

# International VIEWPOINT

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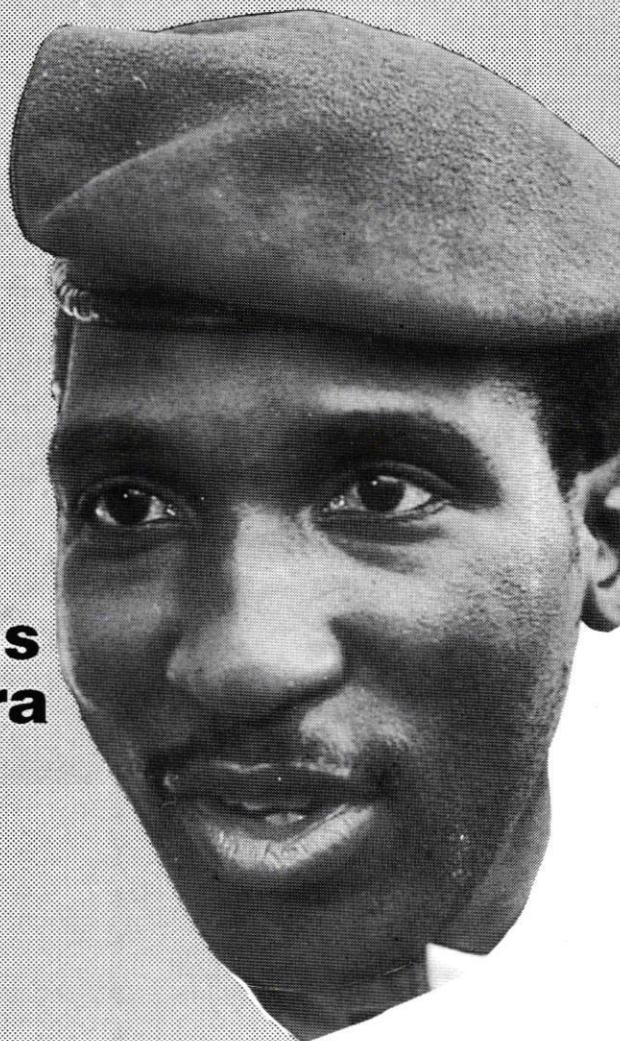
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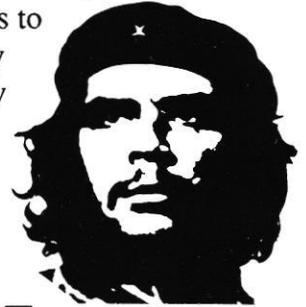
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# International VIEWPOINT

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## EDITORIAL

## Before the crash comes, invest in *IV*!

GETTING your friends and workmates to subscribe to *IV* could be the biggest favour you can do for them in the near future. The stockmarket crash this month is undoubtedly only a harbinger of worse things to come. As capitalism's crisis deepens, it's more important than ever to get socialist analysis and ideas across.

An internationalist understanding of imperialism's crisis and a clear working class response are vital for workers and the oppressed who, as usual, will be the ones made to suffer when the world economic situation worsens. We are planning more thorough coverage of the recent crash and the economic crisis in the near future.

So there can be no better time than the present for helping us to extend our sales. Our autumn sales campaign got off to a good start with subscriptions increasing every issue.

With the help of our readers making an effort to win new subscribers, we should be able to increase our print run — and maybe even bring back the issues we lost because of cuts last year.

A little investment in *IV* will bring in good dividends. We are still keen to receive donations to our standing fund drive. We could make even more improvements in the quality of the magazine with a relatively small amount of cash. So put your money on us, and invest in "people's socialism" for a secure future! ★



## A world recession is on the horizon

**BLACK MONDAY**, October 19, was an extremely hard blow for the international capitalist economy. On that and the following day, the stock exchanges witnessed a fall in share prices greater than that of Wall Street's "Black Friday" in October, 1929.

The total loss of US shareholders alone is evaluated at \$1,000,000 million. To give an idea of the scale, private investors have lost the equivalent of nearly half of the total public debt of the United States. Total losses on a world scale are greater than \$1.5 trillion, 50 per cent more than the whole so-called "third world" debt.

ERNEST MANDEL

**B**ECAUSE the stock exchange recovered part of the loss in the days that followed does not signify that these losses were cancelled out — the people who lost money were not the same as those who won some back. The overwhelming majority of small- and medium-size shareholders lost without repurchasing or regaining anything in the days after the crash.

The violent fall in prices, which spread to all the stock exchanges in the capitalist world, reflects the enormous monetary instability that rules the international capitalist economy today. It is linked to the bourgeoisie's growing anxieties. Practitioners of the method of self-delusion, starting with Margaret Thatcher, comment-

ed that there was no need to be worried because the "real economy" would be OK. This view is marked by blindness, if not a deliberate wish to deceive the public.

### Fears of new recession justified

What is particularly distinctive about stock market speculation is that it never reflects the current situation. It anticipates — that is, it expresses predictions about what will happen tomorrow. In this sense, the crash in stock market prices corresponds to increasingly widespread fears of a new generalized recession. In terms of the "real economy", these fears are entirely justified.

3

Is all this to say that a "new 1929" has already begun? Will the plummeting prices in Wall Street trigger off an economic crisis as grave as the one in October 1929? These questions are badly put for two reasons.

First, for a collapse of stock market prices to set off a serious crisis of overproduction, there must be a number of accompanying factors. The stock market certainly shows itself to be the weakest link in the chain. But other links must crack before the chain will give way. Financial institutions have to go down, abruptly stopping credit expansion; big industrial firms must go bankrupt; orders, current production and jobs have to decline noticeably. All that has not yet happened, but it could in the months to come.

Neither in 1929 did everything change from "Black Friday" to 30% unemployment in the United States, and to 40% in Germany in one go. It took more than two years to get to this catastrophic result. Nobody dares to predict what the state of the world economy will be looking ahead two or three years from now.

### A new expansion in the debt mountain

Paradoxically, for capitalism, the method that the imperialist governments have envisaged to stop the crash in Wall Street is more serious than the crash itself: the injection of new credits, swelling the amount of money in circulation again, and a new expansion in the debt mountain. The fact that these measures are accompanied, against all logic, by a momentary lowering of interest rates only serves to underline the "after us, the deluge" character of this pseudo-therapy.

The persistent US balance of payments deficit inundates the world with depreciating dollars. Is it possible to "attract" foreign capital to the United States by lowering interest rates? We can expect the Japanese and European capitalists to react in their usual way. The other day it was learned that in greater Los Angeles, three-quarters of big property holdings already belong to foreigners!

This is crunch for the short-sighted policies of Ronald Reagan. He is plugging the gaps in the fortress by filling them with dynamite — hardly a way to prevent future explosions.

More than ever, the debt spiral is widening. In the short term one can foresee a reduction of consumer's buying power — a new step towards recession.

Also, there are the debts of the third world, of the US, of the Japanese banks and stock markets, of the public authorities and social security in Europe, which are beginning to tumble.

The whole snowball has been rolling for over a year. The rest is only a question of chronology: generalized crisis in 1987 or 1988? ★

# Perestroika opens the way for independent social movements

**THE FIRST meeting of the independent clubs and societies existing in the USSR was held in Moscow on August 20-23. According to *Pravda*, today there are several thousand throughout the country.**

**This meeting had the stamp of approval of the Moscow party authorities and the Soviet press. *Ogonyok*, *Moscow News*, *20 Vek i Mir*, reported the event, even if in a partial way.**

**These clubs represent a very broad spectrum of concerns. Overall, they define themselves by a triple no — no to violence, no to a single truth and no to chauvinism and racism.**

**The following article was originally published in the Austrian magazine, *Profil*. Both it and the accompanying documents indicate the possibilities for independent organization that have been opened up by Gorbachev's reform course.**

## A SEVERYUKHIN

**A**LL THE SIGNS indicate that the process of change in the Soviet Union has entered a new, and perhaps decisive, phase. After Gorbachev's speech at the January plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the liberalization is no longer merely verbal but is being put into practice.

The official decisions have created legal possibilities for many forms of social activity previously considered, if not anti-state, at least "reprehensible" and "harmful." Instead of the traditional principle, "everything that is not permitted is forbidden," the opposite principle began to prevail, "everything that is not forbidden is permitted."

Nonetheless, the liberal proclamations at the top will change nothing unless real forces exist in society that are capable of taking advantage of the new possibilities. The tempestuous growth in 1987 of various kinds of associations, clubs and groups embracing every conceivable tendency has shown that such forces do exist in the country.

