR will make further considerable reductions in its tactical nuclear missile force in Europe.

Yet, without any ground, NATO continues to view the Warsaw Treaty Organisation as a potential threat, and as a source of crises and tensions. The North Atlantic Alliance insists on the continued presence of US nuclear and conventional forces in Europe and remains committed to a strategy of nuclear deterrence which clearly shows its true goal to be that of achieving military superiority and upsetting parity.

As for your other question, I think that the documents approved by the Bucharest meeting offer an integral and constructive programme for building a stable and secure Europe without nuclear or chemical weapons.

Which elements of the Warsaw Treaty programme might NATO support? In what may seem an unusual reaction, the West European ruling circles on the whole welcomed the results of the Bucharest meeting. However, not all the proposals of the Warsaw Treaty countries have been appreciated by NATO. For example, the two alliances' stands on nuclear weapons are diametrically opposed: the socialist

countries are committed to a non-nuclear world, while the West persists in its nuclear deterrence concept.

There are also differences on manpower and conventional arms reductions in Europe. The Western negotiators in Vienna would like to limit that problem artificially to cuts in the armed forces of the USSR and the US outside their national territories. Meanwhile, Britain, France, Canada and the Netherlands keep a total of almost 160,000 troops in West Germany. That force should be subject to cuts as well. We would like each alliance limited to an aggregate of 1.35 million officers and men, but the NATO countries are opposed to such a limit.

The sides differ in their evaluations of the naval forces as well. At the insistence of NATO, these have so far been left outside the force reduction process: relevant figures are uncomfortable for the alliance, which has a considerable edge over WTO on the seas.

We hold that the problem could be addressed in special consultations between all the interested parties, primarily the major naval powers. They could air their concerns and exchange views on the mechanism and ultimate objectives of future talks and on ways of bringing them about.

In short, the Vienna talks will have to deal with difficult problems, we have no illusions about that. But they should be resolved without prejudice to the security of either side, in the interests of all the participants.

■ **NATO leaders are always stressing the relationship between strategic and other nuclear weapons on the one hand, and conventional weapons on the other. Do you recognise this relationship? And in this context, what do you think of the arguments in favour of the nuclear deterrence concept?**

I have already mentioned the Warsaw Treaty countries' attitude to nuclear weapons. They should be removed once and for all from the arsenals of East and West. International security can only grow stronger as a result.

But the NATO military and political leaders resort to a variety of arguments to justify their reliance on a deterrence strategy based on huge stockpiles of nuclear weapons. They say, for example, that nuclear weapons are essential to prevent war, and to compensate for the alleged gap between NATO and WTO in conventional forces.

I consider these are far-fetched and invalid arguments. The United States, for example, lived in peace when there were no nuclear weapons at all, and it is doubtful that these weapons alone are the guarantee of US security today.

This also holds true for the European NATO members. World War II taught them to take a more responsible attitude to their security. But why seek it through the arms race, through military and political confrontation with socialist countries? Do they really expect the myth of the "Soviet military threat" to become a reality?

But history shows that peace in Europe is possible, and I believe it will be stronger without nuclear weapons.

The shedding of part of Europe's nuclear burden has demonstrated how its security has benefited from the sign-

ing and subsequent implementation of the Soviet-US INF Treaty. Moreover, the Treaty has given a strong impetus to reductions in the armed forces. We are likely to see the following chain of events: the elimination of medium- and smaller-range nuclear weapons—the Vienna talks on conventional forces—the possibility by 1990 of signing corresponding agreements—prospects for further reductions. The implications of Europe becoming a nuclear-free continent are easy to imagine. Conventional arms levels are likely to drop to the minimum necessary for purely defensive functions.

Today deterrence strategy is a strategy of suicide. By justifying the preservation of nuclear weapons, it encourages sentiments in favour of using them. Who can guarantee that the button will never be pushed? There is also the risk of an unauthorised use of nuclear weapons, and just one accidental nuclear explosion could automatically lead to nuclear escalation.

That is why I think that deterrence strategy has long outlived its usefulness.

■ ***Are you and your colleagues considering a clear-out of old dogmas and stereotypes about the other side? Are any of the aspects of your organisation's activities open to revision, and if so, which ones?***

The shedding of old stereotypes is an important element of new political thinking, and all the Warsaw Treaty countries are engaged in this process. We would not be able to pursue an effective course in politics and military affairs without a dialectical approach to the political initiatives and actions of the North Atlantic Alliance. Such an approach is important in every area of human activity: changes in the global community of states and nations should be promptly identified, evaluated and taken into account.

In the present international situation the Warsaw Treaty countries have found it possible to modify the activities of their alliance. For example, the Bucharest meeting of the Political Consultative Committee decided to continue efforts to strengthen the political aspect of WTO and further to perfect its mechanism on a democratic basis.

As for the Joint Command, its activities reflect the new conditions in which the socialist military structures are operating. It is becoming quicker to react, more dynamic, and more critical in its appraisals. Forms and methods of work are also being revised, with those no longer of any use being dropped.

Further, it is necessary now to readjust the structure of the Joint Command and to deal with other issues. All of them are being attended to without delay. Hopefully, as a result the Joint Command of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation will become even more efficient, and the combat readiness and defence potential of the Joint Armed Forces will be increased.

■ ***How could NATO reciprocate?***

Virtually all the proposals and initiatives of the Warsaw Treaty countries are counting on NATO's reciprocal steps

and on joint actions. We are, as it were, all in the same boat; with only one oar in the water, it will just go round and round in circles. You need both oars working together for the boat to move forward.

The abolition of nuclear and chemical weapons and drastic cuts in conventional forces are the most pressing task before humanity today, and NATO could contribute more decisively towards achieving it.

■ ***What are the specific issues with which the two military groupings could deal as partners? Could there be joint discussions on military doctrines and calculating techniques, exchanges of experts, delegations of staff officers, and information, and the creation of some permanent joint structures? Is there a possibility in the short term of some joint recommendations on reciprocal cuts in military budgets, and on ways of reducing military activity in Europe and in the seas around it? Finally, what subregional initiatives and proposals could be given a fresh impetus by greater understanding, trust and cooperation between NATO and WTO?***

As for partnership, new political thinking has destroyed a number of the dogmas and stereotypes which have for years been holding back relations between the two alliances, and their views, positions and practical actions have changed accordingly.

It turns out that WTO and NATO can deal jointly with some problems of European security, such as conventional force reductions, confidence-building, and the de-escalation of the routine military activity of their armed forces. Mutual military inspections are carried out, notification of specific kinds of military activity given, and observers invited to military exercises on a regular basis. The commanders-in-chief of the joint armed forces of WTO and NATO have had their first, albeit informal, meeting.

But partnership between the two military and political alliances has only just begun; much more can and must be done.

There are opportunities to reduce military activity in Europe and the seas around it, although they are difficult to realise. The Warsaw Treaty countries are reducing the number and scale of their military exercises, but NATO is not reciprocating. Every now and then Europe is shaken by military manoeuvres, such as Autumn Forge-89, which spanned large areas of the continent and the Atlantic and involved about 200,000 troops, 1,000 tanks, 2,000 warplanes and close to 400 warships from all the NATO countries, including France and Spain. The scale and objectives of Autumn Forge could easily have been mistaken for the deployment of strike forces for real action.

Such actions do not help to build trust on the continent. Moreover, they threaten those shoots of trust which have sprouted and should be preserved.

As for the proposals and initiatives which could benefit from greater cooperation, in the past few years the Warsaw

Treaty member countries have put forward, jointly and individually, a series of proposals concerning Europe's sub-regional problems.

These include proposals for establishing in Central Europe a nuclear-free corridor and a chemical weapons-free zone; for cutting armaments and building trust in Central Europe; for setting up a zone of trust, cooperation and goodneighbourly relations along the line of contact between WTO and NATO; for establishing in the Balkans a zone free from nuclear and chemical weapons; for turning the Mediterranean into a zone of peace and cooperation, and for drastically reducing the level of military confrontation in Northern Europe.

They cannot be implemented by one side alone. The socialist countries will not be found wanting: they are prepared to go through with their initiatives. They are await-

ing a similar show of readiness and goodwill from the NATO countries.

■ **What do you think of the prospects for strengthening peace and security in Europe on the threshold of the 21st century?**

I'm optimistic. Neither today nor in the longer term do I see problems that the Europeans could not resolve by political means.

¹ In the late 1960s, a session of the NATO Council approved a report by the Belgian foreign minister on the immediate tasks of the alliance; he formulated the principles of NATO policy as detente (military-political talks) and defence (an all-round military buildup).—Ed.

* * *

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

PREVENTION IS BETTER THAN CURE

Donald RAMOTAR
member, CC, People's Progressive Party
of Guyana; Secretary, Guyana Agricultural and
General Workers' Union

A mere 10 or 15 years ago, governments and people in the Third World showed little concern about the looming environmental crisis. The attitude among ordinary people and politicians was, "let the industrialised North worry about environmental protection; we in the South have more important matters to attend to". Today, this attitude has disappeared. The encroachment of deserts in Africa, the regular monsoon floods in Asia, the large-scale and destructive mud slides, the environmental disasters precipitated by the ruthless exploitation of natural resources (the Amazon Basin, for instance), and deadly industrial accidents like the tragedy in Bhopal have all conspired to change the situation and the attitude of the public opinion radically.

More and more people are becoming convinced that environmental protection is essential to the survival of Third World nations and human civilization as a whole. The times when the rich industrial North could fence itself off from the poor agrarian South are long gone. The preservation of the environment is emerging as a common concern for all people, wherever they live.

The causes of the crisis are another matter. Who bears most of the blame for the global threat of humanity's environmental suicide? It has to be said that, however unwittingly, the industrial powers of the West have caused particularly grave damage to the environment, albeit not always directly. The Latin American, Asian and African countries that are dependent on the West technologically and financially are often forced to sacrifice all they have to make ends meet. Sometimes, selfish political concerns also play a part: in order to prove their solvency to the powerful creditors from the International Monetary Fund (and thus ensure their political survival), many Third World governments doom nature to destruction by allowing foreign corporations to do with it what they will.

True, some of the major capitalist powers have recently come out with statements and proposals on resolving the Third World's environmental problems, but these well-inten-

tioned outbursts are very seldom backed by practical action. The most important thing is these nations' refusal to admit that our problems, including environmental ones, are rooted in the crushing debt burden, which creates and aggravates penury. Poverty prevents the debtor countries from effectively protecting nature against plunder and destruction. This raises a moral question: how can the developed nations continue to demand their "pound of flesh" while at the same time lecturing the poor South about environmental protection?

But they do much worse than this. *They are not only indirectly but also directly responsible for harming the environment in the economically dependent states.* Many developed capitalist countries in North America and Western Europe try to solve their own environmental problems at the expense of Third World nations. Due to the strong pressure from environmentalist movements, transnational corporations must spend more on safety measures in the industrially developed regions. For this reason many "dirty" factories are now being transferred to the Third World with little regard for the health of the people there. Countries such as Guyana do not have the technical or financial means to fathom the actual or potential harm that is being done.

Apart from the export of "dirty" industries, the industrialised capitalist states *export their dangerous industrial waste.* Despite the numerous scandals involving such "exports", transnational corporations continue to bribe corrupt officials in Third World nations and pass on the deadly waste. For many poor developing countries the need for foreign exchange makes the "importation" of this waste a profitable enterprise. In some cases, this dumping is accepted in exchange for debt rescheduling or for additional Western aid.

This almost happened in Guyana in 1988, when the government secretly agreed to allow the disposal of industrial wastes from the United States in this country. When the public learned about this, a big campaign was mounted against the deal. The People's Progressive Party played an active part among those who took to the streets in protest. The campaign bore fruit, and the government was forced to abandon its plans. This experience has helped the PPP recognise the role the people can play in environmental protection when they are aware of the real issues. It has also shown that with a positive programme on ecological problems, the party can mobilise vast numbers of people.

But a viable programme and greater ecological consciousness are only one, although important, facet. The main problem lies elsewhere—in the unequal relations between the developed capitalist countries and the Third World.

Today, communist and workers' parties in the developing countries are faced with the complex task of working out developmental programmes that do not threaten the environment.

As new, ecologically oriented social movements arose, the Communists were *late* in responding constructively to

this challenge. The ranks of the Greens have grown considerably over the past two decades. These movements are now represented in many parliaments in Western Europe. In fact, in contesting elections, a party must have a viable environmental policy. Our lag with regard to these issues was due mainly to the dogmatic and simplistic belief that only when the class struggle was resolved in favour of the working class—that is, when it took power—would it be able to tackle and solve other, "secondary" questions, among which ecology was, until recently, placed.

Fortunately, we are now moving away from such stereotypes. Communists in Western Europe have accumulated much experience in tackling these issues. The vigorous discussion of such problems in the socialist countries will no doubt result in major gains as the great potential of socialism is realised. These policies are in fact a return to the ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. To them, social liberation and freedom meant not only the abolition of exploitation of man by man but also humanity's harmonious relations with nature. But, although quite clearly pronounced, this aspect of their work was sadly overlooked. Today, however, many of their ideas are being seen in a new light, and we are rediscovering their profound understanding of the issues involved.

Engels, for instance, displayed remarkable foresight when he wrote: "Let us not ... flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first. The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that with these farinaceous tubers they were at the same time spreading scrofula. Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature—but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly."¹

Communists must now further develop the Marxist concept of the environment. Paradoxically, although the communist movement was perhaps the first one in the world to

have a conscious environmental basis, we have failed to advance it in modern times.

Guyana needs a well thought-out national programme for the rational utilisation of our rich but exhaustible natural resources—a programme in the spirit of the new attitudes that are gaining ground internationally. We must collate all the evidence we have about the effects of damage to the environment. Moreover, we must have a socio-economic-ecological programme which will make development sustainable. At the moment, we have both tremendous wastage and under-utilisation of our renewable resources, such as balata (rubber).

Of the 13 countries with rain forest vegetation, Guyana is the only one which still has the bulk of its rain forests intact. But this could change dramatically because of the present severe economic crisis. Under pressure from the IMF, the government is pursuing an open door policy to attract TNCs by providing them with tax concessions and cheap labour. But no manufacturing industries are being set up in urban areas. This is due to the country's dilapidated infrastructure and to the heavy losses of skilled labour through emigration. The foreign capital that is being attracted is therefore looking towards the vast and largely untapped mineral deposits and other resources (bauxite, gold and timber) which promise substantial returns on investment. There is a consensus that Guyana's rich natural resources should be used to raise the low living standards of our people. So far, however, their exploitation has been damaging the environment, laying in even greater problems for ourselves and future generations.

Let me try and list the main factors in the destruction of our forests. Firstly, Guyana is one of the world's leading producers of bauxite. This ore is strip-mined by both government and foreign companies over an area of some 400 square miles. To get to the mineral itself, large tracts of forest are destroyed and untold tons of topsoil are removed, leaving deep wounds in the land. No attempt is being made to salvage any of the timber destroyed. Furthermore, when a mine is exhausted, no refilling or reforestation takes place.

Secondly, thousands of acres of forest lands have been put at the disposal of the US, Canadian and Brazilian companies involved in large-scale gold mining. These forests are doomed: when the mines are exhausted, the TNCs will just pack their bags and leave, regardless of the environmental damage caused or the need for recultivation. A lot of harm to the flora and fauna is also being done by local gold seekers, who operate mainly on small rivers and creeks in the interior. They use suction pumps to bring the gravel from the bottom, causing river banks to cave in, blocking rivers and creating artificial lakes and swamps.

The damage is no less and the wastage even greater in logging operations. As much as 25% to 50% of a tree is wasted: tree tops, branches and leaves are discarded. Many trees of inferior quality are destroyed in the process of selecting those in demand. No effort is made to use the unwanted parts for charcoal and electricity, both in short supply. Instead, trees are being cut indiscriminately for fuel,

and the primitive methods of making charcoal greatly enhance the possibility of forest fires. Some valuable species of hardwood are under threat of disappearing altogether. These choice products are in demand overseas and account for 80% of our lumber exports. There is a big rush for these species, with some companies going hundreds of miles into the interior for them without any programme for replanting.

Ill-conceived government plans also threaten our forests with avoidable depletion. For example, a grandiose hydroelectric scheme envisaged the flooding of some 5,000 square miles of forests and the forcible removal of indigenous Amerindian tribes. Fortunately, public pressure and lack of funding forced the government to abandon the project. Then there was the scheme to build a road connecting Brazil and Guyana. This, too, was shelved. However, before these schemes were rejected, millions of dollars were wasted and vast areas of forests destroyed.

A relatively new problem has also arisen. As unemployment continues its upward spiral, and the jobs available are very low-paying, many people are turning to the lucrative business of exporting our wildlife. Many of our birds (parrots, macaws, toucans and canaries), monkeys, alligators, tigers, snakes, aquarium fishes, etc. are being sent abroad, legally and illegally. This is sad, because in our forests there are approximately 1,200 animal species, many of them listed in the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and in the US Endangered Species and Natural Resources Red Data Books. Extinction threatens 98 species of birds, 27 species of mammals and 19 species of reptiles.

Changes are urgently needed in the structure of our exports in order to shift the emphasis as much as possible from raw materials (logs, poles and planks) to semi-finished and finished products (furniture and handicrafts). There are some 200 manufacturers of secondary wood products, most of them cottage industries. Of these, 30 are in the export business; 7 of them monopolise 97% of total exports. Paradoxically, Guyana, so rich in timber, is forced to import forest products, particularly paper. In 1984 and 1985 we spent G\$13.3 million and G\$11.4 million, respectively, on the importation of paper, which is equivalent to 90% and 64% of our earnings from the sales of forest products in those same years.

Like other developing countries, Guyana cannot cope alone with the complex and costly undertaking of protecting the environment and ensuring the rational use of natural resources. To accomplish this, international cooperation is needed. Mikhail Gorbachov has put forward the idea of an International Environmental Centre, to be set up under UN auspices in order to look at the ecological consequences of various economic projects. The proposal is consonant with the interests of countries like Guyana which do not have the necessary technical potential. At a time when the country has opened its doors to foreign capital, international cooperation can be decisive in preventing environmental catastrophe.

In this connection, let me share some of the conclusions stemming from reflections on how environmental problems should be solved. *First, the West must now match its words with deeds and stop exporting its wastes and "dirty industries" to the periphery and stop sending obsolete technologies to those who need modern techniques (particularly in power production, agriculture and waste disposal) for using natural resources rationally. After all, these priceless resources are a common heritage of all humanity.*

Second, the cruel exploitation of the Third World, which leads to poverty and, consequently, to political turmoil, must end. What is needed is a restructuring of economic relations to promote development, economic vitality, democracy and social progress. This would in turn help towards the solution of purely environmental problems.

Third, an international effort is needed to curb wasteful consumption in the West which has a negative effect on the rain forests in Central and South America.

Fourth, in order to preserve flora and fauna we need to organise large national parks, not only to protect species from extinction but also as a laboratory for the development of more effective agricultural husbandry and new medicines.

Finally, we must have a massive educational campaign to make our people ecologically literate. Environmental consciousness should be inculcated in children at a very early age. It is therefore important to work for the incorporation of ecology into school curricula.

We all have to understand that, no matter how expensive, it is cheaper to preserve the environment now than to try and restore it after the damage has been done.

¹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, pp. 74-75.

MAKE PEACE WITH NATURE

John S. BAKER
Ecologist (Australia)

The joint threats to humankind's and Nature's survival are often perceived as separate and discrete, not interconnected in any way. But in his address to the United Nations last year, Mikhail Gorbachov posed this dangerous duality, these twin horns of humankind's and Nature's dilemma, before the world community. He said that we could end the era of wars and of aggression against Nature only by working

John S. Baker, a long-time trade union activist, is now a representative of the US-based Earth Regeneration Society. He conducts semesters of lectures for students and workers in Australia and the United States.

together. This means recognition at the highest levels of world influence that, whilst humankind may gradually be coping with the war threat, it is still unable to establish proper relations with its own environment. Gorbachov and his colleagues, like some North Americans, now see the resources and the state of Nature as crucial to the continued existence of the human race.¹ Let me, too, try and prove this point by examining the subject in a context which may surprise people mostly concerned about their day-to-day problems. I am referring to the future of Earth.

Is the planet's climate in danger of getting warmer or colder?² There are many reasons why the public knows little about this. They include the general lack of proper attention to a problem which seems far removed from pressing current issues, the reluctance to "traumatise" the audience, and the inability of the latter to analyse the scope, the conditions and the feasibility of climate control. Finally, some quarters have a direct stake in concealing or distorting the truth. For example, during the 1970s the US energy interests, members of the intelligence community and a group of scientists influenced by agrochemical, coal and oil corporations launched a vast research and media control campaign which excluded weather cooling trends from research and information channels (thereby distorting CIA-commissioned weather crisis-impact studies). This campaign was the main reason why it was widely believed in the West that the world's climate would become warmer, not colder. The reappraisal of this view came during the mid-1980s, when the extending ice cover, building glaciers and reductions in crop yields forced hard facts and older wisdom into the media.

The onset of a new Ice Age was predicted by the Italian biologist Cesare Emiliani back in 1955. The transition from the present interglacial period to the next Ice Age may well be accelerated by the buildup of CO₂ in the atmosphere.

Accepted measurement of CO₂ parts per million in the atmosphere commenced around 1959, when the level was close to what had persisted from a century before—about 270 p.p.m. Stimulated by deforestation, the demineralisation of soils and the burning of increased amounts of wood and fossil fuels, this figure has now risen to some 350 p.p.m.³ Beyond this watershed, a rapid slide into the next Ice Age may begin.

Whether this process is accelerated or not, prominent climatologists and ecologists in France, Canada, the United States and the USSR—for example, Irving Kaplan, Bertrand Schultz, Fred Wood and Victor Kovda—agree that the interglacial period is bound to culminate in a new state of the world's climate.

Judging by the previous Ice Ages, this change will hardly be favourable. But the question is whether a drastic change in the climate can be prevented. The objective is not only to survive, avert nuclear war and preserve flora and fauna by eliminating environmentally dangerous industrial cycles, but also to save the planet from what seems to be a historically inevitable Ice Age—in other words, to navigate our Spaceship Earth safely between the Scylla of the man-made

"greenhouse effect" and the Charybdis of a colder climate which, to a certain degree, also depends on man (for example, in the event of a "nuclear winter"). It is the goal of *providing our planet with global means of temperature control* which will safeguard the family of nations and our remote descendants against the coming of Ice Ages 30, 200 and even 5,000 years from now. The enormous scope of this dramatic challenge posed by Nature is mind-boggling, and it calls for the highest possible degree of concerted action and the pooling of resources by all people on all continents. It is time we reflected on industrialisation and energy sources in terms not only of their impact on the environment but also of their place in the delicate system of *constructive climate control*. This is how we can favourably influence the course of the present Quarternary.

How will nations and various interests respond to the call for priority for such a super-problem? Where do we begin now? Radical solutions have been outlined, among others, by a group of scientists and unionists in the California-based Earth Regeneration Society. They have drafted an emergency climate stabilisation and earth regeneration bill and submitted it to the US Congress. The bill assumes nothing less than that the people of the United States—the scientific community, the government and the working classes—can *not only halt the cycle of Ice Age history but also reverse this cycle and stabilise Nature within climate rhythms and CO₂ levels prevailing at the beginning of this century*.

The beginnings of the programme are promising. A glacial rock/dust re-mineralising programme to restore fertility and health to the soil stocks of the planet will cost about one-third of what it now takes to produce pesticides and chemical fertilisers. A rock-meal of talcum-like fineness can be produced cheaply and in almost every region, while grain and vegetables will not be contaminated with insecticides or nitrates and crop yields will increase 40% to 50%. This is only one of the many prospective contributions to the effort to save Nature and the human race. It is also important that the soil regeneration programme can create up to 20 million jobs.

Opposition to a global remineralisation and reforestation programme by the chemical/fertiliser/pesticide corporations of the US, UK, France and West Germany is inevitable. They are still preparing for chemical and bacteriological warfare. Their great wealth has been accumulated from production methods which have poisoned and polluted vast areas of all continents. They showed their form in the recent frustration of attempts to ensure immediate and complete prevention of further damage to the ozone layer. Prime Minister Thatcher imposed her option—to protect the ozone layer, but not until the year 2000, when the stocks of CFCs (freons) are exhausted.

Meanwhile, Gorbachov's appeal to the General Assembly followed the trend leading to a better global and regional political climate and to the peaceful settlement of conflicts. And where there is a will to end wars, there is a way of

transcending the aggressiveness displayed by corporations and their politicians in their pursuit of profit.

At the same time, Gorbachov touched upon an even more universal, immediate and complex issue. Ending the era of wars is an important goal in its own right, but ending the aggression against Nature will create the right conditions not only for establishing a non-violent and nuclear-free world but also for ensuring harmony between the human race and the environment. This is much more than a ride on the Green bandwagon.

Gorbachov called for UN machinery which could respond immediately to environmental damage and for the launching of a special weather satellite to monitor pollution and the planet's surface temperatures. Indeed, *it is no longer man, but Nature, which is dictating a programme of action*. No longer should discontinuities in peace movements be accepted because of minor differences, and no longer should rejection of environmental safeguards by corporations and governments be accepted as final without the agreement of peace and disarmament movements. Nonaggression against Nature and nonaggression against nations should be indivisible.

People are now better informed about issues of war and peace, and public opinion is intervening with greater confidence in decision-making on these matters. But the situation is different with regard to Nature. Moreover, ignorance leads to countless small and large acts of aggression against the environment. Many people even claim some "right" to be environmentally destructive. However, the individual is often restrained legally from his minor acts of environmental damage—but not so much those exercising corporate "rights" to spoil the environment by mining and quarrying, degrading soils, misusing water resources, exhausting marine habitats, depleting the ozone layer, polluting the oceans and the atmosphere, toxifying food chains and thus poisoning present and future generations. Once capital, particularly monopoly capital, is applied to some process, then environmental damage is induced, and it is defensible in law.

Pollution goes on almost unrestrained, proliferating through the fault of the biggest corporate "environmental rapists" who, through long-held privilege, dominate agriculture and industry. They have rejected the homeostasis of wilderness as incompatible with progress in agriculture, industry and the service sector. EXXON, Royal Dutch Shell, Union Carbide and others make and break governments, fuel wars and literally exterminate whole communities (as with the disaster in Bhopal).

The commitment to vigorous and conscious action against the TNCs as the biggest despoilers of the environment is growing among Australian workers and trade unionists, particularly in view of the deteriorating environmental situation at home. This commitment is consonant with global protection programmes and with the goal of human survival. It will help in the creation of the greatest universal alliance so that Earth may abide forever.

The question of allies on whom success will really

depend is central to the platform of ending the aggression against Nature.

The labour movement's international associations—the biggest forces that have a stake in this effort—have so far hardly been tested. The World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, the World Christian Trade Unions and the International Labour Organisation have confined their concerns largely to humankind in work, to men and women as resources, products, commodities and casualties of the agricultural and industrial production systems. But neither these organisations, nor the rest of humankind, can afford to ignore the crisis of Nature.

As capitalism developed, workers embarked on a long and arduous journey to a fairer, kinder and more abundant

life—but also, as it turned out, to a more polluted environment. It was an obvious shortcoming of the founders of scientific socialism and its followers that for a long time, Nature was seen only as something to be mastered and tamed, not as something in which people were to live and work together and which they should respect.

But does Gorbachov's appeal to end the "dual" aggression deny the attitudes of Marx and Engels towards humankind and the forces of Nature? It does not. On the contrary, it is a call for nations, their workers and even their more aggressive and extremist elements to make peace with Nature, in order that the human race and Nature itself can unite in meeting the challenge of their age-old combatant—weather.

¹ As Javier Perez de Cuellar said in his report to the current 44th UN General Assembly, some 3 million people have been killed and about 1 billion otherwise affected by natural disasters over the past 20 years.—Ed.

² Those who hold that the climate is getting warmer cite the dramatic increase in the scope of man's economic activity (e.g., the "greenhouse effect"), while those who maintain that temperatures will decline proceed from astronomical observations (the inclination of the Earth's axis, the position of the Earth and the Sun in the galaxy, etc.). Scientists estimate that the Ice Ages had a duration of some

100,000 years each, with interglacial periods of 10,000 to 20,000 years. The present interglacial period is considered to be ending, and it is very important to estimate when and on what scale the next Ice Age will begin.—Ed.

³ Add to this the data about the imbalances in atmospheric CO₂ by the beginning of the 1980s: 250 billion tons of CO₂ generated annually, with the burning of fuels generating 23 billion tons against 240 billion tons absorbed, including 200 billion tons absorbed in plant photosynthesis.—Ed.

* * *

ATHLETES FOR PEACE

Peter WERNER
(Netherlands)

In the 1960s Peter Werner became prize-winner in diving and freestyle wrestling at the Rome and Tokyo Olympic Games. Many top places in world competitions followed. Then, tragically, he lost the use of his legs because of a medical error, and for 11 years now he has been confined to a wheelchair.

But misfortune could not break Peter's spirit and he remains committed to the lofty ideals of friendship and mutual understanding. He is active in the international movement of Athletes for Peace. Last summer he joined 120 more athletes from 8 European countries in a 3,000-km trek from Paris to Moscow.

WMR asked Werner to talk about his life and share his views on the tasks facing the peace forces today.

I was born in 1942. I don't remember my father, mother or sister, who were all killed by the Nazis. I grew up in an orphanage. Now I am married, and have a 13-year-old daughter. Of course, I don't want her or other children to experience anything like I had to go through. The grim realities of the nuclear age make us especially concerned about our children. What is at stake is not just their happiness, but human survival in general, and there is no time to waste. Better go see the dentist while you still have your teeth, so I decided to join the antiwar movement before it's too late...

Athletes are popular everywhere. Every day millions of people turn to the sports pages in their newspapers to find the latest football, hockey, tennis, chess or boxing news. That is why the contribution of a well-known basketball player, swimmer or gymnast in peace actions is very important: these people are appreciated as "stars" and trusted and respected as open-hearted and simple people.

The purpose of campaigns like the Paris-Moscow trek is forcefully to attract public attention to the menace of a nuclear catastrophe and to urge every effort to avert it. It is

undoubtedly important that politicians and diplomats discuss these matters and reach accords. But should we sit back and wait for them to give us peace?

People in the West often say that the peace movement is manipulated by Moscow, which is pulling all the strings. But is it only the Kremlin that needs peace? Don't I need it? Many people think as I do, and they act. The peace trek and many other campaigns like it would have been impossible without Western sponsors. Peace initiatives are coming from all sides. For example, our movement, Athletes for Peace, originated in West Germany. In 1983, many amateur and professional athletes began protesting against the NATO countries' rearmament with Pershing and cruise missiles. In 1987, a group of cyclists crossed West Germany from north to south in a "peace race", and in the process the idea was born of holding an even more impressive event. So last summer another race started from the banks of the Seine on the eve of the bicentennial of the French Revolution and finished in Moscow on August 6, Hiroshima Day.

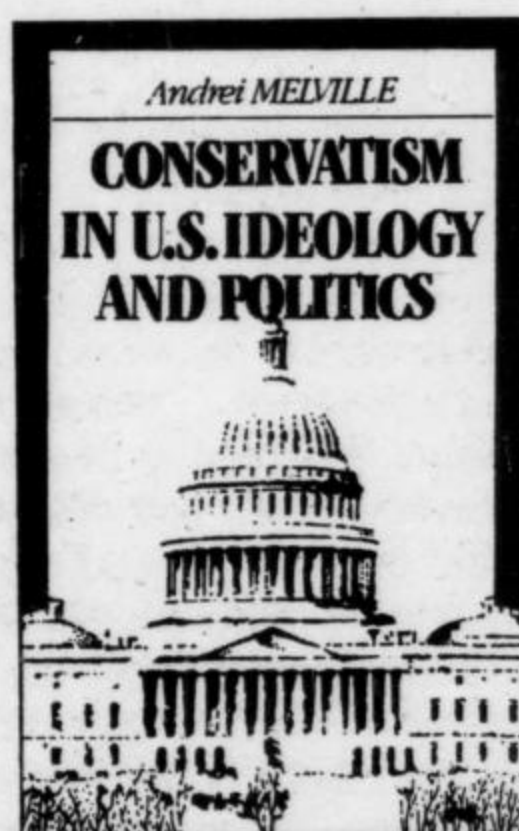
This joint endeavour helped cement contacts between peace campaigners from different countries. We had an opportunity to exchange views and share experience. We had fun together, and shared good things and bad. Those were unforgettable days!

I don't believe in the concept of nuclear deterrence. It is a vestige of old thinking, steeped in the formula "if you

want peace, prepare for war". I think we should drop scare tactics altogether. Who are we trying to scare? Ourselves! Or take the much-publicised modernisation of nuclear weapons in Europe. It is a very risky game, I would say, just within the rules.

And the "enemy image"? Contention, combat and the striving to prevail are intrinsic in sport. But it has no room for intimidation, lies, slander or hatred. Our ideals are nobleness, honesty, friendship, understanding, and perfection in body and spirit. Unfortunately, many misconceptions still persist in the Netherlands and other West European countries, and there are fears of the Soviet Union's "aggressiveness" (although they have diminished considerably thanks to Gorbachov). Many of the socialist countries' proposals and initiatives, which I think constructive, seem to catch the West by surprise, and it stonewalls. So peace campaigners have a great deal to do.

During the race we went past Chernobyl. Many of my companions must have thought that even a conventional missile hitting an atomic power plant would cause irreparable damage. If we really want happiness for ourselves and our children, we must take an active stand on many issues, primarily on ridding the world of deadly weapons. Athletes can make their contribution to this sacred cause.



Conservatism in U.S. Ideology and Politics

A prominent Soviet Americanologist delves into the history and roots of conservatism in U.S. thinking and political life, examines the distinctive features of Reaganism and looks at possible future trends in this context. Melville, A., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1988, Paper, Index, 229 pp. \$6.95

original American 19th century thinker, Romantic philosopher and writer whose work made a significant impact on the development of American culture, and on the world view of many more thinkers in other countries.

Pokrovsky, N., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1989, Paper, Bibliography, Index, 242 pp. \$5.95

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PROGRESS OF ECONOMIC REFORM IN THE USSR

Dr OTTO LATSIS

First Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the journal
Kommunist (USSR)

The goal of drastically reforming economic management was formulated by the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee. In this way new possibilities will be opened for using the advantages of socialism—not in words, as was the case over the decades, but in reality. More than a year ago I discussed in *WMR* some problems of especial concern to the Soviet people.¹ The present contribution deals with issues in the focus of attention of the Soviet political and economic leadership.

To begin with, a few words about the reasons behind the economic crisis in the USSR. The road we have been travelling since October 1917 has not been straight. In the 1920s, the organisation of production and distribution by methods of military communism was replaced with a New Economic Policy (NEP), based on commodity-money relations. Industrialisation, launched by the end of that decade, quickly propelled the country to a qualitatively new level of development; regrettably, NEP was dismantled in the process. By the outbreak of World War II the Soviet Union was Europe's biggest and the world's second biggest industrial producer. Realities, especially the complex international situation, made it imperative to give priority to basic industries.

However, due to our historical circumstances as the world's first, and for a long time only, socialist country we staked everything on what I would call the extraordinary method of development: it was a war-time economic model imposed to a large extent by objective circumstances and then solidified by Stalinist deformations. Naturally, it performed superbly in 1941-1945. The Soviet Union had one-half to one-third the combined industrial potential of Nazi Germany, its allies and the Nazi-occupied countries, and, moreover, lost half its industry in the early months of the war. Nevertheless, in sum it produced more weapons of a better quality than Germany did, and won the great Victory.

The glitter of that miracle blinded us for decades, and the command-administrative methods of the extensively developing economy took firm root in the country. The

"rationale" of our former economic strategy was production for the sake of production.

The April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee launched a course of *intensive economic growth*, because without it all social programmes would be little more than daydreaming. The way out seemed to be a far-ranging restructuring of the national economy on the basis of new achievements in science and technology and an overhaul of the economic mechanism and the management system. Structural and investment policies were to be revised. The progress of transformations, however, was affected by the momentum of old thinking and economic processes, by the haste with which the early steps were taken, and by clashes between different concepts. The transition has proved more difficult than expected.

The new economic system introduced in early 1988 is so far incomplete: no reform of wholesale prices has been put into effect, the distribution of the means of production according to centrally fixed quotas has not been replaced with wholesale trade in them, and the functions of the sectoral ministries have remained unchanged, while enterprises have been given new rights. The new, progressive model is having teething troubles: mistakes are being made and experience accumulated. Meanwhile, the old mechanism no longer works as it used to, but is a drag on the economy. Sharp public criticism and discontent with the results of transformations have been growing in society, especially in the past year, and the polarisation of opinions and moods has been increasing. Coal strikes in the Ukraine, Siberia and Vorkuta in 1989 and stoppages in other industries are evidence of these processes.

The main reason is, I think, that people have not tasted the real fruit of perestroika. Its processes are going ahead, good decisions have been made, new important bills, including those on ownership, on the land and its use, on leasing and lease relations, etc., were discussed by the autumn session of the USSR Supreme Soviet. But everyday life is growing worse, not better, as empty-shelved shops demonstrate.

Two years ago the situation on the domestic market began to worsen dramatically. In 1986-1987 alone the supply of goods to retail trade networks fell short of the plan target by 33 billion roubles' worth. According to the figures of the Institute of the Market and Consumer Demand of the USSR Ministry of Trade, in 1988, only 23 of the 211 groups of foodstuffs were considered non-deficit, while the situation with non-food consumer goods was even worse.

Meanwhile, production was not reduced, nor did the overall volume of consumption diminish. Paradoxically, the production of most basic goods has grown over the past few years, in some cases considerably. But supply is still far behind consumer demand.

For example, in the 1950s people were queuing up to buy black-and-white TV sets, while ten years ago colour sets were offered on credit because of overproduction. Now there are almost none in the shops, although in 1988 production increased by 6%, including an almost 25% rise in the production of colour-TV sets. In the nine months of 1989 a total of 7.3 million TV sets, including 4.6 million colour ones, were turned out (an increase of 10% over the same period last year)—but it is still a problem to buy one. Or take detergents: last year 80 tons were sold in Moscow every day; this year's sales are 300 tons a day, but people complain that they cannot buy any. There is no soap, tooth-paste, notebooks, batteries, cigarettes and many other goods in the shops.

The reason behind this consumer rush is the *disorganisation of the market*. As a result goods produced in increasing quantities do not reach the shelves but go for special sales at enterprises or are sold under the counter, and many of them fall into the hands of black-marketeers. An unwelcome side effect of this situation is rationing. Meat, sausage, butter and sugar are rationed in many parts of Russia. People no longer look at prices but buy whatever is available. This grave situation is fuelling political discontent as well as economic and social problems.

But why have things come to such a sad pass when the economic reform is under way, when many bureaucratic distortions have been removed, when we have a more rational five-year plan, and when economic management has been upgraded?

The main reason behind the destruction of the market seems to be the dramatically swollen *state budget deficit*. These figures were a closely guarded secret until recently. The first ever admission that over the years state expenditures had been in excess of revenue was made at the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet in October 1988. The budget deficit therefore is not a recent problem, but the result of economic imbalances, huge subsidies, enormous losses and other factors over past years. The first session of the newly-elected USSR Supreme Soviet learned in August 1989 that the budget deficit stood at 120 billion roubles. This is a huge amount, almost a quarter of the state's annual spending. The huge mass of paper money not backed by commodities is a result of years of overprinting and unchecked state spending.

The budget deficit is explained primarily by the drop in world oil prices in the second half of the 1980s, which forced the country to save its hard currency. That was done, unfortunately, according to ministries' recipes rather than in the interests of the population and the state budget. The country continued to buy a lot of industrial equipment for new plants in order to boost production. Basically there is nothing wrong with such spending, but in the later years much of the imported equipment was consigned to warehouses because there were no plants to use it. Grain was imported as well, while domestically grown crops were left to rot in the fields. It has been revealed that vast amounts of hazardous chemical fertilisers, which capitalist countries do not use but fob off on developing states, were bought by the USSR. At the same time the smallest item of expenditures, one which does not offer much in terms of savings but which is badly needed by people and greatly benefits the budget, was cut back drastically; I mean the import of consumer goods, which offers the largest rouble returns on hard currency expenditures.

As a result of a saving of several hundred million hard-currency roubles on consumer imports in 1985-1987, retail trade did not get 8.2 billion roubles' worth of goods, and the financial situation worsened considerably. The trend continued into 1988, and imports were cut by another 400 million hard-currency roubles. But every hard-currency rouble spent on consumer imports brings in 10 to 12 roubles from domestic sales. As a result, during the last three years around 40 billion roubles were lost because of the drop in the world oil prices and the resultant reduction of consumer imports.

The ham-fisted campaign against alcoholism has cost the state almost as much again. It was too straightforward, I think, with vineyards being destroyed, distilleries closed down and hundreds, if not thousands, of beer breweries converted to soft drinks production. Undeniably, such measures, especially during the first year of the campaign brought down drink-related crime, helped improve industrial performance and increased average life expectancy. But in 1986, some 10 billion roubles in revenue were lost because of the decline in taxes on vodka and wine sales. At the same time, drug addiction and other substance abuse increased, as did moonshining, with bootleggers and illegal distillers pocketing money once earned by the state.