Despite their many calls for citizens' and democratic initiatives, the authorities have

clearly shown themselves to be perplexed by the new social movements. Even the functionaries in the reformist wing of the leadership have no experience in maintaining contacts with independent representatives of various social layers. Insofar as many of the newly arisen groups do not consider it necessary to register and others, as far as possible, avoid contact with the bureaucratic structures, these groups have been described by the officials as "informal associations."

### Press focus on right wing group

Some new organizations quickly obtained juridical status, and began to develop contacts with the mass media. Thanks to the "policy of *glasnost*," they achieved a relative independence. Others remain in a semi-legal position, since they have no confidence in official tolerance.

From the outset, the attention both of the Soviet and Western press was focused mainly on the extreme rightist group "*Pamyat*," which represents Great Russian

chauvinism and anti-semitism. But already by the spring of 1987, many left organizations had been formed, and had begun to arouse interest. The best known of them is the Moscow Social Initiative Club (KSI), whose formation actually dates back to the autumn of 1986.

The founders of the KSI were the sociologists F. Pelman and B. Kagarlitsky, the journalist G. Pavlovski and the philosopher M. Malyutin. At first, this group concerned itself with the (more or less) youth magazine *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Later, however, it transformed itself into an independent organization whose goal, in Kagarlitsky's words, was "to consolidate the left wing of the *perestroika* [restructuring]."

The activity of the KSI was based on socialist ideas and Marxist traditions. In Brezhnev's time, Pavlovski was editor of the left samizdat journal *Poiski*, and Kagarlitsky participated in the underground Young Socialists group. Both were jailed at the end of the Brezhnev era, and regained their freedom only thanks to the political changes that had come about in the country.

The majority of the activists and members of the KSI, however, had little if any experience of participating in political developments. Rather they were pulled directly into public life through the liberalization. Some of them remain in the party, for example M. Malyutin. The KSI brought together in particular the attempts to transform the "radical reform" proclaimed by Gorbachev from a theory at the top to practical activity at the base.

In the KSI, seminars and discussions were organized. Working groups on the problems of youth and self-management, the rights of the working class and so on were set up. The materials and activities of the club were publicized in the written and electronic press. And radical-left youth and student groups, whose numbers multiplied rapidly after the January plenum, worked with the club.

Alongside the KSI, other big left-oriented associations arose. The Perestroika Club in Moscow and Leningrad brought together mainly young scholars, jurists, sociologists and economists. Unlike the KSI, the Moscow Perestroika group did not have a clearly defined program of work, and its ranks included people of widely varying views. As a result, the members of the club spent more time in disputes with each other than in practical work. Although in the documents of the Perestroika group, the princi-

ples of its activity were defined as socialist, it was generally suspected of "liberal Westernism," and people preferred to collaborate with the ideologically more clearly-defined KSI.

## Ecological/cultural groups formed

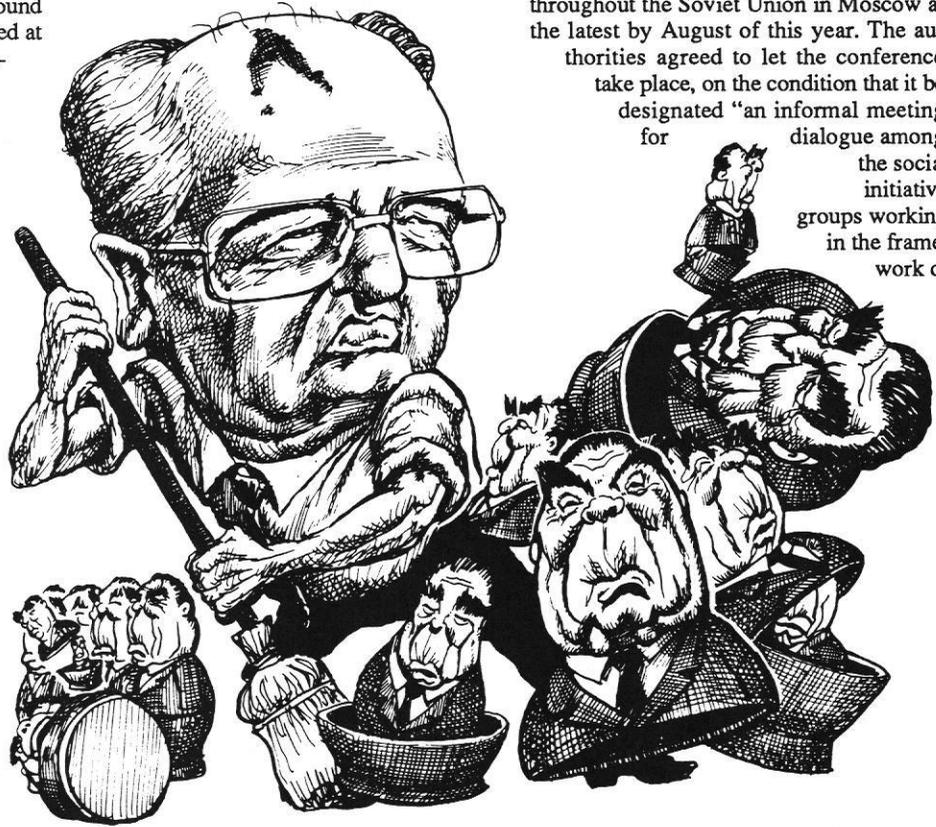
In Leningrad, alongside the relatively small Perestroika group, the Council for Ecological Culture (SEK) and the cultural-democratic Epicenter Movement sprang up. The demonstration by SEK supporters against the demolition of the venerable Hotel Angleterre became a topic of discussion in the leading Soviet papers. Moreover, the Epicenter created its own news journal, *Merkur*, of which hundreds of copies were circulated in Leningrad. In

ences of opinion in its own ranks, this organization proved unable to adopt consistent documents and to do work.

Moreover, not only the VSSPK suffered from internal divisions. A sharp conflict also arose between the KSI and the Perestroika group. The KSI suffered a split. In May 1987, a very moderate group left, and based itself on a Fund for Social Initiative (FSI). A month later, new frictions developed, and the KSI divided in fact into two groups, each claiming the name of the old KSI. Nonetheless, the movement continued to develop. A month after the split, one of those involved in this event declared in astonishment that each of the competing groups was bigger and stronger than the original united KSI had been.

Despite all the conflicts, efforts to work together continued. Already in May, the Council of the KSI in Moscow decided to hold a conference of the progressive groups throughout the Soviet Union in Moscow at the latest by August of this year. The authorities agreed to let the conference take place, on the condition that it be designated "an informal meeting for dialogue among

the social initiative groups working in the framework of



August 1987, *Merkur* even got a favorable mention in the official press, an event unprecedented in the history of samizdat.

Larger left groups have also sprung up in Riga, Vilna, Kiev and other big cities. In May, the most radical of them came to Moscow for the conference of All-Soviet Social and Political Correspondence Courses Club (VSSPK). This organization had declared as its objective from the beginning to raise the most radical demands ("No collaboration with the authorities," "Fight for a democratic socialism," "Revolutionary self-management by the masses," and so on). But because of differ-

*perestroika*." Because of the factional struggle in the Moscow groups, the preparation for this all-Soviet meeting became fraught with tensions. Nonetheless, the congress opened on August 20, with 250 delegates representing 40 groups.

Over the four days, more representatives came from groups in the provinces. After the end of the congress's work, the organizing committee of the conference reported that altogether 600 delegates representing at least 50 groups of various kinds — environmental, cultural-democratic and socialist — had participated in the meeting.

The first days were poisoned by clashes between the delegations from the Perestroika groups and the organizing committee, which was made up of representa-

tives of both factions of the KSI. The Perestroika group supported the formation of a broad union of clubs and groups without any ideological boundaries or clearly defined program. Against this, the KSI presented the project of building a federation of socialist clubs.

### Radical demands raised by Marxist groups

There were sharp disputes even over the agenda. Compromise proposals failed to clear up the situation. At the same time, Marxist political clubs entered into sharp polemics with some participants in the conference, the members of the liberal and pacifist group *Doverie* (Confidence) and the Democracy and Humanism Seminar, who were former dissidents.

Representatives of the authorities intervened resoundingly when dissidents spoke and when radical demands were raised by socialist and Marxist groups (abolition of pre-censorship, erecting a monument to the victims of Stalinism in Moscow, rehabilitation of those persecuted under Brezhnev, punishment of the high party functionaries responsible for the decay of the economy and corruption.) In the corridors rumors went around that the congress might still be banned.

Under these conditions, the warring groups began to unite. Both factions of the KSI and the Perestroika group joined together, and according to a participant in the conference "functioned like a well-coordinated command." Quickly, agreement was reached between the KSI and the Perestroika group that two organizations would be set up at the same time — the Association of Social Initiative Groups, with an open membership and a broad general democratic program, and a Federation of Socialist Clubs.

Some members of the Perestroika delegation had further hesitations, and announced that such decisions were premature and too radical. In the course of the conference, however, the relationship of forces changed. The radical youth groups (Obshchina, Young Communards-Internationalists, the Ernesto Guevara Brigade, and so on) found a common language. Both they and the youth clubs not represented in the KSI Council determined the psychological atmosphere of the congress in its last stage. They had not gathered here to go away with empty hands, but to make concrete decisions. Without this determination and pressure, the congress could not have been successful.

The events of the four-day meeting were sensational, even for many participants in the discussions. In the statement of the socialist social clubs, which was read by B. Kagarlitsky on August 23, 1987, the movement's independence was proclaimed, as well as its right "to express and defend its interests independently and without any intermediary."

"We recognize the constitutional role of the CPSU in our society," the statement went on to say, "but the party is not a homogeneous whole. Its ranks also include those who bear a direct responsibility for the abuses and errors of the past years; and those who have filled the ranks of the bureaucracy, forming the mass of self-satisfied functionaries cut off from the needs and hopes of their people.... We will endeavor to support the leaders and ordinary members of the party who represent healthy and progressive forces."

The Socialist Clubs declared their firm intention to combat bureaucratic conservatism, fascist-like groups of the same stripe as *Pamyat'* and any form of extremism "from above and below."

It was said that "racism and chauvinism, fascism and Stalinism" were widespread in certain social layers and represented a direct threat to the social movement.

The statement called for a change in the electoral system, a broadening of the function and authority of the soviets in all areas, for granting the clubs the right to run their own candidates in elections to the soviets without any restrictions, as well as for access to the mass media.

A series of participants in the discussions even stressed the need for expanding social guarantees at the same time as developing the market in order to compensate in an effective and democratic way for redistributions of wealth that might arise through the operation of the market. In addition, the statement spoke of genuine self-management of workers' collectives as a guarantee of the success of the reform, and about the need for taking up the fight against bureaucratic attempts to manipulate the self-management bodies.

The statement proclaimed the principle of freedom of information, demanded the abolition of pre-censorship and liquidation of the "special stocks" [reserved sections] in libraries and archives, and called for the establishment of independent cooperative publishing houses, as well as the right to demonstrate. At the insistence of the radical youth groups, a point was included in the statement on solidarity with revolutionary and left forces in the capitalist and underdeveloped countries.

### Monument to the victims of the repression

The statement was signed by 16 groups, including the KSI, Perestroika, Obshchina and the Moscow section of the VSSPK. At the same time, on the basis of the conference press center, G. Pavlovsky set up an information agency. A special working group was also formed that took on the task of organizing a campaign for erecting a monument to the victims of the repression. The idea for such a monument was already raised at the Twenty-Seventh Congress of the CPSU, but had previously been successfully suppressed by the party

leadership.

In addition, a Working Group on the Question of Extremism (RGE) was set up. It is to coordinate the efforts of the left clubs fighting the *Pamyat'* nationalists and "fascism and Stalinism." The creation of such an anti-fascist center has aroused serious disquiet among the right-wing extremists. Only a few days after the end of the conference, unidentified persons broke into the home of an active member of the RGE, N. Lvov, and carried off all the papers and tapes of the *Pamyat'* leaders. Another activist was threatened with a "settling of accounts." Such events, however, can no longer change the course of things. Dozens of progressive groups established contact at the conference, affirmed common principles and began joint work on various questions.

### Little media coverage of conference

It can be said that the movement got to know itself. Its activists no longer feel isolated and hemmed in. Many questions that on the eve of the conference aroused violent polemics and even splits have now been resolved in constructive discussions. Of course, differences between the left and right wings of the movement — between the supporters of "revolutionary pressure" on the bureaucracy and the more cautious groups — continue to exist. But it is clear to all that such differences of opinion must not interfere with common work.

Although a large number of journalists took part in the work of the conference, the mass media maintained a virtual silence (with the sole exception of the Mayak radio station, which broadcast a short report on the congress a few days after it ended). It was quite clear that the directors of the official press were awaiting a reaction from on high.

In the meantime, information about the discussions conducted and the decisions made began to spread in Moscow and naturally showed up rapidly in samizdat publications. Shortly afterward, the conference was mentioned in a Voice of America broadcast. The Western radio stations, however, had no serious information, and offered their listeners nothing substantial. Nonetheless, they gave the first prod to the official press. It had to take up the congress material before it was scooped by Western journalists.

On September 5, 1987, a quite thorough report on the conference finally appeared in *Ogonyok*, one of the country's most popular and widely-circulated weekly magazines. In the article, the founding of the Federation of Socialist Clubs and the statement were not mentioned, but otherwise the account was a fair one. In the meantime, the clubs belonging to the Federation and Pavlovsky's press center have declared their intention to publish their own collection of material giving a full and "unedited"

version of the activity of the clubs and groups. For their part, the leaders of the campaign for erecting a monument to the victims of Stalinist repression have begun collecting signatures and have been circulating their materials more widely. This activity has become a gain of *glasnost*'.

Overcoming its own contradictions and

weaknesses, the movement has become a real factor in the country's political life. The real meaning of the decisions adopted is still to be analyzed. One thing, however, is clear: For the first time in the Gorbachev era, it is possible to speak not only about reform initiatives from above but also about a social movement from below. ★

## "Whatever is not forbidden is permitted"

KNOWN AS the publication par excellence of the advanced wing of Gorbachev's supporters, Moscow News published an interview in its September 13 issue about the August meeting of the independent social clubs.

Gennadi Zhavoronokov conducted the interview. G. Pavlovski, was described as a "member of the Council of the Social Initiatives Club"; Y. Lubtsev as the chief of the propaganda department of the Communist Party committee in the Brezhnevski borough of Moscow; and N. Bellayeva as a collaborator of the State Law Institute.

The interview is translated from the French-language version of the paper, *Les Nouvelles de Moscou*.

**U**NTIL the recent past, many people linked the very notion of parallel groups to all sorts of excesses. They imagined uncontrollable groups of youth more or less opposing society. Today, we see them as individuals who want to really participate in the processes of transforming our lives. Where did the idea for this dialogue meeting come from?

■ Pavlovski First of all, we realized that there was no coordination of the activities of these groups, which sometimes expressed different interests. It was this and nothing else that aroused a reaction of rejection both from the population and the judicial bodies. The word parallel became an insult, although it only meant that an individual or group of young people engaged in their favorite occupations outside an official group.

Then in the pages of the weekly *Sobesednik*, the Social Initiatives Club proposed holding a conference. The Moscow Party Committee helped solve all the technical problems.

The meeting proceeded in a stormy way. It turned out that every group interpreted

democracy in its own way — "We are the only ones who know how the monuments have to be protected," "We are the only ones who know how to maintain the ecological balance," and so on. Someone described these discussions as the "kindergarten" of democracy. But, after all, it was only an initial experiment.

**Extremism is not rational, even in words. What juridical argument can there be put forward to avoid confusing enthusiasm and interest with inadmissible manifestations?**

■ Bellayeva First of all, a few words about extremism. Lately, this word is coming up often. Groups attribute this to others, without realizing that they are going off half-cocked themselves. This is quite dangerous. We are seeing the appearance of a phenomenon of "extremists fighting extremists."

**Yuri Vasilevich, this first discussion meeting might be considered an additional burden on the Party organs placed on you by the social groups. But could it be seen as an opportunity to**

**take advantage of supplementary aids for perestroika in the USSR?**

■ Lubtsev The latter view is closer to our hearts. The impression given by this meeting is not a simple one, far from it. Everything we heard can be divided conventionally into two parts. The first was constructive proposals for the clubs participating in the solution of ecological and production problems. The other aspect was theoretical, and requires discussions in order to be able to define clear positions.

For a long time, we pretended not to have any parallel groups. They existed and were springing up where we did not know how to work. Today, our district already has a certain experience. Concrete work clarifies things. The real leaders become leaders, and the big talkers with the aura of standing apart become emperors who have no clothes.