Another dent in the budget was caused by the outlays on the clean-up after the tragic incident at Chernobyl more than three years ago. Originally put at 8 billion roubles, the cost of the clean-up has certainly exceeded this figure.

The slackening of control over cash earnings has also contributed to the shortages. For example, although in the nine months of 1989 GNP increased by 3.6% and labour productivity by 2.2%, the country's wage fund swelled by 8.5%. It is of course a good thing that enterprises themselves now apportion their wage funds. But wages are not always pegged to the real end results of production, and many shopfloor workers or research engineers are receiving double their wages for an infinitesimal improvement in

performance. In October 1989, the USSR Supreme Soviet enforced taxes on the wage funds of enterprises in order to prevent them from paying out unearned money.

But the main reason behind the catastrophic budget deficit seems to be the *operations of ministries and departments*. Primarily, there was the massive investment in new capital construction. Paradoxically, new factories were being built while many existing ones had only the manpower to operate one shift. New irrigation canals were being laid, with the Ministry of Land Reclamation and Water Resources of the USSR spending 130 billion roubles for the purpose between 1971 and 1988—and precious little to show for it in economic returns. The country now has 700,000 kilometers of canals—or half as much again as motor roads—but the ministry has asked for another 230 billion roubles for its projects to the year 2005. It makes little sense to keep a ministry which returns a mere 30 kopecks per rouble of investment.

The task of cutting back unfinished construction was formulated by the 27th CPSU Congress at a time when there were over 300,000 big and small projects under construction. But the old thinking prevailed, and capital investment targets for the current five-year plan period were set at 170 billion roubles a year, up from an average of 125 billion roubles in 1981-1985. Yet, in 1988 we went so far as to mothball some of the unfinished projects. Naturally, that move created some social problems and difficulties for the work collectives concerned, and involved certain outlays. Projects worth a total of 24.2 billion roubles were frozen. But it turned out later that new projects to the tune of around 60 billion roubles were launched simultaneously.² This, I think, is the root cause of the disaster which has hit the state budget and, ultimately, the consumer market.

The introduction of cost-accounting at enterprises seemed to be the answer: they would use their money to expand production, and do that economically and thriftily. But what makes the reform half-hearted is, I repeat, that the ministries still uncontrollably command huge state capital investments. They actually spend money they have not earned, but receive from the state budget—and as much as they can get the government to give them—or wring from the enterprises subordinated to them. The resources at their disposal still remain bureaucratic property. Departments spend money arbitrarily without taking any interest in the resultant social effect. For example, it is more profitable for steelworkers to boost output in terms of weight instead of producing quality and special steels in sophisticated waste-saving shapes which are in demand.

Do we need so many ministries and departments? I personally don't think we do, although I understand the logic of those who would like to keep them. A lively debate on the subject was held at the session of the USSR Supreme Soviet in the summer of 1989, with the pros and cons presented forcefully. Today, the number of national ministries has been cut to roughly 50, but figures don't matter: the important thing is that their operations have clearly come into conflict with the standards of efficient

economic management. I see a direct relationship between the departments' old functions and spendthrift ways on the one hand, and the budget deficit and shortages on the consumer market on the other.

The same session approved amendments to the Law on State Enterprise (Amalgamation), promulgated about two years ago. Seemingly insignificant, these amendments are *fundamentally important*. In particular, enterprises leased out to their work collectives have the right to withdraw from ministries. Factories can withdraw from amalgamations, which is especially important because some of the latter are in fact disguised subdivisions of ministries. Moreover, enterprises are allowed to form voluntarily new amalgamations, concerns and joint-stock societies and associations. This centralism is most welcome because it grows out of the interests of the production collectives themselves rather than being imposed arbitrarily by bureaucrats. Work collectives have the right to choose under which form of cost-accounting to operate, including leasing, joint-stock ventures, etc. Enterprises can enter the securities market, issue stock and draw loans for specific projects. In short, the amendments to the law were a severe blow to the monopoly of ministries and departments.

The earlier decisions on improving the country's finances laid emphasis on increasing revenue, which is important, but clearly not sufficient. Current plans aim also at *cutting back expenditures*, including a substantial reduction—by almost one-third—in centralised state capital investment (but not in the outlays made by enterprises themselves), real reductions in defence spending and administrative costs, a war on losses and squandering, austerity measures in the national economy, etc.

For example, in 1990 state expenditures on new construction in the production sector will be cut by an average of 30%, and even by 40% in some industries. Purchases of consumer goods will be increased simultaneously: almost 32 billion roubles' worth (in retail prices) will be supplied to the domestic market. It is planned to import 2 billion roubles' worth of medicines and 1.6 billion roubles' worth of raw and other materials for the light industry. The easiest way out, of course, is to boost such imports even more with the help of large Western credits. But since the country's external debt has reached 34 billion hard-currency roubles (the figure was first made public at the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR in June 1989), such credits would make our debt unmanageable. Debt-servicing would be a real burden, and we would have to export more than we import. I think that we are already close to the safety limit, and large loans would be destabilising.

Changing the structure of imports seems to be a better option. The plans are to cut purchases of equipment for heavy and other industries, which already have a backlog of unused hardware worth hundreds of millions dollars; to cut grain imports (roughly \$7.5 billion went on around 38 million tons in 1988) and to pay some of the hard currency thus saved to our own grain growers. I am glad to say that the latter measure was put into effect last August in

response to suggestions made at the Congress of People's Deputies of the USSR. Collective and state farms are paid in hard currency for durum wheat, legumes and oil-bearing seeds brought in over and above the average 1986-1988 yields, and are free to spend their earning as they see fit.

The main pillar of economic recovery is *the stabilisation of the consumer market*. Imports alone cannot do the job: the task is drastically to increase the production of consumer goods domestically. Frankly, it cannot be accomplished in a year or two, although in 1990 consumer goods production will grow by 13.5% (in retail prices) over the 1989 plan target, while GDP will only increase by 2.3%. But I would like to warn against the desire to saturate the market only with clothes, shoes and other everyday goods. The best bet would be new high-tech products, such as videos, household electronics, microwave ovens, etc. The conversion of defence plants, which have the necessary technology and knowhow, to the production of such goods will also help stabilise the market. Civilian products already make up 40% of the output of the defence industry, and the figure will exceed 60% by 1995.

Changes in retail prices were proposed a few years ago. Indeed, prices for many foodstuffs have been the same since 1947, and for meat since 1961, although those for manufactures and other goods have increased, of course. Some economists are suggesting that prices should be raised across the board to a level at which supply and demand are balanced on the market. Although in principle prices should be regulated precisely in this manner, the sociopolitical situation today is too precarious for such a step. Many economic problems would be resolved, but the side effects of such price rises are easy to foresee. Also, it would be unfair to make the people pay for the profligacy of our ministries and departments.

The priority is to cope with the excessive demand for production-related goods, artificially inflated due to the incompetence of ministries, superfluous industrial construction, etc. The next step is to balance the consumer market through a reduction in the inflationary financing of the state budget. Then the structure of retail prices can be changed, but only with a socially justified compensation in the form of wage and pension rises. Other socialist countries have already done this.

One of the more frequent questions asked about the Soviet economic reform concerns *the relationship between the plan and the market*. Are we sacrificing the former to the latter? I think that *market relations are impossible without efficient planning*. Unfortunately, the market is not yet working in our country in spite of the introduction of cost-accounting and the growing rights of enterprises. As I have said, administrative regulation has been slackened, while that by cost-and-benefit methods, through finances, has not been organised adequately.

Against the gloomy background of the worsening market situation, which has a depressing effect on people, *the changes for the better brought about by the economic*

reform have gone largely unnoticed. Moreover, drastic improvements are hard to make in such a short time.

Until recently *housing* was one of the more acute social problems. Over the past fifteen years housing construction has grown by less than 0.5% a year. Between 1986 and 1988 alone, housing turned over for tenancy increased by 15%, and 383.6 millions square metres of living space was built. Today, however, the reserves that were on the surface, so to speak, have been exhausted. The task now is to expand the production of building materials in order to sustain a doubling of housing construction over the next few years. Regrettably, the impressive progress here is not all that visible because of the dimensions of the problem: an increase of 15% over the 2 million flats that were built every year means an extra 300,000 flats annually, whereas the country's waiting list for new homes is 12 million. When will the last families on the list get new housing? Moreover, 30-40 million more families actually need better housing although they are considered slightly better off than others and have not been put on the waiting list.

Higher growth rates of *labour productivity* are another achievement of the reform. Several hundred thousand people have been released in material production as a result. But the labour market is still short of 10-15 million pairs of hands, so unemployment is not an immediate threat. Yet in some regions, especially in Central Asia, there is a sizable pool of free labour, which sometimes causes social conflicts.

The consumption of farm produce, especially the products of livestock-breeding, has increased. Milk and meat production has been growing by 3-4% a year over the past four years. But the increment is not that obvious in the pot.

Of course, the problems that have been piling up over the decades cannot be resolved overnight. The fulfillment of the 1989-1990 plan targets can check the deterioration of the economic situation and *stop the growth of social tensions*. The Soviet economy has all means at its disposal to begin working normally fairly soon: there are plentiful natural resources, the world's second largest industry and a powerful scientific and technological potential; a long-term concept of the reform is being developed; adequate economic mechanisms are being developed at enterprise level, and the processes of self-government and self-financing in the constituent republics are being worked out. We are going through the difficulties of transition, caused by our being 30-40 years late with the reform, and also by our inconsistency in introducing it.

A certain social mentality typical of socialism is also in the way. People tend to think, simplistically, that socialism is a system for the working people, which should protect and provide for everyone. It is a system of equal, and therefore the supposedly fairest, distribution. Such ideas have taken root in public consciousness, while Lenin's premise that socialism should have higher labour productivity than any other system has been relegated to the background.

We want to gain everything while losing nothing, and that is one of the difficulties of perestroika. But in politics we must make little sacrifices for the sake of large gains. The "advantage" of shoddy workmanship must finally go. Society must ultimately shake off its laziness, even though this offers an easier and more relaxed life than applying oneself to the limit. Unless such attitudes are left behind, our prospects are bleak.

We must not underestimate the *constructive work* done in the economy in the recent period in spite of all the present difficulties and the novelty of the problems. The national economic leadership is overcoming old stereotypes and shifting its efforts, which is the primary precondition of improvement.

It is heartening that the government has come to grips in earnest with the huge budget deficit. The original intention was, as the first Congress of People's Deputies was told, to cut it by 29 billion roubles in 1989 and by 34 billion roubles next year. But that would have been nowhere near enough for the necessary rapid improvement of the economic situation. Deputies' criticism made the government revise its programme, and the task now is to *cut the deficit back* to 60 billion roubles in 1990. It is a sensible and realistic, if tough, approach. If it is carried through, we will quickly be able to stabilise our finances.

The national economic development plan for 1990, ap-

proved by the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, has set a series of priorities in the social sphere. All sectors of the national economy will be effectively re-oriented primarily to meeting people's needs. The plan was keenly debated in Parliament. While noting its positive aspects, many speakers pointed out that no mechanism had been devised to couple planning with the market economy, and that the structural shift was not being backed with any serious reallocation of resources. The deputies' exacting attitude is explained by the fact that emergency measures are to be put into effect.

The draft laws mentioned above were considered in the same spirit; they are a package of basic measures designed to usher in a new stage of the economic reform and to prepare the ground for a drastic reconstruction of relations of production.

I am certain that the implementation of these measures will create the right conditions for the healthy functioning of the new economic system and for resolving pressing social problems. Only then will a stable and dynamic economic growth become a reality.

1 WMR, No. 7, 1988.

2 On October 1, 1989, unfinished capital construction was worth 204.1 billion roubles—a rise of 15% over October 1, 1988.—Ed.

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AGRICULTURE: A CZECHOSLOVAK SUCCESS STORY

Miroslav ZAJÍC

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The success of the agrarian policy pursued by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is evident in the development of our socialist agricultural production.

Throughout the past 40 years¹ the party has been relying on accurate and objective evaluations and using a creative approach in directing transformations in agriculture. As has been generally recognised, in farming we have achieved the level of the world's more developed countries, and our people are rightfully proud of their agriculture.

PAST EXPERIENCE

Under the bourgeois republic (1918-1939), almost 60% of all farmland was in the hands of large landowners, while

petty farmers holding up to 5 hectares each had between them about 15%. In attempting to resist the pressure of agrarian capital, the petty and middle peasants were already beginning to form crediting, trade, production and other societies of mutual assistance in the mid-19th century. Eventually these societies fell under the influence of agrarian-financial capital, but their original positive aspects gave rise to traditions which, given the relatively high cultural standards of the Czechoslovak countryside, contributed in the postwar period to the development of a modern agrarian sector and the assertion of cooperative democracy.

With the national and democratic revolution growing into a socialist one, the CPCz had to address new challenges in that field.

The alliance of the working class and toiling peasants played the decisive role. At that time it could be cemented only by winning peasants over to the party's side and by isolating the bourgeoisie from the mass of people. The party's agrarian policy was based on the democratic reorganisation of property and on improvements in the life of the working people. Emphasis was laid on a far-reaching land reform, which dramatically changed the rural socioeconomic structures. As a consequence, the middle peasants grew stronger, while the number of the rich diminished considerably, and there remained almost no poor, landless peasants. The reform was carried out along democratic lines: private ownership of the land was not abolished.

After the historic victory of the working people in February 1948, the 9th CPCz Congress decisively set Czechoslovak agriculture on a course of socialist transformations in order to develop the productive forces. That course was based on the idea of socialisation and on the principles and practical methods of Lenin's cooperative plan, which was a programme of reorganising petty-commodity structures.

ORIGINAL CONCEPT

At the same time the CPCz worked out an original concept for the development of agriculture which incorporated progressive traditions while following up on the steps taken in agriculture in the early postwar period. The main thing was the *principle of the voluntary, gradual, unforced organisation of production cooperatives in agriculture.*

The aggravation of the international situation in the early 1950s, the Cold War and the threat of another world conflict forced us, like all the other people's democracies, drastically to redistribute capital investments in favour of heavy industry, especially the defence industries. The pace of collectivisation was forced, which caused deviations from the concept. As a result, the material and technical infrastructures of the newly established integral farming cooperatives fell behind in spite of extensive material, financial and organisational aid from the working class.

There were also subjective mistakes. Haste and the mechanical duplication of the Soviet practice of the time, identified with Lenin's cooperative plan, resulted in violations of the principle of voluntary membership and in administration by decree. Grave conflicts came to a head in the countryside, and the rural reactionary forces joined in the struggle. More and more crimes were being committed against the socialisation drive by terrorists sent in by foreign secret services. These factors along with the lack of experience of organising large-scale production slowed down the pace of transformations and brought about an outflow of people from cooperatives.

The party did not lose heart in the face of difficulties but promptly responded to them by rectifying its policy and

giving more attention to the specific circumstances of Czechoslovakia.

What were these circumstances? The land was not nationalised, as has been mentioned above. From the start four successive types of cooperatives, from the lowest to the highest form, were planned to take effective account of the peasants' tradition of private ownership, their culture, and the technological infrastructure of agriculture. Nor did we forget that the major motive force in the countryside was the middle peasant. Well-to-do peasants did not have to be destroyed as a class. On the contrary, the 1949 law allowed them to join cooperatives and even to sit on their boards on the condition that petty and middle peasants were in the majority.

Gradually, the relationship between the cooperatives and the state began to change. The number of plan targets handed down from the centre was lessened, the cooperatives themselves were given a free hand, and economic incentives grew. Administrative restrictions on the organisation of subsidiary production were removed. From 1950 to 1960, the worth of their modern fixed assets grew from Kčs 41.5 billion to Kčs 71.1 billion.

Machine and tractor stations had a special role to play. In the early period of the cooperative movement these pools of farm technology and repair facilities performed the majority of mechanised operations and trained budding cooperators in using technology. They made a decisive contribution to shaping the technology of large-scale production, which was how the working class helped the peasants, thus cementing the alliance between the two classes.

The Communists' strategy and tactics, based on their analysis of realities, quickly paid off. The cooperatives grew stronger, and in the mid-1950s more peasants were persuaded to join them.

IMPRESSIVE PAYBACK

An historic turning point was achieved in 1959, when cooperatives became the prevalent agrarian sector. The stage was set for dramatic transformations in rural lifestyles. By that time the 12,560 integral farming cooperatives² accounted for 65% of all farmland, uniting 690,000 small and medium farms and almost 900,000 people.

The ten years of collectivisation saw considerable changes in the social composition of the cooperatives: while in the early years most of their members were petty farmers, the latter period was marked by the mass arrival of middle peasants.

Along with the socialisation of agriculture, production, far from diminishing, grew, food supply kept improving, and food rationing was phased out.

The cooperatives and state farms achieved economic stability. Organisation and management continued to improve, becoming more efficient, and cooperators' incomes

grew accordingly, approaching those in certain industries. This contributed to further transformations.

Working and living conditions in the countryside were a stabilising political factor during the 1968-1969 crisis: not a single cooperative disintegrated, and agrarian production did not shrink even in that troubled period.

Thanks to intensification, food supply kept improving during the subsequent period in spite of political and economic difficulties. Over the years the market has been steadily receiving foodstuffs of ever higher quality and greater variety.

Today the country is able to meet 98-99% of its food needs, the calorific value of the Czechoslovak diet even exceeding by 10% the norm recommended by nutritionists. Meat and egg consumption has grown considerably, while the demand for potatoes and flour has dropped accordingly.

Among the world's leading industrialised states and the CMEA member countries, Czechoslovakia ranks high in per capita food consumption. For example, it is ahead of Austria, Denmark, Holland, Sweden, Switzerland and Britain in meat consumption. Regrettably, our diet is poor in fruit and vegetables.

The practice of collectivisation in Czechoslovakia shows that the organisation of socialist cooperatives, far from reducing production, improves food supply to the population. Furthermore, it confirms the stabilising role of adequate food supply and its beneficial effect on the sociopolitical climate. The Czechoslovak experience of socialisation illustrated the imperative of creating appropriate material and technical infrastructures for the petty peasantry to go over to efficient and large-scale socialist commodity production. The performance of the Czechoslovak cooperatives is effective proof of the correctness of the party's agrarian policy as part of the strategy of building socialism in Czechoslovakia.

SOCIAL TRANSFORMATIONS

Rural life as a whole has flourished as a result of production successes.

The social and cultural gap between town and countryside that Czechoslovakia inherited from the past has been bridged. Like all the other working people, farmers are entitled to pensions and health care and have effective educational opportunities. All the amenities and comforts of city life are available to cooperative farmers and state farm workers.

The excellent conditions in Czechoslovak rural communities are common knowledge. A great role is played here by the world's densest network of bus routes, which link them to urban centres, and by the ready availability of cultural, health, retailing and other services. The Czechoslovak countryside has a number of advantages over the hustle and bustle of the big cities, particularly the chance to live in a healthier and more attractive environment.

All this explains why the number of skilled technical personnel is rapidly growing in agriculture. In 1963, around 1,000 specialists with higher education were employed; by 1987 there were over 35,000. This growth, among the world's fastest, testifies to the powerful and modern intellectual potential of our farming, which makes it possible to fulfil complex scientific and technological programmes.

The party began by linking rural reforms to cost-accounting, self-financing and concrete responsibility for economic performance. It always demanded that pay depend directly on the results of production, and that the principles of inner cooperative democracy and self-management be strictly observed. From the start executives in the cooperatives were elected, their boards had full powers, and their general meetings were the supreme governing bodies.

Characteristically, during the period of intensification, expansion programmes were backed up by a system of economic measures which took account of the specifics of individual farms, their different circumstances, and the level of development of their productive forces.

Today, when the Czechoslovak economy is being restructured, the cooperatives with their wealth of experience have proved capable of introducing the democratic methods of management speedily—one year ahead of plan—without great difficulties and more consistently than some production units.

The decision on the comprehensive restructuring of the national economic mechanism was taken by the CPCz Central Committee at a plenary meeting in late 1987 as the result of an intensive search for the optimum way of converting the economy from the predominantly extensive way of development to one of intensification and efficiency.

NEW MECHANISM

The agrarian sector was also the subject of discussion before the plenary meeting. The public wanted to know, for example, if changes of principle on such a scale were also necessary in agriculture, which was effectively coping with its key tasks. The potential risks and difficulties of drastic reorganisation were pointed out.

It was necessary to decide in principle whether to fundamentally restructure the economic mechanism of the agro-industrial complex, or to preserve it with minor corrections and changes. The decision was unequivocal: in spite of its achievements, our agriculture was clearly *underutilising its material, technical and human potential*, and was able to contribute far more to the creation of the national income. Hence the logical conclusion that the comprehensive restructuring of management was as essential in the agro-industry as in any other sector.

A long-term socioeconomic analysis of the specific characteristics of agriculture and its dissimilarities with industry also demonstrated that its relative isolation from the other sectors had been largely overcome. The nature of

work in the agro-industry had become very much like that in industry in general. It has come a long way from the traditional farm. For example, farming now is bound up with non-farming operations. More and more agrarian combines are being established, and various new links are being created between agriculture and the rest of the national economy.

The principal aim of the economic mechanism put into operation on January 1, 1989 was to cut production costs and to save on live labour, which necessitated changes in planning and management. As a result, progressive taxation was replaced with an across-the-board 50% tax on the wage fund and on profits, while the procurement prices were increased. The differentials for procurement prices were raised for the farms operating in less favourable physical and climatic conditions. Now only two target figures are fixed for cooperatives by the state. Intermediate administrative structures between the producers and the central management were abolished, and the staff of the national ministry of agriculture was cut by half. The cooperatives were given greater autonomy, including the right to sign international contracts.

The new regulations mean more difficult economic tasks for the agricultural enterprises, but now they have far more room for initiative and decision-making in using the potential of the agro-industry for the benefit of society as a whole.

The new economic mechanism has been in operation for less than a year, and it is still too early to evaluate in detail the production and economic performance of the cooperatives and the food industries. But the atmosphere in the work collectives is a good indicator of its effect. Most managers and rank-and-file workers have become far more active, and the party and public organisations are showing greater initiative. People are displaying increasing interest in the expansion and greater efficiency of their enterprises, putting in more effort, and looking for ways of cutting production costs. Scientific and technological advances are being introduced on a larger scale, and better use is being made of the new opportunities for enterprise. Management is being rationalised and cost-accounting carried further without any prodding. These changes for the better show that the right steps have been taken.

The agro-industrial complex is thus pursuing a major goal of the current qualitative transformations in the national economy, that of creating the conditions for the full-scale use of the productive forces, including the tremendous potential of our agriculture.

An important problem we have inherited from the past, that of the alienation of the peasant from the function of the socialist entrepreneur (which should be inherent in the cooperative owner of the means of production), is gradually being resolved. Cooperators are revising their underestimation of cost-accounting, which worked efficiently during the establishment of cooperatives and the early consolidation of large-scale commodity production.

Our duty is to rectify these deformities, which are a product of the bureaucratic management and administra-

tion by decree practised in the past. *We want peasants to be not simply nameless cogs in the technological machine, but active producers with a sense of responsibility for their work, the quality of which decides their share of the redistributed goods and services.*

Although Czechoslovakia is virtually self-sufficient in food, we are not planning to reduce the growth rates of production or its intensity, nor are we content with the labour productivity level we have achieved.

The priorities that should be tackled by joint efforts include high production costs; excessive material and energy inputs per unit of output; failure to meet the targets for the priority growth of crop farming, primarily in fodder crops; chronic difficulties with cultivation and processing of sugar beet, vegetables and fruit; unjustified differences between the economic performance of individual regions and enterprises, with some constantly lagging behind others; and the poor quality of some foodstuffs.

How can these problems be resolved and the agro-industrial complex restructured? Solutions must proceed from the assumption that the potential of large-scale socialist agriculture in Czechoslovakia is far from exhausted.

FORECASTS AND SOLUTIONS

In order to set targets and priorities for agriculture, we should have a good idea of the working and living conditions in the country after the year 2010, and specifically of its food needs, i.e., the nutritional patterns and the required amounts of food, and also of the environmental imperatives. A forecast for the development of rural communities must be drawn up as objectively as possible. Short-term plans can be based on estimates of our requirements and resources and on a comparative analysis of the domestic situation and world trends.

The latest achievements in science must be used to draw up a concept meeting the present needs and to direct its implementation by cost-and-benefit methods.

Until recently, concrete initiatives for improvements in the agro-industry used mainly to come from front-ranking cooperatives. The main incentive to strong cooperatives has always been full and well-developed cost-accounting backed by an appropriate managerial culture: under these conditions work collectives are encouraged consistently to improve their performance. Large cooperatives have been especially good at combining cost-accounting with self-management and democracy in mobilising the workforce. In other words, they have succeeded in rooting out the reasons behind the alienation of workers from cooperative property, and in involving them in efficient enterprise on the basis of cooperatives.

By creating a sizeable economic potential and cadre pool in this way, the front-ranking agrarian enterprises have become the vehicles of scientific and technological progress and an example for others to emulate. They pass their experience of introducing scientific and technological

achievements on to other cooperatives and thus contribute to the growth of the productive forces. Credit should also be given to them for carrying through new programmes, especially those in which society has a special interest.

The key longer-term tasks of our agriculture can be formulated as follows:

- * guaranteed and stable self-sufficiency in grain; in particular, through the full-scale introduction of intensive maize-growing techniques;
- * adequate supply of vegetables and fruit either from domestic resources or through exchanges with other countries;
- * more energetic efforts in tackling the previously ignored ecological problems;
- * tougher demands on food processing;
- * better use of agrarian secondary raw materials in crop-farming and other sectors;
- * more energetic external economic operations by agricultural organisations, including the establishment of their own export-import offices.

The intensification of production, greater efficiency and higher labour productivity in agriculture depend primarily on technological improvements, and these are the goal of the restructuring of the economic mechanism.

Another factor here is a broader involvement of Czechoslovak agriculture in the international division of labour, because our own potential does not allow us to make full use of the achievements of science and technology.

Society expects from agriculture a variety of foodstuffs which meet the requirements of today's rational diets. It can deliver only on condition that production is organised comprehensively, with requisite supplies to the grassroots agricultural units; interlinked production, canning and storage systems; quality processing and packing; and efficient consumer-oriented retailing and public catering.

The present level of self-sufficiency in food is an important precondition for the stabilising function of agriculture, one that has a beneficial effect not just on the economy, but also on the sociopolitical aspects of life in the country at a time of restructuring.

The 1988 law on agricultural cooperatives gave agro-industrial enterprises more room for initiative in other production and non-production spheres. It allows for the integration of economic activities which would promote the comprehensive development of communities and economic regions. For example, cooperatives are expected to go into retail trade, public catering and the hotel business. And why shouldn't they offer new services or build sports facilities and cultural centres? Or they could join national committees for improving roads, transport and communications, building homes and protecting the environment.

Cooperatives and state farms have helped create a strong material and technical infrastructure for Czechoslovak

agriculture, and this now gives us a unique opportunity to determine the prospects for the socialist agro-industry and for rural development comprehensively and on a modern basis. The 11th Congress of the Union of Cooperative Farmers,³ and the 18th CPCz Congress due in May 1990, will give a fresh impetus to the further implementation of the party's policy.

OUR "SECRETS"

WMR asked me to contribute an article which would explain the miracle of Czechoslovakia's success in cooperative agriculture. This idea was to be conveyed in the title of the article. But in my view, there is no miracle; rather, it is a question of the real triumph of Lenin's cooperative plan in little Czechoslovakia.

It is a result of the principled and flexible policy of the CPCz. Although the party has made serious mistakes, it has promptly corrected them. From the start our specific conditions favoured cooperation. The ground for the foundations of a new society has been prepared by strengthening the class alliance of workers and peasants, primarily the middle farmers, in the national democratic and then the socialist revolution. This alliance proved effective during the period when the first priority of the party's policy of winning a better future for the people was class struggle for the emancipation of the working masses from exploitation and a search for ways to take the country forward. The commitment of cooperative farmers to their alliance with workers remains beyond doubt, as does their dedication to the restructuring effort.

In sum, our cooperative agriculture faces major problems, including that of rehabilitating the environment so that it would be clean and unspoilt for man to enjoy, task which has been included in the political programme of the CPCz.

The experience of drastic but nonviolent transformation of an important organic part of national production is a source of pride for the party and a guarantee of success in the difficult period ahead.

Czechoslovak socialist agriculture is becoming a strategic force, an accumulator of valuable knowledge and experience, and a political tool for transforming society and improving our people's living standards.

¹ Reference to the 9th CPCz Congress in May 1949 and to the adoption of legislation on integral farming cooperatives.—Ed.

² On January 1, 1989, Czechoslovakia had 1,655 integral farming cooperatives. These have 64% of all cultivable land, state farms 31%, and private farmers 3%. The agrarian sector employs 891,000 workers.—Ed.

³ December 1-3, 1989.—Ed.

CONFERENCES IN BERLIN AND VARNA

A conference of Central Committee Ideology secretaries from socialist countries' communist and workers' parties was held in Berlin, capital of the GDR, on September 21 and 22, 1989. Taking part were representatives of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party, the Workers' Party of Korea, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Romanian Communist Party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Vietnam.

The participants in the conference, which was conducted in an atmosphere of understanding and solidarity, exchanged their views and experience with regard to topical ideological questions facing the sister parties as they work to build socialism and struggle for peace and disarmament. They discussed various points and proposals and agreed on steps to promote bilateral and multilateral cooperation in ideology, political education and academic and cultural policy, and to make this cooperation more effective by creatively applying and enriching the theory of Marxism-Leninism and socialist internationalism.

The participants acquainted one another with topical aspects of socialist development in their countries. It was noted that as socialism continued to be built, improved, restructured and renewed, moving increasingly to the foreground were issues connected with ensuring economic growth, developing the political system on the basis of socialist democracy, raising living standards and respecting human rights and freedoms. Emphasis was placed on efforts to secure a high level of productive forces by mastering advances in science and technology and linking these to social

progress, environmental protection, improved education and the enrichment of culture.

The representatives of the sister parties expressed their resolve to continue creatively applying the principles of scientific socialism on the basis of the common features in the development of socialist society, in accordance with the experience, conditions, traditions and requirements of their countries, and with due regard for the diversity of the possible paths, forms and options of socialist development. They stressed the importance of the historical role played and of the responsibility assumed by the sister parties as the vanguard of the working class and of the popular masses. Each party works independently to draw up and implement its policy, strategy and tactics. The participating representatives advocated continued regular exchanges of experience and views relating to the common features and differences in attitudes to pressing issues of social development. They came out in favour of closer cooperation.

Since the media are an important instrument of ideological and political work, a steadily growing responsibility devolves on them in covering current events and development processes in the socialist countries, and in publicis-

ing the achievements, values and ideals of socialism. They are called upon to work more effectively to promote friendship and trust among the socialist countries and to help enhance their cooperation.

A special role should be played by academic and theoretical research, based on Marxism-Leninism and the sister parties' creative experience. For all the diversity of the specific forms and roads of socialist development, the sister parties are linked together by common objectives and ideals. They therefore underscored the need for a theoretical analysis of the historical path traversed and of socialism's contemporary problems, and for placing this experience at the service of the parties and their nations. They regard this as a substantive contribution to the enrichment of Marxism-Leninism and to the discussion of socialism's present and future problems.

Resolve was expressed to continue the worldwide dialogue for coping with humanity's global problems and to mobilise the entire potential of ideology, science and culture in order to ensure world peace, end the nuclear and conventional arms race and promote new political thinking in international affairs. In this, the parties attach priority importance to the activity of the popular masses and to concerted action with all the social forces dedicated to these objectives.

The participating parties stressed that in their ideological work, they should firmly rebuff all manifestations of revanchism and chauvinism and all attempts to foment hostility between nations. They noted with concern the increasing evidence of neo-Nazism in certain capitalist countries.

The conference emphasised that it was imperative to fight resolutely against anticommunism and against imperialist policy and ideology, and to rebuff antisocialist propaganda conducted, among other things, under the pretext of upholding human rights and freedoms.

The parties' representatives came out strongly against any attempts by the imperialist forces to interfere in the internal affairs of the socialist countries in violation of international legal standards, to hamper from the outside the proces-

ses under way there, to destabilise and discredit them, or to derail them from the socialist track.

The participants in the conference expressed their solidarity with all countries subject to particularly vicious attacks from imperialist circles, above all the GDR, Cuba and the DPRK.

They advocated an equitable settlement of the problems of underdevelopment, poverty, hunger and foreign debt which weigh heavily on the developing countries. They spoke out against these nations' exploitation by in-

ternational finance capital. In their opinion, priority attention should be paid to the problems of protecting and improving the environment and enhancing humanity's ecological security.

The conference was conducted in a constructive, frank and comradely atmosphere. The participants expressed their heartfelt thanks to the SED for organising the conference well. Agreement was reached on convening the next conference of Central Committee ideology secretaries in the People's Republic of Bulgaria.

* * *

A conference of Central Committee international secretaries from socialist countries' communist and workers' parties was held in Varna, Bulgaria, on September 26-28, 1989. It was attended by representatives of the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Communist Party of Cuba, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany, the Workers' Party of Korea, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, the Mongolian People's Revolutionary Party, the Polish United Workers' Party, the Romanian Communist Party, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist Party of Vietnam.

A representative of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was present and spoke at the conference.

The participants exchanged views on the present international situation and on topical aspects of their parties' international activities.

They stated that two trends were clashing on the world scene. On the one hand there is a growing commitment to detente, disarmament and peace and a desire to look for rational solutions to today's problems for the benefit of all nations. On the other, the forces acting in the imperialist spirit are still trying to preserve confrontation and tensions, to continue the policy of pressure and diktat, and to carry on with the arms buildup and with actions hostile to socialism and peace.

As the world prepares to enter the last decade of the 20th century,

broader opportunities have emerged for the peaceful and constructive development of international relations. Thanks to the vigorous efforts of the socialist countries, and of other peace-loving and rational forces seeking to promote new political thinking and new practices in international affairs, the first steps have been taken along the path of nuclear disarmament. Positive signs have surfaced as far as the easing of tensions is concerned; prospects have materialised for the political settlement of disputes in various regions and for the development of political dialogue at different levels; the world community is demonstrating a growing readiness for joint action in the tackling of environmental and other global

problems; and trust and understanding among nations are on the rise.

At the same time, the international situation gives no cause for euphoria and remains complex and contradictory. Positive developments have not yet become comprehensive or irreversible; NATO is still committed to its doctrine of nuclear deterrence, and weapons continue to be amassed and modernised. Imperialism continues to interfere in the internal affairs of other countries and to subject sovereign states to military, political and economic blackmail and intimidation. The economic gap and the contradictions between the developing and the developed capitalist countries are growing.

An end to the arms race, disarmament, the prohibition and elimination of nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction, the cessation of nuclear tests and of the drive to militarise outer space, and substantial cuts in conventional armaments, troop strength and military spending are the key issues of our age.

Conference participants noted the connection between peace, disarmament and development and supported the idea of channeling the resources released by reductions in

military expenditures and by disarmament into economic and social development, particularly for the economically underdeveloped countries.

An exchange of opinions was held on the prospects for the all-European process, the creation of an indivisible Europe, and lasting peace and cooperation in a "common European home" with diverse social and political systems in different countries.

The promotion of new relations in Europe demands respect for the existing territorial and political realities and for the sovereign equality of states, and unswerving observance of the principles of national independence, complete equality, noninterference in the internal affairs of others, mutual benefit and an end to the policy of using or threatening to use force.

Greater security in Europe calls for nuclear and conventional disarmament and for joint, constructive and responsible efforts and broad cooperation on the part of governments and various sociopolitical forces and movements which have a stake in a climate of detente, understanding and mutual trust. Conference participants stressed the need to firmly rebuff the actions of revanchist and neo-Nazi forces, manifestations of chauvinism, and attempts to pit nation against nation or to foment hostility between them.

An exchange of views was conducted at the conference on the problems of contemporary socialism. It was noted that the future of the world and of social progress was closely linked to the socialist countries' dynamic development and all-round cooperation, and to the in-depth socioeconomic transformations, renewal, restructuring and perfection of socialism.

The conference underscored the historical role played by the communist parties and raised the question of developing and strengthening different forms of socialist ownership for the sake of building socialist society.

The realities of our difficult and dynamic age make it objectively

necessary to promote joint action, solidarity and unity among the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries in accordance with these nations' common interests and aspirations.

It was reiterated that each party should creatively apply the principles of scientific socialism and adjust the common features of socialist development to distinctive national conditions, and that relations between the parties were based on each party's independence, equality, autonomy and responsibility to its people.

Conference participants said that the existing practice of inter-party cooperation should be developed and improved. An important role should be played by regular exchanges of information, efforts to publicise the values of socialism and the experience accumulated, joint workshops and discussions, joint work on topical issues of Marxist-Leninist theory, the implementation of long-term cooperation programmes, etc.

As the sister parties declared, the imperialist and antisocialist forces' attempts to destabilise and weaken socialism, use the issue of human rights in a biased way, conduct hostile propaganda and slander the socialist countries run counter to the interests of peace, security and understanding between nations.

Conference participants exchanged views concerning the progress of the class struggle and the defence of universal human values in the interests of peace and social progress.

In view of the current situation, those present asserted their parties' firm commitment to a further strengthening of their unity and resistance to the onslaught of imperialist reaction. They voiced their solidarity with those socialist countries presently being subjected to particularly vicious imperialist attacks, specifically, with the DPRK, Cuba, the GDR and Bulgaria.

The parties represented at the conference expressed their readiness to continue consolidating their con-

certed action and solidarity with other communist and workers' parties on the basis of independence, equality and respect for the right of every party to define its political line. They are open to the broadest possible cooperation for peace and progress with socialist and social democratic parties. The conference noted the growing role played by civil, democratic and antiwar movements in the drive to create a world without wars or weapons; it also stressed the great importance of promoting joint action by the communist and workers' parties in the struggle for far-reaching political and social change and for the acceptance of the new policy of detente, disarmament, peace and progress.

The conference spoke highly of the part being played by the Non-Aligned Movement as an independent force in international relations and its dedication to ever more vigorous efforts to tackle the main issues of disarmament and peace, the establishment of a new international economic order and the solution of other global problems—as demonstrated yet again at the recent conference in Belgrade.

The participants stressed that peace was indivisible and that it should embrace all countries and regions. They noted the significance of the initiatives undertaken by the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries with a view to establishing, in different parts of the world, zones of peace, good-neighbour relations and cooperation, as well as zones free from nuclear, chemical and other weapons of mass destruction.

They advocated political settlement of regional conflicts and efforts to extinguish flashpoints through negotiation on the basis of respect for self-determination, sovereignty and the right of nations to freely choose their own sociopolitical path without outside interference. Solidarity was expressed with the progressive, democratic and patriotic forces fighting for their nations' free and independent development.

The participants spoke about their parties' commitment to act more heartily to resolve complex and acute economic problems and establish a new international economic order. They voiced support for the popular struggle in Asia, Africa and Latin America to strengthen national independence, eliminate neocolonial exploitation and diktat, overcome economic backwardness and solve

the acute problem of the external debt. They also expressed their solidarity with Communists and all other champions of national and social liberation who are suffering persecution and repression from the forces of reaction, racism and apartheid.

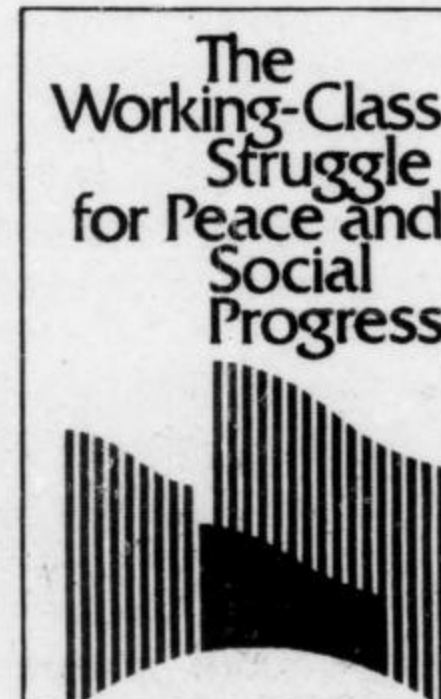
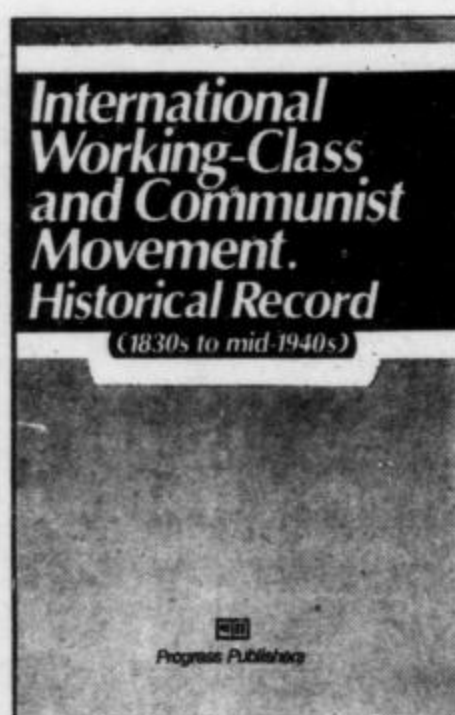
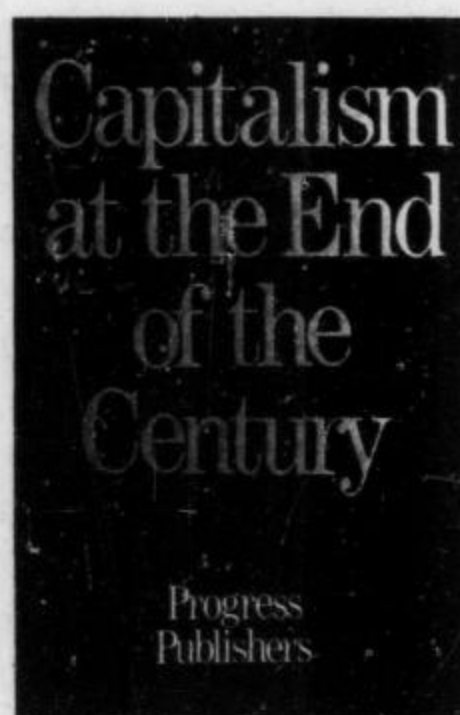
Conference participants reiterated their parties' readiness to continue working vigorously and to promote all-round cooperation and concerted

action on the international scene in the interests of socialism and peace.