**Whether we wanted it or not, the discussion meeting was the occasion for the appearance of a new youth organization. What will be the attitude of the Komsomol [the CP's official youth section]? Will it take a good neighborly attitude or will it seek points of interaction?**

■ Pavlovski The Komsomol was aware of this meeting, but in practice it showed no interest. [A storm of objections.]

Please, you can challenge my impression. It is as difficult for us to cooperate with the Komsomol as it is easy to contact the Party bodies. The Komsomol does not try to get us to participate in any activity. It does not take part itself. At best, it may offer us premises, while all the rest appears only in the reports.

■ Lubtsev I want to point out that among the members of the parallel groups there are many Komsomol members. It would be more logical to ask the Komsomol how it defines its relationship with the youth.

**Having overcome the tendency that might be represented by the words "permit nothing," are we sometimes falling into another extreme that I would call being afraid of the youth. You can already hear the voices clamoring, "Let them do what they want!" That is impossible. Any society lives within defined juridical bounds, and any social movement has to have juridical bases, as well as limitations.**

■ Bellayeva Today, we are experiencing a real juridical boom. Our institute is working like a team of fire-fighters. We have never made such intense exertions in creating new juridical norms. You have just mentioned juridical limits, but some of them were created in the 1950s and even in the 1930s. At present, they have been revised, in particular for voluntary associations.

■ Pavlovski There is a wonderful democratic rule. Whatever is not forbidden, is permitted. Everyone has to get used to that. The recent conflicts between some youth groups, the attempts to resolve differences

of opinion by force and arbitrary judgments, have proved to be sad lessons for us. In large measure, the reason for this was the lack of information about others. This must not happen again.

One of the practical results of our meeting was the creation of an independent press center whose mission it will be to inform everyone about the objectives and tasks of the various movements; and the formation of an "arbitration" group whose mission it is to settle conflicts peacefully on the basis of justice and democracy.

**Loneliness is considered the twentieth century plague, like AIDS. Now, we can analyze the youth movement of the 1970s, which arose in response to stagnation. Young people formed clubs based on their musical tastes in order to relax. Trying to escape from emptiness, they came back to the same emptiness because they had neither precise perspectives or objectives. Isn't the movement of the 1980s threatened by a similar danger?**

■ Pavlovski Loneliness is the first symptom of the weakness of social relations, a sign of a lack of knowledge about other people. This can be overcome through common activities. At present, such activities are inadequate.

Most of the clubs are as young as the *perestroika*. At the meeting, various proposals were put forward that were appreciated by everybody because they reflected the interests of society — to build a monument to the victims of the repressions, to organize assistance teams for welfare cases, to adopt a charity program, that is, concrete care for the elderly and disabled.

**All of us feel that the *perestroika* has a**

**pressing need for personalities. Do you think that a social movement can offer political and other leaders who will take charge of solving the most timely problems?**

■ Lubtsev All these groups, and this greatly slowed down the meeting, have a common idea — participating in the transformation of society. It is hard to predict who among the leaders of the young people today will become political or state leaders.

I would like to clarify some details. Yes, that depends on them, but also on us. For long years, with an enviable persistence, we have challenged our youth by reminding them that "at their age, some people were commanding regiments." We did not challenge them without giving them regiments. There they are before us as "commanders of divisions."

This flowering might be feared as a danger, but it could also be considered as a school of social experience, of active civic efforts.

■ Lubtsev The dynamism exhibited by youth in defending their ideas astonished and pleased me. This is no longer a "lesson learned by rote." I will be frank. I have not seen such a spirit in many Komsomol meetings — far from it. From this point of view, some of these young people have the potential of offering new conceptions and ideas to our society. Only let this be a school for concrete achievements, and not a school for back-biting.

It is a school for all of us, because the discussion meeting showed that a lot of us were not capable of taking a new approach of discussing, persuading, seeking arguments. ★

# Statement of the Federation of Socialist Social Clubs

**THE TEXT of the statement/platform of Socialist Social Clubs is reproduced below. It was read out on August 23 at the Conference on Social Initiatives in the Framework of the Perestroika held in Moscow, and signed by 16 groups. (See article on page 4.)**

**S**ELF-ACTIVATING social organizations, meeting in Moscow in August 1987 to participate in the informational and discussion meeting entitled "Social Initiatives within the Framework of the *Perestroika*," make the following statement:

1. The processes happening in connection with *perestroika* have given rise to independent social and socio-political organizations. According to the constitution of the USSR, all power in the society belongs to the people. Thus, as a part of the people, the independent social and socio-political organizations have the right to express themselves independently and to defend their interests without any intermediary whatsoever.

2. The groups and unions signing this statement are partisans of a socialist perspective for developing our country. As convinced supporters of socialism, we identify with the course proclaimed in October 1917 toward building a classless society in the USSR and the withering away of the state.

We see the formation of independent groups and unions and the increase of their role in society as one of the roads for build-





ing social self-management, which will involve the elimination of bureaucratic and administrative structures.

3. In the present period, our country is going through a period of major changes. The success of the reforms underway depends on the level of support that the masses offer to the *perestroika* and on the degree of their involvement. The victory of the *perestroika* is a matter of life and death for socialism in the USSR.

We recognize the constitutional role of the CPSU in our society, but the party is not a homogeneous whole. Its ranks also include those who bear a direct responsibility for the abuses and errors of the past years; and those who have filled the ranks of the bureaucracy, forming the mass of self-satisfied functionaries cut off from the needs and hopes of their people.

We will endeavor to support the leaders and ordinary members of the party who represent healthy and progressive forces.

4. Both centrally and locally, the *perestroika* is running up against desperate resistance from those forces that fear for their privileges, and who are trying to maintain a monopoly of information and decision-making. The new initiatives and actions are being either blocked by them or simply ignored.

The union of independent groups and organizations, which stands on a platform of support for the policy of developing socialism and democracy adopted by the CPSU at its Twenty-Seventh Congress, is indispensable for another reason. Within the informal movement, groups are forming that defend reactionary points of view, racism and chauvinism, fascism and Stalinism, which are adopting extremist methods of action. By uniting, we will be able to resist extremism in the independent movement and to disseminate information on the actions of these groups.

5. On the basis of the above considera-

tions, we, the signatory organizations of this document, have decided — in conformity with the constitution of the USSR, which proclaims freedom of association — to come together in a Federation of Socialist Social Clubs, whose main goal is support for the *perestroika*. The objectives of the Federation are the following:

#### In the ideological field:

- Developing conceptions for democratizing our society and considering means for resolving the dialectical contradiction between an administrative power and social self-management.

- Analyzing the role and place of the social organizations in the political life of Soviet society and in the self-management system.

#### In the political field:

- Obtaining juridical status for the independent organizations, recognition of the right to take legislative initiatives; systematic application of the decisions of the January Plenum of the CPSU concerning democratization of the electoral system; obtaining the right for the social organizations to run representatives for the Soviets of People's Deputies at all levels, without any limitation or prior accord and with free access for the candidates to the news media.

- Prolonging the working sessions of the Soviets of People's Deputies, which is essential for constructive work.

- Increasing the budgets of the Soviets of People's Deputies on a strict juridical basis guaranteeing them total independence in appropriating resources.

- Incorporation into the law of a clear difference between the notion of criticizing the defects of the existing system and of anti-state activity.

- Implementation of the first point of the program of the RSDP (Russian Social

Democratic Party) on the right of citizens to institute proceedings independently of the state prosecutor's office and independently also of any proceedings instituted by the administration, against people in positions of responsibility who may commit illegal actions.

#### In the economic field:

The Federation proposes to:

- Collaborate in the re-orientation of state planning and management bodies, in which essentially administrative methods now prevail, toward economic methods.

- To help to broaden the sphere of action of monetary-commodity relations as the fundamental mechanism for regulating the country's economic activity, a change that must go hand in hand with solid guarantees for maintaining the workers' social gains (full employment, living wages, right of retirement).

- To fight for the following points:

Reduction of spending on the state apparatus; transferring the economy onto a self-managed basis; setting up of monitoring of the management system from below; transfer of the social means of production (factories) to a system of leasing the self-managed enterprises to collectives; democratization of the planning system; creation of conditions permitting the free development of all forms of socialist property.

#### In the cultural field:

- The right to financial autonomy for artistic unions and groups.

- Tolerance for the both the social and artistic tastes of representatives of various currents, insofar as they are manifested in ways that do not conflict with the constitution of the USSR.

- Free access for the population to statistical material and archives, to the stocks of museums and libraries, and end to the special stocks [of reserved books].