The conference was characterised by fraternal mutual understanding and a businesslike exchange of views.

The participants conveyed their heartfelt thanks to the BCP for organising the forum well.

As suggested by the CPSU, the next conference will be convened in Moscow.



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HUNGARY: A SOCIALIST PARTY IS BORN

Sandor SZORCSIK

representative of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP) on *WMR*

The Congress of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSzMP) held last October riveted the country's attention as an event bound to have a decisive influence on the nation's future. Following fiery debates, it announced the birth of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSzP): the history of the party as the party of the state, in power since 1956, thus came to an end.

FROM THE PARTY CONFERENCE TO THE CONGRESS

In the second half of the 1980s, Hungarian society came face to face with a crisis, with all the strata growing more and more disgruntled, trust in the political leadership waning, and the moral crisis deepening. As a result, belief in the socialist goals was melting away.

The situation made it necessary to convene a national party conference without waiting for the next regular congress, and such a conference met in May 1988. It gave the first critical appraisal in more than 30 years of the activities of the Central Committee and executive bodies, the government and its agencies. The conference drew the conclusion that the progress and prosperity of the nation demanded a drastic change, the renunciation of the policy line which had led the country into the crisis, speedier reforms in every field, the harmonious renewal of the economy and the political system, and the tapping of the creative potential of society. The priorities set by delegates included the introduction of market mechanisms into the economy, the creation of a new system of political institutions based on pluralism and legality, and, most important, the restructuring of the MSzMP through the development of inner party democracy.

Large-scale transformations were initiated after the conference. Political and legal reforms followed one another dynamically: new laws were passed, a discussion on the concept of a new constitution was launched, the

ground was prepared for the introduction of multiparty democracy, the relationship between the government and parliament was revised, etc. Dozens of new sociopolitical movements, associations, clubs, groups and societies sprang up in the heady political atmosphere. Some of the old parties, such as the Social Democrats, the Independence Party, and those of the petty proprietors and the peasants, were revived... The MSzMP had to readjust to the changed circumstances. As party life was democratised, individual party organisations and bodies grew more active, past mistakes and ways of the country's development came under discussion, etc.

Conflicting currents have emerged within the party; some equated the need for a change in the model of socialism with a renunciation of socialism; others argued that it was not Marxism that had failed in Hungary, but the leadership who had deviated from it; still others pressed for a Stalinist party. There were calls for "a revolution within the MSzMP".

In short, Hungarian society had reached a turning point. The administrative-command system had exhausted its potential, and the present crisis could only be resolved through a drastic restructuring of social, economic and political relations. The reformist forces that had existed within the party for decades drew inspiration from other reform-oriented movements and used the favourable external situation to pave the way for a peaceful transition from state to democratic socialism. However, a comprehensive social, economic and political renewal called for the formation of a new party.

THE MSzMP—A LEFT SOCIALIST MOVEMENT

The last MSzMP Congress opened in a complex political atmosphere against the background of economic uncertainty. As many as 80% of the nearly 1,300 delegates were attending their first party forum; 85% had higher education, 80% were aged 30 to 45. Women accounted for 8%, workers, youth and pensioners for 3% each. All the provinces of the country were represented by their groups, and there were caucuses of delegates from the defence and interior ministries and from border troops.

However, in a dramatic break with the practice of previous congresses, the main role at the forum was played not by territorial groups but by platforms, which could be formed by no less than 12 delegates.

The Union of Reforms was the most representative and, perhaps, the most radical of all the platforms. It urged

a drastic reorganisation of the party, which had led the country into a historical impasse, a clean break with the conglomerate monster which had functioned as state power, and the removal of party cells from enterprises, the system of the interior ministry and the courts, and it also attacked discredited leaders and "closet" conservatives. This platform initially comprised around 460 delegates, a figure which had grown by 10% to 15% by the end of the Congress.

The people's democratic platform, represented by roughly 40 delegates and offering a moderate programme which suited many people as a compromise, won over almost 300 delegates. Although it sides with the Union of Reforms in rejecting bureaucratic and dictatorial socialism, it differs in giving priority to state property and to elements of self-government.

These two platforms, along with the numerically smaller ones of youth, the agrarian and food sector, and "Equal Opportunities for the Provinces", called for the establishment of a new, left socialist party. Two platforms, "For the MSzP" and "Consolidation for the Renewal of the MSzMP" (with 35 and 30 delegates, respectively), took a different stand: the former argued that the Congress did not have the powers to dissolve the party (by the end of the Congress that platform had disbanded itself), while the latter insisted on unity within the old party. They were a minority, however, and the Hungarian Socialist Party was proclaimed with just 159 out of the 1,202 delegates present voting against and 38 abstaining.

The resolution of the Congress reads that the MSzP has inherited the reformist tradition that existed within the MSzMP, and that it unconditionally recognises general human values, such as humanism, freedom, democracy and respect for creative endeavour.

The MSzP remains loyal to the time-honoured *traditions and values of the socialist and communist movement* and subscribes to the principles of solidarity and social justice. Its operational principle will be philosophical and political tolerance.

No longer a party of the state, the MSzP will be a contemporary left socialist movement, a mass political party controlled by its membership. In its creative effort it will draw inspiration from the fundamental ideas of Marxism, and its objective is democratic socialism. It abides by the tenets of the rule-of-law state, and is prepared to join with all the forces willing to cooperate in pulling the country out of its present crisis. The new party will help build a multiparty parliamentary democracy based on mixed property, a socially-oriented market economy, and a system of self-management.

The MSzP is not a communist party in the old sense of the word, nor is it a social democratic one. It is a socialist party, and one looking for ways of bringing the two movements together.

"What should we dissociate ourselves from?" Rezso Nyers, chairman of the new party, asked. First, the MSzP has abandoned narrow class-delimited policies, while

remaining loyal, of course, to the interests of the working class, the cooperated peasantry and the intellectuals. It will have no truck with those who would like the new party to become a bourgeois one. The MSzP has dropped the principles of democratic centralism and the dictatorship of the proletariat, and dissociated itself from every form of Stalinism and neo-Stalinism.

The MSzP must be an organisation of the mass of people. It is open primarily to those who work for a living, but also to petty proprietors; compatriots of other nationalities as well as Magyars are eligible. In a special resolution the Congress urged all those approving of the political Programme and Rules of the new party to join it; it stated that dissenting views were no obstacle to membership—a major principle proclaimed by the Congress. The party operates as an alliance of different platforms. Its starting points are voluntary participation and joint actions under the keynote of solidarity and common principles and political goals. Broad democracy will be practised within the party, with the will of the members being the only source of its decisions and actions. Members are free to air their opinions, to organise into groupings, and to undertake joint political actions.

THE GOAL: A DEMOCRATIC SOCIALIST SOCIETY

The new party holds that the transition to democratic socialism will be effected through the development of a state whose social policy will be based on an efficient market economy. Such a course will not be a drag on the national economy, but will become part and parcel of social reproduction. Our goal is a state in which people will feel comfortable, be free to realise their talents and interests, create the conditions for a life of peace, and guarantee a future for their children.

The MSzP intends to work for the *socialist character of the social system*. To this end priority will be attached to the free development of the collective and the individual, the abolition of the insular, bureaucratic and over-centralised character of power, and popular representation, self-government, democratic procedures and public control at every level of the political system. Dynamic social development will be ensured in order eventually to guarantee the fullest possible realisation of human freedoms. The MSzP aims to build a sound system of social justice, solidarity, equal chances and social security.

The development of the political system of democratic socialism involves primarily the establishment of a rule-of-law state on the basis of a broad national consensus, and the practice of referendum as the direct expression of popular will. The balanced delegation of authority will prevent any overconcentration of power and make for the independence of local and regional self-government. Local councils will operate on the basis of popular representation, while parliament will be effectively controlled by

the people and by the Constitutional Court. The political system rests on the separation of judicial, executive and legislative authority. Civil liberties will be guaranteed by the multiparty system. There will be independent mechanisms for representing social interests and constitutional guarantees for ethnic, religious and other minorities.

The basic precondition for economic renewal during the period of transition to democratic socialism is a *reform of property*. The MSzP believes in a system promoting both economic growth and social security. Hungary already has the principal elements of a multiple property structure, including state property, which serves the whole of society, collective property in its cooperative and public forms, the property of public and other autonomous institutions, and private property.

The new party advocates freedom to acquire and manage property. The lawful accretion of property does not prejudice the civil rights of other people, nor does it mean a return to capitalism. The first step will be to democratise state property, which should be passed on to new holders on the basis of law and under public control. Freed from state supervision, cooperative property will become an important element of social property. The reform will lead to the emergence of municipal property, which will belong to communities. The range will be broadened further with the establishment of funds by various organisations and institutions.

In the view of the MSzP, private property can be joined harmoniously with the system of public property and function for the benefit of the people as a whole as well as of its owners. The growth of free enterprise makes it necessary to guarantee the participation of workers and employees in economic decision-making. In short, the party advocates multiple forms of property and will constitutionally guarantee economic equality and security for all of them, including foreign capital.

The delegates were unanimous that *Hungary should have a market economy*. By market they meant not only commodities, but also labour power, capital, land, information, etc. In order to develop it, unreasonable state subsidies will have to be cancelled, the negative effects of overcentralised economic management removed, the monopoly of enterprises abolished, and competition and enterprise encouraged. The party has stated: "We are against impoverishment, not enrichment!" It advocates social relief to the workers of non-competitive enterprises, the development of a system of personnel training and retraining, and the creation of new jobs.

What role will the state play in the new circumstances? In all developed countries the state regulates market relations, protects the economy from adversity, and encourages the introduction of new technologies. The modern state and the market economy complement and restrain each other.

Many speakers at the Congress pointed to the *need for the just distribution of incomes*. Alongside wages, we recognise as lawful any income (including that from capi-

tal, and also profit from enterprise, remuneration for development, intermediary functions, etc.) that is used efficiently for the good of society. Those who take risks and look for new ways have every right to greater remuneration. This does not contradict the principle of social justice or equality of opportunity, but creates a real material foundation for it. The MSzP says in its programme statement: "We want a sociopolitical, economic and distribution model in which a decent life will rest on the industry of the citizens and on social security guaranteed by the state."

The taxation system should not be oriented to short-term benefits, or people will be discouraged from working harder and better and from developing culturally and intellectually. According to the MSzP, the main task of social policy is to *reduce the gap between the extremes in living standards*. The development of job-creating strategies and training and retraining programmes, the revival of entrepreneurship, broader opportunities for taking up jobs abroad, the introduction of part-time employment and other measures are intended to keep unemployment. "We still consider the right to work and to social security to be a paramount value, but we interpret them as security for people and their families, not for loss-making enterprises". The party is adamant in its insistence on changing the economic and social conditions which reproduce low living standards.

The right to health is another basic human right, and it is necessary to improve the material basis of the health care system and to increase the share of the national income used for the purpose. Our goal is an ecologically sensible and energy-saving economy. The MSzP Programme also lays emphasis on aid to the family, young people and pensioners.

The MSzP believes that scientific advances and higher educational and cultural standards are a basic precondition of progress. Moral and material incentives to creative work and to intellectuals in general should be revised drastically and without delay. The party is against a state monopoly of education and advocates autonomous and free education.

OUR PLACE IN THE WORLD

On the international scene the MSzP, jointly with other progressive and democratic forces, will seek solutions to the problems of our century, and encourage mutually beneficial political and economic contacts with all countries. Together with other developed countries Hungary should move to replenish the achievements of human civilization and try to contribute effectively to international integration in the economy, science, culture and human contacts.

The party stands for an *independent Hungary*. Our national interests can be ensured only with due regard for our obligations to allies and on the basis of a rational evaluation of international realities. The MSzP reaffirms the importance of a balanced relationship with the Soviet

Union, and supports all the political and military steps towards stronger European detente. As a member of the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, Hungary should encourage agreements between the blocs, greater trust, and the removal from state-to-state relations of ideological confrontation. The MSzP believes that it is time to reform and democratise the Warsaw Treaty Organisation, and to make its military doctrine more pronouncedly defensive.

Hungary will have to readjust to the main trends of the world economy, and simultaneously take measures to keep in check inflation and unemployment and to uphold its national interests more efficiently in cooperation with its CMEA partners. Our membership of CMEA is an objective reality.

The MSzP intends to contribute to the creation of a *single Europe* because the future of Hungary will depend primarily on that of the continent. European security must rest not on the force of arms, but on political, economic and cultural cooperation, on direct human contacts, on trust. The new party sincerely wants the consolidation of the Danube nations.

The party's main moral obligation, according to its programme statement, is consistent struggle for the exercise of human rights, for the equality of minorities, and for the effective observance of these rights as much in Hungary as in the world as a whole.

As a participant in the European Left, the Hungarian

Socialist Party has stated its readiness to cooperate with all the forces which recognise their responsibility for the future of Europe, primarily with those who advocate reforms in the communist, socialist, social democratic and other left movements, with those who desire the successful accomplishment of our historical mission, with various new movements for environmental protection and peace, and with youth and women's organisations.

The MSzP is going to build its relations with other parties on strict respect for the principles of independence and equality, and on full freedom of thought and action for the sides. We want to preserve many-sided contacts with the parties of the international communist movement. Our special interest in social democratic experience is explained by our common traditions and by the considerable achievements of social democracy. The MSzP will also look for areas of possible cooperation with bourgeois political forces since it thinks highly of the efforts of progressive bourgeois humanists for peace, democracy, and economic equality, and will embrace those values which have proved their worth.

The Congress closed with the singing of the Internationale. The course of the MSzP is laid out, and on its method of implementation will depend the faith of millions of people in this new political organisation, which calls itself a party of the workers and a party of the people.

* * *

LEGALITY WON. WHAT NEXT?

Ali MALKI

representative of the Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria (PAGS) on WMR

Since September 1989, the Party of the Socialist Vanguard, with 50 years of struggle for national liberation and the interests of the working people behind it, has been operating legally. Yet the PAGS is entering upon a new stage in its activity as a young force—young both in the age of its members and in the fact that its quest for solutions to new historic tasks relies on the enthusiasm and hopes of all our young people.

Active work by the Communists in the thick of the popular masses, among the workers, peasants and intellectuals, has helped pave the way to peace, land and freedom. The party's contribution to the struggle for independence, to national construction, and to the dissemina-

tion of the ideas of socialism is unique and irreplaceable. Yet the shortcomings and mistakes of the past have served and will continue to serve as a lesson for the party members and all progressive forces.

Over the last three decades our party has been non-clandestine for only a few months, and that was immediately after the gaining of national independence in July 1962. There were also particularly difficult periods when the Communists faced massive ideological and political pressure, repression, arrests, and torture. For its adherence to democracy, which for us is inseparable from the socialist ideal, it had to pay a heavy price.

We remember well the names of the patriots who have given their lives in order to create the party and place it at the service of our people. We are also grateful to all those who, in varying forms and at different times, have identified themselves with our struggle and who have understood the need for the existence of the PAGS and its role in the accomplishment of national democratic tasks.

On behalf of the working class we also thank all those representatives of the international public who have expressed their political or simple human solidarity with us. It has helped not only the Communists and all working

people, but also the progressive development of Algeria as a whole, and the strengthening of its prestige in the world.

Over recent years we have experienced an influx of fresh forces from among the urban and rural youth. A climate of warmth and cordiality has gradually developed around the party and its activists. A wave of popular support at the end of 1986 during the great unrest in Constantine stopped the anticommunist repression.

In the days preceding the tragic events of October 1988, scores of Communists were seized by the police, some of them subsequently subjected to brutal torture. However, the spontaneous actions by thousands upon thousands of young unemployed people in Algiers and throughout the country led to the emergence of a new situation. The party was saved from even more severe persecution thanks to the intervention of other patriotic and democratic forces, including at government level, which also ushered in the democratisation of all social life.

The legalisation of the PAGS is a practical embodiment of the right of the workers, as of the other classes and social groups, to have their own political party under the February Constitution.¹ The Algerian Communists had fought for this right for decades. When the liberation war began in November 1954, and particularly after the gaining of independence, they were denied this right, which was justified by reference to the need to prevent a class stratification of society. Some patriots, who favoured socialism, were asserting that a one-party system was needed in order to stop the bourgeois classes and groups consolidating themselves into a major political force.

It is now obvious that this system has failed to halt the stratification and that bourgeois and petty-bourgeois forces (along with the levers of the state) have succeeded in using the ruling party for the consolidation of their own positions. And the party even tried to restrain an expression of the will of the working class. But the proletariat, just as the bourgeoisie, represents an objective reality: no industrialisation or economic development is possible without its numerical and qualitative growth.

Such a positioning of the question helps to understand better why our party has for decades, not least during the liberation war, sought to preserve its independent status in order, at all stages of struggle, to ensure the fullest presence of the working people in the wide spectrum of broad-based patriotic alliances created for the achievement of various specific aims. Such is the class and patriotic stand of the Party of the Socialist Vanguard of Algeria.

Some discerned a contradiction in our bid to express the interests of both the working class and the nation as a whole, and wanted to present the national role of the Communists as a tactical manoeuvre on their part. In reality, we consider such a combination a matter of principle and of great importance. The latest events in the international communist movement reconfirm the obvious truth that

acting as an independent force, the working class does not at all operate from antidemocratic positions with respect to the other classes and social groups, and does not seek a hegemony transcending its real and lawful place in society, a place which must belong to it in full measure because this meets the genuine national interest.

We regard our scheme as fully coherent. However, it has not always been understood correctly by all. We have been accused of sectarianism, of a desire to seize power by using democracy. Others assert that our consideration of the interests of other classes and social groups is tantamount to opportunism. The PAGS has invariably rejected the false dilemma which certain forces wanted to impose on it: either unreserved support for all the actions of the authorities, or constant opposition.

The multiparty system: an achievement or a threat? This problem has arisen more than once in the past and is particularly topical now that the system is a reality that mirrors the pluralism of Algerian society. In today's involved and complex situation the joy we experience together with the whole people over the current changes in national life does not eliminate the need to be vigilant and show a responsible approach to the problems of the country and the dangers threatening it.

The question many patriots are now asking themselves is: Will the multiparty system of government strengthen or weaken our society and its ability to tackle vital problems?

For our part we declare that everything depends on how each of the patriotic forces will act in this situation. If they all go into the shell of their own narrow interests and ignore the main collective requirements, the established system will be unable to defeat chaos and disunity, which the single ruling party was unable to overcome anyway. But if the multiparty system is prepared to rely on a truly democratic mobilisation of the masses and to solve problems with regard for the common interest, a mighty force can emerge.

This is why we welcome the present stage as the first important breakthrough in enhancing the maturity of our people and society. We see progress in the recognition of the fact that not one political force, not one social current—whatever its ideological orientation or self-image as powerful and perfect—can cope with the present immense tasks single-handedly.

But this great historic gain of our people calls for a new advance. We should learn to use better the opportunities opened up by an identity of interests and the mobilisation of common efforts. We must accomplish this by getting to know and understand each other better in an atmosphere of greater clarity, mindful of what unites and what divides us, and respectful of each other's attitudes and opinions.

¹ For details see Ali Malki, "A New Constitution for Algeria", *WMR*, No. 6, 1989.—Ed.

THE LEFT FORCES' EXPERIENCE

"NO MAN IS GOOD ENOUGH TO BE ANOTHER MAN'S MASTER"

(Discussing democracy)

Encyclopaedia Britannica defines democracy as "a form of government in which the citizens exercise the same right not in person but through representatives chosen by and responsible to them". It is "designed to guarantee all citizens the enjoyment of certain individual and collective rights, such as freedom of speech, and religion..."

Great Britain is known as a country of representative parliamentary democracy, and an epitome of some of its major attributes. How is it functioning today? To what extent does it meet the above goals and the interests of the working people?

These questions were discussed by **Tony BENN**, MP, member of the Executive Committee of the Labour Party and holder of various ministerial posts in Labour governments, and **Bert RAMELSON**, representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain on the *WMR* Editorial Council.

Bert RAMELSON. Many people around the world entertain the illusion that Britain is the first parliamentary democracy, and that there is genuine, real democracy in Britain.

Tony BENN. The myth that Britain is the mother of democracy is one that has been carefully spread over the years. As a matter of fact, if political democracy means one man/one woman—one vote, then this actually occurred in your lifetime and mine because only in 1928 did women win right to vote the same as men. So it is a very short time. This idea that we have been a parliamentary

democracy is, of course, the confusion of parliament with democracy. We have had a sort of parliament—which is the French word for a "talking-shop" (from *parler*, to talk)—since the model parliament of 1295.

But, initially, that parliament was the land-owners contesting the power of the King, then it was the bourgeoisie trying to limit to some extent the power of the land-owners and the King. It was only in the 19th century that the Chartists, the struggle of working-class people for trade unions, and the suffragettes gave ordinary men and women any role in the political process. And then, of course, you have to set that against the fact that our Constitution is a feudal one. Unlike the Americans, who can elect the President and Congress (the Senate and the House of Representatives), we are only allowed to elect one-third of our Constitution. The Crown itself may have no power, but the prerogatives of the Crown have survived, and the Prime Minister exercises them secretly; these include huge powers of patronage to make treaties, to go to war, etc.

B.R. You mean that the concept of democracy is not absolute or constant, but relative, sometimes being extended, sometimes eroded. There are equally widespread misconceptions of the nature of Parliament. There is an assumption that Parliament is the House of Commons, but of course it isn't. Parliament consists of three parts, and two-thirds—the House of Lords and the Royal prerogative—have nothing at all to do with electoral choice. As for the House of Commons, its democracy is limited by the election process, electoral methods, and so on.

T.B. Schoolchildren are told we live in a democracy. On state occasions we are told we live in a parliamentary democracy. Whenever the Crown makes a speech, they don't talk about parliamentary democracy, they talk about the constitutional monarchy.

B.R. There is a common misconception that democracy is one of the fundamental aspects of capitalist society. But whatever the degree of democracy we have achieved in this country, it has been as a result of struggle.

T.B. My own opinion is that the only difference between the British ruling class and the ruling class in France and Russia, for example, is that after the 1649 English Revolution, the British ruling class always decided to retreat before the barricades were built. That capacity to retreat is purely tactical: they retreat, hoping then to co-opt and absorb the leaders of the movement that has challenged them. But what it does show is that the harder you struggle, the more you gain; and the less you struggle, the more they take back. They have always stepped back simply in order to regroup, absorb, co-opt, defuse and then advance again. If the working people do not fight for their rights to the end, their gains will be taken away again. In the last 10 years we have seen a major reversal of democratic gains in trade union rights, trade union legislation, local government, civil liberties, etc., all of which have simply been taken away by the Thatcher government.

B.R. Yes, there has been a considerable erosion of democracy. Now it is a question of not only defending, but of regaining so many of the democratic rights achieved in struggle.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC POWER

T.B. That defence must involve recapturing ideological, moral and political territory we have lost and recognising that even at the high point of working-class pressure in British history we never got anywhere near any real control of economic power. So it is extending the argument for political democracy into the area of economic democracy as well.

B.R. Can one be separated from the other?

T.B. It is believed that a fully-fledged parliamentary democracy in a political sense can allow the majority of people, by the ballot box, to change the laws by which they are governed. But once you are on that route, politically, as a minister, you are immediately aware of the economic power that is brought to bear. And that economic power, we have been told for years by the media in Britain, is the trade unions holding the government to ransom. But of course, anyone who really analyses the situation knows quite well that the real power in our society is the power of capital, and that it has always been much greater than that of the trade unions. Without control of the means of production, distribution and exchange, political democracy makes you little more than a shopsteward against a global employer.

B.R. One cannot build a Chinese Wall between political democracy and economic democracy. For instance, if under the political democracy we are having my trade union rights are restricted, surely my abilities to achieve economic advances are affected. Equally, if a multinational company or a big monopoly company exercises monopoly economic power under the guise of political democracy, does not this affect the economic rights of the individual?

T.B. We have in Britain a partial political democracy nestling in a status quo that entrenches the power of money, or capital. And what our parliamentary system allows you to do is to change the management of capitalist society on the political side. Now, it is better to be able to change your management without bloodshed. I think it is very important never to underestimate the significance of the ballot—if the Blacks in South Africa had the vote, the war would end tomorrow, and there would be a potentiality of economic change. At the same time, the idea that the ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange under the control of a vanguard party that represents the interests of the working class, whose dictatorship has to be entrenched, ensures democracy does not hold either. Experience shows that you can have something which is so remote from any form of political accountability that it leads you into difficulties both of a political and economic kind. Hence the idea that without private

ownership you have democracy is wrong. You need a proper blend of political and economic democracy.

I was recently on a lecture tour in the Soviet Union, Poland and Bulgaria. I said that if our kind of parliamentary democracy could be transplanted into socialist society, then the management of socialist society could be changed without affecting the system, that is, within the framework of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange. In the Western countries, political democracy is a powerful weapon (if properly used and sustained by struggle) for tilting the balance of economic power. "Convergence" is not a very popular word, but I think that exchanges of experience between working people in different systems could offer a perspective of a kind that would really be a great improvement on naked global capitalism or the worst excesses of statism of the kind that have existed in some socialist countries.

WILL THERE BE A WRITTEN CONSTITUTION?

B.R. Britain is the only major country that has no written Constitution. Many think that that is an advantage for the ruling class, and an obstacle to developing greater democracy for the people as a whole.

Today we have a whole movement for a British Constitution. Last year more than 200 prominent people, including members of the House of Lords, scientists, writers and lawyers, signed Charter-88 calling for a democratic programme that would put an end to the uncontrolled sway of those in power. As children, we were told that we were free, and that our Parliament was a model of democracy, but reality gives the lie to such claims. They further state that the freedoms and social and political gains of the British people are being increasingly restricted, the last few years having seen the erosion of many civil liberties, including the right of assembly, freedom of speech and of the press, the rights of the unions, and the curtailment of the rights and powers of local government. The signatories believe that Parliament must be reformed, and that a British Constitution has to be written, discussed and adopted in order to guarantee democratic rights.

T.B. I am in favour of a written Constitution, but the most important thing is how it is written. It is absurd to suppose that a party of the working class can use for its own purposes institutions that were devised by another class at another period for another purpose. We do have a Constitution, but it is an unwritten and very rigid one. Even though it has been updated and modernised to suit a capitalist economy, British law is rooted in the feudal system. The Crown is supreme, which means that we in Britain are not citizens, but subjects, with no inherent rights in law. The power which has been lost by the Crown, in the person of the monarch, has gone to the Prime Minister, who has enormous power: he/she can appoint ministers,

put people in Parliament, in the House of Lords, appoint Bishops and Archbishops, judges, and heads of the armed forces all without consulting Parliament. When our ministers take part in the passage of EEC legislation, in Brussels for instance, they act on the basis of Crown powers, not those granted by Parliament. And the Official Secrets Act allows all government operations to be screened by a wall of secrecy.

And what is the Crown? It is a state within a state, veiled in secrecy and untouched by democracy. And that is the real power that even the advances of political democracy have never been able to bring into the arena of public accountability. You may have your turn in the ministerial offices, but you are really fooling about on the margins of power and never get near its real centres. And that is something that people are beginning slowly, very slowly, to understand.

B.R. So our unwritten Constitution gives a non-electoral element tremendous power. Those advocating a real Constitution are seeking a Bill of Rights that would outline basic civil rights in such a way as to prevent a transient majority in Parliament from undoing them. They are proposing a different electoral system exercising full power unhindered. It's worth remembering that our unfair electoral system allowed the Conservatives to win three successive elections, the last with little more than 40% of the vote, or 32% of the total electorate! This prompts the following question: why did the October conference of the Labour Party in Brighton decide against proportional representation?

T.B. Of course, the present majority system does give power to people with less than 50% votes cast. Thus, Mrs Thatcher only has 42%. But proportional representation also poses several dangers to democracy. One is that there would be a national list, with the leadership controlling the order in which names appear on that list, and there would be no local initiative in choosing candidates. The second danger is that if we did have proportional representation, this would probably mean the appearance of more than four parties: the Tory Party might split, the Labour Party might split into right wing and socialist, and so on. (The parties' emphasis on unity is largely explained by the need to win a relative majority of the votes in order to win seats in Parliament.) The party leaders would then have to come together, produce a coalition government and formulate a coalition programme that no one voted for because nobody knew what it was when they voted. These are real difficulties for democracy.

B.R. This is one issue on which I disagree with you, and the Communist Party disagrees with the Labour Party, which has rejected proportional representation. We support it and don't believe it would necessarily lead to a coalition government; we are concerned more about the fact that almost a quarter of the voting population are either under-represented or not represented at all.

T.B. I agree that there is a massive crisis of representation in the British electoral system. But there are dif-

ferent ways of changing that. The central issue is the character of state power, an issue we have dodged because we have assumed that the state is neutral with regard to political processes. It is not. Over many centuries state formations have been centralising power and conditioning people's thinking and actions in the process. Until we are prepared to tackle that question as a major political question, we shall never get anywhere near political power, let alone economic power.

B.R. Another question which came up at the Labour Party Conference was the constitutional question. The Labour Party did make certain constitutional suggestions about the House of Lords, but rejected the concept of a written constitution. What do you think about that?

T.B. Actually, we do have a written constitution—the Treaty of Rome, and anything that an elected government did that is contrary to the regulations of Brussels would be illegal. As for a modern Bill of Rights, I'm drafting a bill myself, a Government of Britain Bill, which would rewrite our constitution on more democratic lines. For example, if there is a breach of rights, it should be taken to Parliament to deal with rather than sent to the judges. We need a bit of perestroika ourselves on a very big scale. We need major reforms from top to bottom—a secular, federal republic or commonwealth in Britain.

B.R. So basically we don't disagree on the need for a written constitution, though we may disagree on the form. The main argument against a written constitution is, how can you entrench the rights? If this is not done, they can be undone overnight. In actual fact, Magna Carta, Habeas Corpus, the Bill of Rights of 1689¹ have been with us a long time under various governments—Parliament can in a sense undo all of these. But in real life it is very difficult to do this. So I think we exaggerate the constitutional problem of entrenchment. The rights written into a constitution would be very difficult to undo, although I don't rule it out completely.

As for the role of the judiciary, I agree that there must be other forms in deciding how to interpret the constitution. Then there is the question of the abolition of the Royal prerogative, and the establishment of a judiciary which is not appointed indirectly through Crown patronage, but by an elected body.

T.B. What is being assembled in Britain at the moment is a coalition of opinion in favour of absolutely fundamental change. There is a considerable republican movement which is not attacking the monarch personally, but Royal prerogatives, and in Scotland a National Convention is calling for devolution within the United Kingdom.

B.R. The point is not simply the right of the Scottish people to set up an assembly, but the recreation of Britain as a federal system comprising England, Scotland and Wales.

T.B. Of course, when you get down to the community, local authorities really ought to have the absolute right to deal with the problems in their areas. However, the main thing is the power structure not just in Britain, but in the

world. For example, the power to control nuclear weapons, chemical weapons and the environment may have to be transferred to the United Nations. There is a need to redistribute power in the world, from top to bottom, to find the appropriate level at which power should be exercised. This concerns socialist societies as well as Britain.

DECENTRALISATION AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

T.B. The pressure for devolution downwards and for more effective world government is a parallel movement, and the two go together. I cannot imagine circumstances in which a return to nationalism without an international perspective could be anything other than dangerous: separatism, nationalism and xenophobia are potentially very dangerous. It is a problem for one and all, and for the working-class movement in every country.

B.R. As for regional assemblies in Britain, I see the question of decentralisation as a democratic process. But the important thing is not to allow Scottish Parliament or Welsh assemblies to become second-rate parliaments.

T.B. I am a federalist, don't misunderstand me. But I would suggest that you are not approaching the question in the right way. If there were regional parliaments, Scotland would not be dominated at all. The main argument—that we must have more decentralisation—remains the same.

B.R. That is the whole point. The national question as I see it is not the same as decentralisation. These are two separate problems.

T.B. The national question is connected with decentralisation.

B.R. A great deal depends on the federal structure itself, on its equilibrium—whether it provides a balance of interests between England, Scotland and Wales. There are many ways of devising mechanisms. The important thing is to satisfy the national rights of the indigenous peoples.

T.B. The development of democracy is inseparable from the solution of the national question. Many people thought that after the Russian revolution the national question had been solved, but we see that it has resurfaced as a major problem, that there are cracks in the structure of the unitary state. Socialists as a whole, including the best international Socialists, have tended to underestimate the importance of nationhood, saying: "Well, it's a diversion from class, and we ought to push it aside". But people approach socialism through the gateway of their own experience. And their experience is that race, sex or nationhood explain the circumstances of exploitation.

B.R. I agree entirely that one of the greatest problems of the communist movement has been its total underestimation of national factors in social development, and its underestimation of the need to resolve the national question in the only possible way: on the basis of equal rights and equal development for all ethnic groups. The Soviet Union claimed to have resolved the national question, but

that has not been done. Glasnost has shed light on the mistakes that were made in that matter. It has shown that you cannot solve the national question without encouraging each nationality to develop its own language and culture, and, of course, to cooperate with all the others. Democratic decentralisation has become a priority.

B.R. Hence, in the struggle for democracy, there are as many different elements as there are forms of democracy, but all of them have something in common.

T.B. I suppose, there are inherent rights; they do not exist unless you struggle for them. But once you accept that men and women are brothers and sisters—whether you take the theological interpretation or the humanistic one—once you say that every baby born into the world has an inherent right to equality, that leads you to the demand for equal rights. And that principle, translated into different languages, has been a continuing theme from the very beginning: "When Adam delved, and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?" The definition of democracy I believe in is that no one should have any power over anyone else unless they are accountable to the person over whom they exercise that power. That applies politically and economically. An American theologian put it another way: "Man's capacity for evil makes democracy necessary, man's capacity for good makes democracy possible". I have five simple questions that I put to people who have power: "What power have you got? Where did you get it from? In whose interests do you exercise it? To whom are you accountable? And how can we get rid of you?"

Put those five questions to anybody, whether it be a minister, or a minister of religion, or chairman of a multinational. If properly answered, these questions give you a key to what you should do next.

B.R. Would you agree that those who try to separate individual rights from collective rights don't really understand the nature of democracy? And would you say that, to gain individual rights you have to look to collective rights?

T.B. I think, people ought to have individual rights. But individualism, along with consumerism and so on, is being used by capitalism to subtly obscure the reality that human beings are a family, or a tribe, we are humanity that must work together to achieve anything.

B.R. The individual must have rights, of course, but these can only be achieved through collective action.

T.B. But collective rights won and exercised in the wrong way could deny individual rights. Provision must be made for the reexamination of collective gains in order to ensure that they do not harm anybody.

B.R. In other words, to see that collective rights are not abused.

T.B. As a scientific Socialist, I would suggest the problem lies in finding ways in which humanity can gain control of its destiny. Otherwise, we will be unable to release the talent of humanity, overcome the problems facing the planet and develop a decent society. In that respect it

seems to me that capitalism and democracy are totally incompatible, whereas socialism is capable of developing in a democratic way, though because of its revolutionary origins it may not have succeeded thus far in achieving it to the extent that it wished.

B.R. The struggle for democracy is therefore a struggle

1 Magna Carta, signed by the King of England in 1215, restricted Royal privileges and extended certain rights to the knights, freemen, and cities.

The Habeas Corpus Act of 1679, one of Britain's more important

for a different system of society in which exploitation of one man's labour by another becomes impossible.

T.B. No man is good enough to be another man's master. And those ideas contain within them the future of the globe, if we are to make it.

constitutional acts, guaranteed personal rights in legal procedures and stipulated the rules of confinement and trial.

The Bill of Rights, passed by Parliament in 1689, drastically restricted Royal powers and guaranteed the rights of Parliament.

WMR INTRODUCES * * * * *



EGON KRENZ

General Secretary of the Central Committee, Socialist Unity Party of Germany

A Plenary Meeting of the CC SED in October 1989 elected Egon Krenz General Secretary of the Central Committee.

Egon Krenz was born on March 19, 1937, the son of a tailor. In 1953 he joined the FDJ (Free German Youth), and two years later the SED. After school he went to a teachers college, and then served in the National People's Army of the GDR.

Having completed the Higher Party School attached

to the CC CPSU, he held elected posts in the FDJ between 1953 and 1971, after which he led the Ernst Thälmann Young Pioneer Organisation until 1974. From 1974 until 1983 he was the First Secretary of the FDJ Central Council. He became an alternate member of the CC SED in 1971, and a full member in 1973. At the 9th SED Congress in 1976 he was elected an alternate member, and in 1983 a member of the Politburo and a Secretary of the CC SED.

In 1969 Krenz became a member of the National Council of the GDR National Front, and in 1971 a deputy to the Volkskammer (People's Chamber) of the GDR. He has been a member of its Presidium for several years now.

Since 1981, Egon Krenz has been a member of the Council of State of the GDR, and in October 1989 he was elected its Chairman.





HISTORY OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT: FACTS, PEOPLE, IDEAS

TWO TYPES OF REALISM

GRAMSCI, TOGLIATTI AND THE COMINTERN

Professor Renzo MARTINELLI
Florence University, Italy

Relations between the Italian Communists and the Comintern, and generally within the latter itself, were never idyllic. The perceptions of the Third International as a monolithic, conflict-free centre of the international communist movement are totally misguided, although such a propaganda stereotype had currency in the past. In reality, inside the Comintern there was always an intense political struggle, which affected the destinies of communist parties. Relations between the Communist Party of Italy¹ and the Comintern, which developed from the very beginning in a complex and contradictory way, acquiring dramatic features at particular moments, offer a characteristic example.

This does not detract from the key role played by the Comintern in the formation of the party. Rather, it helps us to reconstruct a true picture of those events, particularly as we now have access to hitherto unavailable archive materials. Extra stimulus has been provided by the recent spate of discussions about Gramsci and Togliatti, about their views on the Comintern's political directives and on those processes within it that were influenced by the infighting within the CPSU(B) in the mid-1920s.

In order to understand all this, we must obviously trace the origins of PCI-Comintern relations back to the "Bolshevisation" of the party, even as far back as the appearance in the Comintern of the so-called "Italian question", when an attempt was made to create a united proletarian front in Italy against the mounting fascist threat. The Comintern wanted the Italian Communists to establish positive ties with the Socialist Party, which at some point even seemed prepared for a merger that would have restored the position prior to January 1921, when the united PSI, at its Livorno congress, split into two—Socialist and Communist.

However, the line of establishing anti-fascist unity met with stiff opposition within the party, heated up by the sectarian approach of its then leader Bordiga, who saw no distinction between a bourgeois democratic regime and an open terrorist dictatorship. During the party's debate on fascism and the most effective policy of combatting it, Bordiga maintained that the aim of securing unity of action was pointless and that to carry out such an a priori demand

was impossible. This assertion disoriented the party, condemning it to sectarianism and depriving the Communists of their potential allies in the struggle for democratic freedoms, the protection of which was dictated by the interests of the proletariat.

The Comintern approached the solution of the "Italian question", to use the historian Paolo Spriano's phrase, "in an authoritarian way", categorically insisting on Bordiga's removal from the party leadership, and the inclusion of Antonio Gramsci and Palmiro Togliatti, who at the time were vigorously defending the slogan of a proletarian united front put forward by the Comintern. The latter's support helped considerably to isolate Bordiga from the party masses. However, the process of forming a new PCI leadership was somewhat complex and painful. In fact, at this point, when the fascists had already come to power (October 1922), the Communists needed not just a change in tactics, but a revolutionary new strategy which dealt with Italian reality. It had therefore to be distinct from that of the revolution which had won in Russia or from the Comintern directives which often ignored the specific conditions of work in individual countries.

Documents of the time attest to the difficulty of shaping a concept of political renewal for the party—notably, Gramsci's correspondence with his comrades-in-arms, primarily with Palmiro Togliatti, Alfonso Leonetti and Umberto Terracini, who worked together with him at the weekly *l'Ordine Nuovo* in 1919-1920. On the one hand, the PCI had to overcome the sectarian legacy of Bordiga, and on the other, it had to maintain its national character, to prevent itself becoming a conduit for decisions and resolutions which the Comintern regarded as binding on all its parties/sections. One of Gramsci's letters from early 1924 reads: "The decision, which in Russia was direct and launched the masses on a path of revolutionary assault, is made more complex in Central and Western Europe by the whole set of political superstructures created during more prolonged capitalist development. Moreover, it renders slower and more cautious the action of the masses and demands that the revolutionary party should devise a strategy and tactics more complex and longer-term than

those needed by the Bolsheviks between March and November 1917."² Not only does Gramsci engage in explicit polemics with Bordiga on the need to act from the point of view of a "national majority" rather than an "international minority", he also observes that the Bolshevik Party was then dominating the Comintern, something that one should be realistic about in cases of political struggle, including the internal struggle against Bordiga's sectarianism.

The years 1923-1926 were extraordinarily important ones for the PCI. Under the guidance of Gramsci, its leading group embarked upon a "Bolshevisation" of the party ranks. This process was launched by the Comintern as a response to the situation in Europe after the unsuccessful 1923 Hamburg uprising in Germany had once and for all dashed any hopes of rapid victorious revolutions.

"Bolshevisation" in this case had two clear elements. Firstly, there was a need for the parties to "anchor" themselves to the diverse national realities in order to "hold out" and transform themselves into mass organisations capable of being politically active in any situation. Secondly, this was done above all to create structures firmly tied to Soviet Russia and absolutely dependent on a Comintern in which the Bolshevik Party was, mainly for objective reasons, beginning to play an increasingly dominant role.

The latter circumstance had a series of negative consequences since the situation in the Comintern now directly hinged on the state of affairs in the Soviet party. The internal differences that exploded after Lenin's death were immediately projected onto the Comintern, where they became even sharper and were inevitably transferred to each national section. This meant that the working out of their own policies seemed to be directed from the outside. Naturally, the struggle between Stalin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev and Zinovyev was reflected in almost all other parties, giving rise to similar differences and conflicts. In the end, *"Bolshevisation" turned from a means of strengthening communist parties and developing their capacity for action into "Stalinisation", which did enormous harm to the communist movement.* At first, however, this was hard to foresee.

In the Italian party, this process lasted until the fascist "emergency laws" and the arrest of Gramsci in November 1926. This was time enough to provide the basis for a profound transformation which, although not completed, left its mark on the PCI. In fact, not only did the PCI manage, in extremely difficult conditions, to augment its numbers and to build an apparatus of "professional revolutionaries", who later withstood the severe trials of clandestinity; it also established itself as an active factor of political life, having ceased to be a merely propagandistic organism. Its theoretical studies assumed a new thrust and were now based on a sociohistorical analysis of national reality and the fundamental problems of Italian society (among which the so-called Southern question stood out).

The most mature result of this orientation was the "Lyon theses" (the main document of the 3rd PCI Congress, held

in January 1926 in Lyon, France), drafted jointly by Gramsci and Togliatti and still remarkable for its insight, for the originality of its historical reconstruction and for its penetrating analysis of fascism.

Italian "Bolshevisation" put an end to the primitive sectarianism of Bordiga and marked the first, important step towards creating a mass party. Its strong point was undoubtedly its close relationship with the Comintern at a time when this did not yet involve a mechanical subordination to its guidelines.

The political struggle in the party during the period of Gramsci's leadership was conducted openly, in an atmosphere of sharp debates within the framework of its Statute. The recognition of the Soviet experience as a "model" had not yet turned into a supine acquiescence to the decisions adopted by the country of the triumphant revolution.

At the end of 1926 (shortly before the fascist regime stifled the last, residual echoes of freedom and democracy) came the particularly noteworthy correspondence between Gramsci and Togliatti on the internal political struggle in the CPSU(B).³

At that time Togliatti was in Moscow as the Italian party representative. He realised that the period was drawing to a close in which Gramsci and the PCI could engage in renewal and the Comintern parties, within the ambit of "Bolshevisation", could search for a policy adequate to the specific character of national society, and become mass parties capable of reacting to national realities.

The merging of state and party in the USSR was accompanied by a struggle among the various groups: the issue of "socialism in one country", and the clashes between Stalin and Trotsky reverberated in the Comintern and affected the leadership of each communist party. At one of the most acute moments in this struggle, in October 1926, Gramsci sent an anxious letter to the Central Committee of the CPSU(B), on behalf of the Central Committee of the PCI in which, despite his support for the line of the group around Stalin and Bukharin, he called for restraint towards the opposition members—Trotsky, Kamenev and Zinovyev—who had already suffered defeat. Gramsci's concern was that the conflict might grow into a split which, by undermining the worker-peasant alliance, could have a devastating effect on the social structure of the Soviet state and, most importantly, cause the image of unity—the basis of the great influence the Russian example had on the international working-class movement—to fade.

Togliatti's reply expressed disagreement with the contents of the letter, decrying its official delivery to the CC CPSU(B) as inopportune. This eloquently testified to his awareness of the fact that a new, different period had set in, bringing with it the predominance of political conflict within the CPSU(B) over the concerns related to the international working-class movement and the Comintern. At this moment, according to Togliatti, it was more important to decide who to side with than to attempt to look for a now-impossible accord: the image of the USSR from then

on depended more on the victory of a concrete political orientation than on unity in the party leadership.

Gramsci, in turn, was sharply critical of such an approach to the question, which he took to be bureaucratically superficial. He defined his position clearly: "Nine years after October 1917, the *fact of the seizure of power* by the Bolsheviks can no longer revolutionise the Western masses since it belongs to history and has produced its effect; the active ideological and political conviction now (if it exists) is that once it has taken power the proletariat *can build socialism*. The party's authority rests on this conviction, one which cannot be inculcated in the broad masses by methods of scholastic teaching, but solely by revolutionary methods, that is, on the strength of the *political fact* that the Russian party as a whole is convinced of its just cause and acts unitedly."

Earlier, Gramsci had observed that the influence of the Russian example was limited to the communist parties (i.e., the vanguard of the working class), whereas it was necessary to win a *wider* audience—the broad masses of working people—and precisely for this reason the question of unity was a matter of great importance. It was essential for the international communist movement—the Comintern—not to confine itself to a framework which impeded its development and influence; it must not be reduced to a vanguard preoccupied solely with passively reflecting the problems and the internal struggle of the Soviet Union.

The meaning of this dispute is obvious: two different concepts, two different propositions of the question, *two different realisms*, so to speak, came into conflict. Gramsci and Togliatti show themselves in their correspondence to have belonged to two different, consecutive, phases of the history of the international communist movement: their dispute reflects equally acute perceptions of reality, but from different points of view. Gramsci's arguments touch on the profound tendencies of the historical process and have now assumed extraordinary importance in view of the disastrous experience of incessant internal struggle undergone in the 1920s and 1930s by Soviet society and the international communist movement. His conclusions have proved unexpectedly topical in the current period of renewal (and of a free and comprehensive analysis of the past).

Togliatti's views have their own political logic. At the time he was very close to the positions of Bukharin, who was an ally of Stalin and a champion of a gradual development of socialism in the Soviet countryside against the "leftism" of Trotsky.

The different points of view of Gramsci and Togliatti exemplify the gap between an *historico-theoretical* assessment of events based on long-term considerations and a *purely political* evaluation rooted in a concrete determination of the situation. The differences between the two men illuminate the essential characteristics of this crucial period while at the same time demonstrating the extraordinarily complex dimension which relations between the Italian Communists and the Comintern then presented.

Why the Comintern decided to send its delegate, Jules Humbert-Droz, to Italy to clarify the situation and persuade the Italian comrades to take back their letter is a question that still remains largely unresolved. However, at the decisive meeting Gramsci was unable to speak because of the worsening political situation in the country: a few days later he was arrested and the PCI outlawed. The long night of fascist dictatorship was closing upon Italy.

In a certain sense, Gramsci's letter marked the end of Italian "Bolshevisation". It was the *last expression of radical dissent*, touching as it did not only on the forms but also on the methods of action. In other words, Gramsci was questioning the very mode of political thinking that guided Communists in their activity.

Subsequent events cannot be regarded simply as the story of the PCI's mechanical adherence to the directives of a rapidly "Stalinised" Comintern: there were other significant events, amongst which it is worth mentioning the discussion that took place in July 1929 within the Italian commission of the 10th Enlarged Plenary Meeting of the Comintern Executive, where Manuïlski sharply criticised the leading group of the PCI for their indecision in upholding the slogans of struggle against social-fascism and opportunism. These slogans clearly went against the tradition and orientation of the Italian party, then inspired by the "Lyon theses". Although Togliatti observed party discipline and accepted the Comintern directives, he defended to the last the right of the PCI to make its own specific analysis of the Italian situation, affirming that: "We have always said that it is the duty of our party to study the particular situation in Italy... It is necessary to study each region of Italy and define the tactics which the PCI must follow regarding the state of affairs in the country. If this is going to be done as an 'exception', then better not to do it at all; but since it is impossible to stop thought, we reserve this right and shall limit ourselves to the general line. Nevertheless, I affirm that it is necessary to conduct such studies."⁴

Only after the victory of Nazism in Germany and the about-face of the 7th Congress did the genuine possibility of effective political action open up for the communist parties. Togliatti played an important part in this positive shift in the Comintern's attitude by delivering a report to congress on the threat of war. In the same year, 1935, at the Lenin School in Moscow, he read his famous series "Lectures on Fascism" in which an analysis of the regime is closely linked with the delineation of a new policy.

After 1935, however, the PCI endured the most difficult period in its relations with a Comintern shocked by the bloodiest manifestations of Stalinism (suffice to recall the "dissolution" of the Polish party in 1938). In a climate of suspicion and ambiguous provocative manoeuvres the CC of our party was effectively dissolved. It was only during the war that the Italian Communists were able gradually to resume their development, managing, in the most severe conditions, to gain a new capacity for action and theoretical work based on the national need to act in a broad front against Nazism and fascism.

The Italian Communist Party's experience in the Third International undoubtedly had its good and its bad points, and it has drawn the necessary lessons. Togliatti had one such lesson in mind when he told the 5th PCI Congress (1945-1946) that "in general, ideology is not taken into consideration when it comes to foreign policy".⁵

Unquestionably, such an approach underlies the current position of the Italian party, which after 1956 declared its autonomy within the international communist movement. This meant a rejection of any form of "institutionalised", "official" relations between communist parties.

In today's conditions, the new internationalism, as understood by the PCI, must rid itself of its ideological and organisational chains. The most important thing is not formal participation in a leading centre, but an autonomous and consistent struggle for solutions to the dramatic problems of the age—above all, underdevelopment.

The anti-imperialist drive, which has been a fundamental aspect of the working-class movement since its inception, is now crystallised in actions directed towards world

cooperation as a method for defining and resolving the enormous problems facing us all. In this struggle, the Italian Communist Party relies upon the profound internationalist traditions of its history, while at the same time continuing to develop and renew them in present-day conditions.

¹ After 1943—the Italian Communist Party.—Ed.

² See Palmiro Togliatti, *La formazione del gruppo dirigente del partito comunista italiano nel 1923-1924*, Rome, 1962, p. 197.

³ A full collection of letters was published in *Rinascita*, April 24, 1970 (under the editorship of F. Ferri), and then in the 1971 Turin edition of Antonio Gramsci's book *La costruzione del partito comunista 1923-1926*.

⁴ The minutes of the discussion, from which the quotations are taken, were published under the editorship of Ernesto Ragionieri in the journal *Studi storici*, Vol. XII, No. 1, 1971.

⁵ See Palmiro Togliatti, *Opere scelte*, Ed. Gianpasquale Santomasimo, Rome, 1974, p. 431.

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OUTLINING TROTSKY'S POLITICAL PROFILE

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A great deal is now being done in the Soviet Union to enrich the nation's history with new data and to fill in the so-called blank spots in our past. It is a very difficult and labourious job unprecedented in scope and content because history has always been an integral part of social consciousness and of a nation's political biography, a major factor shaping people's ideological convictions. A reappraisal of the past thus inevitably emerges as a critical and even painful self-analysis. I make this judgement not only on the basis of dissatisfaction with what has been achieved—an attitude natural to perestroika—and the need to deepen our knowledge of history, but also on the results of several years of my research into the life and work of Lev (Leon) Trotsky, perhaps one of the most controversial figures in the history of our party and of the international communist movement.

For many years, this research was rigidly restricted. *Firstly*, there was a kind of taboo imposed on any attempted interpretation of Trotsky's life and work which differed from the one that, under Stalin, was regarded as the "party line". Unfortunately, the inertia of traditional attitudes survived in the years that followed.

Secondly, a detailed analysis of Trotsky's position was difficult because of problems in gaining access to the necessary archives. For example, some of Lenin's statements which refer to Trotsky are still closed not only to the general public but also to researchers. Soviet historians were denied access to the papers written by Trotsky himself, to certain documents of the Revolutionary Military Council which he chaired for almost 7 years, and to the minutes of the Central Committee's Political Bureau and Organisational Bureau meetings during the Civil War. Few could turn to the archives for information about his activities in the Communist International.

Lastly, it was virtually impossible for Soviet researchers to read those of Trotsky's works which had been published at home until the late 1920s, let alone those that appeared abroad. Very few managed to get their hands on the two-volume *Trotsky Papers. 1917-1922*, published in London and Paris in 1964. The numerous publications about Trotsky by foreign authors were essentially outside our field of vision, at least they could neither be properly discussed nor scientifically analysed. It was next to impossible to recreate a full picture of the events and developments connected with his personality. It is now time for us to fill in the blank spots.

I may well be asked whether this work is necessary. Some would say it is not, because the communist movement has passed the final historical and political verdict on Trotsky. Others are convinced that the existing assessments are unfair. Still others would say that this work is needed, but the time for it is yet to come. In short, you have a plurality of views.

My position is that we must sort everything out, but without the emotional bias present in some papers on the

subject. It is important not to overlook those previous political assessments of Trotsky's activities which were given by Lenin, the Comintern, the CPSU and other communist parties. These assessments were not groundless, and in many cases they remain valid. However, this should not prevent us from taking a fresh look at the subject. The most important task, I believe, is at least to take stock of things which were generally known before but which were normally kept under the lid due to the prevailing attitude towards Trotsky, and to draw certain lessons from a study of Trotsky's personality.

Let me begin with a brief biographical sketch. Lev Davidovich Trotsky (Bronstein) was born on October 25, 1879. His father, a man of modest means but considerable enterprise (the family lived on the income he received from the use of leased farmland in the Kherson Region in the Ukraine), did all he could to give his four children a good education. Lev, his youngest son, was sent to a technical school in Nikolayev.

The boy was remarkably intelligent and a capable speaker. As he grew older, he became a leader of those young progressives who wanted to do some real work "for the benefit of society". This led Trotsky to join the South Russian Workers' Union, a semi-clandestine revolutionary Marxist organisation (although, as he later admitted, he had not read Marx's works at the time and his views were far from Marxist. His interest in theory developed much later, during his emigre years, when he worked hard to educate himself, eventually graduating from Vienna University.)

After the South Russian Workers' Union was suppressed in 1898, Lev Bronstein was arrested by the police and sent to the Nikolayev, Kherson and Odessa prisons. In Odessa, he chose his famous alias by assuming the name of one of the prison officers. The investigation into his case lasted for two years, after which the court exiled him to Eastern Siberia for four years. There, in the Irkutsk Region, he was active among his fellow exiles and wrote for *Vostochnoye obozreniye* (Eastern Review), a local newspaper. His articles were noted not only by the general public but also by Russian social democratic emigres. A letter he received from the editorial board of the newspaper *Iskra* (Spark)¹ with an invitation to join its staff helped stiffen his resolve to escape from exile.

He did, at the first opportunity. On a rainy morning in October 1902, after an arduous journey, he called on Lenin in London. He received a warm welcome and was immediately put to work preparing articles for *Iskra*, delivering lectures and conducting other political education activities. Still, Trotsky did not, however, join the *Iskra* editorial staff: Plekhanov objected categorically, perhaps divining the man's contradictory and complex personality.

Whilst abroad, Trotsky took part in the 2nd Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Labour Party at which the split into the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks occurred. At first he vigorously backed Lenin against the separatist claims of the Bund² members. But when the congress began to discuss the party's Programme and Rules, he

sided with the Mensheviks, rejecting Lenin's ideas for the organisational structure of the RSDLP. When it became clear that Trotsky did not share Lenin's view of a revolutionary party, virtually all contacts between them were broken off. "The Second Congress was a major landmark for me," Trotsky wrote, "if only because I parted ways with Lenin for several years."³

In 1905, Trotsky returned to Russia. He arrived in St. Petersburg at the height of the October strike, and immediately threw himself into political work. As one of the editors of the newspaper *Nachalo* (The Beginning), he advocated clearly radical views, and this rapidly increased his popularity. When the St. Petersburg Soviet of Workers' Deputies was established on October 13, he was elected, under the assumed name of Yanovsky, to the post of vice-chairman, but became its de facto leader. For six weeks, the Soviet was at the head of the city's workers, and Trotsky was always in the thick of events. After the political police raided the Soviet and arrested its executive committee on December 3, he was again imprisoned.

The sentence handed down by the court in January 1907 was a great deal harsher than the first time: exile to Siberia for life. But Trotsky escaped en route and again reached London where, in May 1907, he attended the 5th Congress of the RSDLP as a Social Democrat belonging to no specific faction.

Trotsky's activities during the first Russian revolution provide ample proof that his capacity for resolute action while riding the crest of a revolutionary wave was a major—if not the major—feature of his political character, one which was to make itself felt later too. At such times he became a changed man and acted with singular determination and purpose, spurred on, as it were, by the growing intensity of class battles. Sometimes this drove Trotsky closer to the Bolsheviks, although their views failed to coincide completely, particularly on matters of strategy. It would seem that his ambition to play a leading role and his indication towards tackling the purely economic aspects of working-class emancipation got in the way. These two qualities, compounded by a sloganeering attitude to theory (from which he borrowed the more striking elements without getting at their dialectical roots) produced a combination of polar extremes in his outlook—from left-wing dogmatism to right-wing opportunism.

These extremes were particularly pronounced in the theory of "permanent revolution", which Trotsky advanced during Russia's revolutionary period and which he saw as his greatest accomplishment, championing it all his life. In his book *The Watershed Years*, written in 1919, he called the Russian revolution of 1905 a "prologue to a social revolutionary era in the development of Europe", asserting that it "cannot be completed either through the cooperation of the working class with the liberal bourgeoisie or through its alliance with the revolutionary peasants; it can only triumph as part of a revolution made by the European proletariat".⁴ Hence his slogan "No czar, and a workers' government".

Lenin harshly criticised both the slogan and Trotsky's whole political platform. "From the Bolsheviks," Lenin said, "Trotsky's original theory has borrowed their call for a decisive proletarian revolutionary struggle and for the conquest of political power by the proletariat, while from the Mensheviks it has borrowed 'repudiation' of the peasantry's role."⁵ Outwardly revolutionary, this theory actually backed a rightist opportunist and liberal bourgeois policy. "Trotsky is in fact helping the liberal-labour politicians in Russia, who by 'repudiation' of the role of the peasantry understand a refusal to raise up the peasants for the revolution."⁶ Whether Trotsky wanted it or not, his guideline objectively urged a course of events which could have doomed the working class to isolation and the revolution to failure. It is a paradox of history and the political tragedy of Trotsky himself that he was the first and biggest victim of his own delusions as he leaped from left to right and back.

During his second emigre period, Trotsky joined those political activists who wanted the RSDLP reformed along opportunistic lines. Virtually up to his return to Russia after the revolution of February 1917, Trotsky opposed Lenin and fought bitterly against the Bolsheviks. Significantly, it was at this time that Lenin described him in particularly harsh and implacable terms, coining the words "Trotskyism" and "Trotskyites".⁷ In this way Lenin stressed that Trotsky's views were now more than a personal delusion: they reflected a policy aimed at the elimination of the party.

The struggle against this course became particularly acute after Trotsky and his followers opposed the decisions of the 6th (Prague) All-Russia Conference of the RSDLP in 1912 and set up the so-called August anti-party bloc. Later, looking back, Trotsky wrote that "the great historic significance of Lenin's policy of irreconcilable ideological division and, when necessary, rift, pursued so as to unite and steel the cadre of a truly proletarian party, escaped me".⁸ Trotsky's subsequent critical reappraisal of his previous stand was welcomed by Lenin as sincere and serious. At any rate, Lenin never again used the word "Trotskyism" in his postrevolutionary works, even when he referred to past events. This term, and the most damning denunciations of Trotsky, surfaced again after Lenin's death in an entirely different situation, when the role Trotsky had played in the October Revolution and during the first years of Soviet government was excised.

Even the fact that Trotsky was one of the last emigres to return to Petrograd (he arrived as late as May 1917) was presented as proof that he had been at the tail end of events from the very beginning. Emphasis was placed on his tactic of waiting for the 2nd Congress of the Soviets, which was expected to hand power over to the Bolsheviks, the conclusion being that Trotsky opposed the idea of an armed uprising. The truth, however, when freed from bias, is much more complex.

Clearly, as chairman of the Petrograd Soviet and one of those who sponsored the establishment of its Military Revolutionary Committee, Trotsky contributed to the

preparation and success of the uprising and then to the suppression of Kerensky's and Krasnov's counterrevolutionary putsch. He did have his doubts about the tactical preparations for the uprising, but in the final analysis he crossed over to Lenin's side on the major issues.

After the October Revolution, Trotsky held several key posts in the top-level party and government bodies, and he took part in the drafting and implementation of cardinal political and economic decisions. But these activities were long concealed from Soviet historians who were dominated by the assessments contained in the *Short History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*. It was from this book that the insinuation of "malicious intent" spilled over into many historical papers, presenting Trotsky as a man who wormed his way into Lenin's confidence with the sole purpose of subverting the party from within and doing as much damage as possible to the Soviet state. The bias of this view was reflected in all aspects of research. There was practically no coverage by historians of Trotsky's role as a member of the party's Political Bureau and Central Committee, as head of the commissariats for foreign, military and naval affairs, or as chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic.

In actual fact, however, a great deal of what he did was useful. Take the Peace of Brest-Litovsk, a case invariably included in the list of Trotsky's actions against Lenin. True, Lenin vigorously condemned the refusal to sign the peace treaty, and this condemnation still stands. But contrary to a popular misconception, Lenin never regarded Trotsky's performance at Brest-Litovsk as a "monstrous betrayal". Lenin noted that Trotsky had initially made splendid use of the talks "for agitation",⁹ and followed the party line in delaying matters, but at the crucial moment he indeed committed grave tactical and diplomatic errors in the hope that "the German workers will come to our aid tomorrow".¹⁰

Also concealed from Soviet historians were Trotsky's activities in other fields. Though making serious mistakes and miscalculations, he acted as a resolute and purposeful leader capable of mobilising people to tackle very difficult tasks. For example, he took part in the suppression of the Left Socialist Revolutionaries' mutiny of July 6, 1918 and in the creation of a regular Red Army.

Obviously, aside from his undoubted services, there was also his overreliance on administrative methods, on the authority of power and on reprisals. All this was later used to accuse him of Bonapartism, to blame him personally for the brutalities of the Civil War, and to present him as the man who sponsored the "export of revolution" idea and was responsible for other leftist deviations.

Let me quote just one example. The 8th edition of Lenin's *Biography*, published in late 1987, says that Trotsky, as chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council, sought to evade the Central Committee's control and that Lenin criticised him severely for distorting party policy in the creation of a regular Red Army. But no documentary evidence of this is cited, or even mentioned.¹¹ Yet, the issue is not clear-cut at all. At any rate, there are few documents

in which Lenin criticised Trotsky for "distorting" the party line in military matters. There is at least as much evidence of Lenin criticising Stalin, the "military opposition", etc. Conversely, there are documents proving that during the Civil War Trotsky worked according to the party's guidelines.

Among these documents is the December 25, 1918 resolution of the party's Central Committee "On the Policy of the Military Department": "In connection with the view which is spreading in certain sections of the party to the effect that the policy of the military department is allegedly rooted in the personal attitudes of individual comrades or a particular group, and considering that such statements find their way into the party press, the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party deems it necessary to reiterate quite categorically a fact which could not be even questioned by the more responsible and experienced party workers—namely, that the policy of the military department, just like the policy of all other departments and agencies, is being conducted strictly on the basis of the general directives issued by the party through its Central Committee and under its direct control."¹²

Trotsky's peacetime activities were also contradictory. On the one hand, as a member of the government who was entrusted many times with the task of resolving purely economic problems, he did much to restore the nation's railroads which had been devastated by the two wars, to promote coal mining, strengthen discipline on the shop floor and increase labour productivity. No wonder that in 1920 Lenin mentioned him and Rykov among the particularly respected leaders who had created a well-known school of economic management.¹³

On the other hand, Trotsky was an advocate of "bar-racks communism". "Militarisation of labour," he said, "is an unavoidable method of organising the work force, of aligning it forcibly in accordance with the requirements of socialist construction during the era of transition from the realm of capital to the communist state."¹⁴ And then: "We have been creating something which is not accidental or harmful but necessary—an administrative and economic Soviet bureaucracy without which no state can exist as long as it remains a state, that is, during the present period of transition to communism."¹⁵

Trotsky was not alone in his emphasis on administration by decree, the militarisation of labour, coercion, a rejection of persuasion and material incentives, as well as shakeups and "tightening the screws" as a means of guiding the work of civic organisations. Many others in the party and in the government believed that this was the right way. Naturally, while referring to the consensus on these administrative matters, we must not forget that there were also serious differences on others.

The shift from the need to deal with national defence to the elaboration of an integral concept of political, social and economic development was accompanied by heated debate and clashes of opinion on a wide range of subjects, including the feasibility of building socialism in a single

country, the principles and methods of economic development, the cooperative movement, taxation, the policy to be conducted vis-à-vis the peasants, etc. As Mikhail Gorbachov noted in his report to the October 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, the ideological struggle of that period was complex and acute, reflecting not only and not so much individual political stands as the entire spectrum of the interests of classes, social groups and sections, the exigencies of the day, historical traditions, the pressure of urgent problems, and the fact that the international environment was capitalist and hostile.¹⁶

This, I believe, is the right way to view the history of the party's ideological and political struggle against Trotsky and his supporters. Taking stock of it today is as complex as the events of the 1920s and 1930s were contradictory.

On the one hand, this struggle helped Communists strengthen their ideological commitment and their conviction that socialist transformations were possible, something which Trotsky's supporters doubted profoundly. On the other hand, the struggle against Trotsky slowly but surely gave rise to a determination not only to defeat the other side ideologically and discredit it politically, but also to physically remove those who did not fit into Stalin's policy. This was later applied to other party activists, but was first used against Trotsky. Many of the Leninist principles of inner party life were thrown overboard.

When fighting against the Workers Opposition, Lenin had insisted on the need to "separate the wheat from the chaff" in its platform, that is, to pay close attention to any positive aspects of its criticism of the party—aspects that could help improve the situation and mass political work in general.¹⁷ This was not done with regard to the Trotskyist opposition.

In order to give a clearer picture of the situation in the party, let me quote from a document which has only recently been made public—Nadezhda Krupskaya's letter to Grigory Zinoviev about the debate of October 25-27, 1923 at a plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee and Central Control Commission where Trotsky was accused of organising a rift and of being responsible for Lenin's illness.

The atmosphere surrounding the debate was significant: "The way Lenin's name was misused at the plenary meeting is absolutely inadmissible. I can imagine how outraged he would have been if he'd known how his name was being misused. They should be glad I was not present when Petrovsky said Trotsky was to blame for Lenin's illness. I would have shouted that it was a lie, that V. I.'s major concern was not Trotsky but the ethnic question and the morals that have surfaced in our top echelons. You know that V. I. saw the danger of a rift not only in the personal qualities of Trotsky but also in the personal qualities of Stalin and others. Because you are aware of this, references to Lenin were inadmissible and insincere. They should have been prevented. They were hypocritical. These references were unbearably painful to me. I was thinking: Is it worth him recovering when his closest col-

leagues treat him so, when they have so little respect for his opinion and distort it so much?

"And now to the most important matter. The juncture we have reached is too serious to engineer a rift and make it psychologically impossible for Trotsky to work. We must try and come to a *comradely* agreement with him. Formally, the whole odium for the rift has now been heaped on Trotsky, and 'heaped' is the right word. But, in effect, hasn't Trotsky been forced into this position? I am unfamiliar with the details, and they do not matter anyway (you often don't see the wood for the trees); the crux of the matter is that we should see Trotsky as a force for the party, and we should be able to create a situation where this force could be used for the party's maximum benefit."¹⁸

We know that events took an entirely different turn. The fateful role here was played by the bitter personal rivalry between Stalin and Trotsky which, as Lenin had foreseen in his "Letter to the Congress", largely affected the position of the Central Committee and the situation in the party as a whole. Even when the opposition was right about the undemocratic methods of leadership used by Stalin and his aides, the growing Bonapartist deviations within the party and the violations of the Leninist standards of its internal affairs, most Central Committee members refused to support these criticisms.

Under the pretext of resisting Trotsky, Stalin began to suppress any and all dissent in the party ranks. Any expression of disagreement with Central Committee decisions (which were not always right) was interpreted as an attempt to engage in factionalist activities—with all such an accusation entailed. In 1925, Trotsky was dismissed from his post as chairman of the Revolutionary Military Council of the Republic. In October 1927, he was expelled from the Central Committee and, in November, from the party, subsequently being exiled to Kazakhstan and then to Turkey. He spent the last years of his life in Mexico where, in 1940, he was assassinated by Ramon Mercader, a Spanish national, on orders from the NKVD, which undertook to accomplish what Stalin wanted done.

These notes on Trotsky's personality really do no more than present a rough outline of his political biography but, in conclusion, I have to say that my experience as an historian has taught me the harmful effects biased attitudes can have, not only on the subject of my research but also on the shaping of historical consciousness. Whether it concerns personalities or ideological and political currents, history cannot be edited to fit a particular formula, no matter how correct it may seem. The important thing is to see and study reality in all its complex entirety, without ignoring, doctoring or suppressing the facts.

¹ *Iskra*, the first illegal Marxist political newspaper distributed throughout Russia; founded by Lenin in 1900. In April 1902 the editorial board was moved to London.—Ed.

² Bund (Yiddish, "union"), a petty-bourgeois nationalist organisation composed mainly of Jewish artisans from the western oblasts of Russia. Formed in September 1897, it was called the General Union of Jewish Workers in Lithuania, Poland and Russia. In 1898, at the 1st Congress of the RSDLP, the Bund joined the party as an autonomous organisation. At the 2nd Congress of the RSDLP (1903), the Bundists fought for the federal principle in party organisation. V. I. Lenin unmasked the harm of the nationalism preached by the Bund.—Ed.

³ Lev Trotsky, *My Life*, Vol. 1, Berlin, 1930, p. 190 (in Russian).

⁴ Lev Trotsky, *The Watershed Years. People of the New and the Old Eras*, Moscow, 1919, p. 45 (in Russian).

⁵ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 419.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 420.

⁷ See *Ibid.*, Vol. 17, p. 243.

⁸ Lev Trotsky, *Permanent Revolution*, Berlin, 1930, p. 49 (in Russian).

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *op. cit.*, Vol. 27, p. 113.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 184.

¹¹ See: V. I. Lenin, *A Biography*, Vol. 2, Politizdat, Moscow, 1987, p. 77 (in Russian).

¹² *The CPSU on the Armed Forces of the Soviet Union. A Collection of Documents*, Moscow, 1981, p. 42 (in Russian). See also: Leonid Spirin, "From the History of the RCP(B) During the Civil War and the Intervention", *Voprosy istorii KPSS*, No. 3, 1989.

¹³ See: V. I. Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. 42, Politizdat, Moscow, p. 165 (in Russian).

¹⁴ Lev Trotsky, *Works*, Vol. 15, p. 181 (in Russian).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 218.

¹⁶ See *CPSU Central Committee News*, No. 2, 1989, p. 212 (in Russian).

¹⁷ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 195.

¹⁸ *CPSU Central Committee News*, No. 2, 1989, p. 202.





MODERN CAPITALISM: THE PHENOMENON AND THE ESSENCE

International Round Table

Scholars and political activists from Hungary, the FRG, Belgium, Poland, the USSR and Lebanon continue a discussion launched in the previous issue of WMR.

THE SECRET OF RESILIENCE

Professor Ferenc KOSMA
(Hungary)

Social systems are not intricate toys eagerly waiting for the customer to pick them up from the counter. Of different social systems, history chooses the one that offers people more favorable opportunities for tackling their pressing problems and that is consonant with the spirit of the times. Thus the prospects for an advanced society can be spotted by checking whether it acts in the strategic interests of the human race, even though it may, at times, proceed ineptly. A retrogressive system, however, while it may be in possession of sophisticated gadgets, a higher level of culture and superior political skills, is usually not geared to these interests. Such criteria enable us to distinguish between what is fading away and what is emerging.

But the latter half of the 20th century has witnessed the appearance of phenomena which often do not fit into our world view. Signs of *ideological uncertainty* and even confused uneasiness have appeared. Some ascribe them to what they allege to be the a priori untenability of the Marxist approach, while others connect them with the improvisa-

tions of history. In my opinion, the foremost reason is that we have incurred an unpaid and overdue debt to our teachers who were great thinkers. Marx and Engels offered a forcefully irrefutable forecast, proving that capitalism was short-lived, even though it was still young and gaining strength. During Lenin's lifetime, one could already discern the first signs indicating that the bourgeois system was past its prime, that "birth pangs" might begin and a new type of society might appear. Far-sightedly, Lenin noted that this new system was still in the embryonic stage: capitalism seemed to be going downhill, while the dawn of socialism was only beginning to break.

The forecast has come true. The world has changed. But why are the contemporary admirers of Marxism uncertain—because capitalism's early demise was predicted or because its "withering away" was interpreted wrongly?

I think the principal mistake lies in the crudely oversimplified interpretation of Marx's view of the historical process. Marx and Engels did not connect the inevitable demise of capitalism with lower growth rates of labour productivity or with the bourgeoisie's opposition to technological innovations. But these expectations took firm root in the thinking of Marxists due to a mechanistic appraisal of the way Marx and Engels assessed the collapse of decrepit postfeudal societies before the onslaught of the Industrial Revolution. But, having highlighted the advantages of rapid capitalist development, the founders of our theory did not claim that the inevitable replacement of

capitalism would occur when technological progress ground to a halt. On the contrary, they concluded that the capitalist system created a situation in which both the employer and the worker would have to accelerate this progress, improve economic management, etc. This torch would pass on to the new system because social factors would make it more dynamic.

The wrong interpretation of Marx's view of the historical process became widespread for one more reason: contrary to initial expectations, socialism entered the scene of history on the periphery of the European industrial centre, in a region where initial accumulation, the industrial revolution and the emergence of a developed domestic market had not been completed—in other words, in a backward country.

Now that we are about to enter the 21st century, it is clear that bourgeois society's capacity for technological innovation and for the promotion of the human factor remains strong. It is true that the monopolies do have a tendency to consign patents to the bottom drawer, but under an oligopolistic structure and with tough international competition, the trend towards the prompt application of technological advances is gaining the upper hand. Therefore, if the decline of capitalism is judged by its indifference to progress in science and technology, one can be sure that there will be no decline.

The regulation of reproduction on a national and international scale, and the enhanced role of transnational agencies in integration and coordination reflect a compromise capitalism has been forced to make with history. Capitalism is adapting because there is nothing else it can do—even though the duration of these adaptive efforts leads to major distortions: sighing nostalgically over the "golden age" of free-for-all competition, the bourgeoisie is aware that there can be no return to the past.

What, then, can be used as a yardstick to identify the decline of capitalism? History tells us that the invariably rapid development of science and technology generally assumes an increasingly antihuman thrust.

Let me briefly recapitulate the principal landmarks of the 20th century. World War I, caused by the inter-imperialist struggle to repartition the world, could perhaps have been prevented if capitalism had developed its in-depth structures instead of militarising the economy. A worldwide conflict flared again 20 years later even though capitalism could have used its technological strength to develop the colonial economies whose markets it needed. From the latter half of the 1950s to the early 1970s, capitalism made partial use both of the developing countries' commitment to economic modernisation and of the recovery in the East-West economic ties. However, this was accompanied by an unprecedented arms race and by conflicts (Korea and Vietnam) which "cost" as much as world wars. It would seem that today's technological potential makes it possible to solve the problems that endanger our civilization's survival. But production growth which threatens the environment continues. Meanwhile,

two-thirds of humanity are half-starved and live in abject poverty.

It follows that capitalism's readiness to use every innovation available is more dangerous than the senility of feudalism, which impeded the development of the productive forces: the former calls the very survival of the human race into question. The course traversed by world history increasingly favours socialised ownership of the ever more powerful means of production—that is, it favours socialism. Nevertheless, we should remember that, in terms of technological sophistication, socialism still represents the past because it was largely a "decomposition product" of backward capitalism. But development follows the same "rules" as, say, fermentation. It takes time. So it would be utopian to expect socialism to show, in the immediate future, higher levels of labour productivity and individual consumption than in the West. Of course, I am not saying that there should be no effort to attain international standards in the quality of life. But reaching and exceeding them is not the only yardstick of progress. Rather, this criterion can be represented by social restructuring and by a change of society's quality and potential in terms of humanity's future. These, I believe, are more meaningful indicators than gross per capita income. Perhaps the advances of socialism in this area will force capitalism to adapt to the march of history—but this time, through "self-negation".

NO FAVOURS TO CAPITALISM

Kurt STEINHAUS

Board member, German Communist Party

The question of the resilience of capitalism should be examined in the context of our age, which I still see as the era of humanity's transition from capitalism to socialism. *The fact that there may be periods during which the world revolutionary process makes insignificant progress do not detract from the validity of this definition.* But what are the reasons for the viability shown by the world capitalist system after World War II, viability which most Marxists failed to foresee?

First and foremost, the ruling quarters of the developed capitalist countries managed to cope with the anarchy typical of the bourgeois mode of production. They proved quite adept at using competition as a motive force to increase labour productivity and accelerate progress in science and technology, while the pursuit of profit served as a sufficiently effective means of managing and regulating the economy. By masterfully using economic and other levers and by taking the actual individual and collective interests into account, these quarters succeeded in allaying the effects of structural crises and thus preventing

political revolutions. At the same time, advances in science and technology were used more effectively and more profitably than in the socialist countries.

The imperialist powers exploited African, Asian and Latin American countries with unprecedented ruthlessness. As a result, the monopoly bourgeoisie gained room for social manoeuvre and was able to make various concessions to workers in the industrially developed countries. By skillfully using new technologies, the opportunities offered by international capitalist integration, and neocolonialism, these nations' ruling circles secured much higher living standards for most of the population at home—in fact, for two-thirds of the people.

Over the past 20 years bourgeois parliamentary democracy and the "pluralistic" way of life in the West have acquired such appeal that most people there fully accept the existing system. Besides, the mechanics of domination are now such that they make it possible to effect the necessary changes in domestic and foreign policy and in the composition of the leadership smoothly enough. At least, political crises do not assume dimensions which would be really threatening.

The question about the viability of capitalism should be addressed to socialism too. The two systems are in competition, and capitalism displays its resilience not least because existing socialism has failed to assert fully its potential in this rivalry. Meanwhile, very adverse effects have so far been produced by the socialist countries' practice of overrating their own achievements and underrating the state of affairs in the developed capitalist nations. For a long time, the socialist states' grave difficulties and problems were concealed, and the actual alignment of forces on the international scene was presented in a distorted light. Suffice it to recall that only a few years ago, Soviet sources claimed that the socialist countries accounted for 40% of the world's total industrial output—although their share was actually less than 30%.

Shortcomings in science and technology and in international socialist integration have become particularly pronounced since the 1970s. The development of effective socioeconomic techniques consonant with the humanitarian nature of socialism did not receive the attention it deserved. The issue of improving socialist democracy was essentially ignored.

Things being what they are today, the revolutionary forces in the West will be unable to reach their objectives if socialism fails to appeal to people everywhere as a system worth fighting for. But now that we have to be truly realistic in assessing the development potential of both capitalism and socialism, we must not throw out the baby with the bathwater: the conclusion that, in the past, our view of some things was either simplistic or overoptimistic must not make us close our eyes to the fact that capitalism is still incapable of coping with unemployment and poverty, providing the younger generation with a future, or solving Third World problems. As before, bourgeois society's typical features include exploitation, destruction of the en-

vironment, disdain of morals, as well as inhuman ideologies—racism, xenophobia, neofascism, the cult of violence, etc. These realities of capitalism are sometimes obscured by the glittering facade of what is known as the "affluent society". However sizable its reserves, capitalism remains a historically obsolete and crisis-ridden system.