- Elimination of all forms of pre-censorship; broadening the networks of independent cooperative publishing houses; elimination of the administrative obstacles that the independent organizations run up against in the exercise of their constitutional rights and freedoms — freedom of speech, of the press, the right to demonstrate and march.

#### In the areas of ecology and ecology of culture:

Setting up real mechanisms for the participation of social organizations and movements in the struggle to preserve the environment, as well as historical and cultural monuments.

#### In the field of international relations:

Support for, and solidarity with, the struggle and activity of the democratic, national liberation and revolutionary movements in the capitalist countries and in the developing countries. ★

# Clear the names of the accused in the Moscow Show Trials!

“IT IS NOW over fifty years since the infamous Moscow Show Trials. It is astounding that at a time when the Soviet government is at pains to emphasize its concern with ‘human rights’ and proclaims the need for glasnost’ (openness), the accused in these trials, with a few exceptions, are still considered guilty of being paid agents of Nazism and other crimes.

“Among these men were numbered several who played outstanding roles in the Russian revolution of 1917. The reputations of founders of the Soviet state like Zinoviev, Radek, Trotsky and Bukharin were besmirched or expunged from the history books. Today, no-one doubts that the ‘confessions’ at the trials — the sole basis for the prosecution — were utterly false. Seven defendants in the third trial, Krestinsky and others, have been both judicially rehabilitated and politically exonerated. So have the military leaders, Tukhachevsky and others, whose military trial in 1937 was held in secret. But the admittedly false evidence against these men was inseparable from the charges against all the other accused.

“None of the accused, of course, is alive today. Many were executed immediately after their trials. Others died in prison or camps. Leon Trotsky, the chief accused in all three of the trials, was murdered in exile in 1940. However, families of some of the defendants are still living in the Soviet Union. Some have also suffered imprisonment and exile. It is worth recalling that a review of all these cases was promised by Khrushchev, but this promise was broken.

“We, the undersigned, therefore call on the Soviet government to re-examine the cases against all these victims of the perversion of Soviet justice, as took place with Krestinsky. We are confident that all those accused in the Trials of 1936-38 will be shown to have been innocent. They should immediately be rehabilitated, their honour restored, their families compensated and their graves marked.”

## Signatories:

Luis Ignacio Lula Da Silva, MP, chair PT (Workers' Party) **Brazil**; Pierre Guidoni, national secretariat SP (Socialist Party) **France**; Ernest Glinne, vice-chair of socialist group in Euro-parliament **Belgium**; Ken Livingstone, MP, LP (Labour Party) exec. **GB**; Robert Verdier, pres. International Csn. of Human Rights League **France**; Ian Mikardo, MP, ex-chair of LP **GB**; Jiri Hajek, Charter 77, foreign affairs minister under Dubcek. **Czech.**; Prof. Fernando Cardoso, MP, chair PMDB parliamentary group **Brazil**; Gert Petersen, MP, chair PSP (People's Socialist Party) **Denmark**; Erik Solheim, chair Left Socialist Party **Norway**; Franco Russo, MP, chair parliamentary group DP (Democrazia Proletaria) **Italy**; Olivio Dutra, gen. sec. PT **Brazil**; Jamil Hadad, MP, pres. SP **Brazil**; Seguro Melendez, gen. sec. MIR **Venezuela**; Petra Kelly, MP, Greens **FRG**; Peter von Oertzen, nat. leadership SPD **FRG**; Eduardo Jorge, MP, nat. leadership PT **Brazil**; Florestan Fernandez, MP, PT **Brazil**; Rosario Ibarra, MP, PRT presidential candidate **Mexico**; Jair Meneguelli, pres. United Confederation of Workers (CUT) **Brazil**; Martilases Covas Pontes, vice-pres. CUT **Brazil**; Dan Gallin, gen. sec. IFAW **USA**; Bala Tampoe, gen. sec. CMU **Sri Lanka**; Jacques Yerna, gen. sec. FGTB **Belgium**;

The campaign is appealing for further signatories of individuals or organizations, and financial donations to extend the appeal. Write to the Moscow Trials Campaign, c/o Michael Löwy, 34 rue des Lyonnais, 75005 Paris.

Jakob Moneta, ex-editor IG Metall journal **FRG**; Margarito Montes, gen. sec. General Union of Workers and Peasants **Mexico**; Hugo Blanco, nat. secretariat Peruvian Peasants' Confederation (CCP) **Peru**; Prof. Noam Chomsky **USA**; Prof. Laurent Schwartz **France**; Denis Bonvallet, CGT rep. to WFTU, Prague 1984-1987 **France**; Paul Sweezy & Harry Magdoff, eds. *Monthly Review* **USA**; S. Stojanovic, editor *Praxis* **Yugo.**; Perry Anderson & Robin Blackburn, *New Left Review* **GB**; Krishna Raj, editor

*Economic and Political Weekly* **India**; Gilbert Wasserman, editor *M* **France**; Rathfelder, editor *Tageszeitung* Berlin, **FRG**; Van Amerongen, editor *De Groene Amsterdammer* **NL**; Alex Grass, editor *Wochenzeitung* Zürich **Switz.**; Koen Raes, editor *Vlaams Marxistisch Tijdschrift* **Belgium**; \*Dr Annette Rubinstein, ed. board *Science and Society* **USA**; John Boyd, ex-editor *Weekly Tribune* **Canada**; Alain Amicabile, ex-CC member PCB **France**; Jakob Gorender, ex-CC member PCB **Brazil**; Luis Zamora, presidential candidate MAS **Argentina**; Lev Kopelev, writer **USSR**; N. Petrov, author **USSR**; Vlady Chibalchich, artist **USSR**; Esteban Volkov (Trotsky's grandson) **Mexico**; Elmar Altvater, economist, **FRG**; Samir Amin, economist, Third World Forum **Dakar** **Egypt**; Claude Bourdet, Compagnon de la libération **France**; Reg Groves **GB**; Harry Wicks **GB**; Youssef Abdelké, artist **Syria**.

## Members of Parliament:

Ademir Andrade **Brazil**; Keld Albrechtsen **Denmark**; Clara Ant **Brazil**; Ria Beckers **NL**; Sydney Bidwell **GB**; Paul Boateng **GB**; José Paulo Bisol **Brazil**; Mario Onaindia, Euro-MP, Euskadiko Eskerra **Spanish State**; Trygve Bull ex-MP **Norway**; Mario Campana **Italy**; Luigi Cifrani **Italy**; Joao Carlos Cocer

## Statement of the CPGB

**THE EXECUTIVE Committee of the CP, at its meeting on November 8/9, 1986, adopted the following statement:**

**In 1936 a number of leading Soviet communists, including old Bolsheviks like Zinoviev and Kamenev, were placed on trial in Moscow and subsequently executed. Other trials and executions, including that of Bukharin in 1938, followed.**

**In 1978, on the 40th anniversary of Bukharin's trial, the EC of the CPGB supported a call for his rehabilitation.**

**We consider that in the light of the revelations about repressions under Stalin the verdicts in these trials cannot be justified, and that, in justice to the memory of those falsely accused, and in the interests of socialism, the historical record should be set straight.**

**In the 50th anniversary year of the 1936 trial we urge the rehabilitation of all those unjustly tried and condemned.**

Brazil; Jeremy Corbyn GB; Benedita da Silva Brazil; Najah Wakim Lebanon; José Luis Diaz Moll Mexico; Freimut Dive FRG; Thomas Eberman FRG; Otavio Elisio Brazil; Luiza Erundina Brazil; Francisco Ferramenta Brazil; José Fortunatti Brazil; Alberto Franceschi, ex-MP Venezuela; Raul Messias Franco Brazil; Berge Furre, ex-MP Norway; Mildred Gordon GB; Roberto Gouveia Brazil; Bianca Guidetti Serra Italy; Virgillio Guimaraes Brazil; Luis Gushiken Brazil; Selvino Heck Brazil; Eric Heffer GB; Anne Grete Holmsgard Denmark; Eduardo Jorge Brazil; Peter Lankhorst NL; Helmut Lippelt FRG; Eddy Loyden GB; Lysaneas Maciel Brazil; José Mauricio Brazil; Nilmaro Miranda Brazil; Moises Moleiro Venezuela; Cy Conick, ex-MP Canada; Ricardo Napuri, ex-MP Peru; Jose Genuino Neto Brazil; Stan Newens GB; E. Bruul Olesen Denmark; Paulo Renato Paim Brazil; Ricardo Pascoe Mexico; Vladimir Palmeira Brazil; Pedro Penalosa Mexico; Rosalia Peredo Mexico; Peter Pilz Austria; Uldorico Pinto Brazil; Guido Pollice Italy; Raul Pont Brazil; Paulo Ramos Brazil; Edo Ronchi Italy; David Rousset, ex-MP France; Luis Salomao Brazil; Plinio de Arruda Sampaio Brazil; Secundo Serrano Ecuador; Joze Smolle Austria; Manfred Srb Austria; Sandra Starling Brazil; Gianni Tamino Italy; Cristina Tavares Brazil; Steen Tinning Denmark; J. Ulburghs Belgium; Frank Vandenbroecke Belgium; Bran Van Der Lek NL; Andrée Van Es NL; Marijke Van Hemeldonck Belgium; Joao Paulo Vasconcelos Brazil; Karsten Voigt FRG; Andreas Wahl Austria; De Wasseige Belgium; David Winnick GB;

Frieder Wolf FRG; Jean Ziegler, ex-MP Switz; Zaher El-Khatib Lebanon.