Early this year I was alarmed to see a *Komsomolskaya pravda* item reprinted in a bourgeois newspaper in the Federal Republic. The article, entitled "Revolution or Evolution", cited a reader's query: "Is a proletarian revolution possible in the United States today?" A researcher from the Institute for US and Canadian Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences replied: "The breakthrough in the development of the productive forces achieved by the United States during the 1930s and 1940s raised capitalist society to a level classical Marxist theory had not envisaged. Contemporary capitalism has secured for most of the population a sufficient and, in some cases, high standard of living. A mature bourgeois democracy is a civil society. I would therefore conclude that a proletarian revolution is impossible in the United States." Frankly, I do not accept this view of the problem.

I discern a danger in the fact that in some socialist countries, a self-critical analysis of their problems and mistakes, and disillusionment with insufficiently effective methods, in socialist economic planning for instance, may lead people to seek a remedy in the solution of distinctly socialist problems by distinctly capitalist means. I also fear that, having viewed the two socially opposing systems in black and white (which proved a mistake), some people are no longer able to perceive the totally different class basis of these systems. The latter approach may turn our theory (and later, perhaps, our praxis) into a social democratic or bourgeois one. We should not do capitalism such a favour.

SNOWBRIDGES ACROSS CREVASSES

Jacques NAGELS

General Council member, Union of Belgian Communists

In assessing the potential of capitalism, we often fail to grasp the power and the *indestructibility* of competition. State-monopoly capitalism seemed to have put an end to it. The conclusion was that the system was stagnant, doomed, senile and feeble. But things turned out to be different. It is not easy to hold market forces in check, either by monopoly control or by state regulation. The deep-seated, unruly elements of the market operated to produce qualitative change. Its effects often adversely affected workers employed in those crisis-prone industries which were lagging behind. Nevertheless, the change forced the

bourgeoisie to apply scientific and technological innovations and resulted in an improved quality of life for the new categories of hired workers. In other words, competition continued to lay down the rules. There is even competition between the parent companies and the subsidiaries of TNCs. This, I think, is one of the main reasons for the resilience of contemporary capitalism. Otherwise it could have been a kind of "Brezhnev-style" capitalism based on administration by fiat.

Marx has been proved right: competition is indeed the *inner nature of capital* up against which the producer inevitably runs with his monopolistic claims. Such clashes affect performance in the field of science and technology: even medium and small businesses become pioneers in some areas. No single concern or group can monopolise the revolution in science and technology and this also results in a new basis for competition itself. Such are the economic dynamics of contemporary capitalism.

More specifically, until 1973, postwar Belgium developed according to the so-called social democratic project. A greater role was played by the state, which, under pressure from workers, paid considerable attention to their social security. Wages grew, and so did labour productivity. But the world's new economic realities and the crisis of 1973 changed the situation radically. The switch to a neoliberal policy aimed at increasing the share of corporate profits was an offensive against the public sector and the powerful public services in education, health care, social security and the like, and workers rose to defend them. Still, if we want to be realistic we must admit that, however partially, the neoliberal course has given new strength to capitalism by opening up investment opportunities for technological retooling, the automation of continuous production cycles, and for the introduction of informatics and robots into all industries. All this is connected with new types of products. In other words, *production dictates a new system of consumption*; otherwise overproduction (that is, a crisis) sets in. A turn from neoliberalism to a new social democratic project is therefore possible, and has in fact been taking place in Belgium since 1987. What does this turn entail? New technologies will further reduce the numerical strength of the industrial working class; the necessary requirements will be met by small teams of workers and by people working at home. This may polarise workers into the well-paid and the unemployed. To allay the effects of this process, a social compromise is in order.

The opportunities for capitalist expansion are also connected with the situation in the Third World, where the public sector is generally quite large. But neocolonial debts favour this sector's privatisation, including the transfer of control over it to transnational corporations.

However, this does not mean that capitalism is without problems. Such problems do exist, and they are complex, large-scale and fraught with grave risks. You could say that capitalism is crossing snowbridges over crevasses. Im-

balances have developed which are enormous even in global terms—in trade between the United States and the FRG, between Japan and the United States, etc. Vast amounts of money are circulating among the stock markets of the North which is still subsidised by the poor, debt-ridden South.

What, then, is the alternative? In those countries where the productive forces have reached a high development level—for example, in the EEC—central planning is impossible because it is not geared to this level. The important thing is the independence of enterprises and their workers' collectives. *The more developed the productive forces are, the more democracy they need.* This is the present demand as far as management is concerned. Meanwhile, democracy on a large scale means the involvement of workers in decision-making at all levels, both micro (enterprise) and macro (society). This is where different interests may be considerably at variance, various social group may seek self-serving objectives, and so on. But this should cause no alarm: the interests in question should be taken into account so as to achieve "vertical" and "horizontal" compromises (this does not mean fighting over every single letter or comma) for the sake of a more competent social policy.

Today, it is impossible to talk about socialism as an immediate prospect for Belgium. As I mentioned earlier, the working-class base and the trade union movement are contracting due to the changes occurring in production. Still, living standards are bearable, and the working people do not want to endanger them, preferring to proceed with caution. They refuse to take risks, seeking instead to defend and consolidate what they have won. Opportunities for this do exist, in the factory councils, the collective bargaining system and other social institutions, for example. The prime task is to make them work more effectively for the benefit of working people. In other words, *the objective is to strengthen the "state-workers" axis while weakening the "state-capital" axis.* This is the context in which one can speak about the socialist prospect and about the elimination of capitalism as a system of man's alienation.

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE

Professor Bronislaw MINC
(Poland)

Capitalism has not exhausted its potential yet. Whether we trace its history to the emergence of the first manufactories in the latter half of the 16th century, or to the onset of the machine stage in the mid-18th century, or to the French Revolution, it is clear that the bourgeois system

has only been in existence for between 200 and 350 years—a comparatively short time compared to the 1,000 years of feudalism or to the Asian mode of production. Our impatient expectation of its early demise is groundless, even though the bourgeois system was not yet 100 years old, when Marx believed that the revolution was around the corner. Today, ample evidence of capitalism's viability is available: for example, integration and transnationalisation have only just begun and have a long way to go before they are completed.

I think the criterion chosen by Menshikov is outdated. He said that this system had learned to resolve the contradiction between the socialised character of production and the private capitalist form of appropriation. This contradiction can no longer be precisely defined. Today, the state appropriates and redistributes between 30% and 60% (or more) of the national income in capitalist countries: this type of appropriation is no longer private, it is, to a large extent, public. At the same time it has turned out that public ownership in the socialist countries (which used to be regarded as the highest form of socialist ownership) is not really public, and that this has even led to grave distortions.

The reason for the viability of capitalism is that it has learned to resolve the contradiction between use value and exchange value by seeking to meet the requirements of consumers and to win them over, by competing for their attention with the help of a greater selection of better goods, by using marketing techniques and by forging close links between trade and production. While I do not share the theoretical substantiation of Galbraith's approach, on the whole he is right: the mass of consumers and the demand it generates are a motive force of capitalism. Its other motive force is the development and application of new technology for the manufacture of various new products, which now account for 17% to 20% of the total. In the socialist countries, this figure is 3% to 4%, and sometimes even lower.

I agree that neocolonialism has not disappeared and that it exists in different forms. But capitalism has a future in the Third World too, and this future is connected mostly with the exploitation of cheap labour: there are the "small tigers"—Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia. Thailand and Sri Lanka, where labour is 97% cheaper than in the United States, can already be added to the list. The transfer of production to these countries gradually increases wages and expands the domestic market. These processes are not painless, as one can see from the example of South Korea, but it is nevertheless development, including social development.

Let me now return to Menshikov's point about the correlation between capitalism and socialism. They do influence each other, and capitalism has adopted some socialist features. But how many are they and what are they? We are sometimes bold in assessing and criticising the past—Stalinism for example—and this attitude was absent during the 1930s and 1940s. Naturally, such

criticism is necessary today, too, but a critical examination of the present is the important thing. To this day, every new idea put forward by the party and the government is described as valid. Why, then, do people emigrate from socialist to capitalist countries, and not vice versa? Why do they "vote with their feet"?

I think our technological lag in many areas and our living standards which, despite certain gains, remain low are to blame. This is rooted in the immutability of the economic mechanism. All our economic reforms—from Yugoslavia and Hungary to the USSR and Poland—have yet to affect it palpably. Let me cite an example from my country: during the late 1940s, factories were asked to increase their gross output, and later this was stimulated by profit-sharing amongst management and workers. Recently, workers' participation in maximising profits has been serving the same end. Essentially, the system remains unchanged to this day, and it hampers progress in science and technology. You can increase profits by raising prices and by choosing a range of products which look nice in performance reports but sell poorly, fail to meet the demand, etc. This system of incentives leads to distortions in market supply, inflation, shoddy workmanship and low competitiveness, and it uses up a lot of energy and raw materials. As a result, the long-term opportunities for increasing the turnover of goods is restricted severely. But the mechanism's biggest flaw lies in the administrative system. You cannot feed people by decree.

I hold that *we should accept the challenge of the consumer society as soon as possible* and finally face the needs of the people and technological progress, because administration-by-fiat socialism has already lost much ground in its competition with capitalism. We should move more resolutely in restructuring the national economy and removing the barriers facing the consumer.

Factories should work to meet consumer demand in both quantity and quality as fully as possible, and at reasonable prices. They should not produce for the sake of making a profit which remains on paper. By moving to meet the demand we would stimulate consumption and make a major step forward. Why overfulfill planned quotas and receive bonuses when the shops are empty, unwanted goods pile up and producers are afraid of innovation? We need an alternative linked to long-term social development, not tied to the annual quota. Naturally, this does not rule out planning, but it must be a different kind of planning, one based on actual consumer demand and on advances in science and technology.

Finally, we should compete with capitalism in *how best to meet the requirements of the population with the resources available*. Here, maximisation of profits cannot be used as a yardstick of a factory's social effectiveness. We must invest in science and technology in order to cope with this task, and for that we need profits—but they should be optimum profits. All this can give socialism a new lease of life.

WHERE IS THE DIVIDING LINE?

Grigory VODOLAZOV
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Has Marxism provided a valid definition of the main contradictions in capitalism and its development trends? For me, the forecasts made by the founders of our theory have been borne out: the contradiction between the public character of production and the private form of appropriation is consistently being resolved in favour of public appropriation; *public production coupled with such appropriation is socialism, or movement towards socialism*. Professor Menshikov demonstrated this in his paper. He traced the growth of the mechanism of public appropriation from the anarchic free enterprise stage, to the capitalist economy with substantial elements of planning, to the present phase, characterised by transnationalisation, the search for regulative means, what might be described as Keynesianism on an international scale. The growth of public appropriation manifests itself in the proliferation of stock ownership, the greater weight of the trade unions and their control over the labour market, the enhanced political strength of working-class political parties and organisations, a better quality of life, the democratisation of the social fabric, and consequently in working people's greater involvement in running society. In other words, they exerted a growing influence on economic processes.

Why has this happened? Have the employers become kinder and more ethical? *No, the changes are explained by the logic of the class struggle, not by the "humanitarian aspirations" of the capitalist class*. These changes were won, above all, by working people. For instance, the Chartists' victory in Britain, which led to the introduction of the 10-hour workday, was seen by Marx as the first victory of the *political economy of labour* over the political economy of capital. The reduction of the workweek was not a gift granted by the bourgeoisie, but an achievement won by the working class after bitter struggle; after that, British society began to turn into the arena for battle between two political economies.

To a certain extent it is true that we underrated the "capabilities" of capitalism. Indeed, we underrated the flexibility of the entrepreneurial class and its ability to manoeuvre and retreat while retaining its principal strongholds. We did not do justice to the elasticity of bourgeois structures. But I believe we thought (and still think) even less of the democratic forces' capacity for blocking, in the course of their struggle, the logic of capitalist development and for shaping nonbourgeois social structures and relations within bourgeois society. The struggle waged in capitalist society by the working class and its allies has long ceased to be confined to the superstructure as a

strictly political factor. Today, it has also acquired a *basis-related significance. It is changing society's foundation and reshaping its type and character*.

I believe that contemporary capitalism is a complex entity which, as Lenin put it, is being drawn into a new social system against its will and on the basis of the class struggle. In other words, *private ownership is being eliminated within the framework of private ownership*—as Marx foresaw in his time. So let us not credit the *achievements of Western society* solely to capitalism. They are largely the results of efforts exerted by the working class and its allies. *Western civilization should be valued precisely and primarily for the accomplishments of working people and their organisations*.

On the other hand, to underrate the present level of democracy, quality of life and technological progress in the West (an attitude typical of primitive and dogmatic thinking mistakenly identified with orthodox Marxism) means not so much "class-based disdain for bourgeois values" as, objectively, a scornful position vis-à-vis the actual struggle of the democratic forces—the struggle that has made these achievements possible.

At the risk of repeating myself, let me stress that modern Western societies are the arena where two political economies clash. The question often arises as to whether capitalism can do without militarism or neocolonialism. Sometimes the answer is simply that it can. I would put it differently: yes, Western society can do without militarism and neocolonialism, but then it would be a "capitalism" which is losing its salient features. The question of capitalism's viability is a pseudoproblem because in order to survive, it has to cease being what it is. But in order to contract the sphere of capitalist domination, the class struggle must be continued. The gains won during it are no reason to weaken, let alone abandon it. We Communists and our allies still have a great deal to accomplish: far from having been completed, our historical mission is becoming ever more important (if we can break with the Stalinist tradition which leads nowhere). We can really grasp the principal contradiction of our era only if we follow up on the idea of a contradiction discovered and formulated by Marx—the contradiction between alienated hired labour and capital. It has been going through stages of its resolution in the West, and in the East it began to be resolved in distinctive forms after the October Revolution. But it has not been resolved fully—either in the West or in the East. Therefore, the social dividing line runs through and within, not only between the two systems. It is the watershed between the international forces of progress and emancipation (including the working-class and democratic movement in the West, the champions of national liberation in the Third World and the advocates of revolutionary restructuring in the socialist countries) and the forces of oppression, alienation and conservatism (the bourgeoisie of the military-industrial complex, the bureaucratic and comprador interests in the developing countries and the forces of Stalinism and stagnation in the

socialist nations). The struggle continues. This is why Marxism has not exhausted its potential, and why the main trends it identified remain valid. We have no reason to be ashamed of our commitment to the ideals born of 19th-century class battles. Ours are great tasks—the struggle for human survival and the world's social renewal. The political economy of labour has helped tackle economic problems in the zone of developed capitalism, and *now it has to solve the problem of meeting universal human requirements which have been conditioned by the entire course of world history and the development of modern civilization as a whole.*

THE PLIGHT OF THE THIRD WORLD

Rafic SAMHOUN

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I would say that the analysis presented in some of the contributions, particularly from Galbraith and Menshikov, is somewhat one-sided: contemporary capitalism is reduced to the industrially developed countries, as though it had no *periphery*. But it consists of more than the industrial centres and the capitals—Washington, Paris, Bonn or Tokyo—drowning in a neon sea of advertisements. The developed centres and the backward periphery make up a single whole, and the true image of late 20th-century capitalism is inseparable, just as it was in the past, from the exploitation and poverty of hundreds of millions and from the social contrasts that are growing between the neocolonial South and the prosperous North:

- * there is an extreme imbalance in the way raw materials and resources are distributed (one-quarter of the human race consumes three-quarters of the wealth produced);

- * the minimum wage in the capitalist centres is about \$1,000 a month, while it is no more than \$50 on the periphery;

- * in the developing countries, 40 million people die of hunger every year;

- * the debt of Third World countries continues to grow, reinforcing their backwardness.

This world is, of course, diverse: it has its own leaders and its own outsiders. But it does not fit the "prosperous" pattern of the centres. There is an obvious imbalance between them and the South—a social, not a geographic imbalance. Contemporary capitalism should be judged by what it offers all its tenant nations, not just those who are lucky enough to live in its better apartments. The situation in the Third World would have been far worse had it not been for the assistance rendered by socialism, which made sacrifices to help us at times when it was experienc-

ing domestic and external difficulties. In the centres of capitalism, complex social problems also exist. All this should be taken into account when reflecting on the resilience of capitalism.

Our repeated forecasts of its early collapse formed in us the habit of stressing the increasingly acute contradictions developing between the leading capitalist powers; we regarded these contradictions as insurmountable and inherent in the system. This view was not unfounded: there were the world wars and the trade wars. But we underrated a new trend, the *transnationalisation of capitalist production*, as a result of which numerous international organisations and agencies began to coordinate the activities of the centres. To maintain today that centrifugal forces dominate centripetal ones in relations between the leading Western powers is, I believe, an oversimplification which overlooks a new and more complex reality.

I would say that interrelations and contradictions between industrially developed countries have acquired a different quality. One should not, of course, discount the differences existing between West European and Japanese or US and Japanese interests, the juggernaut of competition, the hegemony of the dollar and the like. Nor should we belittle the importance of the fact that despite these contradictions, the centres are gravitating closer to one another. This transnationalisation of the capitalist economy runs counter to the interests of the South and produces new tangles of contradictions, polarising the world into the rich and the poor, the strong and the weak nations.

New opportunities are also opening up for coordinating the activities of all those who suffer from transnationalisation, both in the strongholds of industrial capitalism and on its periphery. I am referring to the global unity of working people in both developed and developing countries. It is important to counter the policy pursued by the centres and their ruling quarters with joint action by those forces which seek to renew the world and which are interested in the establishment of a new international economic order and effective control over the TNCs.

We have also grown used to the idea that militarism and wars are intrinsic to capitalism and that the definitive removal of these threats necessarily implies the eradication of capitalist arrangements. This view was not unfounded either: witness the two world wars, the scores of local conflicts, etc. Some economists still claim that the arms buildup is an "objective" requirement of international capital since economic crises now involve not so much overproduction as financial "overaccumulation"—the trillions of "surplus" dollars which cannot be used in the civilian economy because of its relative saturation with investments. The assertion is that channeling these resources into military requirements is the only way out.

However, times are changing, and today the arms race threatens to overrun the human race. Moreover, the military-industrial complex sponges on technological advances which ought to be used to tackle global problems,

including underdevelopment. Militarisation thus offers only a temporary reprieve from crisis, while harbouring a long-term universal threat. This sort of tendency objectively compels diverse forces, including large sections of the business community connected with the civilian sectors of the economy, to join forces against the arms manufacturers. This may prove crucial to the viability of capitalism.

A great deal will also depend on the ability of socialism to gear itself to peaceful competition and to *prevent the nascent positive trends in international relations from being frustrated. Last but not least, the future of a just and interdependent world depends on the extent to which the peripheral countries benefit from such restructuring and from the economic achievements of socialism.*

* * *

MASS CONSCIOUSNESS AND SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

The dialogue we present is between Professor German DILIGENSKY, a Soviet researcher, and Jorge BERGSTEIN, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Argentina (PCA) and one of the leading figures of the PCA Group for Socio-Psychological Analysis and Propaganda.

Jorge BERGSTEIN. Unfortunately, many Marxists underrated the importance of social psychology, and some still do. I think that this explains the difficulties and the failures several communist parties have experienced. They have suffered heavily from dogmatic and fatalistic concepts of revolution.

German DILIGENSKY. Dogmatism in ideology sooner or later stymies the policy of world revolutionary transformation. It is therefore particularly topical to abandon dogmatism and call for the realism which is essential to such transformation. And a profound insight into reality is impossible without social psychology.

The views of many Marxists have been noticeably influenced by the idea about the primacy of ideology in the shaping and guidance of the masses' consciousness, sociopolitical behaviour and, consequently, psychology. The ideological struggle is thus presented as a battle between two armies in the course of which one side—revolutionary ideology—seeks to oust the other—bourgeois ideology—from the "territory" of mass consciousness.

It is a serious flaw of this approach that it regards psychology and mass consciousness precisely as "territory", as a passive object of the ideological struggle. In practical politics, this usually prevents parties from winning influence with the masses (or retaining what was won previously). But if a ruling party is guided by these ideas, its attitude to the people as an "object" of ideology and politics leads it to adopt antidemocratic practices and may even prompt it to use violence and reprisals against a particular section of the masses. We know that this was the path taken by Stalin's regime.

J.B. Still, one can hardly deny the primacy of ideology over social psychology. Besides, I do not think it is suffi-

cient to compare the struggle between proletarian and bourgeois ideology to territorial rivalry. While communist parties do tend to "idealise" and oversimplify the characteristics of classes and of the masses, the issue is in fact much more complex. This makes it very important to use the tools offered by psychology and sociology in order to study the system of relations between the party and the masses. By applying a relevant scientific method, we must give up a black-and-white picture of reality. Black-and-white vision is promoted by certain distinctive features many sister parties have developed in their organisational system. The authoritarian trends built into it tend to hamper the political self-expression of party members. Therefore, debates about the need for a proper understanding of democratic centralism, an abandonment of overcentralisation and the ensuring of more vigorous and direct participation by the rank and file in party affairs are very important for our movement. In this way, the party receives firsthand information about the level of the masses' consciousness and about their attitudes, and it can therefore take them into consideration in its work.

G.D. True, mass psychology is always influenced by the ideologies that exist in society; one can say that it absorbs their products. But this does not mean that it lacks its own content, although I must admit that, so far, only a beginning has been made in studying the psychological "layer" of mass consciousness.

J.B. Argentine Marxists are contributing to the examination of these problems. A group of our sociologists has conducted some research into the sociopsychological aspects of the nation's public opinion. But theoretical studies of sociopsychological categories are still at the embryonic stage in Argentina as well.

G.D. Nevertheless, I think we can already set forth certain reflections of importance to Marxists' practical work.

Soviet social psychologists are making their own contribution to the study of the nature of Stalinism, a phenomenon which has so deeply marked the history of the communist movement. The Stalinist system did use certain sociopsychological characteristics of mass consciousness—naturally, manipulating and distorting them to its own advantage. It was kept afloat not simply by the purges, but also by means of the moral suppression of the personality in the name of the proclaimed common goals, by absolute confidence in the party leadership (confidence that was transformed into a cult of the leader), by the greatest possible dogmatism and oversimplification of socialist ideology, and by the exaggeration of the threat posed by the class adversary. While ignoring the elementary needs of the working people, the Stalinist model projected a paternalistic image of the state as the guarantor of their material well-being: no matter how poor its subjects, each had a definite economic niche, each was entitled to free medical care, and no one was redundant. It is no accident that Stalinism spread far beyond the USSR. This was due to the common nature of mass psychology as the two opposite social systems confronted each other.

J.B. Frankly, some of my comrades were initially very much alarmed to hear such assessments voiced. When new, previously unknown facts came to light, opinions changed. At any rate, the previously inspiring image of socialism is fading in the eyes of many Communists in Argentina and other capitalist countries as they learn about the mistakes and crimes committed in the Soviet Union. This now represents a negative sociopsychological factor for our movement.

G.D. But there is only one way of restoring and reinforcing the socialist ideal: we must pass through the crucible of learning the truth so as not to repeat past mistakes and deformations. For example, we must recognise the reality of the situation created in Soviet society in the period of stagnation. Most Soviet citizens did not question the values and ideals of socialism or its moral superiority over capitalism. But their actual social behaviour often had little connection with these values. The social inertia that arose as a result is, I believe, the biggest psychological hindrance to perestroika.

J.B. As a social psychologist, let me stress that your perestroika produces a dual effect. On the one hand, for many of us the fruit is bitter because of the numerous critical assessments and exposures that have surfaced. On the other, all genuine advocates of socialism see it as evidence that socialist society can correct its own mistakes, and this is reflected immediately in world politics. Still, there is much for our public relations experts to do in this sphere as they, along with social psychologists, resist the campaign that has been launched in the capitalist world: our adversaries are trying to prove the "failure" of

Marxism-Leninism, despite the fact that developments in the Soviet Union have made Mikhail Gorbachov a figure of global standing, that democracy is improving and that your society is going through an intellectual and moral renewal. In the final analysis, perestroika is furthering social progress throughout the world.

G.D. The phenomena you mentioned have a direct bearing on the prospects for the shaping and promotion of mass socialist consciousness. Many people in the capitalist countries and in the Third World respond (or can respond) positively to socialist ideals which express their own aspirations for a more just, more humane and freer society. But these ideals are increasingly unlikely to be taken at face value or in purely emotional terms: the public demands rational and tangible proof of their feasibility. It is obvious that the negative aspects of the actual experience of socialism have weakened its appeal substantially. But it is equally obvious that the success of the democratic and humanitarian perestroika drive and the attainment of impressive economic and social progress are essential if we want to close the gap between socialist ideology and the working masses' expectations and loyalties.

J.B. I would say that activities among the working class have always been of the greatest importance to Communists. What do you think we can glean from a sociopsychological cross-section of the contemporary working class?

G.D. Many ideologists and leaders of today's working-class movement still see industrial workers the way they were seen in the 19th century. However, the world has changed radically since. Workers' material conditions are now different, their educational and overall cultural level has grown, and they now exert a greater influence on various parts of the social fabric. I would say that Marxist thought has yet to provide a clear and substantiated answer to the fundamental question: what are the historical prospects for the revolutionary nature of the working class? A great deal can be accomplished in this respect by social psychology, but in order to do that we must break with dogmatism and with habitual formulas and stereotypes.

J.B. There is no doubt that we should pay due attention to the changes occurring in the society we live in. But I think we should also be aware that the situation is different in different parts of the world: there are nations of developed capitalism; nations where capitalism emerged much later; and some only now embarking on this path. Many countries have been subjugated by imperialism, and their development level is relatively low. But even in the industrialised states one can hardly speak (as claimed in some quarters) about the "disappearance" of the working class or the erosion of working-class consciousness.

G.D. We reject our ideological opponents' claims that Marxism has become obsolete and that the working class has been "integrated" into capitalist society. But we have so far been unable to counter them with a sufficiently

well-argued concept based on an analysis of today's realities. We have yet to explain convincingly why no revolutionary situations have arisen in the developed capitalist countries for many decades now, why the social base of the revolutionary parties has contracted in most of these nations, and why opinion polls show that people fear abrupt change and want stability.

In order to understand the contemporary situation, I believe we should examine the changes under way in the mass psychology of the working class.

Our traditional approach has been that the characteristics of this psychology include, firstly, the *system of consumption*, dominated by motives stemming from material poverty; secondly, *collectivism*; and thirdly, a certain *mode of gaining knowledge*, developing social views based on trust in recognised figures of authority, and absorbing ready-made stereotypes advanced by various ideologists; fourthly and finally, working-class awareness of social reality was *black-and-white*—specifically, people were divided rigidly into "us" and "them".

J.B. What do you think is happening to these views today?

G.D. Rapid social change has been eroding them over the past few decades. Workers' interests have become more complex and more diverse. The issues of living standards and jobs remain important, of course, but they are intertwined closely with requirements which have now grown enormously—for meaningful and variegated leisure activities, for self-expression and personal initiative, and for a healthy way of life and a safe environment. The intricate panoply of today's mass concerns does not fit into the familiar framework of economic struggle: witness the fact that classic strikes are combined increasingly often with other types of mass movements unconnected with economic factors.

Traditional forms of collectivism, too, are gradually becoming a thing of the past. They cannot withstand the pressure of the new, more individualised way of life. Individuals are becoming more "isolated"; they are being left to their own devices in the search for common ground with other people.

The changes in the social structure make the dividing lines between classes and other large social groups more mobile. For several years now, Marxists have been registering an expansion of the boundaries delineating the working class. This means that the working class is becoming more heterogeneous, that its inner cementing ties are weakening and that its relationship with other social strata is becoming more complex. Class contradictions are not abating. But the man in the street increasingly feels that he is not so much a member of a certain class as a "human being like any other". This is one of the reasons behind the appeal of universal human interests and priorities.

J.B. I am a bit disconcerted by some of your ideas, those concerning people's needs, for example. In the developed capitalist countries, large groups of workers

have indeed appeared whose cultural level enables them to tackle tasks connected with informatics, robotisation or biotechnology. Such workers cannot be compared to those who existed, in Marx's lifetime, amid abject poverty and mass illiteracy.

But I think it would be a grave methodological mistake to follow developments only in that part of the world and to lose sight of the global state of affairs. Although we are now saying more often—and quite rightly—that our world is interdependent and that many workers in the capitalist countries do have more to lose than their chains, for the overwhelming majority of the human race life is still an uphill struggle. There are many such people in the developed capitalist nations too. In the 12 EEC countries, 44 million people out of 320 million live below the poverty line.

Note that their number has grown by 6 million since 1975. Trade unions estimate that more than 20 million people have no jobs at all in the EEC countries; moreover, workers in Spain, Greece and Portugal are much worse off than in the other nations of the Community.

We must, of course, reappraise people's concerns and aspirations with due regard for the unfolding revolution in science and technology. The scope of basic needs increasingly extends to cultural values. For example, it is in many cases typical of those marginals who live in abject poverty to go hungry so as to buy a television set.

G.D. Indeed, the processes I referred to surface mostly in the developed countries. I agree that we must analyse the acute social contradictions present there.

In this connection I believe it would be worthwhile to reflect on the profound changes occurring in the mechanics of mass consciousness: the fact that people are now better educated and better informed and that they possess greater social experience increases their urge to think and learn independently and destroys ideological stereotypes in their world view. They gain a deeper insight into the world's complexity and into the interrelatedness of various social phenomena.

For example, the perception of relations between labour and capital has changed in many ways. The bourgeoisie has long tried to make workers believe that economic class struggle was pointless because, ultimately, their incomes depend on the "size of the pie"—on economic growth in which both capitalists and workers have a stake. Working-class organisations rejected this view, maintaining that the workers' share of the pie was the important thing ("the rich can afford to pay"). The indications now are that fewer workers subscribe to this rigid attitude. They seek not only to enlarge their share of the pie (that is only natural) but also the pie itself. They realise that the two are interconnected; they are not indifferent to the future of the national economy or to the prosperity of "their" firm. Psychologically, they are therefore ready for "rational" collaboration with the employers. But they want to combine this collaboration with a struggle for their interests instead of acting in a "class peace" spirit.

J.B. Nevertheless, it is important to find out whether such attitudes on the part of workers in the developed capitalist countries perhaps result from the psychological pressure exerted by the bourgeoisie, and whether shortcomings in our own activities play a role here. In every way possible, capital encourages collaboration. I hold that our task is to use scientific analysis of new phenomena to defend the vital interests of workers and of the popular masses.

Most Communists are getting rid of the deadwood of dogmatism, and working vigorously to use advances in science and the examination of society's objective and subjective aspects in order to translate Marxist-Leninist ideas into reality. But in some areas, our progress is slow. There are many problems connected with the moves of our class adversary, specifically, with the giant apparatus of the bourgeois mass media.

G.D. When we discussed the causes of the difficulties encountered now by the revolutionary movement, I insisted on the need to pay attention to the underlying basis of the workers' mass consciousness and to the contradictions of its development. In this sense, one cannot regard the familiar formulas about the influence of bourgeois ideology, about the might of its mass media or about the monopolies bribing the "upper crust" of the working class as an exhaustive explanation.

J.B. Without treating the issue of the mass media as all-important, I think it would be very dangerous to under-rate their role and the modern technology they use to manipulate people's consciousness—to say nothing of the advances in understanding the potential inherent in the human brain. Today, if you want to reach people's minds and to convince, quotations from the classics are not enough. Nor is it enough to have a policy line and good intuition. We must also use every modern technique available—radio, television, video and films: after all, we are still not applying them fully or properly.

G.D. I would be the last one to object to your view of the role played by the mass media. Besides, I do not want to create the impression that communist parties are doing nothing in this field. For example, we in the Soviet Union have been turning increasingly to these issues in recent years: several studies have been published, and tangible steps are being taken to enhance the effectiveness of our mass media. In the era of perestroika and glasnost, some television programmes have an enormous impact on people's moods and attitudes—although we cannot agree with some experts in the West who claim that a "telecracy" has arisen in the USSR.

J.B. In capitalist society, too, "telecracy" is more of a journalistic image. Television and other mass media are

run by all-powerful capital. In recent years, transnationals have been particularly active in this sphere. Their expansionist drive is giving rise to a "transnational culture". The repercussions of this "transculturisation" are felt particularly painfully in the countries of the "peripheral world".

The use of satellite communication networks is already violating national borders and strongly influencing the morals, ideology, culture and, consequently, the psychology of different nations. The mass media corporations are financing this influence which is being promoted through massive worldwide advertising. Enrique Gonzalez Manet is quite right when he says that information has become an instrument of power, which is used as a commodity. The latest technological advances confirm its status as a structural element of the strategy of imperialist domination.

G.D. In our struggle to overcome imperialist influence, we can make wider use of the results yielded by socio-psychological analysis. The "neoconservative wave" phenomenon can serve as an example. The massive influence of neoconservatism—specifically, among workers—is due, among other things, to the rational motives mentioned earlier.

J.B. There has been a recent upsurge of neoconservatism in several Latin American countries too. At the same time, the decline of some communist parties' influence should be analysed in a broader context. The list of the underlying factors should undoubtedly include the mistakes made in the past in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. We should also consider the effects of Stalinism—for example, the extermination of some parties' leading cadres. The proliferation of dogmatism, which divorced our conceptual thinking from reality, is also impossible to explain without referring to the impact of these past events.

Naturally, you cannot ascribe all our difficulties to Stalinism. They are rooted in the contradictions innate in the development of each particular party. Besides, I regard as wrong the claims that the revolutionary spirit is now on the wane. Look at the way mass social movements are gaining strength. In Third World countries, the number of strikes and strikers is increasing, social contradictions are growing in scope, and new alliances of democratic forces are emerging.

G.D. Nevertheless, we can see that the tasks of the revolutionary forces in the capitalist countries are much more complex than we previously believed. This means that in selecting the objectives and the avenues of the class struggle, we should consider not only the acuteness of the contradictions present in today's world but also the actual state and the sociopsychological aspects of mass consciousness.

CULTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

Ornel URRIOLA

CC member, People's Party of Panama

The international symposium "The Communists and Culture in Latin America"¹ concluded, inter alia, that culture is not decoration, but life in its dialectical renovation. Using this as the starting point, I will try to expound the subject and further clarify the significance of culture in the historical process and its role at the present turning point in the development of our continent.

THE COMPASS NEEDLE OF SOCIAL LIFE

Generally, by culture we mean everything created by people both to meet their biological needs, and to realise their individuality, to express themselves and to define their place within the surroundings. Culture is a medium through which *homo faber* (man the creator) reproduces his environment and, to the same extent, himself. In the past few decades, however, social sciences have been turning away from these vague formulas and looking for more precise definitions. Celso Furtado² characterises this search as "the ample utilisation of the basic elements of dialectical thinking in typically Marxian form". He notes that "...when the categories of culture and social organisation become the central preoccupation of anthropology and sociology, the ground is being prepared for broader generalisations, which are intrinsic to dialectical thinking".³

Culture is traditionally divided into the *material* (the productive forces and everything necessary to support human life) and the *spiritual*, or non-material, which involves the superstructure (social institutions, science, art, religion, morality, traditions, customs, etc.). The terms "culture" and "superstructural culture" in the present discussion will be used primarily in the sense of non-material culture.

Changes in the productive forces and in the organisation of production, chiefly as a result of technological progress, are more dynamic than transformations in the superstructure (spiritual life). Imbalances between material and non-material culture give rise to social tensions, expand and aggravate the class struggle, and may provoke social crises.

For many professionals, culture is the creation of "sublime" works, unrelated to reality, and incomprehensible to the general public. Wittingly or unwittingly, they thus obscure the genuine humanistic purpose, character and functions of culture, and contribute to the "cultural trauma" and stagnation related to social crises.

Only by eschewing this kind of spiritual desertion and cosmetic gloss can culture display the multiplicity, complexity, diversity and inextricable unity of its components. There is a profound relationship between the organisation of society, its philosophy, laws, science, education, religion, art, traditions and customs. Dialectically, they are a product of the accumulated social heritage, which social classes, strata, groups and individuals influence in accordance with their roles in material and non-material production and reproduction.

All this shows that culture is a product of the numerous imbrications created by human activity in the material sphere and the superstructure. In a narrower sense, culture is the sum of people's perceptions of themselves and of the world in which they are living and struggling. The ability of individuals to cognise the surrounding reality depends on quality of the conceptual tools supplied to them by society, and on the character and breadth of their experience of life. Through an efficient educational system and continuous informal influences, the ruling class gives every individual a requisite stock of knowledge. People's access to material and non-material goods and services is controlled by their various roles in production. According to Durkheim,⁴ the civilised human differs from the primitive in that the former has more personality than the latter in proportion to the cultural assets of his/her consciousness. It follows that working people's accessibility to genuine culture (which is opposed by the bourgeois elite) would help them to overcome alienation and realise the profound injustice, oppression, exploitation and moral discrimination in the world, and to become masters of their destiny.

FROM THE CONQUEST TO THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Without going to the extremes of geographic determinism, one may say that it is not just the people, but also the environment that in many ways shapes social life and makes it inimitable. Following the conquest of Latin America, during an historically short period, the dynamic interaction of Indian, Iberian and African cultures in the specific natural environment of the continent produced an original Creole culture. Although direct descendants of the Spanish and the Portuguese, their mentality and psychology were different from the European standard, and they were given a lower rung on the social ladder of the colonies.

In order to consolidate their domination after the conquest, the Spanish divided their possessions in Latin America into isolated economic and administrative units and pursued in them tough policies of social stratification. That was why in the early 19th century only the vigorous organisational, educational and propaganda efforts of the separatist-minded Creoles made it possible to undo the alienation of the Indians, Blacks and Mestizoes and to involve them in the independence struggle.

In trying to replace world outlooks based on caste with a broader ideology of *common interest and national unity*, the Creoles embraced the philosophical, political and moral postulates of the North American and French revolutions and adapted them to the needs of the social forces which believed that independence would give them the right to free work, the land, education, equality before the law, etc. But contrary to their expectations, the winning of political independence did not bring about the destruction of the superstructures which had held back the development of the productive forces. Vestiges of colonialism survived under the legal systems of the newly established nation states, fuelling internecine struggles which further depleted the weak economies of the young republics.

In the latter half of the 19th century, capitalist development, and the technologies produced by the industrial revolution, forced a series of shifts in the productive forces, which gradually came into conflict with the elements of the superstructure increasingly obstructive of social change. The industrial revolution necessitated a revolution in the superstructure, and by the end of the 19th century priority shifted to questions of non-material culture.

These were addressed by all the sociopolitical forces which had risen on the crest of industrial growth, including the emergent industrial bourgeoisie (often referred to as national), the broad sections of the petty bourgeoisie, the workers' trade unions and other professional, student and peasant organisations. New parties—the Radicals, the Socialists, the Communists—entered the political scene as did prominent men of science and the arts. The need for the oligarchic state to be replaced by a modern one, and the cult of the leader by a system of political parties with well-defined ideological platforms, was generally recognised. Scholastic education was to be supplanted by personnel training based on democratic principles and aimed at fostering the habit of efficient work in order to expand and diversify the domestic market and propel the national economies onto the international scene. As a result, higher and secondary education was specialised and came to play a more prominent role.

In our region, the readjustment of the cultural superstructure to meet the needs of the industrial revolution was carried out half a century later than in Europe or North America, and involved fierce struggles, the ebb and flow of social processes, strikes, protest marches, rallies, rebellions, peasant riots, military coups, and so on.

By the mid-20th century, however, the local productive forces had again fallen behind the times, or to be more precise, behind the scientific and technological revolution (STR). When the Latin American bourgeoisie tried to implement modernisation in order to establish import substitution and gain a foothold in international markets, it turned out that there was no adequate infrastructure for competing with the transnationals, which had forged the achievements of natural and precise sciences into modern technologies and become the principal driving force of the STR.

CULTURE IN THE AGE OF THE STR

Nowadays the STR is posing another challenge to the superstructure built by the industrial revolution, for that superstructure itself is now obstructing the further progress of civilisation. This is one of the reasons behind the present crisis in Latin America, a crisis directly related to the most urgent problems of our time.

We can no longer think of progress as embodied in our mastery of Nature, as symbolised by huge cities of concrete, glass and steel, dense networks of roads, railways, power lines, gas and oil pipelines, and mammoth factories polluting the air, the seas, rivers and lakes. This course of development is insane because it imperils human life and health and calls the very existence of civilisation into question. In the social context, we see that the *present nation state—in the form of representative democracy based on the social contract—is becoming increasingly fragile and unstable as its citizens aspire to be the immediate subjects and objects of their future*—not as an amorphous mass referred to by Ortega y Gasset,⁵ but as creators with their own distinctive identities and personalities.

In Latin America, as elsewhere, the jurisdiction of the state over its citizens, over its land, waters, air space and natural resources, and over the export and import of national assets, is increasingly being arbitrarily violated by the transnationals. They now have a greater influence on what people think and do than the educational system. The transnationals overstep family and national traditions and cultural institutions to shape consumer tastes and to impose specific behaviour patterns on society. Young people readily adopt the new lifestyles offered by music, fashion, and behavioural models, in the process losing their individuality and becoming alienated in a typical syndrome of our age. It is not just political conflicts and the arms race that are assuming global proportions. The destruction of the Amazon rain forest, the depletion of fish and dolphin schools, the pollution of the oceans, external debt, human rights violations, the preservation of the historical monuments of world civilisation, AIDS, new energy sources to replace the diminishing oil and gas reserves, satellite communications and other troubles and problems are no longer local but universal, and they necessitate equal cooperation among nations. But such cooperation is impossible unless relations are transformed and democratised within each country and on the international scene.

The only social forces equal to this task are those which, through their openness and creative potential, can humanise the STR and force the transnationals into mutually beneficial cooperation. But the fulfillment of this mission, one to which the Communists can effectively contribute, calls for steadfast and consistent effort, and for a global awareness of the complexity and diversity of the world in order to introduce plans and programmes for its future restructuring.

It should be borne in mind that the STR transforms manpower as well as the means of production. The in-

dustrial revolution produced the worker, but the STR is replacing him with a professional. Large plants are giving way to small highly specialised factories. As the mysteries of the structure of matter are unravelled, natural raw materials are being replaced by artificial compounds. Advanced technologies are becoming accessible to cooperatives, and to individual and family producers in agriculture, industry and the services, who form a broad spectrum of new social forces posing a challenge to bourgeois dominance. The mission of these forces, including workers, peasants, scientists, intellectuals and petty proprietors, is to transform the cultural superstructure and open the floodgates to the free development of modern productive forces which will help the people throw off the yoke of neocolonialism, cooperate with supranational structures on an equal basis, and become part of the mechanism of global cooperation without losing their identity or betraying regional unity.

The more important and urgent tasks on this road are to guide the fast-moving STR towards a development of the productive forces that would lead to the complete emancipation of all members of society; to ensure that material and technological progress contributes towards the maximum realisation of the physical, mental and moral potential of human beings and makes them masters of their own destiny; to foster in people a new understanding of the world so that their needs are in harmony with the need to preserve and improve the environment; to restructure relations of production to fit the present social and international requirements of the productive forces; to create legal, political, administrative, educational and other institutions with entirely new functions in order that collectivity of action is guaranteed at all levels.

LATIN AMERICAN INTEGRATION ON THE AGENDA

It is in this context that the continental role of politicians, educationalists and men of science, technology, culture and the arts should be appreciated. The pooling of efforts suggested here is nothing new; there is no need to stretch the imagination to re-invent what is already becoming historical and geographic reality. The imperative of Latin American unity pervades the following words of Simon Bolivar, which gave an impetus to many an important process: "It is a grand idea to make the whole of the New World a single nation, parts of which would be tied in with the whole and between themselves by common bonds, for we have the same language, the same customs, the same religion and the same origin... But this is impossible because America is divided by diverse climatic conditions, different circumstances, conflicting interests and dissimilar characters." The Liberator's conclusion was: "Of course, we need a union to complete our liberation... However, it will not be a gift from divine providence, but will be brought about by real actions and well-directed efforts."⁶

Now that geographic distances are being compressed

by sea, railway, motor, air, telephone, radio and TV communications, important steps have been taken (with varying degrees of success) to shorten other distances as well. At the risk of sounding dull, I will name a few regional organisations just to show that Latin American and Caribbean unity is making its way in spite of hidebound nationalism or vulgar pan-Americanism: for example, the Latin American Economic System (LAES), the Latin American Energy Organisation, the Andes Group, the Central American Common Market, the Caribbean Community; and in politics there are the Contadora Group, the Group of Eight, and the Latin American Parliament, which is endeavouring to become a vehicle of political integration.

As for culture proper, several institutions are functioning, albeit with considerable difficulties and somewhat inefficiently, among them the Union of Universities of Latin America, the Andres Bello Agreement (cooperation in science and education), the Higher Council of the Universities of Latin America, and the Federation of University Students of Latin America; the Association of the Culture Departments of Central American and Caribbean Universities uses the Simon Bolivar University (Venezuela) as a base from which to work. In the past decade movements for regional cooperation in film-making have also emerged. Special mention should be made of the House of the Americas⁷ in Havana, although it is not a regional organisation. This institution has become a forum for progressive intellectuals of the region and is playing an invaluable role in popularising literature and the fine arts.

Even this list of cooperative endeavours in Latin America shows that, in the economy, most integration measures are initiated by the big bourgeoisie, while in the sphere of the cultural superstructure they come from the new social forces which are challenging the bourgeoisie for the leadership of state and society. However, as conflicts with the transnationals (primarily with those which have monopolised finances and technology) grow worse, the local bourgeoisie is becoming increasingly aware that integration will come up against ever greater difficulties unless the superstructure is drastically overhauled. Addressing the 15th conference of the LAES member countries in Cartagena, Colombia, last August, the Director of the Institute of Latin American Integration stated that, in spite of all the troubles, regional integration was a viable cause, although its completion would take time, continuous efforts and far-reaching socioeconomic changes, with the active participation of the ruling circles, in each country.

Finally, at the first meeting of the culture ministers of the 18 states of the region (Brasilia, August 10-12), the Mexican representative Flores Olea said that political and economic unity was only possible on the basis of a firm cultural identity. This affirmation is very important, of course. But since all the delegates to the forum, with the exception of Cuba's minister, spoke for bourgeois republics, it is not hard to guess that they were talking

about the kind of unity and the kind of culture that would, on the one hand, change those elements of the superstructure hindering the development of the productive forces at a time of the STR and facilitate cooperation between the bourgeoisie and the transnationals, and, on the other hand, strengthen its class hegemony and further the system of oppression and exploitation of the working people.

It would be very sad if the Left and the other progressive forces in Latin America, enmeshed in internecine conflicts and guiding themselves by illusory national interests, put themselves in the same situation as their European counterparts, i.e., face to face with integration devised by the transnationals to the latter's advantage. In Latin America a new social blueprint for freedom, democracy, justice, social progress and prosperity involves not just economic and political unity, but also a single culture that would accord with the above principles.

Progressive forces in Latin America need a genuine pooling of efforts and resources, a drastic restructuring of people's mentality, and the creation in each country of social conditions for the purposeful reorganisation of cultural structures; they require, moreover, the formation of a

multinational community able to provide people with independence, cooperation, peace, justice and happiness, and to realise human physical, cultural and intellectual potential through the achievements of the STR. In short, to create the proper conditions for the translation of yesterday's utopia into tomorrow's reality.

¹ WMR, No. 11, 1988, pp. 68-80.

² Celso Furtado, b. 1920, a Brazilian sociologist and economist, author of many publications on Third World problems.—Ed.

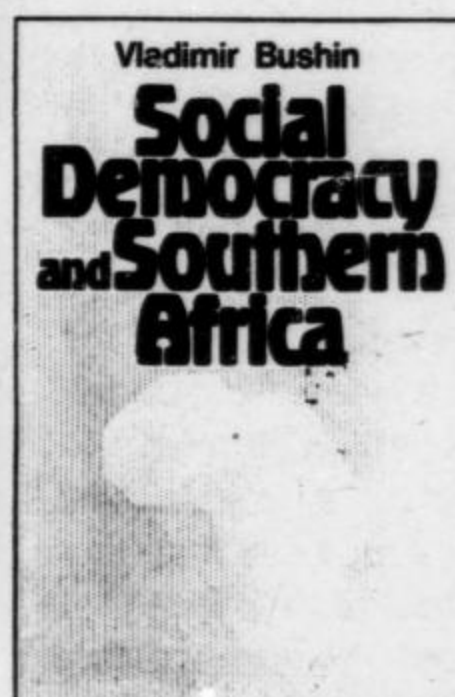
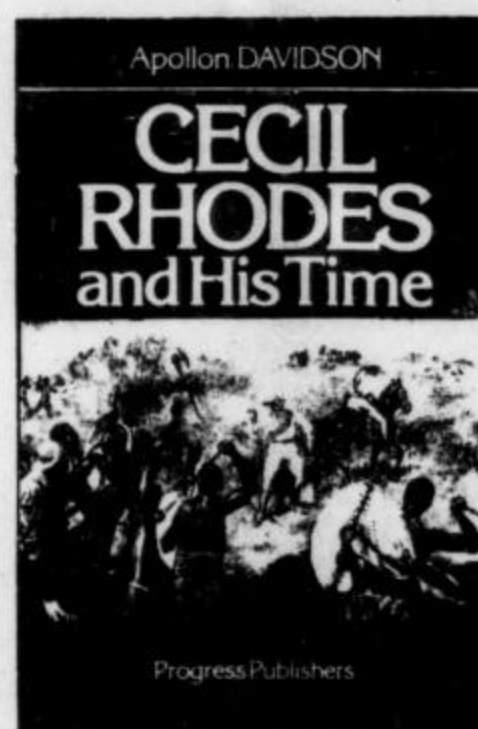
³ Celso Furtado, *Dialectica del Desarrollo*, Mexico, 1965, p. 32.

⁴ Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), French positivist sociologist who opposed the trends based on individual psychology and biological interpretations of sociological realities, considering the social whole to be more than a sum of individuals.—Ed.

⁵ Jose Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955), Spanish philosopher and writer, leading exponent of the concepts of "mass society" and "mass culture".—Ed.

⁶ Simon Bolivar, *Carta de Jamaica*, Havana, 1975, p. 30.

⁷ See WMR, No. 11, 1989.



Cecil Rhodes and His Time

This exceptionally well written book tells the story of the life and times of Cecil Rhodes. It provides a great deal of information on the history of Southern Africa, the essence of colonialism and the roots of the struggle against it. Apollon D., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1988, Hardcover, Index, 443 pp. \$9.95

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Urnov A., Progress Publishers, Moscow, Hardcover, Notes, 330 pp. \$8.75

Social Democracy and Southern Africa

A Soviet specialist in African studies analyzes the evolution of the policy of international Social Democracy to Southern Africa — from support of colonialism to solidarity with African freedom fighters. The record, and prospects, of joint efforts to put an end to colonialism and apartheid are also examined.

Bushin V., Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1989, Hardcover, 217 pp. \$7.50

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PLAYING AT PEACE

Ali KHAVARI

First Secretary, CC, People's Party of Iran

The flames of the eight-year-long war between Iran and Iraq have been extinguished,¹ but the embers are still smouldering.

The Islamic Republic accepted UN Security Council Resolution 598 about two years ago, but no serious steps have yet been taken at the peace talks. Each side regards itself as the winner, haggling at the negotiating table for the gains it failed to secure on the battlefield.

It was a pyrrhic victory for both Iran and Iraq. The tragic toll includes more than 1,000,000 people killed, 2,000,000 maimed or wounded, thousands of families left homeless and destitute, hundreds of cities and villages destroyed, and the economy in ruins.

The imperialist and Zionist interests which did much to provoke and then prolong the war were worried lest one of the sides won a decisive victory. They wanted both nations bled white and dependent on them, which is exactly what has happened. For the next 20 to 25 years, both countries will have to exploit their mineral resources ruthlessly in order to make good their material losses. While the conflict was still raging, Western monopoly quarters were anticipating the "deal of the century" which promised them billions of dollars in profits. They expected the war-ravaged countries to appeal to them for assistance.

The fact that the carnage was stopped cannot be credited to any reasonable or peace-loving attitude displayed by the leaders of the warring regimes. It was halted simply because it had to end. With their economies in tatters, the two sides suffered irreparable losses, and popular discontent was growing both in Iran and in Iraq. Finally, an important role was played by the vigorous efforts of the peace-loving forces within the two countries, throughout the world and at the United Nations.

However, things have failed to progress beyond the cessation of hostilities. The two governments seem to lack the goodwill which is necessary to end the insane game.

This is where more active efforts by the UN and by the world's progressive forces are needed.

For many years, the sides have been competing bitterly for the right to control the Arvand River.² The islands of Tumb Al-Kubra and Tumb Al-Sughra, controlled by Iran, are also the object of dispute.

Iraq lays claim to the Arvand. Iran justifies its control over the river by invoking the 1975 Algiers Agreement under which the boundary between the two countries runs along the middle of the river, that is, along the thalweg line, in accordance with international standards. At the beginning of the war, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein made a show of tearing up, in front of the TV cameras, the Agreement, which he had himself signed at Algiers.

But the unilateral abrogation of the Algiers Agreement, eight years of war and almost two years of talks have failed to secure stable, peaceful and good-neighbourly borders for the two countries. According to Teheran, Iraq has occupied 2,400 square kilometers of Iranian territory.

On both sides of the 1,000-kilometre-long frontline the armies are poised ready to strike.

Six years before the adoption of Security Council Resolution 598, the Islamic Republic could have secured not only a ceasefire but also a successful elimination of all the consequences resulting from the act of aggression. However, this did not come to pass. In May 1982 the city of Khorramshahr was liberated thanks to the selfless struggle of the Iranian people and their armed forces. The defeat forced Saddam Hussein to propose a halt to hostilities and the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Iranian territory.

However, the expansionist "export of revolution" policy, the slogan of "war to the victorious end" and the desire to install a similar Islamic regime in Iraq imposed another six destructive years of war on the two nations. Only after hundreds of thousands more casualties was the Islamic Republic, gripped by an acute social and economic crisis, forced to agree to a ceasefire.

It was clear from the beginning of the conflict that such a clash in such a strategic region (from which the West received more than 60% of its oil) could not be settled by force. But only after long years, when they were already on the verge of defeat, were the Iranian authorities able to grasp this simple fact.

Our party has always singled out two essentially different stages in the eight-year war. The first lasted from September 1980 to May 1982. That was when it was a war of liberation for the Iranian people and an aggressive war on the Iraqi side. But during the second stage, having rebuffed the Iraqi army, the Iranian people no longer had a stake in continuing the conflict. Meanwhile, the artificial objectives contrived by the authorities—those of exporting the Islamic revolution—and the campaign against blasphemy and the profanation of religious faith proved short-lived and unconvincing.

One would expect the war, which has caused nothing but immense loss and suffering, to have brought the hotheads who dreamed of military victory back to their senses. This was what progressive and peace-loving forces hoped for. In actual fact, however, the positions of the two sides, particularly of Iraq, cannot be assessed optimistically. Even after the harsh experience of the war, Baghdad still wants to establish its hegemony in the Gulf area, while the leaders of the Islamic revolution in Teheran still claim that theirs is a special mission throughout the Muslim world.

Iraq and other Arab countries fear the Islamic revolution with its policy of Islamic fundamentalism. For its part, Iran has not forgotten the beginning of the war and the solidarity of many Arab countries with Iraq. For example, Saudi Arabia, the richest state in the oil region and one with influential "friends" in the United States, provided Iraq with more than financial support during the war. It pursued a policy which helped bring down oil prices—virtually the only source of revenue for the Iranian economy—from \$34 to \$5 to \$6 per barrel. Iraq remains allied with Saudi Arabia.

Generally, the CAC countries³ have assumed a conservative attitude to the region's problems and a negative one vis-à-vis the Islamic revolution in Iran. Having become the targets of the latter's attempts to export its revolution, they began to assist Iraq during the war, and this promoted rapprochement between them. Iraq received considerable quantities of weapons from Egypt and access to the sea through Jordan, bypassing the Persian Gulf.

At the September 1989 CAC summit the participants reiterated their commitment to the Casablanca platform on the issue⁴ and voiced their support for Iraq and for its historical rights to the Shatt Al-Arab.

To sum up, the territorial claims and the mutual suspicion and fear, as well as the despotic rule and absence of democratic freedoms in these countries, make peaceful settlement very difficult. The Teheran-based *Ettela'at* newspaper, which is close to the government, has this to say on the matter: "The strength of each party at the talks depends on power and on the ability to restore it in

the political, military, economic and social spheres."⁵ The implication is that the arms buildup must continue if the talks are to be successful.

At a meeting with relatives of fallen soldiers, Chairman M. Kharroubi of the Islamic Council Assembly openly declared that "Iran is getting ready to use force in order to liberate its occupied territories. If the Iran-Iraq talks on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 598 fail, our armed forces will make the aggressor withdraw to the internationally recognised borders."⁶ Yet again, war is being regarded as a means of settling the conflict.

Both sides' efforts to bolster their positions ideologically constitute a further dangerous development. Confrontation is being artificially fomented between Iran's pan-Islamism and Iraq's pan-Arabism.

Fuel was added to the fire when the Arab emergency summit in the spring of 1989 expressed solidarity with Iraq in its right to control the Arwand.

One can see that Iraq is seeking to incite the Arab world against the Islamic Republic. On the other hand, Teheran maintains that it is entitled to impose its ideology on the entire Muslim world. For example, on May 27, 1989 the Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran radio station broadcast a statement made by Deputy Foreign Minister Bisharati during his visit to Turkey: "Iran considers it its duty to uphold the rights of Muslims wherever they live, and we do not regard this as interference in the affairs of other countries." This policy is precisely what the neighbouring Arab and non-Arab Muslim states fear. But the policy of confrontation with Iran adopted by a number of Arab countries is not comforting either.

On March 18, 1989 UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar expressed regret that the two armies had failed to return to the internationally recognised borders despite the fact that this provision is contained in Article 1 of Resolution 598.

Iraq sees the 2,400 square kilometres of occupied Iranian territory as a bargaining chip to force Iran to meet Iraqi claims. Teheran, meanwhile, is insisting on a stage-by-stage implementation of the resolution. It is delaying the exchange of prisoners of war (more than 100,000 of them on both sides, including 70,000 Iraqi and 40,000 Iranian soldiers), and saying it will be ready for direct negotiations only after the Iraqi troops withdraw to internationally recognised borders. For its part, Baghdad maintains that UN decisions cannot be implemented without direct talks.

Both regimes are thus laying serious obstacles in the way of peace and of an end to the strife which has since the end of WW II twice plunged our region into armed conflict.

The people of Iran and Iraq and the world community are demanding an end to this absurd game. The continued state of "neither war nor peace" is fraught with the danger of the two sides rearming and preparing for a new blood-bath, something that would threaten security in and beyond the Gulf area.

You cannot play with fire sitting on a powder keg. Before it is too late, a new conflagration must be prevented.

The People's Party of Iran holds that peace can be

achieved definitively only if all the progressive and democratic forces of the republic take concerted action against the despotic medieval regime.

¹ See *WMR*, No. 4, 1989, pp. 71-75.—*Ed.*

² A river formed at the confluence of the Tigris and the Euphrates and running for 200 kilometers into the Persian Gulf as a natural boundary between the two states. The Persian name of the river, the Arwand, is being used alongside the Arabic name, the Shatt Al-Arab, increasingly often in press reports and articles.

³ The Council for Arab Cooperation (CAC) was established by the

leaders of Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and the Yemen Arab Republic in February 1989.—*Ed.*

⁴ Adopted at the emergency summit of the Arab states in Casablanca in 1989.

⁵ *Ettela'at*, July 3, 1989.

⁶ *Kayhan International*, September 26, 1989.

* * *

THE REVOLUTION CAN DEFEND ITSELF

Najmuddin KAWIANI

Political Bureau member and secretary, CC, People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA)¹; member, Supreme Council for the Defence of the Fatherland

The April Revolution of 1978, accomplished under the leadership of our party, was objectively conditioned by the long struggle of the Afghan people for democracy and national development. The PDPA has amassed ten years of experience of national leadership, succeeded in rallying millions of people to the defence of the country and is the initiator of the policy of national reconciliation.

The revolution started in a backward agrarian Muslim country which has inherited a whole tangle of complex political, social, economic and ethnic problems from the past.

Now, in retrospect, we can admit that we made a number of mistakes in our bid to speed the revolutionary process. This was due not only to the traitorous activity of Hafizullah Amin, but also to *grave tactical errors, attempts to rush the course of events by skipping a number of vital revolutionary stages*. At a certain juncture the party therefore found itself isolated from the peasantry—the mass of the people. The provocative stand of the big feudal lords, bureaucrats and other opponents of transformation, as well as interference from the Pakistani military and hegemonic US circles exacerbated the republic's difficulties.

Public reaction to the presence of a Soviet military contingent was also mixed. This is a complex issue, which we have yet to analyse. Counterrevolution and its allies had a common mobilising slogan: Get the Soviet troops out of Afghanistan. Admittedly, they have been able to muster great forces under this slogan. Reaction played on the religious and national feelings of the masses and, with the Pakistani regime's backing, exploited this factor for the es-

tablishment of its own influence in the countryside. There, especially in remote mountain villages, the people disobeyed the central government. The counterrevolutionaries created armed formations either by offering money or by resorting to military force and deception, and turned our smallest miscalculations to their advantage.

Those whose interests were encroached upon by the revolution fled to Iran and Pakistan, which became the centres for the formation of an armed opposition. Mohammad Zia ul-Haq and Reza Shah Pahlavi helped in every way to organise the military training of terrorists, arming them and financing their infiltration into Afghanistan. Their aim was to strangle the revolution by provocations and sabotage. Several years before the April events, certain Pakistani circles, with the CIA's blessing, had started to establish centres for the preparation of subversion against the leadership of the young republic. Provocative US and Saudi policies also contrived to aggravate the situation. In the end a *dyarchy* actually emerged—the national government in Kabul, and the nest of counterrevolution operating from Pakistan.

Three years ago the PDPA critically examined its tactics and the military-political situation in Afghanistan. Changes in world politics and the course of events inside Afghanistan had placed before the revolution new theoretical and practical tasks. In the interests of the people and its future, the party put forward the idea of *national reconciliation*. Our long-suffering nation had grown weary of the war. We put the slogan of providing conditions for a peaceful and constructive life at the centre of the process of reconciliation between the conflicting sides. All political and social forces came into motion, leading to a new political situation in the country. The gap between most Afghans' interests and the desire of the so-called irreconcilables of the armed opposition for continued slaughter, and between the ordinary members of its detachments and the leaders who have been safely sitting it out in villas in Pakistan, Iran or some Western countries, became still more evident.

An Afghan-Pakistani accord, with the USA and the USSR acting as guarantors, was signed in Geneva on April 14, 1988 under the UN auspices. Although this was widely covered in the world press, I shall stress once again that

the goal of the accord was to neutralise the external factors impeding the solution of the Afghan problem. Under the provisions of the signed documents, any interference on the part of Islamabad in our internal affairs (including arms supplies) was to be discontinued. They also called for the dismantling of the mujahidin camps and training and propaganda centres, and the granting to refugees of the possibility to return home without hindrance.

While the USSR has fulfilled its commitments, the USA and Pakistan have actually been violating the accord. Not only has Islamabad not reduced the number of military training centres, it has even established new ones, bringing the total to 180. In fact, 30 to 35 groups, 1,200 to 1,500 men each, are being trained almost every week for terrorist acts. US-made missiles are being fired upon peaceful villages and towns.

We foresaw that the extremists would launch a fierce offensive after Soviet withdrawal, and decided to uphold the revolution and repel the aggression by preparing the republic's armed forces for this. Members of the PDPA took a military training course and joined the struggle. They realised that defeat would mean not only their political demise, but also death. All members of the Afghan armed forces were also aware of this.

Let us recall the formidable psychological attack launched against us by the Western mass media before the Soviet pullout, when they kept saying that the republic's fate was now sealed. Military and financial aid to the opposition increased. A number of countries even closed their embassies in Kabul, intending to open representations with the mujahidin. They had reasoned simply that if Soviet units together with the forces of the republic had for 10 years been unable to ensure the country's security, their withdrawal would leave a wide enough breach for the opposition to pour in and take power.

The psychological attack and the propaganda ballyhoo of Afghan reaction and its backers at first helped activate a large part of the opposition forces. There was an attempt to set up a cabinet on the basis of the "Rawalpindi Council",² but nothing came of it because of the squabbling between its "leaders". Having disgraced themselves before the entire world, they formed an "interim government". They planned to move it first to Jelalabad, and then to Kabul. The stage-managers there were Hamidd Gool, former chief of Pakistani counterintelligence, and various CIA experts. But their Rawalpindi "government" was stillborn.

Discord in the opposition camp is easy to explain. Its detachments were established on a regional, ethnic or religious basis. Diverse external forces financing and supporting them stood behind each group. In the course of negotiations, the fundamentalists and the moderates—i.e., the Seven with headquarters in Peshawar and the Eight in Iran, as well as the field commanders in Afghanistan—were unable to agree, especially on the distribution of seats in the "interim government". Representatives of some nationalities, religious communities and regions

were originally not included in it. For example, share in the "government" was refused to the Eight and a part of the Seven, as it was to the field commanders of groups fighting in Afghanistan and playing the leading role in the armed opposition. By an irony of fate the political centre stage was taken by the weaker groups, dependent on the USA, Malaysia, and certain Arab countries (Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Sudan) which still have no contacts with Afghanistan.

On March 5, 1989, a meeting attended by the US ambassador to Islamabad and Hamidd Gool, who represented the opposition, decided to attack Jelalabad by a combined force of the mujahidin and large Pakistani units. Already on March 6 the leaders of several opposition groups, and some mujahidin commanders, "displayed initiative" by starting hostilities.

But why Jelalabad? Because it is only an hour's drive from Peshawar, and Pakistani *malishi*, disguised as civilians, could easily participate in the operations. The Pakistani information service predicted that the city would fall in 72 hours. From hundreds of foreign correspondents a report was expected about the conquest of the city and the transfer there of the "mujahidin interim government", whose "premier" had even appointed the date of its first meeting—March 10, 1989.

History decided otherwise. Every day, up to 100 US ground-to-ground missiles were fired at Jelalabad. But it held out: all attacks were repelled, and numerous losses were inflicted on the attackers.

Jelalabad, the gate to Kabul, was defended by representatives of all the regions and nationalities of Afghanistan in what was our first independent large battle, one that gave the people confidence, raised the army's morale and improved our party's political prestige in the country and abroad. The opposition suffered a serious defeat, its blitzkrieg plan to topple the regime in 2 or 3 weeks having failed. The economic blockade of Kabul and other cities, and the endless provocations, were to have roused the people to an uprising. The counterrevolutionaries had also set hopes on a demoralisation of the army and expected a military coup.

However, the armed forces, together with the PDPA and its allies, repelled the extremists' attack, overcame the economic blockade, and thwarted the conspiracies. Furthermore, an atmosphere developed in the army (70% of whose personnel are party members) that precluded any likelihood of a military coup.

Until recently, the opposition relied mainly upon a backward, illiterate part of the population. Intellectuals educated in the West and inclined towards it stood aloof from the conflict. Now the USA wants to bring them into the political arena of struggle, where their authority would be useful. In short, the opposition consists of groups with military weight which have no political influence, and groups favoured by Washington which have little military weight. It is obvious that counterrevolution, torn apart by internal quarrels, is incapable of autonomous decision-

making and is increasingly dependent on the USA and Pakistan.

Enough time has passed since the pullout of Soviet troops to draw a number of conclusions:

- * The PDPA has proved that it can defend the revolution.

- * The military path leads only to a further fratricidal war and destruction; the only acceptable variant is the political process of reconciliation with the participation of all concerned forces, including the PDPA.

- * The Afghan people and the entire world have seen who is for an end to the war and who for the continuation of bloodshed.

The republic's leadership and the PDPA are concentrating on constructive initiatives. At the 9th Conference of Heads of State and Government of Non-Aligned Nations in Belgrade we submitted a new package of proposals:

A ceasefire, with the sides retaining the areas they control, leading to a joint commission for negotiations between all interested parties. The organisation of a coalition government at all levels, with representation matching the real alignment of forces; parliamentary elections to be held under the commission's observation.

Another variant is possible:

All forces interested in an end to the war in Afghanistan to sit down at the negotiating table. A conference, called to discuss the question of establishing a governing National Council, would declare a six-month ceasefire. During this period a new constitution and a law on elections to the National Assembly would be drafted. Following the approval of the constitution, the traditional Loya Jirga³ would meet. After free, secret, direct, equal and general elections a new government would be formed from representatives of the parties, or their coalitions, which had won seats in the parliament. We would agree to the presence of an international monitoring commission during the elections.

The leadership of the republic has proposed that Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran, India, China, the USA, the USSR and other countries, as well as a representative of the Non-Aligned Movement, should attend this conference. We believe that its first duty would be to achieve a ceasefire agreement, legally confirm the status of Afghanistan as a neutral and demilitarised state, and create a special committee within the National Assembly with the participation of the aforesaid countries that would help to implement the Geneva accords on Afghanistan. We believe it would be possible to reach mutual understanding on the composition of such a committee, the activity of which would not contradict UN Resolution 43/20 on a political solution to the problems of Afghanistan; on the contrary, it would facilitate it.

Our initiatives and work among the masses are already bearing fruit: opposition field commanders are trying to free themselves from their supervision by the centre, which is located in Peshawar. Most of them are observing the

ceasefire, and they are expressing increasing dissatisfaction with the "interim government". Some have crossed over to our side or are negotiating with us. In recognition of their abilities and influence, we are prepared to give these people an opportunity to participate in the national leadership and render them all the necessary help.

The US stance is very contradictory. During her visit to Washington, Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had talks with George Bush at which both spoke in favour of a political solution to the Afghan question. But in practice we see that the US President is banking on increased military aid to the opposition, power pressure on Kabul and the removal of the PDPA from office. The question arises as to whether there is another party in Afghanistan capable of implementing a political resolution of our problems. The answer is obviously no. Bush has also said that he does not recognise the opposition's "interim government"; at the same time he has sent a special US representative to Peshawar, where the opposition government is based. The indications are that certain circles in Islamabad and Washington are still trying to help the Seven in order to impose on the Afghan people a fundamentalist government that suits them, and to establish in Southwest Asia a military-political union directed against India, the USSR and progressive Arab countries. Documents have been published that attest to these dangerous plans.

I shall stress once again that if the USA and Pakistan begin to honour their commitments under the Geneva accords, there will appear a real opportunity for dialogue between all sides, reconciliation and national concord, and for the formation of a coalition government involving all political forces concerned.

In our actions we are pinning great hopes on the world community. Many states identify themselves with the Afghan revolution and the struggle of our people, but their support has been inadequate. Because of hostile propaganda some international quarters still view the reality in Afghanistan in a distorted light.

We want the USA and the countries of Western Europe, on whom a solution to the question largely depends, to take a realistic view of the situation, to stop pushing the opposition towards military actions and to encourage political dialogue.

We are convinced that the UN and the non-aligned states also have enough authority and resources to play an important role in safeguarding peace in Afghanistan.

¹ The People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan was founded in January 1965.—Ed.

² The "Rawalpindi Council" included only the leaders of the "Alliance of Seven", who are entrenched in Pakistan.

³ A congress of representatives of all the tribes and peoples of Afghanistan.—Ed.

THE IMPERATIVE: A DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION

Ali Ahmed EL TAYEB

representative of the Communist Party of the Sudan (CPS) at WMR

The military coup in the Sudan¹ which overthrew the legitimate civilian government of Sadiq el-Mahdi continues to throw up numerous questions, above all about its causes, about those who engineered it and about their objectives and plans.

The first statement from the military now in power was made by Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmed el-Bashir, who said that the reasons for the coup included "economic dislocation, the collapse of health care and education, the growth of corruption, the establishment of paramilitary groups by various parties, the deterioration of the nation's external ties, disdain for the needs of the armed forces, and the government's inability to achieve peace."² The conspirators blamed all political parties for the worsening of the situation and declared themselves to be "guardians" of the Sudanese people. They called their governing body a National Salvation Revolutionary Council (NSRC) and formed a government, likewise dubbed a "national salvation" cabinet.

To those who have been following developments in the Sudan since the nationwide uprising of April 1985, it is clear that there was nothing new in the first statement by the new regime. Such assessments had already been voiced by most of the nation's political forces, including the leaders of the two biggest parties—Al-Umma and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The same conclusions had been made in the well-known 21-point memorandum submitted on behalf of officers and men to the Prime Minister and the Supreme Council on February 20, 1989.

The memorandum created favourable opportunities for resolving the crisis of power within a democratic framework. In March, a United National Front government was formed, which adopted a programme signed by 40 parties and trade unions.³ The first positive steps taken by this government included the approval of a Sudan Peace Initiative, the start of direct negotiations with the SPLM⁴ (made possible by the suspension of Sharia laws pending the convocation of a constitutional conference), the abrogation of the mutual defence treaty with Egypt and the military cooperation protocol with Libya, the ceasefire between the national army and the military wing of the SPLM, and then preparations for a constitutional conference to be attended by all interested parties.

A new round of talks was to begin on July 4, but the

peace process was cut short by the military coup of June 30.

It is now obvious that the junta has no definite programme with which to justify the coup or to articulate objectives different from those of the overthrown legitimate civilian government. The democratic rights and freedoms won by the Sudanese people during more than 22 years of struggle against dictatorship have been abolished. Legitimate institutions of power—the Constituent Assembly, the Council of Ministers and the Supreme Council—have been dissolved, as have political parties, trade unions and civic organisations; their leaders have been arrested and the Constitution suspended. Newspapers and periodicals have been closed and their property seized, and some 500 officers have been discharged from the army. At the same time, the junta has refused to recognise the Sudan Peace Initiative or the agreements that led to its signing (specifically the Koka Dam Declaration⁵), and announced the reinstatement of the Sharia laws and the mutual defence treaty with Egypt. Little wonder that the Egyptian government was the first to recognise the new regime.

A particularly dangerous plank in this platform is a plan for a division of the nation into two states—one in the North (ruled by the Sharia laws after the Egyptian pattern) and the other in the South. The media of the National Islamic Front (NIF) report that the underlying principles of the southern state will be decided by the Christians. The new head of state has said repeatedly that the NSRC intends to preserve the Sharia laws even if this leads to the nation's partition. There is every indication that the military administration is committed to the complete implementation of the NIF guidelines—thus acting to undermine national sovereignty and the interests of the Sudanese people who are fighting for national unity, and in defiance of world public opinion and the country's international obligations (including the Sudan Peace Initiative, which is deposited with the Organisation of African Unity).

The sinister intentions of the authorities are betrayed by the release of Nimeiri's cronies—Abu el-Qassem Mohammed Ibrahim, Khaled Hassan Abbas and Mamoun Awad Adu Zeid—who were convicted after the April 1985 uprising. This move is echoed by the decision to restore the military-economic complex which undermined the national economy under Nimeiri.

The military council has issued decrees vesting el-Bashir, the leader of the coup, with full legislative and executive powers. He has been promoted to the rank of general and appointed commander-in-chief of the armed forces and chairman of the NSRC and of the Council of Ministers. Against the background of curtailed democracy and a continued state of emergency, this has paved the way for one-man rule (as existed in the nation under the military dictatorship), the only difference being that this time the Muslim Brotherhood are in charge.

This association, led by Hassan Abdallah at-Turabi, the current Secretary General of the NIF, was the "architect

and builder" of the previous repressive regime under which Nimeiri, known internationally as a butcher and an embezzler, played the role of "defender of the faith". The Muslim Brotherhood shared power with him for more than seven years—a time of severe trial for the nation.

The new dictator (the Number Two man in this association's secret branch within the armed forces) has told the magazine *Al-Watan al-Arabi* that the coup was planned back in 1971, but that it was postponed because Nimeiri "took power again and butchered the Communists".

It is worth noting that shortly before the coup of June 30, a military putsch was attempted. The leader of that abortive move, known for his NIF affiliation, is now a member of the military leadership, and his associates have been released from prison.

There is not a shadow of a doubt that the coup of June 30, 1989 was planned and carried out by the National Islamic Front. According to *Al-Maydan*, the press organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Sudan, now published clandestinely, 100 civilian activists of the NIF put on military uniforms and took part in operations to seize the strategic targets in the capital—the telephone exchange, the radio and television stations, the airport and the satellite communication centre.⁶ After the coup, NIF Undersecretary General Ali Osman Muhammed Taha became the regime's chief adviser; members of the front now comprise 85% of the Military Council, the new army command and the cabinet. NIF leaders knew in advance about the planned arrests of the heads of political parties, and were therefore well-prepared. NIF-controlled student associations immediately voiced their unconditional support for the coup.

Completely isolated from the people, the organisers of the coup are now trying clumsily to deny their NIF connections. For example, replying to a question about links between the leaders of the coup and the Muslim Brotherhood during an interview he gave to the newspaper *Al-ittihad*, General el-Bashir claimed groundlessly that the putschists "represent all social strata and ethnic groups without exception."⁷

In their politics, the new rulers are resorting to the same deceitful and hypocritical techniques practiced by the leaders and the media of the Islamic Front. But this will not fool anyone; our people have a well-developed revolutionary intuition and a great store of militant experience, and they can see through lies.

It was therefore no accident that when news leaked out about the putschists' secret decision (made as soon as they seized power) to execute former Prime Minister Sadiq el-Mahdi, General Secretary of the CPS Central Committee Mohammed Ibrahim Nugud, CPS Central Committee Secretariat member and managing editor of *Al-Maydan* El-Tigani el-Tayeb Babiker, as well as several leaders of the SPLM, there was a public outcry at home and abroad. Political parties in many countries, international organisations and world-famous public figures demanded that the criminal intentions of the military regime be frustrated.

Details have also been revealed concerning the secret visit paid to Iran by the head of the Sudanese military regime together with Islamic Front leaders Ali Osman Muhammed Taha and Mehdi Ibrahim, as well as the secret agreements under which Iran has pledged to provide the government in Khartoum with military and material assistance. It is an open secret that the leaders of the coup are hostile to revolutionary Ethiopia, a stand that allies them with reactionaries in the Arab world and in the United States, and that they are seeking to isolate the progressive regime in the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen by stepping up propaganda and media warfare against it.

When a representative of the US State Department visited the Sudan recently, the military leaders assured him that if Washington supported the new authorities, the Sudan would offer the United States a naval base on the Red Sea coast and the El-Fasher air force base in the western part of the country.

Despite its feverish activity, the ruling junta has found itself considerably isolated both domestically and internationally. It is patently incapable of resolving a single one of the difficult and chronic problems plaguing the Sudanese people, although the coup was allegedly aimed at saving the nation and meeting popular interests. The attempts of the regime to achieve peace in the South have been a complete fiasco. The first round of talks with the SPLM delegation in Addis Abbaba⁸ produced no results because the regime had no settlement plan.

The SPLM leadership responded to the regime's call for negotiations without preconditions, agreed to a month-long ceasefire and then to its extension, and helped food shipments reach the South. But it also took a principled political stance by opposing coups as a means of resolving the government crisis and other Sudanese problems. Dr John Garang, leader of the guerrilla movement in the South, told the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Anbaa* that "religious leaders and army officers undermined democracy... The coup is also an undemocratic move. It will result in a military dictatorship."⁹ At press conferences and on the insurgents' radio, Garang has demanded that the junta dissolve the Military Council and release those in prison, and he has denounced all the antidemocratic actions taken by the regime. If his terms are not met, the SPLM leader has declared his intention to issue an appeal to the people of the Sudan, calling for a general political strike, and for a popular uprising which would be supported by the SPLM.

This position is fully consonant with the Sudanese people's attitude to the dictatorship installed as a result of the military coup. The fate of the regime will be the same as that of the dictator Nimeiri.

By assuming this stand, the SPLM has proved its loyalty to the obligations it undertook before the other participants in the political movement for democracy, and to the Sudan Peace Initiative.

The most pressing task for the opposition, which includes the SPLM as an inalienable component, is to coor-

dinate its activities, define common objectives and wage a joint struggle in order to topple the dictatorship and shape politics on a new and democratic basis.

The record has demonstrated that military dictatorship has not only been unable to resolve the nation's major problems, but that it has also invariably plunged the Sudan into severe crises. Conversely, national democratic rule, in spite of its shortcomings, offers ample opportunity and the most favourable conditions for debate, dialogue and a search for the best possible way out of the crisis.

Drawing on the lessons of struggle in our distinctive national situation, we in the Communist Party of the Sudan

have become firmly convinced that military rule and the aggravation of national crises are rooted in the absence of well-established democratic traditions. Their destruction began when the right-wingers, both military and civilian, decided to force the nation to take the path of capitalist development and neocolonial dependence. The crisis will remain acute until the Sudanese people recapture the rights and freedoms which are enshrined in the Constitution and in other documents adopted after the glorious popular uprising of April 1985 but repealed by the military coup of June 1989.

¹ The coup took place on June 30, 1989.—Ed.

² The reference is to the civil war in the South of Sudan.—Ed.

³ For more details, see Ali Ahmed El Tayeb, "The Democratic Process in the Sudan," *WMR*, No. 8, 1989.—Ed.

⁴ The Sudan People's Liberation Movement, active in the South. The agreement signed between the SPLM and the DUP in November 1988 is known as the Sudan Peace Initiative.—Ed.

⁵ For more details, see: Ali Ahmed El Tayeb, "Southern Sudan: How to Heal the Bleeding Wound?", *WMR*, No. 1, 1989.—Ed.

⁶ *Al-Maydan*, No. 1895, July-August 1989.

⁷ *Al-Itihad*, September 18, 1989.

⁸ The talks were held on August 19 and 20, 1989.

⁹ *Al-Anbaa*, September 5, 1989.

* * *

AGAINST REPRESSION AND PERSECUTION

LIVES IN DANGER

WMR has already reported on the workers' strike in Helwan, Egypt, and the authorities' subsequent reprisals against representatives of left-wing forces.¹

We now have more information about the persecution of Egyptian democrats. At the end of September, another 22 people were imprisoned. The official reason given for the arrests was no longer the strike, but the charge that they had been found in possession of materials criticising the policy of former President Anwar Sadat.