### Other signatories:

Manuel Aguilar Mora Mexico; Tariq Ali Pakistan/GB; César Alvarez Brazil; Christos Anastasiadis Greece; A.M. Babu Tanzania; Juuriaan Bendien NZ; Wolf Bierman GDR; Hans Blumenfeld Canada; Prof. H. Brakemeier FRG; Peter Brandt FRG; Fenner Brockway GB; Varda Burstyn Canada; Nora Ciapone Argentina; Perly Cipriano Brazil; Igor Cornelissen NL; Prof. Jan Craeybeckx Belgium; Kamel Dagher Lebanon; Eugenio Del Rio Spanish state; Prof. Maghnad Desai India/GB; Guy Delsore Belgium; Eric Corijn Belgium; Tamara Deutscher; Theun De Vries NL; Prof. Z. Djurdjic Yugo.; Silvia Diaz Argentina; Jiri Dienstbier Czech.; Ross Dowson Canada; Ernst Federn Austria; Prof. Tring Fetscher FRG; Magda Flores Brazil; Paulo Cesar Funghi Brazil; Ciro Garcia Brazil; Tarso Genro Brazil; Adolfo Gilly Mexico; Prof. Z. Golubovic Yugo.; Ernesto Gonzales Argentina; Prof. G. Gürsoy Turkey; Mohamed Harbi Algeria; Huda Hawa Lebanon; Clovis Ilgenfritz Brazil; Tom Kemp GB; Göte Kilden Sweden; Joost Kircz NL; Prof. Leo Kofler FRG; L. Kohout Czech.; Alain Krivine France; Prof. Georges Labica France; Joanne Landy USA; Michaël Löwy France; Joao Machado Brazil; Tomas Matta Machado Brazil; Livio Maitan Italy; Ernest Mandel Belgium; Prof. M. Markovic Yugo.; Prof. D. Miconovic Yugo.; François Moreau Canada; Prof. A. Moscato Italy; Pierre Naville France; Prof. W.D. Narr FRG; Susana Ounei Small New Caledonia; Leo Panich Canada; Marcello Parilli Argentina; Brian Pearce GB; Norman Penner Canada; Gilles Perrault France; Mauricio Faria Pinto Brazil; Paul Piesse NZ; Michel Raptis Greece; Sergio Rodriguez Mexico; Miguel Romero Spanish state; Clayton Ruby

Canada; J. Sabata Czech.; Sal Santen NL; Prof. N. Sattigan Turkey; Prof. Savran Turkey; Ralph Schoenman USA; Ronald Segal S. Africa/GB; Louis Sinclair GB; Daniel and Jeanne Singer Poland/France; Lotfallah Soliman Egypt; Joaquim Soriano Brazil; Cyril Smith GB; Francisco de Souza Brazil; William Sutherland Fiji; Prof. L. Tadic Yugo.; Cristina Tavares Brazil; Y. Thanassekos Greece/Belgium; Petr Uhl Czech.; Lea Tsemel Israel; Charles Van Gelderen GB; Jean Van Lierde Belgium; François Vercammen Belgium; Adao Villaverde Brazil; Veronika Volkov Mexico; Michel Warschawski Israel; Prof. Herman Weber FRG; Barry Weisleder Canada; Prof. Susan Weisman USA; Prof. Reg Whitaker Canada; Prof. W.E. Wilmot NZ; Milton Wolpin USA; Hocine Zahouane Algeria; Stelio Babas, CC Gauche Hellenique (EAR) Greece; Prof. Michel Beaud France; Patrick Camiller, *New Left Review* GB; Prof. Bogdan Denitch, Democratic Socialists of America USA; Prof. René Gallissot France; Hosea Jaffe, historian South Africa; Prof. Alexis Mitropoulos Greece; Prof. Valentine Moghadam USA; Prof. Leo Panitch Canada; Prof. Adolfo Sacher Vazquez Mexico; Prof. Yildiz Sertel France; Elias Khoury, author Lebanon.

\*The following people from the USA signed a version of the appeal whose final paragraph was changed to: *We the undersigned from the United States, who are opponents of the cold war and anti-communist policies of the US government, therefore call on the Soviet government to exonerate and rehabilitate the victims of the Moscow Trials..* Annette T. Rubinstein; Prof. Louis Menashe; Prof. Paul Siegel; Prof. Michael Goldfield; Michael Smith National Lawyers Guild; Prof. Morris Slavin; Dan Georgakas, author; Prof. David Herreshoff; Prof. Sungar Savran.

## Soviet official says: "Rehabilitation a real possibility"

**THE NOVEMBER issue of *Marxism Today*, theoretical journal of the Euro-Communist CP in Britain, contained an interview entitled "Trotsky and Co" with Yuri Afanasyev, rector of the Moscow State Historical-Archive Institute, and a leading champion of glasnost' (see Ernest Mandel's article in IV 128).**

**They asked him, "Do you think there will be an official rehabilitation of such figures as Bukharin, Kamenev, and even Trotsky in the future?" Afanasyev replied: "In terms of withdrawing these imaginary accusations of criminality, the rehabilitation of them is a real possibility, and quite soon.**

**"Everything has to be changed: the image of them as evil-minded, the notion that in all their actions they were motivated by evil intentions, with the aim of damaging the revolution and the building of socialism in our country. Of course, they were different people and cannot all be put on the same level, but the charge that they were criminals has to be removed. I think this will be done. Similarly, we need a reappraisal of the true role and place of these people in the revolution." ★**

# Thomas Sankara killed in coup d'etat

**FOUR YEARS** after the revolution, Captain Thomas Sankara was killed on October 15 during a putsch led by his main collaborator, Captain Blaise Compaoré. The coup d'etat resulted from a conflict between factions in the army, and does not seem to have involved any section of the population.

**On the contrary, as soon as Sankara's death was announced many thousands went to his grave. Utter confusion seems to have hit all the militant layers involved in political action over these last years.**

CLAUDE GABRIEL

**A**N OFFICIAL communique announced, "sincere revolutionaries, foiling a plot and at the same time preventing our people from being being plunged into an unnecessary bloodbath, have decided to assume their historic responsibilities and act." According to the instigators of the coup, Sankara would not accept being in a minority in the leadership. He planned to ban independent parties and unions and set up a single party. The coup instigators made it clear that, for them, the action was necessary to put an end to methods that reflected "eccentricity and immaturity".

Coming as the culmination of the differences inside the leadership team and a settling of scores, Thomas Sankara's demise shows the limitations of the political process that has been underway in Burkina for four years. His sudden execution illustrates very well the gulf that existed between the real power and the masses, in spite of the honest efforts by a section of the leadership team.

Burkina Faso (previously Upper Volta) gained independence from France 27 years ago. The Burkinabe revolution began on August 4, 1983, when Thomas Sankara took power at the head of a "National Revolutionary Council". Prime minister in the Ouedraogo regime, he had been imprisoned in May 1983 for "plotting". Two months later, an uprising at the Po parachute base led by Blaise Compaoré put an end to the regime and freed Sankara.

The National Revolutionary Council was proclaimed, basing itself on denouncing corruption and neo-colonial submission. Very quickly, the government benefited from Sankara's charisma — he alone came

personify the revolution. This personalization of the government can be explained by the leading group's fragility and its weakness.

## A strong personality

But Sankara also symbolized "the new man", a goal for all to reach in order to get the country out of its crisis. The battle for development was often presented as dependent on a massive redemption of the society, in which everyone was to keep their patch clean. For example, the appeal to spread sport to all workplaces reflects this view of the revolution as a purifier.