The appalling prison conditions are endangering the health of the political prisoners. One is particularly alarmed by reports of a serious deterioration in the health of Mubarak Abdu Fadhl, a well-known progressive leader. Despite the fact that he was already very ill when he was arrested (partial paralysis, hypertension, diabetes), M. A. Fadhl was thrown in gaol.

The NPUP appeals to all political parties and public organisations to prevent the detainees' physical

destruction and to do all they can to secure their immediate release.

*The Committee
on Freedoms,
National Progressive Unionist
Party of Egypt*

¹ See Mohamed Kamel Magdi, "The Helwan Strike", *WMR*, No. 11, 1989.

WEST EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE WORKING-CLASS MOVEMENT

THE LESSONS OF A STRIKE

Heinz STEHR

member, Presidium and Secretariat of the Board, German Communist Party (DKP)

The successful strike by the West German printworkers in the spring of 1989 has clearly demonstrated the contradictions existing between labour and capital, particularly in connection with preparations for the establishment of a single internal market within the EEC. Regulation of working time was the main focus of this struggle. Similar clashes now seem to be programmed in other branches of the economy of the FRG and Western Europe.

As they prepare for the emergence of a single market, the Federation of German Industry and the Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) are insisting on *greater working time flexibility* and, specifically, on getting rid of fixed days-off at the weekend. This would facilitate more intensive use of the large modern sets of equipment available to the industrialists, and the creation of the best conditions for higher profits and the ousting of their small and middle business competitors, above all in other West European countries. The industrialists are looking even further. Ultimately they will try to lay the foundations for winning a share of the world printing market from Japanese and US companies. Newspapers and magazines from other West European countries and the USA are already being printed by large print shops in the FRG.

References to the future single market are also being used in attacks on other social and trade union rights. For example, the printworkers have, after a recently implemented tax reform, lost some benefits in the form of overtime for work on days-off and night shifts. Modern machine tools, comparatively easy to operate, allow for the wider use of low-skill or unskilled and low-paid workers. Employers are therefore seeking to undercut the influence of the trade unions by imposing on them the discussion of other pay models. The changes introduced into the law on enterprises meant an attempt to restrict workers' right to strike. On the whole ever greater pressure is being put on the trade unions to leave the arena of political struggle and engage solely in the protection of the economic interests of the working people.

All West German mass media have been harnessed to the ideological conditioning of the masses in order to obscure the contradictions in West European integration, the role being played by concerns, transnational capital and large banks in this process and the wishes of military-industrial complexes and right-wing political forces.

The confrontation in the printing industry had certain peculiarities. For the first time in FRG history it was employers who abrogated some of the provisions of existing collective agreements. Until then, initiative in this matter had always come from the trade unions seeking improvements for the working people. The steel barons also made an unsuccessful attempt to emasculate the union contracts.

An important development was that the battle over union contracts was mainly being waged against the bigger companies, and this determined its course. Small and medium-sized companies don't usually have to deal with the problem of weekend work: their operations in printing newspapers and magazines tend not to require rigid schedules, and they often lack the kind of large-scale equipment that demands maximum loads for its efficient use. Under the present favourable market conditions, the owners are not after strikes and complications. This created a remarkable coincidence of interests between the small and middle employers and the members of the print union, and led to agreements between them in a number of enterprises even before the conclusion of a national union contract for the industry.

The success of the West German printers' strike assumes greater importance when you consider that *similar issues also face the other trade unions*. The main clause of the new wage accord states: "Regular working time for each employee shall be spread over the week for five days, from Monday to Friday." Hitherto, most wage agreements, even though they confirm a five-day working week, have not had this major stipulation—"from Monday to Friday". And employers have tended to exploit this, forcing employees to work regularly on Saturdays as well. Clearly defining the working week, therefore, remains a top priority for most trade union associations.

Detlef Hentsche, deputy chairman of the print and paper workers' union, told the newspaper *Unsere Zeit*: "All the unions which are part of the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB), from the metal workers to those in public catering, are firmly resolved to defend the fixed days-off at the weekend. This is a question of power."

Along with the regulation of working time, demands concerning health protection played a much greater role than previously. The working class is more keenly aware now of the dangers present in machinery and hazardous working practices that may lead to an occupational dis-

ease or early disablement. The new wage accord states the printers' right to seek specialist help and advice if the employer ignores their demands for health and safety checks. Workers are also increasingly conscious of the need to observe environmental requirements, a factor which has to be taken into account in the strategy of the trade union and political working-class movement.

The workers in other industries are also attempting to resist the employers' arbitrary decision-making on labour and environmental protection. Karin Roth, a board member of the metal workers' union, addressing 500 members of production councils and representatives in Stuttgart, declared: "Preserving health and the natural life base of the environment cannot and must not be sacrificed to the employers' drive for profit." We cannot allow human health and an undamaged environment "to be sold off at the prices fixed by capital", she said. Although society's environmental awareness is already high, harmful substances are still being used in large quantities in manufacturing, and this is where the metal workers' union sees the starting-point for work to protect Humanity and Nature. Hence, the action carried out by its Stuttgart regional committee under the slogan: "The Factory Is the Frontline in the Fight Against Poisonous Substances".

The printworkers industrial action was the first to have taken place after restrictions were imposed on the right to strike. The new circumstances in the FRG demand that the trade unions should also *apply new forms of the strike struggle by diversifying it*. The printers have used their accumulated experience to find and test such forms. In this sense their strike permits us to *draw important lessons for all labour*.

The printers set up factory and regional strike committees. Together with the plant staffs, they decided first the time, scale and thrust of actions and then carried them out promptly. A qualitatively new feature was the coordination by the committees of worker action in all the sectors of production. For example, strikers occupied the photosetting premises of the *Frankfurter Rundschau* newspaper and brought the manufacture and dispatch of an edition to a halt. One-hour warning strikes at the other plants disrupted production processes and rendered the shipment of finished products impossible. The strikers were successful because discipline, and a readiness to join the struggle, were high among the workers (normally over 90% in a factory staff vote). On various days strikes hit 250 plants with a total of about 30,000 employees. Solidarity among strikers' families also had a positive effect. Thus the wives of the Gruner und Jahr workers formed an initiative group, attempting to win public support for the action of their husbands.

The solidarity of the various trade union associations was consolidated during the strike. In the district of Baden-Württemberg, metal workers took care of the striking printworkers, and agreed concrete forms and methods of assistance. The printers' actions received the approval of the DGB.

Members of the German Journalists' Association (a trade union) also identified themselves with the printers, a point especially worthy of note. Like high-ranking employees, they had often been used as strikebreakers. An important feature of the struggle was the establishment of a mass media workers' union, which the BDA had tried to block. Until recently, ten separate associations had existed in this sector. Soon after the strike they merged into a single trade union incorporating 180,000 people, including the Journalists' Union.

The strikers foiled the employers' plans to transfer newspaper printing abroad. Within the International Graphical Federation, the union has a long history of cooperation with individual members of the World Federation of Trade Unions, something that is so far an exception in our country. This kind of solidarity is capable of averting situations whereby strikes are broken by foreign printers running off urgent orders. The weight of positive experience may finally induce the European Trade Union Confederation to cooperate with such large centres as the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) in France, the Workers' Commissions (CCOO) in Spain and the General Confederation of Portuguese Workers—National Intersindical (CGTP-IN) in Portugal. International solidarity is dictated by advances in communication technology, since possibilities now exist for the instant facsimile reproduction between countries of prepared newspaper or magazine pages. It is important to democratise the use of the new means of communication so that big capital cannot abuse them in its own interests.

The political aspects of the struggle by the printing industry workers ought to be borne in mind, as their success and the defeat of the employers attest to a *change in the sociopolitical climate* in the Federal Republic. Big capital's offensive has met with resistance from the masses. Its parties—the CDU/CSU and the FDP—are under growing pressure, and their position is becoming less stable. Broadening the extra-parliamentary struggle still further is the key prerequisite for a realignment of forces in the Bundestag even before the 1990 elections.

The German Communist Party actively and convincingly supported the printers' struggle. It furnished information to the plant staffs and the public at large, especially through its newspaper *Unsere Zeit*. For example, we distributed among readers so-called "neighbours' letters" explaining reasons behind the clash over wage agreements, and appealing for an understanding of the strikers' position. We also organised fund-raising activities. Members of the Communist Party, including its leaders, spoke at strike meetings, voicing their solidarity, which was received with approval. Where Communists were on the factory councils or representatives or were active in a strike committee, they contributed greatly to the success of the strike. The unionists' acknowledgement of their services increased the sympathy for our party as a whole. DKP factory groups also acquitted themselves well, effectively helping the union to carry out various actions and,

together with local party organisations in the towns and communities, promoting solidarity with the strike.

The setting up of solidarity committees and citizens' committees standing for a 35-hour working week and against the restrictions on the right to strike shows that a *unification of different political and social forces* is possible. This is one of the forms of development of a broad-based movement against the omnipotence of big capital where our party is in a position to be a mobilising and unifying factor.

During the struggle, the aims of the employers and the demands put forward by the trade unions did not bear a specifically national, West German character. In the main, they are looking to the forthcoming single internal market

of the EEC, a circumstance which dictates certain conclusions for the trade union and political working-class movement. No longer will any West European country see the struggle between labour and capital confined within national boundaries. General West European conditions will also inevitably play a certain role. An understanding of this demands from us much more persistent efforts to promote *exchanges of opinions and experience between all communist parties of Western Europe*. In the future, it will be important to strive for the greater coordination of plans and actions, which will make it possible to contribute to the expansion of cooperation inside the working-class movement and particularly among the trade unions.

* * *

A PERSONAL IMPRESSION

RIM SU KYONG CROSSES THE DEMARCATION LINE

Few in the West know about the huge concrete and steel barrier, five metres high and ten metres wide at the base, bristling with machine-gun points, which runs for almost 250 kilometres, dividing the Korean Peninsula in half. The wall was ordered by the Seoul regime at the end of the 1970s, and US experts took an active part in its construction. The population of South Korea was forced to pay a special tax for several years in order to cover the enormous cost of creating this "shield against the communist threat" (as the reactionaries call it).

"A rabbit couldn't get through here now," Kim Chy Nam, an officer in the Korean People's Army, told me and other foreign newsmen who visited the demarcation line. We had barely moved onto a viewing site and begun to examine the wall through our field-glasses when loudspeakers started broadcasting on the other side. They were trying to convince us of the need for the existence of the wall, which "protects democracy and freedom"!

The soldiers with submachine guns, the barbed-wire entanglements and pill-boxes, the endless cold grey wall, and the loudspeakers' deafening noise combined to create a tense battlefield atmosphere. Disquieting thoughts remained with us when we looked at the photo exhibition devoted to the imperialist intervention by 15 nations against the DPRK (1950-1953). Horrifying pictures of the

destruction of whole cities met the eyes (in Pyongyang, for example, US bombers left not a single building intact).

"It could begin again at any time," remarked our guide. "There are over 40,000 US soldiers and more than 1,000 nuclear weapons in the South... Both neighbouring states, and the world public, therefore, have an interest in reducing the tension on the Korean Peninsula."

One of the stops on our trip was Panmunjom, where the demilitarised zone (DMZ) contains a hall for official meetings between the two Korean sides. It is divided by a line, and a long negotiating table stands in the centre. In the southern part of the hall, the flags of the capitalist states which took part in the intervention hang beneath a glass case. I was happy to learn that the Greek flag had been removed at my government's insistence. This symbolic act reflected the will of most of my compatriots, who always regarded Greece's participation in the Korean war as disgraceful and who had demanded that all the consequences of this imperialist interference be liquidated.

Unfortunately, it is still not over: when the 449th sitting of the military armistice commission took place in the negotiating hall several days after our visit, the chief Korean-Chinese delegate, Major General Choi Ei Ung, cited a lot of concrete facts in accusing the USA of committing "deliberate acts in order to increase tension" on the peninsula. He reported 840 recorded instances of spy flights, 33 violations of the republic's territorial waters and 21 incidents of DPRK posts in the DMZ being fired on, all in the first 8 months of 1989.

The DPRK has been developing in conditions of military confrontation. Naturally, the enormous costs of military expenditure are affecting the growth of living standards. "Are your people able to think only of peaceful work and devote themselves to it completely?" we asked Chon In Chol, DPRK Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

"We are forced to counter the imperialists' aggressive plans," he said, "in order to maintain peace in Korea and the region. Rejecting any attempts to interfere in our internal affairs, we want to live in peace with all nations. The dismantlement of foreign military bases in South Korea, the withdrawal of US troops and the establishment of denuclearised zone on the peninsula would be the first steps towards the removal of confrontation, an essential pre-condition for the achievement of the great aim of reunifying Korea. When the wall dividing North and South has gone, the entire Korean people will be able to engage wholeheartedly in peaceful work."

Reunification is the dream of most Koreans, we were constantly told during our stay in the republic, inevitably so given the fact that millions of families are separated by the demarcation line and the wall. Over 10 million people—parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives—are kept apart, not even knowing the fate of their relatives.

We met with the 22-year-old Rim Su Kyong, the only representative of South Korean youth to have managed to attend the World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang. "Ninety-nine per cent of Koreans desire reunifica-

tion," she said, "but internal and external divisionist forces continue to prevent it. We know that this goal can only be reached through our own efforts—by working relentlessly for the withdrawal of nuclear weapons and the dismantling of US bases, for peace and the unrestricted reunification of our Homeland on the basis of respect for the system of views and ideology of each side. Yet the authorities answer us with batons, tear gas, arrests and torture. The regime's prisons hold not only criminals, but also many of those who are fighting for democracy, freedom and a reunified Homeland. ...I shall return to the South on foot, through Panmunjom, even if they arrest me or shoot me ..."

A few days later she really did cross the demarcation line, having returned to the South on foot. Word has reached us that she was at once seized and jailed for refusing to recognise the wall of hatred which divides Korea. Her example may well inspire others...

Rim Su Kyong and her comrades are awaiting our solidarity!

Aris PAPANTHIMOS

Greek journalist,
WMR staff member



The Russian Orthodox Church. 10th to 20th Centuries

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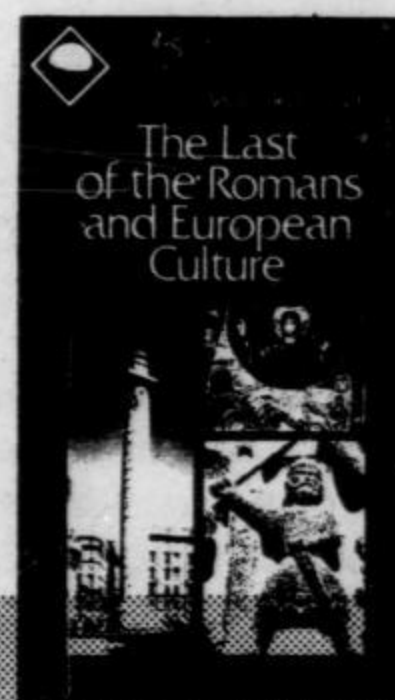
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Ukolova, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1989, Paper, 391 pp. \$7.95

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LATIN AMERICA'S ECONOMIC PLIGHT

German SANCHEZ

Sector Head, CC, Communist Party of Cuba

The states of Latin America and the Caribbean are in the grip of the worst economic crisis in their history. This statement may sound trite, but the reasons behind the crisis or the possible ways out have not yet been sufficiently explored.

The problem of the crisis has always preoccupied many Latin American politicians, leaders of mass organisations and economists, but in the 1980s it has been thrust into the focus of general public attention. Since 1981 anxiety has been growing on the continent over the declining economic indicators and the deteriorating living standards of most of the people. Mexico's 1982 moratorium on its debt servicing highlighted the *relationship between external debt and the failings of the world capitalist economy*.

Many forecasts and alternative programmes for resolving the numerous problems have appeared, but the crisis has been worsening, and there is still no light at the end of the tunnel. The economy of the region has been stagnating at the level of the late 1970s, the effects of the 1981-1986 recession are still making themselves felt, and only a few countries and industries show some timid signs of recovery. The efforts to check inflation are not working, prices for staple exports continue to fall, and the terms of

international trade are deteriorating. Neocolonial dependence is growing due to shrinking investment, continued denationalisation and the outflow of capital. In addition to aggravating the crisis, the *external debt has become a new and very dangerous form of imperialist dominance* over the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean.

The present situation has been caused by both internal and external factors related to the historical place of the region in the system of colonial and then imperialist oppression, and responsibility for it rests on the ruling classes. They have occasionally put up resistance to imperialist policy, and sometimes still do, but in the main they bow to it. The upper echelons are blocking transformations aimed at overcoming backwardness and the crisis. Instead of pursuing drastic changes, such as an agrarian reform, the expansion of the domestic market and higher rates of accumulation and investment in the key industries, they have taken to heart the transnationals' interests and tried to resolve the crisis and dampen social protests by borrowing more heavily from foreign sources and by adapting economic policies to the needs of international financial capital. Much of the blame rests on Western industrialised states, primarily the US, which have shifted onto the region the consequences of economic recession in the imperialist centres.

What is especially worrying about the present critical situation is the failure to take practical steps to remove its root causes. The social system in the countries of the region has entered a protracted general crisis. They have stopped in their development, and are increasingly falling behind the major capitalist powers.

The bulk of the financial resources circulating in the world are used mostly within the imperialist powers, and there is little chance of new injections of capital to the periphery. The scientific and technological revolution and the boom in microelectronics, biotechnology and automation have enabled the industrialised countries to replace natural raw materials with synthetic products, and the renovation of production structures has had a negative effect on exports from Latin America. Low economic growth rates and the continued threat of recession in the West have also put the entire Third World at risk.

There are internal factors as well: the obstacles to the development of the continent include the concentration of land ownership, the power structures (which in many countries rest on anti-national financial and land-owners' oligarchies), the intensification of technocratic tendencies and the constraints put on the role of the state by creditor banks and the armed forces.

The living conditions of most of the

See also Fawzi Mansour, Ibrahim el Eisawi, "The External Debt: Anatomy of the Problem", *WMR*, No. 10, 1989.

population are declining dramatically: full and part-time unemployment, pauperism and crime are growing while real wages and the quality of education and health care are going down.

While the capitalist system is capable of recovering after its endemic cyclical crises, Latin America and the Caribbean are witnessing the *growth of tendencies which threaten their very future*. Today there are neither regional nor international mechanisms to control them. The crisis on the continent will not dissolve of its own accord because *dependent capitalism does not have in itself a potential for overcoming crises*. The experience of many countries shows that every attempt at sustaining the system and "managing" the crisis fails.

Since the 1960s the leaders of the Cuban revolution have been analysing the debt problem in the context of the economic situation of Latin America and the underdeveloped world as a whole. In 1985 Fidel Castro formulated proposals which have now become widely known, and their timeliness has been proved by subsequent developments.

He said, in effect, that the cancellation of external debts was an imperative of development. This would offer the underdeveloped countries their first ever opportunity to seize the initiative from the capitalist powers. Of all the Third World regions, the republics of Latin America and the Caribbean had the best chance to succeed due to their economic and political potential, their huge indebtedness, the depth of their economic crisis, the risk of social explosions with unpredictable consequences, and also their common interests and cultural and social specifics. Fidel Castro's proposals do not jeopardise the international financial system: the industrialised powers could bail out the debtor countries with 10% to 12% of their own military budget. This reduction in military spending would mean a contribution to the development of the South, stimulate the economic growth of the creditor countries themselves, and contribute towards detente and world peace.

The cancellation of debts would ease the plight of many nations, but it would not guarantee their stable economic development since underdeveloped countries might easily slip back into the

vicious circle of financial dependence. To avoid this, *it is necessary to establish a new international economic order*, while Latin America should also rapidly advance towards effective integration and economic cooperation. The present historic battle for genuine independence for the continent is even more important than the struggles for liberation from colonial rule in the early 19th century.

Success is possible only if there is broad unity of the public and political forces in each country and if all the states of the region band together. It is also necessary to recruit the assistance of those quarters in the creditor countries which recognise the merits of the proposed change. Only the outright servitors of imperialism should be isolated.

Why did Cuba make such an effort to explore the problems of the crisis, and debts precisely in 1985? Why did Fidel Castro give so much of his time to the study of these issues?

By early 1985 the debt crisis had reached dramatic proportions. However, many politicians and statesmen of the region were still unaware of the real complexity of the situation, while others were hoping for quick solutions. The Latin American and Caribbean countries could have effectively demanded an end to the plunder, but that would have called for a joint stand against the creditors. At that time the transnational banks, though having taken certain joint steps¹, did not yet have a concerted policy for the eventuality of the underdeveloped countries declaring themselves insolvent.

According to the UN Economic Commission for Latin America, an unprecedented financial crunch was a real possibility: in 1982, bank loans to Latin American and Caribbean countries amounted to 124% of the latter's capital. Should one or two countries fail to meet their payments, the leading world banks could be destabilised with "catastrophic effects for trade and production".²

At that time the creditors would have yielded to the combined pressure of all or most of the Latin American and Caribbean countries, supported by the rest of the Third World. But instead, each of the debtors individually reached a compromise with the creditor banks.

Fidel Castro's proposals offered a real

opportunity to resolve the debt problem by the mid-1980s and eventually to remove other obstacles to the efforts to overcome the economic crisis and underdevelopment. His plan called for audacity, resolve and an ability to use a favourable international situation.

But the ruling classes of the continent failed to rise to the demands of the times, although the Cuban leader made it clear that his initiatives were not aimed at subverting the social system in any of the countries concerned. On the contrary, his realistic alternative accorded with the long-term interests of the creditor banks and offered strategic economic benefits to the developed capitalist powers.

An historic opportunity was missed. Latin American governments could not or dared not act, and instead accepted the conditions pressed on them. Today, however, few of them will agree to play a subordinate role. Grassroots pressure is growing as the peoples make it clear that they will no longer let themselves be sacrificed to economic policies determined by foreign interests. *External debt is no longer the worry only of financial experts, but has become the focus of political struggles on the continent*.

And now the masses have entered the fray. Since 1985, the trade unions, youth, peasant, student, women's and other organisations, political parties and leaders of every persuasion, churchmen, etc., have clearly realised that the debt cannot be repaid or collected, although some are hedging their bets by adding "...in the present circumstances".

In 1984, for the first time Latin American governments took a joint stand against IMF policies and the effects of external debt: 11 signatories of the Cartagena Agreement stated the need for a political approach to the problem, but hastened to clarify that they were not going to form a debtors' cartel.

The lowering of interest rates and the growth of the world capitalist economy have played into the hands of the creditors, who wisely made a few concessions in 1985. It is amazing that, although the crisis phenomena were perfectly obvious, the governments of many debtor and creditor countries shared the illusion that the growth of external debt was being stemmed by the banks' strategy.

At the same time the public, a section of the ruling classes and even some governments began to realise that the debt was a sort of focus for the social implications of the crisis. These views, the mass actions (which assumed militant forms in some countries), meetings in Havana and an interest in Fidel Castro's initiatives all worried the creditors.

In this situation, in 1985, there appeared the *Baker Plan*—Washington's attempt to update the creditors' strategy with emphasis not just on the "austerity regime", but also on the need for economic growth. The plan was meant to put a damper on the protests in some Latin American countries, including Peru, but, as a belated and limited initiative, it quickly fizzled out because new loans to the tune of \$29 billion were needed to carry it through. The banks backed out because the outflow of capital from the South was already an obvious fact.

Today most of the creditors, who are coordinating their actions within a common strategy, are planning to encourage the economic growth of the debtor countries on the basis of the principles of neo-liberalism, and to stimulate them to restructure their economies in accordance with changes in the international division of labour. These changes, meanwhile, are increasingly subordinating the countries of the region to the interests of Big Capital and the imperialist powers, and subverting the sovereignty of the peoples. There is a clear intention to prevent the debtor countries from uniting, at all costs to retain the principle of negotiating with each of them individually, and to refuse every request for debt cancellation, even those coming from the poorest countries.

In view of these realities and the serious social and political manifestations of the crisis (such as the risk of explosive unrest in Venezuela and Argentina), in March 1989 the US administration launched its Latin American policy with the hasty proclamation of the *Brady Plan*.

Although, like the Baker Plan, it is a belated and half-hearted programme, the US government is nevertheless acting more resolutely and broadening its approach to the debt problem with new elements. This has encouraged Latin

American governments and given them some hope, but their reaction seems to be a sign of their weakness and their readiness to accept the creditors' terms.

In early 1989, banks no longer discussed whether they should revamp crediting procedures, but rather were figuring out how better to minimise and spread out the inevitable losses. The whole purpose of the Brady Plan is to overcome conflicts among the creditors and to regain for Washington the role of the supreme arbiter and guarantor of their global strategy, the role the US lost with the failure of the Baker Plan.

The Brady Plan, though containing some new elements, falls short of a revision of old policies. The Bush Administration is relying on the same mechanisms of correction that the banks use amongst themselves. Since new loans and investments are unable to mitigate the crisis, attempts are being made to reduce debt servicing payments without altering the debtors' subordinate status. The leading capitalist powers have lent their support to the plan, which in many respects meets their own proposals.

The proposed 20% reduction, however, is incompatible with the real drop of more than 60% in the value of the debt obligations of most Third World countries on the financial markets.

On the other hand, government outlays on the implementation of the plan (\$20 to \$30 billion over three years) will not be enough. Moreover, it covers only 39 countries, some of which are offered privileges. The overall purpose is to *sow discord in the Third World, to secure the further subordination of the "chosen few" and to make the debtors even more pliant and divided.*

The Brady Plan is a component of the imperialist strategy of restructuring underdeveloped economies. It encourages privatisation, the opening of markets and other neo-liberal measures which will exacerbate the pressure of the crisis on the mass of people. Various economic, political and repressive sanctions are envisaged to enable the ruling circles of the region to neutralise protests.

The initiative is likely to fail in many countries because numerous factors are working against the US and other countries supportive of the plan. How-

ever, the US has reaped some temporary dividends as many Latin American governments seem to be lining up for the promised benefits. The last say belongs to the peoples, and the important thing is to expose Washington's new ploy and, in view of its eventual failure, to mobilise the working people and to demand from governments firm and consistent actions on external debt.

So far the reactions of the states of Latin America and the Caribbean have been limited to declarations as they are all but avoiding any discussion of the reasons behind the debt crisis or responsibility for it, and are not putting sufficient effort into developing a strategy for dealing with it. Neither the Cartagena Agreement, nor the Group of Eight, nor the OAS, nor the Latin American governments collectively or individually, have devised realistic and conclusive ways out of the debt impasse.

Encouraging signs of progress have appeared in 1989, however. The speedy decline of democratic processes due to the aggravation of the socioeconomic situation and the obvious relationship between economic recession, external debt and the continued pauperisation of broad sections of the population have led many governments in the region, particularly those of the Group of Eight, to the idea that it was necessary to draft a common strategy. *Thus, 26 member countries of the Latin American Economic System decided to convene a regional conference on external debt.*

Most of the responsibility rests with governments, which ought finally to realise their negotiating chances. There are enough well-thought-out and detailed proposals, and sufficient information, to elaborate a realistic strategy for the whole of Latin America and the Caribbean. Everything depends on the political will and resolve to defend common positions. Of course, no government can act without popular support. The mass movement will have to step up its resistance to the diktat of the IMF and world financial capital. The peoples' struggle for national sovereignty and the right to life is essential to the formation of a single front of governments.

In every state of the continent one can identify anti-national forces in the economy: the owners of huge funds, for

example, who have transferred them to Western countries and, using the policies of international financial centres, have become creditors of their own countries. These "transnational" operators exert considerable influence on governmental decision-making. The adverse effects of economic stagnation and the outflow of capital and resources have little effect on them. They have vested interests in their countries and abroad, and broad opportunities for speculation and for importing or exporting capital depending on the rate of profit. Such people are playing into the hands of the imperialist powers, the transnationals and the creditor banks.

A common Latin American strategy should take into account the interests of the Third World as a whole, and also the constructive proposals put forward by Spain, France and Japan. This line is also assisted by the policies of socialist countries; for example, addressing the UN General Assembly, Mikhail Gorbachov proposed a 100-year moratorium on debt repayment.

Latin American governments and their advisers are increasingly aware of the need to mitigate the socioeconomic implications of debt in order to make the crisis "manageable", to ease the burden of payments, to encourage trade and to obtain new financial resources. However, they continue mistakenly to believe that half-measures will do, and to disregard the deep-seated international causes of the dramatic present-day situation. In fact, they have accepted the creditors' "rules of the game", under which there is the obligation to continue with the repayments. We think that even the more far-reaching proposals in this vein will at best mitigate the debt problem, without resolving it or destroying its root causes. Can one hope for people's support and demand fresh sacrifices from them for the sake of such modest goals?

But can Latin American and Caribbean governments stick to the terms of their own solution to the debt problem, achieve a new international economic order, and progress towards integration and development?

Such questions have nothing to do with pessimism or prejudice. The dependence of the region on transnational capital and the accumulation of explosive

problems in Latin American societies compel the ruling circles to devote themselves to a search for ways out of their predicament. As Fidel Castro has said, "I hope that leaders in our Hemisphere will take steps to resolve these problems and avert major social explosions. Otherwise they will assume the role played out in their time by the last kings of France or the last tsars of the Russian Empire."

Although the present situation is worse than that in 1982 or 1985, a decisive solution to the debt problem is still possible.

Following the US, Britain and other developed countries, in Latin America neo-liberalism has begun to supplant policies based on Keynesianism and similar philosophies. The neo-liberal model guarantees the supremacy of international financial capital. The economic role of the state diminishes, conditions are provided for the free flow of capital, goods and services, national industries fold up, and local capital retreats. Financial speculations intensify, and growing imports and credits inflate external debts. Neo-liberalism aggravates recession and inflation, stimulates the concentration and centralisation of capital, and enriches a handful of capitalists at the expense of the majority.

This doctrine has now been adopted as the basis of economic policy by most of the countries of the region, which are following the IMF "recommendations". It has been embraced by both civil-democratic and military-dictatorial regimes, although, as Chilean experience shows, the neo-liberal recipes are easier to introduce in a repressive atmosphere.

This philosophy is being used to revamp capitalism in order to meet the needs of the imperialist powers. However, its "transplantation" into the Third World conflicts with the interests of the underdeveloped countries. A starting point of neo-liberalism is the principle of competition "of equals", which is not applicable to relations between countries on the opposite sides of a wide economic and technological gap.

The Latin American version of neo-liberalism is being served under the seemingly attractive but false slogan of modernisation. Its supporters are urging sacrifices for a future prosperity based on

privatisation, full economic openness and drastic deregulation. Their arguments are "realism" and the dependent position of the states of the region in the world capitalist system. The "modernisation" they are pushing is bound to weaken Latin American economies, subordinate them utterly to transnationals, and exacerbate poverty as the price of access to some of the modern technologies and achievements.

This traitorous course belies not just the servility and toadying of such "realists", but a programme of Latin American Big Capital integrated into the structure of transnational corporations and banks. What they call "modernisation" is the ideological and political platform of a range of parties and politicians subscribing to the views of imperialism and its clients on ways of overcoming the crisis. What all this amounts to is the *modernisation of dependence, social polarisation and the aggravation of the contradictions of the neocolonial variety of capitalism.*

Many political leaders have rejected this strategy and suggested alternatives, such as the continued payment of interest in a way that would not affect the already desperate plight of the people. They are opposed to privatisation and want to keep the public sector as a regulator of economic activity and a guarantor of national interests, and call for integration and a new international economic order.

With all their differences of position and varying degrees of influence in different countries, the moderates are warning against the dangers posed by neo-liberalism to stability and the democratic system as such. They are concerned that a historic opportunity for democracy might be missed because the fate of constitutional regimes on the continent depends primarily on overcoming the crisis and on economic recovery. These politicians do not understand, however, that neither is possible unless the system of foreign dominance is dismantled and the deformities in the socioeconomic structures of Latin American countries rectified. Small wonder that they have failed to produce a detailed programme or secure firm mass support.

Can some of these politicians and the

forces behind them be won over to a more radical and at the same time more realistic programme? We think that the *decisive role here will be played by the breadth and flexibility of all the democratic, patriotic, popular and revolutionary forces, and by their renunciation of old dogmas.*

One priority is to dispel the technocratic illusions that the crisis can be resolved with a cleverly devised economic model. An economic programme is necessary, of course, but it is not enough. Only if a broad social movement is established in each country and on the continent as a whole to defeat those economic and political circles with a stake in the status quo will the problem be resolved.

There can be no return to the past. The Latin American economy is not just in recession: the present situation has been brought about by failures of past development models and attempts to

cure the disease with the medicine of neo-liberalism. Alternative programmes for overcoming the crisis must base themselves on the international realities and the objective tendencies of world economic development. That is why any practicable national crisis-management programme should aim at economic independence from imperialism and at participation in the world economy on a new basis.

Can Latin American countries achieve this goal separately? Cuban experience shows that they can do so through social revolution. That road is still open, although the obstacles on it are more formidable than 30 years ago due to the proportions of the present crisis and the changes and difficulties in socialist countries. Of course, this will not halt the people's struggle for their just goals. There is still the possibility of a victorious revolution on the continent, Nicaragua

having shown that a revolution can survive in an unfavourable international environment and in the face of US hostility.

The task today is to unite the efforts of the revolutionaries and those who advocate more moderate solutions to the economic and social problems of the Latin American nations in order to overcome the crisis, achieve greater independence and carry through a strategy of development in the interests of the majority.

¹ In 1982, the first coordinated steps were taken to try and overcome the debt crisis: the International Monetary Fund received the creditors' mandate to negotiate with each debtor individually on debt rescheduling, and began to examine all the debt obligations.

² CEPAL. La evolucion del Problema de la Deuda Externa en America Latina y el Caribe, March 30, 1988, p. 1.

FACTS AND FIGURES * * * * *

EXTERNAL DEBTS OF COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (mid-1989)

- The population of Latin America and the Caribbean is around 400 million. In 1989, the aggregate external debt of the region reached \$420 billion (from \$192 billion in 1980). In the past 7 years the countries of the region have paid \$180 billion in interest.
- In 1976-1988, some \$100 billion of capital was exported illegally out of just 10 Latin American countries.
- From 1980 to 1985, per capita incomes in the region dropped by 12% (from \$1,933 to \$1,782 a year).
- As many as 40% of families in Latin America and the Caribbean are suffering some form of malnourishment; 44% of the employable population are partially or totally unemployed; 68% of homes do not have basic amenities.
- Every year 700,000 children—1,917 a day or 79 an hour—die from hunger.

Country	\$ million	ratio, %1	\$ per capita
Argentina	56,800	18	1,862
Belize	119	24	748
Bolivia	3,930	9	818
Brazil	114,600	30	815
Chile	20,740	58	1,714
Colombia	15,900	55	548
Costa Rica	4,453	12	1,712
Dominican Republic	3,840	19	590
Ecuador	10,500	12	1,039
El Salvador	1,850	10	385
Guatemala	2,840	20	350
Guyana	1,030	12	1,277
Haiti	800	7	133
Honduras	3,230	15	769
Jamaica	3,882	31	1,764
Mexico	101,721	32	1,209
Nicaragua	6,370	2	1,930
Panama	4,170	13	1,895
Peru	16,200	4	843
Trinidad and Tobago	1,421	17	1,200
Uruguay	6,050	51	2,016
Venezuela	33,891	21	1,959

* Shows the real value of the country's debt obligations on the international financial market.

WHO WILL WIN THE ELECTION?

Tomás BERGE

member, National Leadership, FSLN, Minister of the Interior, Nicaragua

The fact that December 1989 and the first two months of next year will be crucial to domestic political life in Nicaragua is well-known. This is when the run-up begins to the general election on February 25, 1990. After fierce pre-election skirmishes, the main contenders are now entering the fray: the presidential and vice-presidential hopefuls; and the candidates for deputies to the National Assembly and municipal bodies. These aspirants, running independently or in coalitions, represent over 20 political parties, including the Nicaraguan Opposition Union (UNO), an array of major forces opposed to the ruling Sandinista National Liberation Front. Daniel Ortega has been nominated as the FSLN candidate for president and Sergio Ramirez, for vice-president. The respective UNO candidates are Violetta Chamorro and Virgilio Godoy.

While on a working visit to Prague, Tomás BERGE, a Nicaraguan leader, took time out to answer questions from a WMR staff member on preparations for the forthcoming elections.

■ **Elections are usually considered a country's own internal affair. But, judging by press reports, this is not the case in Nicaragua, with the nature of the elections, the range of contesting forces and even the election date the subject of much discussion at the international meetings. How do you explain this?**

Tomás BERGE. There are many reasons for this. I would single out the fact that Nicaraguan developments, from the triumph of the Sandinista revolution in 1979 to the present day, continue to influence the international situation as a whole, and especially in Central America. It is impossible to judge whether we have more friends than enemies, but I would think so. Otherwise the Nicaraguan revolution would have been hard put to withstand the counterrevolutionary armed aggression, organised and financed by US imperialism. Our losses have been enormous, amounting in physical terms to US\$15 billion; but this figure belies the losses for which there is no price—almost 60,000 dead. I believe that this is revealing enough: Nicaragua won't submit to any pressure.

But the question remains: how to resolve the contradictions that continue to destabilise the entire Central American

region? The prevailing view (at least among sober politicians) is that it is necessary to give the Nicaraguan people an opportunity to sort out their problems for themselves on a democratic basis. The first important step towards this was taken in August 1987 at a meeting of the presidents of the five Central American states in Esquipulas, Guatemala, which initiated the process of peaceful settlement in the region. In February 1989, a meeting followed in the capital of El Salvador, where the discussion of the relationship between national reconciliation in Nicaragua and normality throughout Central America moved into the realm of concrete proposals.

It was then that President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica suggested postponing the scheduled date for general elections from November 1989 to February 1990 in order to demonstrate, in his view, our willingness to deepen the process of democratisation in the country. Since the election date is our own internal affair we would have been within our rights to reject the proposal. But we decided to agree. Although the actual date of the election is perhaps a trivial detail, if anyone needs additional evidence of our interest in carrying out democratic reform and developing political pluralism, the Sandinista leadership is ready to submit it. There are many other examples which show that the FSLN and the government

are ready to grant the forthcoming elections "most favoured" status with regard to their free and democratic character.

■ **Could you give us some examples?**

T. B. First of all, the FSLN on its own initiative raised the question of the need for a radical revision of the laws on elections and the mass media with the aim of amending them in order to ensure a fair electoral process based on the equal participation of all political forces. The same desire marks the drafts of constitutional reform submitted by the Sandinista government to appropriate National Assembly committees for consideration.

Without waiting for legislative approval of these fundamental documents, the government has assumed a number of unilateral commitments to the democratisation of political life in the country in order to impart to the election campaign in its earliest stages a truly free and competitive character. In particular, it has announced that there will be no army call-up between September 1989 and February 1990, and reaffirmed the guarantees written into the Constitution for the existence of various forms of property, as well as the pledge not to confiscate it for any political reasons. Between August 25 and December 2 (i.e., until the beginning of the election campaign's final stage), it has granted

each political party taking part in the election process free daily half-hour access to one of the national TV channels for the advocacy of their political platforms.

In the course of the national dialogue with the opposition parties, agreement has been reached that their representatives will receive the lists of electors no later than 60 days before the vote. They can monitor the work of all polling stations, and accompany sealed ballot-boxes during their transportation from the places of voting to regional election councils. We have also agreed not to place any polling stations on military unit precincts. Since the beginning of the year each party has the right freely to conduct elections-related opinion polls and to publish data in the press.

I think that these examples are enough to demonstrate that the Sandinista

leadership is not only not obstructing the democratic process, but that it is also endeavouring to give it the maximum boost.

■ **Have FSLN representatives taken opinion polls, and if so, what are the results?**

T. B. Yes, they have. Judging by the results, more than 50% of respondents said they intended to vote for the FSLN candidates. We believe that the Front has sufficiently firm positions among the workers, peasants and students. I shall give you one typical example. At the beginning of the year, elections to the National Union of Students' presidium took place. The winner was Maria Ramirez, the candidate of the Sandinista youth, with 63.4% of the vote; the runner-up, from the Social Christian-oriented

youth organisation Accion, polled only 19.4%.

However bright the survey predictions may look for us, we know that a difficult and complex political struggle lies ahead. I won't conceal the fact that we expect the FSLN to win. Our hopes are based on objective political logic: the Front was the vanguard of the Nicaraguan people in toppling the Somoza dictatorship, and has persisted in that role over the last ten years as great efforts were needed to uphold revolutionary gains. If the FSLN wins the election, this won't simply be the victory of one of the parties contesting the elections, but a victory for the entire Nicaraguan people in their struggle against a return to the shameful past and their fight for the right to decide their own future.

THE READER WANTS TO KNOW * * * * *

AIDS—NOT JUST A MEDICAL PROBLEM

Several years ago the horrific disease AIDS was totally unknown. Today, no country remains untouched and alarming signals are coming in from all over the world. Is the human race finally doomed? I have read that the GDR's anti-AIDS drive is showing encouraging signs, and would appreciate more information.