At an international level, Sankara astonished everyone by his simple language and fair judgements. It was this personality, somewhat unusual among African leaders, that made such a strong impression among the young people of West Africa.

Over and above Sankara's personality, the revolution aroused enthusiasm and sympathy among all anti-imperialist layers. The complexity of, and doubts about, the political process itself could take nothing away from the desire to see this little country succeed in the face of imperialist pressures. But while the specificities of the Burkina case must be pointed out, its similarities with all the other "progressive" or "Marxist-Leninist" regimes in Black Africa also have to be understood.

The first, or underlying similarity, we might say, is the socio-economic backwardness of these states. This backwardness greatly limits the possibilities for revolutionary developments on a regional

scale.

Africa today is not the same as Latin America, the Middle East or Asia. Particularly in West Africa, there has not been any political regional inter-relationship that could substantially break down the compartmentalization of each country, and which could open the way for international political developments operating to reduce unevennesses.

Such a backwardness also restricts the development of the class consciousness of a still tiny industrial proletariat and, owing to the lack of a real collective consciousness, the possibilities for a peasant revolt. Sankara spoke of "the inexistence of a conscious working class...and, consequently, of an organized working class".

## Dependence on French aid

At the same time, this backwardness finds its reflection in weak ruling classes, torn apart by regional and ethnic interests and rotten with corruption. Finally, it also resulted in Burkina in a state apparatus largely dependant for its everyday functioning on French aid (40% of the current budget), and on imperialist programs. Here we find the ultimate expression of combined and uneven development in the internal structure of the state itself.

In this context, the revolutionary anti-imperialist project came up against a number of big problems: What sort of mass mobilization could be counted on, and which layers or social classes would really be able to serve as the backbone a revolutionary process?

The "revolution" here was not conducted by a progressive bourgeoisie anxious to put an end to national oppression and the vestiges of the old society. Nor was it conducted by an embryonic proletariat expressing its initial radicalization on democratic and anti-imperialist issues.

Contrary to what Sankara wrote, the mass demonstrations of May 20 to May 22, 1983, (after he was arrested) did not "help to reveal the sharpening class contradictions of the Upper Volta society". Progressives in the military, in concert with a certain number of left groups, seized opportunity to carry out a coup d'etat. But this "revolution" was organized from above, in the very limited spheres of young officers and intellectuals.

The new regime based itself on some sectors of classes. But no real revolutionary social bloc had been systematically built up for struggle. It was a "revolution" without class candidates for power. Therefore, within it all sorts of social substitutes for a real ruling class were to compete and be telescoped together.

One of the paradoxes is that although the "democratic revolution" was installed by a military putsch, it had a leadership influenced by Marxist-Leninist conceptions. This gap between objective reality and the

ruling ideology can only be explained by the backwardness of the social formation in a capitalist-dominated environment.

The Sankara regime stretched itself severely to try to reconcile the needs of struggling against under-development in a socially backward country with the need for a Marxist interpretation of the world corresponding to the international reality of capitalist development.

## National, popular revolution

The revolution's leaders claimed to be inspired by the theory of a national popular revolution. To follow the threads of this position it is not enough simply to retrace it to Stalinist position or Maoist writings. It is necessary above all to refer back to the Byzantine debates of African students from France's ex-colonies in the 1960s and 1970s. All these discussions have to be placed in the context of the debates between Maoist and pro-Soviet currents in the Federation of Black African Students in France (FEANF), and the particular social and political frameworks of these currents.

Thomas Sankara added a personal touch to this theory. Above all, unlike most of the principals in these debates, he tried in practice consciously and firmly to carry the position to its logical conclusion. The difference between the African students' obscure and confused debates in the 1970s and Sankara's regime is that the latter dropped some of the formal rhetoric in order to follow a more pragmatic path.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in this respect, Burkina differentiated itself from the "Marxist-Leninist" regimes in Benin or the Congo — or even from that in Ghana — where, for a very long time, Marxist verbiage has covered up a total abdication in the face of neo-colonial pressures.

Sankara's militant empiricism was reflected in simple language, rather agreeable for those who cannot stand the "progressive" African regimes' pompous professions of faith. It was this empiricism that allowed him to develop a lucid analysis of the situation of his country in Black Africa.

In such a context, the national and popular revolutionary project was designed to be realist. The Burkina "revolution" in August, 1983, was only possible because of the extreme fragility of the state, a state at the hub of many modes of production but which, in reality, was dispossessed from regulating the dominant capitalist relations by France and for-

eign companies.

Once in power — that is, once the "revolution from above" had been accomplished — Sankara's team was confronted by the problem of "how to trigger" the revolution at the base. The state apparatus was unchanged. Some of its cogs could be reformed, but its functions would stay the same, until alternative social relations appeared in the villages and countryside. Therefore the destruction of this apparatus had to be the next step after the military take-over.

Even if "democratic and popular", the revolution had to take up the question of the state apparatus and its army. However the army was not turned upside down after August 4, 1983. It was purged, and then surrounded by the Revolutionary Defence Committees (CDRs). But it remained a 6,000-strong force of which only commander and government had been changed. The problem is well-illustrated by the way in which Sankara was overthrown, and the apparently "praetorian" character of the debate and its tragic culmination.

So the new regime ran up against its own contradictions. It came to power with a revolutionary project without having first built a mass movement, without having organized the labouring classes and without having united a conscious vanguard. There was no class candidate for power, nor a party!

## Democratic and national reforms

Manipulating words could not in itself resolve the difficulty through putting the conventional label of "national-democratic revolution" on something that looked like a revolution, but in reality did not have the social base for carrying one through. Realism first of all called for democratic

and national reforms. But isn't utopianism precisely trying to make a revolution, of whatever kind, without a potential ruling class?

For some months, there has been a certain readiness among the people for action. The struggle against corruption, the development project, the denunciation of imperialism and the appeals for steps towards women's liberation opened the way for the beginning of a social mobilization. But this process had to be speeded up and to the Burkinabe people had to be roused.

## Social base for the revolution

The creation of the CDRs fitted in with such a scheme. Initially, this was based on a spontaneous growth of social activism, but the formation of these committees reflected a fundamentally voluntarist project over the long term. Very quickly, too quickly for the equilibrium of the regime itself, the CDRs took on at the same time the tasks of grouping an vanguard and forming a broad social base for the revolution.

Besides tendencies towards bureaucratization and careerism that developed as a result, a feeling arose in the CDRs that all layers in society were holding back from commitment to the revolutionary project — the wage-earners who had a standard of living much higher than that of the peasants; the petty-bourgeoisie worried about their incomes; and even the small peasants, who clung to their way of living and their prejudices. Here, authoritarianism gets the upper hand over persuasion. A society paralyzed by conservatism has to be given a shove.

1. Some traces of these debates remain, notably in the reference to "democratic centralism" for the functioning of state bodies. Sankara said he was personally influenced by Che Guevara and the Nicaraguan Sandinistas.



Jean Zeigler (a Swiss sociologist, and member of the executive of the Socialist International) wrote the following about this problem: "The CDRs are rather unreliable and fragile instruments. I don't criticize Sankara's strategic choice. After 1983, he probably didn't have any other option than to confront the traditional powers, and obviously no other choice than to resist the attempts of this or that left party or trade-union organization to impose their hegemony."

**"A partially useless weapon"**

"But the weapon that he forged to implement his strategy seems to me, I repeat, a weapon that is partially useless. The CDRs are composed mainly of young people, who are linked to Sankara by spontaneous enthusiasm. But how can the CDRs be controlled? Their exactions are numerous, their organization fragile, their leadership rudimentary and their ideological education often non-existent."<sup>2</sup>

This raises a discussion about what social forces you could base yourself on in such a situation. When the military took power in 1983, no alliance of the toiling classes had been brought about through a convergence of struggles for concrete demands. The "workers' and farmers'" alliance that was objectively necessary had not appeared at all in practice, even in an incipient way. There was no external danger threatening the national territory and unifying popular resistance. There was no civil war against the former ruling classes, the former "landed chiefs" and the speculators. In these conditions how could the toiling classes be galvanized and their revolutionary unity realized?

In the absence of strong prior mobilizations, it was therefore after the taking of power that the decision had to be taken on what social layers or classes the regime would base itself, and how they could be mobilized.

At this point two historical processes became juxtaposed. First that of the military coup d'etat and the appearance of the CDRs; and second the development long before that of small pro-Soviet or Maoist left-wing groups, based in the towns on a series of trade unions, among teachers, civil and public servants.