Miguel CRUZ
printworker, Amsterdam,
Netherlands

The WMR editors asked Dr Ludwig Mecklinger, a GDR health expert, to answer this letter.

Acquired immune deficiency syndrome, AIDS for short, has become a global problem which can only be solved by the combined efforts of all countries. This misfortune has thrown into even sharper relief not only the purely medical, but also the social and political differences between the two systems.

The more than 140,000 AIDS cases which have already been registered in the world represent only the tip of the iceberg: the real number of infected persons is thought to run into the millions. It is easy to imagine the effect this may have on the social status of the sick and infected, and

on public health in countries with a high incidence of AIDS. The pandemic is spreading inexorably and there is still no sign of an effective vaccine or drug. The medical possibilities are also limited when it comes to preventive measures, which mainly consist of testing donor blood for AIDS antibodies, protecting against transmission through sexual contact and tightening safety procedures during medical examinations and surgical operations.

An awareness that a narrow departmental approach to AIDS prevention cannot be sufficiently effective has led the GDR to take a timely and sweep-

ing action across all fields of state and public activity. This involves preventive medicine, the early identification of victims, and comprehensive health care and social security for patients. Social conditions in the GDR are such that the initial epidemiological situation here is more favourable than in capitalist countries, something to be kept in mind from the start. Firstly, we have no drug addiction and, consequently, no intravenous drug abusers, and secondly, there is no social base for drug-dealing.

Decisions by the party and state leadership form the basis of national anti-

AIDS strategy. Within the Council of Ministers' Central Commission on the Prevention and Combating of Epidemics, a special working group has been set up to enlist all the necessary organisations in providing countermeasures to the disease. In this we rely heavily on public education, which young people are especially in need of while choosing a partner or in their intimate lives. Oral contraceptives and more lax attitudes have engendered a moral climate which we now consider it particularly important to change. People should be made aware of the moral and ethical aspects of the problem and persuaded to accept their mutual responsibility as a norm. Within the unified socialist system of education, the promotion of this awareness starts in the secondary school (8th to 12th forms) and continues with the system of professional training, in universities and colleges and during compulsory military service. The mass media have also joined in. The German Museum of Hygiene has become the main advisory and coordination centre for district health education offices. These measures are being reinforced by tighter control over members of risk groups and the medical staff who care for them.

Part of our national programme to combat AIDS also includes information

on the dangers, and on preventive measures, as a component of special awareness programmes for medical personnel and others.

Firstly, all AIDS cases—not only those with the full-blown disease or death, but also persons testing HIV-positive and suspect cases—must by law be registered. In some capitalist countries, the question of obligatory registration is still the subject of debate and therefore has no legal force. The arguments tend to revolve around the danger of AIDS victims suffering marginalisation, discrimination and persecution. Our experience is different. For instance, not one of our 9 patients and 56 virus carriers resorted to anonymous testing. We believe that the reason for this rests with the social system of our republic and the medical services it is able to provide: patients need not fear discrimination or loss of employment. In the capitalist world, by contrast, this normally involves unemployment, ostracism and social degradation. Such is the class-determined distinction between anti-AIDS strategies.

In all districts of the GDR, special clinics now offer advisory services for those infected with the immunodeficiency virus. A group consisting of a doctor, a psychologist and several junior medical personnel guarantees patients constant

advice, establishing, as a rule, firm relationships of confidence with them. Access to advice and qualified help without having to disclose one's condition to a family or factory doctor means that the number of people avoiding treatment will be reduced to a minimum, if not to nought. When necessary, these clinics also provide doctors specialising in particular ailments, which frees patients from the unpleasantness of having to "explain" their illness over and over again. I would add that the constitution lays down the right to free medical care and hospital treatment for all citizens.

Lastly, since the discovery of AIDS and how it is passed on, our government has been endeavouring to prevent any slanderous attacks against risk groups. Although we would still want to achieve greater sensitivity in dealing with AIDS sufferers and to expand the facilities for anonymous testing, they are treated here with the utmost care and consideration. In general, doctors should constantly search and, most importantly, find a common language with risk-group members.

AIDS is a challenge to all humanity. We are striving to use the potential of socialism more fully and to closely cooperate with other countries in order to gradually reduce this threat.

FROM OUR MAILBAG: READERS' RESPONSES, PROPOSALS, CRITICISMS * * * * *

FACING REALITY

I am glad that you have published Anatoly Butenko's article "Antagonisms Under Socialism?"¹ I know that, like myself, he has for many years held the view that socialism is not free of antagonistic contradictions. True, some Soviet comrades have long shared

his point of view, but in the German Democratic Republic, unfortunately, I was alone in expressing it in my speeches and publications.

Many people tend to misinterpret Lenin's statement that "antagonism and contradictions are by no means one and the

same thing. The former will disappear, the latter will remain under socialism".² They think that, according to Lenin, antagonisms in socialist countries must long since have disappeared.

Even if we abstract ourselves from the fact that everyday life continually points up antagonisms—for example, between administration and bureaucratism, between honest work and corruption, and so on—it still seems that most of the time we totally misunderstand the degree of socialist development in our country.

In my opinion, we are still at the initial stages of development and thus I never talk or write about "developed socialism", only about developing socialism. Developed socialism I consider different to that which can be observed at present in the socialist states. Developed socialism comes when we reach the phase described by Lenin: "Capitalism can be utterly vanquished, and will be utterly vanquished by socialism creating a new and much higher productivity of labour."³ Only by reaching this superior phase in labour productivity could we speak of an antagonism-free, developed socialism.

Although we are still a long way from this phase, does this mean that the development of socialism has been particularly slow? Not at all! Take the development of capitalism in Britain, the country where it first became a reality. From 1560 this social system began to

spread rapidly, but after 1600 an anticapitalist reaction followed—a sort of counterrevolution which was only defeated in the civil war of the 17th century. Marx described the 1640 revolution as a "conservative revolution" because its aim was not to create a new society, but rather to save the preceding development of capitalism from counterrevolution. It was not until 200 years later—in 1760—that the Industrial Revolution came to give capitalism an entirely new, machine-based productivity of labour. From this point, I think, one can speak of developed capitalism.

So, although it took Britain 200 years of relatively peaceful capitalist evolution before it reached what might be called developed capitalism, some countries, including the GDR, nevertheless assume that in just a few years they have advanced towards developed socialism and built a society without opposites of an antagonistic character, without antagonistic contradictions. Our Chinese comrades, on the other hand, think that the initial phase of socialism (i.e., until its developed stage) will take at least 100 years. Even that does not appear unreasonably long.

Thanks again for Alexander Butenko's article!

With best wishes and socialist greetings,

Jurgen KUCZYNSKI
Berlin, GDR

THE WORLD IS GOVERNED BY REASON

Perestroika, of which I now have a deeper grasp after reading your book "Soviet Union: The Revolution Continues" (Peace and Socialism Publishers) and certain articles in WMR, is laying the emphasis on the social development of the USSR and other socialist states. They have resolved to discard the perilous course expressed in formula: "If you want peace—prepare for war". Peaceful coexistence has no need of any recourse to arms.

The ancient philosophers, including Plato and Democritus, invariably noted that the world is governed by reason. I believe in a world invested with the spirit of reason and free from the elements of destruction. This is the force that impels us to communicate and unite in the name of the human race.

Let us recall a significant event—the Great October Socialist Revolution when Lenin stirred the people to action against

imperialist domination, tsarist autocracy and capitalism, believing in the just cause of the emancipation of the working class. Many countries felt the influence of the noble course charted by him. The revolution in Russia shook the world and roused the peoples of many countries to a struggle for the creation of free states and nations. Now we need to proceed to a nuclear-free world.

May the cause of peace triumph, because the unity and concord of future generations depend on the prospect of the continuation of life. I wish success to the leaders of this worthy movement.

Vincent A. EMMANG
unemployed, Lagos, Nigeria

¹ WMR, No. 5, 1989.

² *Leninski sbornik XL* (Lenin Miscellany XL), Politizdat, Moscow, 1985, p. 391.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, Progress Publishers, Moscow, p. 427.

WMR TIES * * * * *

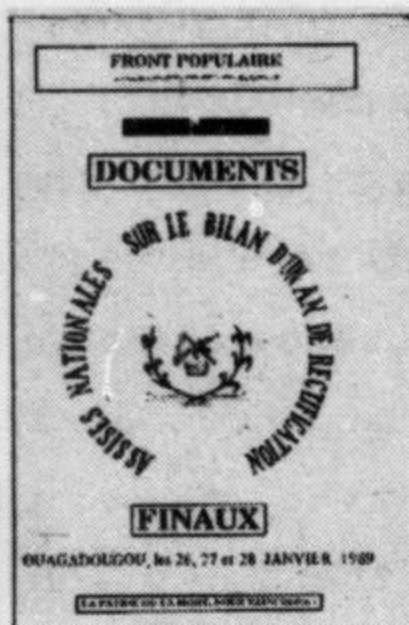
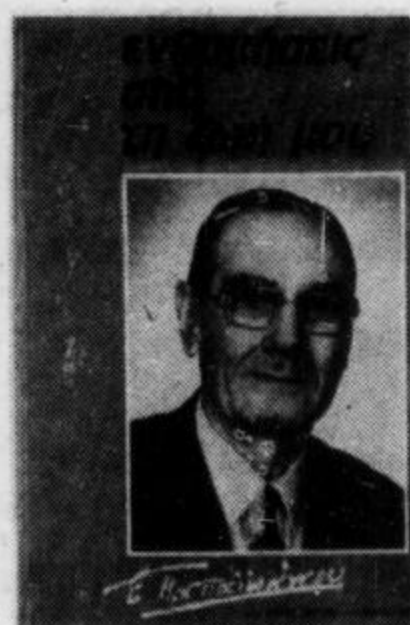
* Cheddi Jagan, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party of Guyana, has visited the WMR offices. Speaking at a meeting of the Editorial Council, he described the situation in his country, the prospects of the struggle being waged by the PPP and other progressive forces, and answered questions from Editorial Council members.

* On a visit to Prague, Humberto Vargas Carbonell, General

Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Vanguard Party of Costa Rica, met with the international staff of the journal. In his speech to the Editorial Council he analysed the present situation in Central America and spoke about the participation of the Costa Rican Communists in the election campaign and their attitude to the process of renewal in the socialist countries.



THE BOOK SCENE



A DEDICATED FIGHTER

Ezekias Papaioannou, *RECALLING MY LIFE*, Pirsos, Nicosia, 1988, 217 pp (in Greek)

The author of this book was General Secretary of the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus (AKEL) for almost forty years, from 1949. "Papis", as Ezekias Papaioannou was affectionately known to his comrades, devoted his whole life to struggle. He was born into the family of a poor peasant in 1908 and, after leaving school, was employed in a mine owned by a US company. "Reporting for the night shift, we went down at 6 pm and came up at 6 am" (p. 19).

In 1929, Papaioannou left for Greece, where he was lucky to find some temporary work at the docks in Piraeus. There he began to read the communist newspaper *Rizospastis*. Since the police refused to extend his visa (Greece, with 7 million inhabitants, had 1 million unemployed then), Papaioannou set off for London, hoping that the Cypriot community there would help him find a job. "On the very first morning of my arrival in the British capital I encountered a big demonstration of unemployed... I went along with them... When I learned that in Britain 5.5 million people were deprived of the right to work, I said to myself: 'Your place is with them, it's necessary to fight together in order to survive'" (p. 28).

For 14 months he tried unsuccessfully to get a job. Together with his compatriots and the unemployed British, he often had

to sleep rough in Trafalgar Square, which they nicknamed a "star hotel".

In 1931, Papaioannou joined the Communist Party of Great Britain. For his role in the movement of solidarity with the struggle of the people of Cyprus against the British colonialists he was arrested and imprisoned for three months.

After his release the young Communist became still more active. In 1936, he volunteered for the International Brigade and went to Spain to fight against fascism. When Franco's revolt began, each party (the Socialists, Communists, anarchists, Left Liberals, Democrats and Trotskyists) had its own separate military contingents and there was no common leadership. "Had there been one headquarters from the outset," the author writes, "we would have defeated the Francoists in two weeks" (p. 41).

Of the seventy-five Cypriots who fought in Spain, 14 were killed. After being seriously wounded in one of the battles, Papaioannou returned to London. During World War II he worked in a munitions factory.

In 1946, Papaioannou left for Cyprus. His first impression of his homeland was of "a vigorous, militant, progressive labour movement", and his second—"the subservience of the bourgeoisie's leaders to the British colonialists" (p. 75). Papaioannou at once involved himself in the work of AKEL, which he had joined while still in Britain; he became the editor-in-chief of *Demokratis*, the party's first daily newspaper, a year later a member of the CC, and then a secretary of the CC for organisational matters. In 1949 he was elected General Secretary of AKEL.

From 1949 to 1959, there was an upsurge in Cyprus's na-

tional liberation movement. The Communists were at the frontline of mass popular actions. During this period, EOKA¹ launched an armed struggle against the British colonialists under the slogan of Cyprus's unification with Greece. AKEL did not participate, considering its defeat foreordained: the balance of military forces was clearly not in the Cypriots' favour. The party decided to concentrate on tactics of mass, popular action.

Subsequent events have shown that the Greek right-wing forces and their Cypriot supporters wanted to use the military struggle not only to annex the island, but also to wipe out the left-wing forces.

At the end of 1955, the British authorities banned AKEL and arrested its leaders. Papaioannou was sent first to a concentration camp, and then to the main prison at Nicosia, into Cell No. 11—next to the Gallows Room. "Some comrades were joking gloomily: they had thoughtfully put us near the gallows so we wouldn't waste our energy going over to the place of execution" (p. 100).

Having been helped by the underground to escape, Papaioannou hid in a shelter dug under the foundations of a house in Nicosia: "The entrance was beneath a cupboard which stood near the wall. We moved it aside and climbed down a wooden ladder" (p. 111).

Meanwhile, the bloodshed continued. A curfew, arrests, torture, shootings, hangings...—the colonialists stopped at nothing to prolong their rule. In 1956 Britain and France used Cyprus as a base in their war against Egypt. "Operating underground," the communist leader recalled, "we organised massive protest demonstrations against the imperialist invasion of Egypt" (p. 113).

In April 1957, local and world public pressure forced the colonial authorities to release political prisoners and cancel the order for the arrest of the AKEL General Secretary.

In 1958, EOKA and TMT, a Turkish terrorist organisation, stepped up their criminal activities against the left forces, killing many Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot progressives. "I then underwent the most severe trial of my life," Papaioannou writes, "party members were demanding that we should retaliate... One night several leftists came into my house and declared: 'Unless you let us answer them properly, we shall kill you.' I replied: 'Better that I should die than thousands of mothers and children should weep'..." (p. 115). Using the traditional tactics of "divide and rule", British imperialism fomented the inter-community conflict.

In 1959, Britain, Greece, Turkey and Cyprus signed the Zurich-London Accords,² which AKEL condemned. Far from defusing the situation, these accords only made it worse. By the end of 1963, the inter-community conflict had become a fearsome bloodbath.

International imperialism took advantage of the situation to put forward the Acheson Plan, which called for an end to the independent state of Cyprus, its division between Turkey and Greece and, to this end, the removal of President Makarios and a ban on AKEL. "The imperialists," Papaioannou writes, "called Makarios the 'red priest', despite the fact that he was not by any means a left-wing politician. He was a patriot, a nationalist and one of the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. Objectively he was a hindrance to the imperialists' plans, and that was why they wanted to remove him..." (p. 124).

In April 1967, US and NATO secret services stage-managed a coup in Greece. Having seized power, the junta of the "black

colonels" decided to carry out a similar operation in Cyprus. AKEL passed on to Makarios information it had received about a planned revolt and attempts on his life. Regrettably, the President underestimated the danger. He failed to take serious measures even after his helicopter was machine-gunned, on March 8, 1970.

Acting almost with impunity, EOKA 2, the junta's outfit, undertook further terrorist acts. The author recalls how he once went to Makarios to protest against the President's release of criminals, members of EOKA 2, soon after their arrest by the police. The following dialogue took place:

"Your Eminence, after all, if you want to be killed, that is your business. But how are the people to blame? Why should they die together with you?"

'Don't forget, Ezekias, I'm a priest.'

'Yes, but you are also a president! And one must not confuse a priest with a president. I am not quite sure whether you would take the same position if AKEL were EOKA 2, and I, Grivas. You would send us to the gallows.'

'You are being unfair,' Makarios replied angrily" (p. 135).

In August 1973, Makarios himself invited Papaioannou to his home:

"You have what you want. The anti-coup contingency plan you have talked about so many times is now ready. From AKEL I will need a thousand men.'

'You may have two, five thousand—all our forces.'

'No, no, only a thousand from AKEL. Bring me a list divided into groups of 15. When necessary, I shall call them for service'" (Ibid.).

Eleven months later, in July 1974, the coup took place. Several times during that period, the AKEL leadership reminded the President that it was necessary to arm and train the men he had asked for. But nothing was done. When the crucial moment came, the 1,000 AKEL members had not a single pistol between them. Had Makarios taken even the minimum of AKEL-proposed measures, the course of events could have been different.

The British imperialists openly supported the rebels, whose tanks they allowed through their base areas in pursuit of Makarios, who fled to Paphos.

After the coup and the subsequent Turkish intervention Papaioannou went underground. Rumour spread in Nicosia that he had been killed. AKEL members and supporters came to the General Secretary's house and laid red roses. For a whole week his own wife thought Ezekias was dead.

The coup and the Turkish intervention, and imperialism's treacherous policy towards Cyprus, resulted in thousands dead or missing, and 200,000 refugees. Since 1974, Turkey has occupied 37% of the territory of Cyprus.

After the overthrow of the Greek junta and its Cyprus placemen, Makarios returned to the free part of the island and proclaimed that the only way out of the situation was a federation of the two communities based on the country's full independence. AKEL immediately backed this proposal and continued to fight for a just solution to the Cyprus problem after Makarios's death in 1977.

During the 1983 presidential elections AKEL supported Spyros Kyprianou, who campaigned on a common minimum programme adopted by AKEL and the Democratic Party (DP). In the first round, the coalition received 52.54% of the votes. But the DP leadership soon breached the election accords. Kyprianou openly declared that he would not be bound by as-

sumed obligations in the future. "The reality of it was that the DP leadership deceived the people. It signed the minimum programme only in order to win the election... Kyprianou became enmeshed in the nets of American-British imperialism, which promised to help him solve the Cyprus problem so long as he agreed not to cooperate with AKEL. That was why he acted as he did, as well as illegally granting four NATO countries the right to use Larnaca airport for military purposes during the Middle East crisis", the author testifies (p. 187).

At the 1988 elections AKEL supported the independent candidate Georgios Vassiliou, who received enough votes in the

¹ EOKA—a military-political nationalist organisation of Greek Cypriots, established in 1951 by Col. Georgios Grivas and other extremists with anticommunist views.

² Greece and Turkey were given the right to maintain a military

second round and was elected President. The attempts by international and local reactionary circles to isolate AKEL politically and shift rightwards the political orientation of Cyprus had failed.

The reminiscences of Papaioannou end with a remarkable phrase: "If I had another life, I would also dedicate it to the struggle for the noblest aim that there is in the world—for socialism and communism."

Christoforos IOANNIDES
member, CC, AKEL

presence in Cyprus (950 officers and men from Greece, and 650 from Turkey). Britain retained 99 square miles of Cyprus territory, as well as 32 bases and other facilities for various uses. The accords envisaged the granting of independence to Cyprus. On August 16, 1960 it was proclaimed an independent state.

* * *

THE SPECTRE OF THE MILITARY COUP HAUNTS LATIN AMERICA

Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, LOS MILITARES Y LA POLITICA EN AMERICA LATINA (The Military and Politics in Latin America), Ediciones Oceano, Mexico, 1988, 118 pp.

The author of this book, Pablo Gonzalez Casanova, a well-known Mexican social scientist, was Rector of the National Autonomous University of Mexico from 1970 to 1972. He won the National Prize in history, social sciences and philosophy in 1984, and has been a visiting professor at the universities of Oxford, Cambridge and Paris.

In this book the author bases his analysis of a topical theme on the premise that a proper understanding of the role of the military in Latin America relies on an interpretation of the state as an historical phenomenon and not on an examination of isolated events.

Casanova believes that an insight into the phases of imperialist policy in the region enables us to comprehend the pattern of coups d'état in Latin America. He supplies statistics which show the coups to have a cyclical character, since they occur most often during periods of economic or political crisis. From a review of events between 1906 and 1984 the author draws the conclusion that there is a growing tendency towards coups, and that the spectre haunting many Latin American countries may well become a reality.

This is confirmed, for example, by the several attempts made since 1986 to remove the Christian Democratic government of Guatemala, the succession of coups and countercoups in Haiti, the lingering threat of political destabilisation and the army's intervention in Argentina, the Paraguayan military's efforts to maintain the political system created by Stroessner, and the recent coup attempt in Panama which sought to violate the

country's sovereignty, although the declared aim was to remove General Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Casanova cites historical evidence for the fact that, during the long period of dependent development, political power was embodied in the traditional figures of the caudillo (leader) and the dictator. It was in this period, the author says, that the caudillos and dictators established contact with the rural and urban oligarchies, the commercial bourgeoisie and the major capitalist states. At the same time there developed the process whereby the national professional armies were reconstituted as support bases for the respective groups of the ruling classes. The book points out that the armies remained "national" units until the upsurge in "pan-Americanism", which has now become "a system of colonial dependence combining the interests of the armies and the TNCs under the aegis of the United States and financial-industrial capitalism" (pp. 16, 17).

The present modernisation and consolidation of most Latin American armies began in 1959, since when a new type of dictator has emerged who, whilst retaining an attachment to local culture, professes the ideology of the imperialist forces which arm such authoritarian regimes and support their most important moves. Between 1959 and 1969 the government of the United States trained an average of 8,475 Latin American military personnel per year.

These "new dictators" are seen as maintaining certain characteristics associated with their predecessors while being mindful of the need to employ new military technology, ranging from sophisticated computers to "simulation exercises" designed by US sociologists to assess the enemy's strength (see pp. 23-28).

The author regards the specific case of Costa Rica, whose Constitution does not provide for the existence of a traditional army, as having resulted from the efforts by the ruling classes to create a specific social mechanism functioning as a shock-absorber in politics. In such circumstances, Casanova believes, the army ceases to be a necessary instrument of power. If, however, the activity of the democratic forces threatens the interests of the governing circles, the latter may resort to the military in order to maintain their positions (see p. 63).

Casanova reflects that the formation of a democratic state

in the countries of Latin America tends to come up hard against an unavoidable reality: "If an army is ideologically, psychologically and militarily prepared for a coup, for internal war, ... it is likely to see the 'democratic transition', in Brazil and Argentina, for instance, as a mere 'strategic retreat' during which it will look for a chance to regain power and declare a new phase of the 'internal war' ... in line with their belief in the 'scientific doctrine' of 'national security'" (p. 85).

The book contains an analysis of the political and ideological foundations underlying the US strategy of a new colonial war violating the sovereignty of our peoples. One aspect of this strategy comprises low-intensity wars and conflicts. In the face of pressure from the United States, which conspires against any democratic process that questions its imperial hegemony, the struggle for independence and democracy is possible only on the basis of an ideological and political integration of popular and progressive forces, along with the simultaneous creation of legal guarantees and the cultivation of a public awareness that would guard against the possibility of coups. "The participation of the military in this process would be in line with their own long-standing tradition whereby officers and ordinary soldiers have emerged to join the national struggle, as happened with Colonel Caamaño in the Dominican Republic in 1965 and with General Prats in Chile in 1973" (p. 87).¹

Casanova devotes special attention to the armies of Cuba and Nicaragua, which by their social base and function are the

exception in Latin America. They are not subject to US control; they serve the working classes, and their relations with various political forces, like the overall relationship between the state and society, are not plagued by the kind of contradictions that exist in oppressive and exploitative societies. For the military to help in the creation of a democratic state, the author believes, government and society must be working together to solve the tasks of social development, as is the case in Cuba and Nicaragua.

The military's attitude to democracy, and their role in the configuration of political power are somewhat complex and contradictory themes, but Casanova's book represents a major contribution to the study of this subject, one that touches directly on the vital interests not only of people in Latin America, but also in other areas of the Third World.

Elfidio CANO

representative of the Guatemalan Party of Labour
on WMR

¹ And in 1968 with Colonel Omar Torrijos in Panama and General Velasco Alvarado in Peru.—*Author's note.*

* * *

COMMITMENT IS NOT ENOUGH

Charles Woolfson and John Foster,
TRACK RECORD. The Story of the Caterpillar
Occupation, Verso, London, 1988, 296 pp.

This book is a graphic and superbly-written account of a courageous industrial action, involving 200 Scottish workers from a branch plant of Caterpillar Tractor, a US multinational company. In response to the owners' decision to close this road machinery plant near Glasgow, in January 1987 the workers occupied its shops and stayed there for 103 days. The conflict stood out not only for its scope and duration, but also for the fact that it showed the changed line-up of class forces in Scotland, highlighted the difficulties workers encounter in class struggles, and aroused a deep feeling of solidarity with the strikers both in Great Britain and abroad.

"The Caterpillar occupation.... gave new confidence to thousands of Scottish workers. It brought into sharp focus many of the crucial issues which face Scotland in the 1980s: how we deal with multinationals, how we deal with a government which is unsympathetic to the aspirations of the Scottish people and believes that market forces must prevail, and how we organise in support of workers in struggle. That we failed to prevent Caterpillar pulling out.... is a tragedy for the thousands who depended on the wages of the Caterpillar workers to sustain their lives and their communities," Christie Campbell, General

Secretary of the Scottish Trades Union Congress, notes in the foreword (p. vii).

The authors of the book are well known in the Scottish labour movement. Charles Woolfson is Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Glasgow, his special field being industrial relations, and Professor John Foster is the author of *Class Struggle and the Industrial Revolution* and of articles on labour history and urban development. This book represents a second stab at co-authorship by the two scholars (in 1986 they published a joint study called *The Politics of the UCS Work-In*). Because of their standing Woolfson and Foster had the full support of the Joint Occupation Committee and were uniquely privileged in obtaining access to its tactical and strategic debates, workers' meetings, and confidential documents.

Based on documentary evidence, tape recordings made at the time and interviews, *Track Record* vividly recreates the atmosphere and tension of the strike and relates with sympathy the militancy and endurance of the Caterpillar workforce. The authors bring out both the strengths and weaknesses of the occupation and compare it with the Upper Clyde shipyard work-in in 1971, which ended in a victory for workers.

One of the problems faced by factory leaders was that of maintaining unity between different occupational groups organised in five separate unions. Initially they were able to do this, winning support for the occupation in all five unions. But after four weeks when it was clear the American employer was determined to shut the factory, the white-collar unions caved in and voted to withdraw from the occupation. Fear of losing financial compensation for their redundancy, and a conviction that the occupation was doomed to fail were potent influences

on their decisions outweighing the appeals of white-collar union officials for solidarity and unity. Woolfson and Foster argued that similar divisions during the Upper Clyde work-in were overcome because of the presence of a well-organised Communist and Broad Left union leadership, something the Caterpillar workers lacked, despite their undoubted militancy. Such political leadership in the Caterpillar unions would have made some difference to the chain of events, but whether it would have made the crucial difference between winning and losing isn't clear.

There was also a sharp division inside the right-wing dominated Amalgamated Engineering Union (AEU), the production workers' union in the Caterpillar plant. Neither the local nor national officials were particularly sympathetic to the prolonged occupation, and their view seems to have been that it was a brave and heroic gesture, but it was bound to fail.

Yet the Caterpillar events provoked an enormous wave of sympathy throughout Britain for the workers who had challenged the foreign bosses. They were seen as heroes, and housewives, young people and pensioners queued up to drop money into the workers' cans. "For many workers can collections became an important sphere of involvement in the campaign. It was a test of how strongly the workforce itself was really committed to fighting for its jobs" (pp. 50-51). Within that first weekend of public collections, a sum of over 5,500 pounds was collected, and the average weekly income of the campaign was approximately 20,000 pounds per week.

The authors do not simply blame the union officials for a "sell-out", and their detailed accounts of meetings with French and Belgian Caterpillar workers underline the huge obstacles in the path of effective international solidarity action.

The workers also faced external constraints because of changes in the structure of Scottish capital, and these changes are set out very lucidly and succinctly. Big Scottish capital in shipbuilding and engineering had declined through the 1960s and 1970s, and Scotland's manufacturing base had been increasingly divided into two segments: a foreign-owned sector of large, branch assembly plants, and a Scottish-owned sector of small suppliers, nominally autonomous, but economically dependent on the large manufacturer. The closure of the Cater-

pillar plant threatened many of these small firms and for a brief period they were active in petitioning Caterpillar's US headquarters to rescind the decision. The repercussions of the closure also hit the Conservatives, already a minority party in Scotland and anxious to avoid further erosion of their fragile base because of the General Election looming on the horizon. But the balance of forces had changed since the 1970s: indigenous Scottish capital was economically and politically weaker, and the Conservative government was committed to an open, free-market economy, even if this meant high unemployment and political unpopularity.

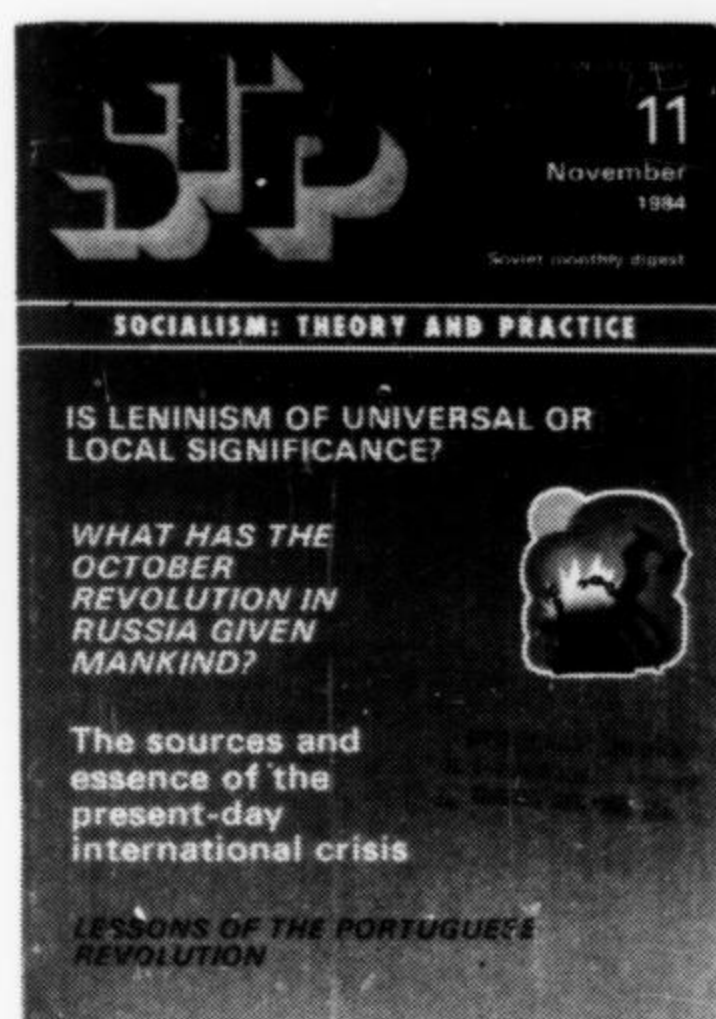
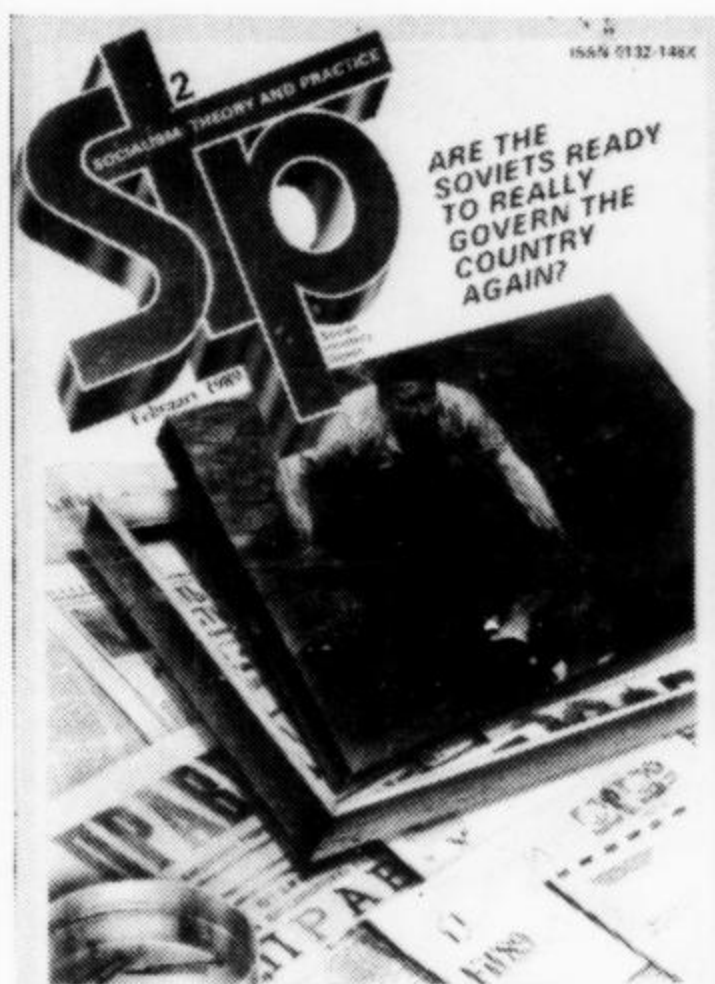
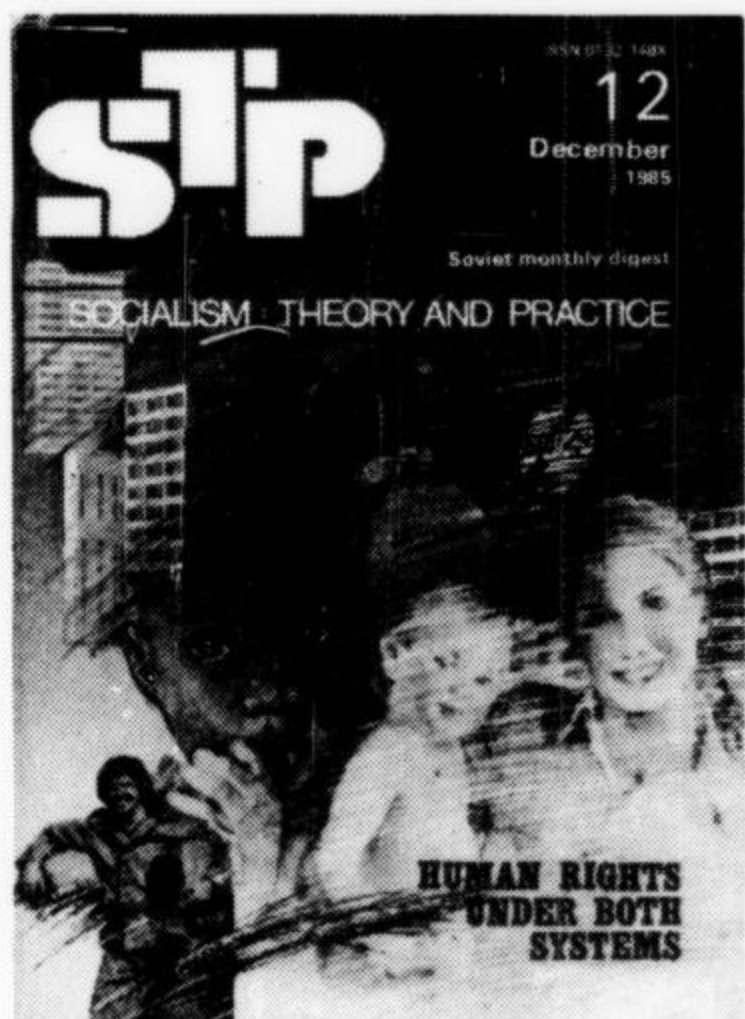
Finally, the authors document the legal changes since 1979 which have outlawed effective solidarity with workers in disputes. The result was to leave the dispute "organisationally and politically isolated. The trade union movement ... was unable to fulfil the purpose for which it had been set up". In this situation workers faced a stark choice: they could remain within the law and go down to defeat; or they could go outside the law and give themselves at least a fighting chance of victory. That workers chose an illegal occupation highlights a contradictory feature of ruling class legislation: by attempting to curb effective trade union action and preclude the chances of victory, they may unintentionally push workers towards a radical rejection of legal constraints.

Woolfson and Foster have produced an excellent account of the occupation that is rich in detail, thoroughly grounded in the political economy of Scotland, and clear in its political lessons. The most important among them is that if workers do not fight for themselves, nobody else will. Confidence in the justness and vast potential of the working class sounds in Campbell's words: "...Ordinary women and men, relatively unschooled in the finer arts of diplomacy and negotiation, have the capacity to change the world they live in" (p. viii).

Let us hope that the next case study Woolfson and Foster document will be a workers' victory.

John KELLY
lecturer, London School of Economics
and Political Science





Socialism: Theory and Practice

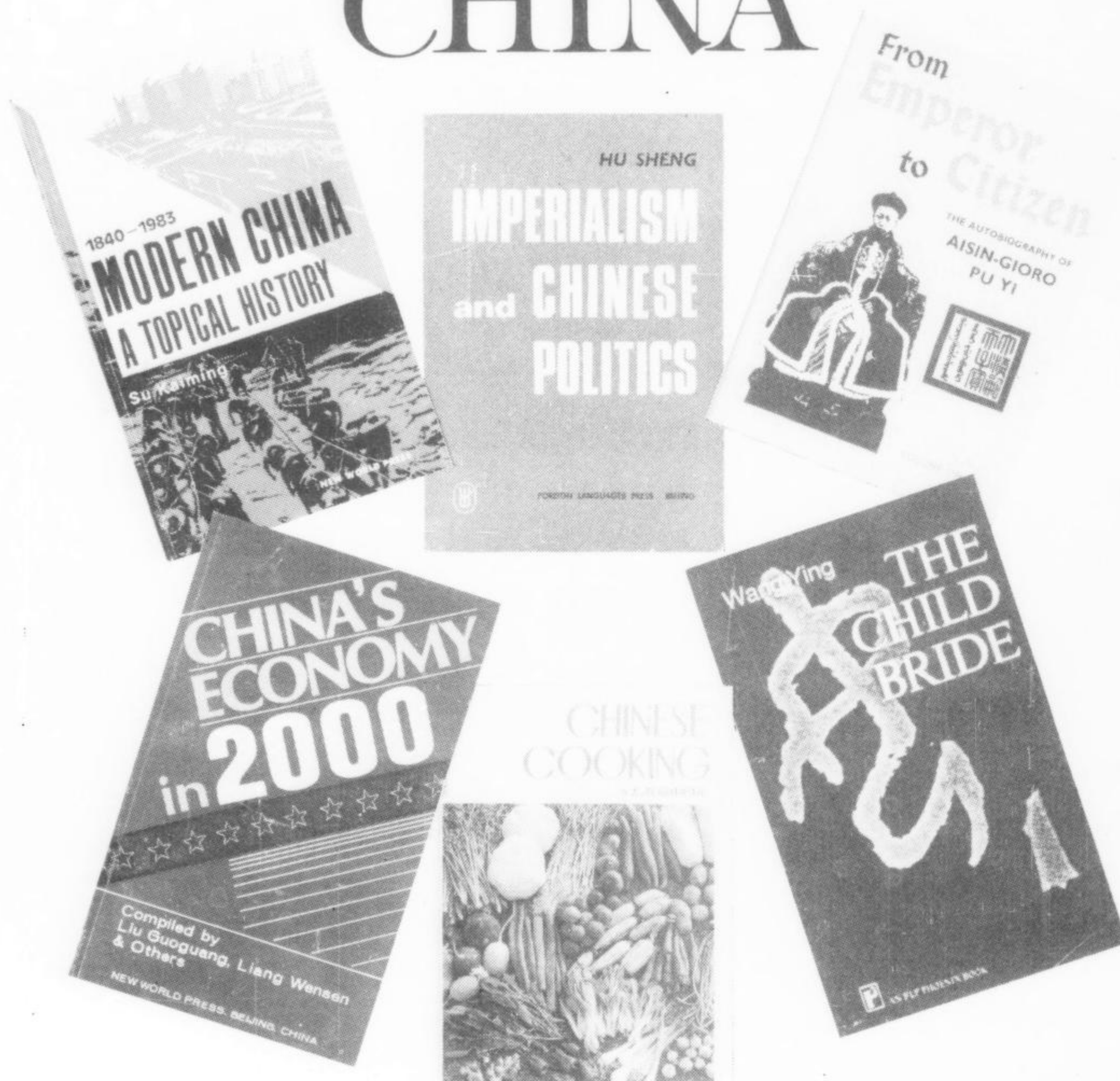
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