This trade unionism had both the virtues and the vices of the political currents that inspired it. It supported a certain number of traditional demands relating to wages and jobs, but had no credible political project for the country. But in Burkina, where the majority of the population is rural and outside the classical wage-earning sector, should these layers of wage-earners be considered as a conservative, or indeed, as a counter-revolutionary labour aristocracy? Should the trade-union leaderships be regarded as a brake on the revolutionary project?

Thomas Sankara was visibly tempted to draw such a conclusion. Would not the real African proletariat be the peasants, because in general they are the only producers of wealth in the country?

This is an old discussion, which goes back to Franz Fanon. But it took off again in the 1970s with the growth of studies on the town/country relationship. The pauperization of the rural zones, the crisis of the peasantry and the fall of agricultural productivity revealed the wildly unequal exchange between town and country in Africa. It was only a step from taking note of this to viewing all the urban layers as exploiters of the peasantry, in the strict sense, and certain African specialists took it.

In his speech of October 2, 1983, Sankara gave a much too classical and dogmatic analysis of African society: "The Upper Volta working class, which is young and not very numerous, but which has been able to prove through its incessant struggle against the bosses that it is a really revolutionary class", and "the Upper Volta peasantry, which is linked to small production and embodies bourgeois production relations."

**Differences between town and country**

But in 1986, his position had definitely changed, and contained a more precise social project: "The poverty surrounding the towns brings out the difference that exists between town and country. This is true to such an extent that we in the towns run the risk of experiencing the fate of those who have the nerve to sit down at a well-laid table in front of starving spectators. These spectators one day could well mount an assault on this table and this injustice."

Moreover, on the civil servants, he made a what amounted to a speech for the prosecution: "The national budget devotes 60% of its resources to paying civil servants, and they represent 0.035% of the population. And to them, and their like, we devote more than 60% of the national budget. Although it is difficult to maintain a standard of living in the towns that would enable us to chase after more and more the European or other mother countries that we have known, it is possible to build basic health centres for the peasants. With this approach we could build a new society."

Asked about the project of equalizing wages, he replied: "It is incontestable that hundreds, if not thousands of our people have been severely hit, in the sense that the privileges that they have been used to for a long time have been withdrawn."<sup>3</sup>

In any case, Sankara's dilemma could only lead to terrible disillusionment. In the specific conditions of the Burkina "revolution", how could one get out from under the pressure of the urban layers and go looking for a peasant mobilization? The "democratic, popular revolution" could not become a simple revolution of the improv-



**Blaise Compaoré (DR)**

erished, a revolution of the "wretched of the earth", pulling urban wage-earners along behind. All the more in revolution made from above, it is very difficult to create and maintain a peasant mobilization.

**Decisive social questions**

In other words, despite the demographic and economic weight of the countryside, the political relationship of forces and the decisive social questions continued to be determined by the urban areas. Failing to master the socio-political relations governing the life of the towns meant ending up very quickly in crisis and disorder. Sankara paid for that failure with his life.

The problem of keeping a grip on socio-political relations in the towns was all the more important because there were a certain number of small political "Marxist" organizations in Burkina. The main one was the Patriotic League for Development (LIPAD, pro-Soviet). There were other oth-

2. Un nouveau pouvoir africain, Editions Pierre-Marcel Favre, Paris, 1986.  
3. Interview in L'Autre Journal, March 26, 1986.



small left parties had no national perspective, Sankara's politics appeared definitively more audacious than theirs.

However, very quickly coexistence with the LIPAD became difficult, leading to the departure of its ministers. The problems arose in particular because Sankara's projects sometimes collided with the interests of the base of these groups.<sup>5</sup>

### Sense of proportion and prudence

Sankara however had a sense of proportion and of prudence. He had the intelligence to understand that his country could not afford the sort of grandiose formulas we have become used to hearing from other African regimes. He was anxious to avoid just producing rhetoric for domestic use by the leading strata. And he quite explicitly drew a balance sheet of other "sister" regimes. Recognizing the error of trying to build monumental industrial projects on the Soviet model in countries like Angola, Madagascar and Benin, he explained that: "the National Revolutionary Council will not delude itself with gigantic, sophisticated projects."

Conscious that he needed of a stable political base, he preferred for a time to back a multi-party system, rather than rush headlong, like others in Ethiopia, Angola or Mozambique into proclaiming the "proletarian party":

"In the future, a party may see the light of day, but we cannot focus our thoughts and our preoccupations on the notion of the party. There would be a danger in doing that. [In that case] the party might be formed to pay homage to revolutionary principles ('a revolution without a party has no future'), or it might be set up in order to meet a *sine qua non* precondition for joining one International or another....The condition [for forming the party] will be that the party play its role as leader, guide, as an vanguard element. It must lead the entire revolution, be rooted in the masses and, to this end, the elements making it up must be serious. They must be elements who hold sway, who can convince people unambiguously by their example. But a prior condition for building such a party is that people struggle without a party, forge their tools without a party. If not, we will fall into the nomenklatura system."<sup>6</sup>

But, nevertheless, the regime did not avoid "leftism". Sankara wanted to steer a course between Scylla and Charybdis: neither to seek to construct a utopian revolutionary party, nor to adapt to the pressures of the old society. The instrument that he thought adequate for this difficult navigation was the CDRs, which were at once "authentic people's organizations in the exercise of revolutionary power" and "assault battalions" (speech on October 2, 1983). These Committees symbolized the voluntarist character of the Burkina "revolution". To this extent, they were able to accom-

plish tasks that the public administration by itself was incapable of assuming. That was true for the literacy campaign and above all for the "commando squads" for vaccinating children.

But the CDRs did base not themselves on a big popular mobilization; little by little they came to substitute for it. That is why over the past two years, as some CDR leaders themselves admitted, conflicts multiplied over the past two years between the CDRs and public service workers, and between the CDRs and some sectors of the population.

The national conference of the CDRs, which was held from March 31 to April 4, 1986, revealed these problems to a considerable extent, and the documents coming out of it were full of self-criticisms. Sensitive to this crisis of the CDRs and their revolutionary project, Sankara wrote in February 1986:

"In their economic, political, cultural, military and sporting activities — in brief, in every area — we have seen our CDRs engaged in a tough battle, sometimes with very little gratitude from people, even from those who have benefited from the CDRs actions".<sup>7</sup>

The idea of the "democratic and popular revolution" by definition is supposed to be prudent and pragmatic, opposing all conceptions of a more radical revolution. But the problem is unhappily not between "realism" and "utopia". Even if careful, the revolutionary project has to attack the roots of evil. How can this be done in a country where it appears quite difficult to give to Peter without taking from Paul, in a country where at the end of the day the subjective conditions for revolution could not be prepared?

### Even realism becomes utopia

This is why Sankara's fine-tuned thinking did not avoid the missteps, the "leftist" errors, if one wishes to refer here to the communist vocabulary. Conditions are such in Burkina that at certain times, even

4. A number of groups exist in Burkina. One is the LIPAD, which came from a pro-Soviet current in the African Independence Party (PAI). (There are still three factions of the PAI today in Senegal). There are also the Maoist, Pro-Albanian Union of Communist Struggles (ULC); the Assembly of Communist Officers (ROC); the Burkina Communist Union; the Upper Volta Revolutionary Communist Party.

Moreover, until now there have seemed to be possibilities for taking important independent initiatives, on the condition of positive identification with the government's projects. An example is the Anti-Apartheid Committee that held the recent international conference on South Africa. A CDR was recently formed in this committee, indicating thereby that the Anti-Apartheid Committee as a whole was not simply an appendage of regime.

5. *L'Humanité*, the French Communist Party's paper, wrote on August 21, 1984, about the CDRs: "An organization that recruits the worst and the best". This was a way of supporting the LIPAD thesis whilst maintaining global support for the Sankara regime.

6. Un nouveau pouvoir africain, *ibid*, pp.86-7.

7. *Lolowullen*, the CDRs' journal, February 28, 1986.

er pro-Chinese, pro-Albanian groups, and so on.<sup>4</sup>

Coming out of the student debates in the 1960s and 1970s, these groups essentially existed in the towns. They themselves had no other strategic project in the long-term than the same reference point of a national and democratic revolution. Their respective divergences were over what such a revolution would involve and where it should set its sights internationally. Sankara and his friends evidently mixed with these militants and groups over a long time, and some of them came from these circles.

### Shackles of neo-colonialism

Before the advent of Sankara, Burkina was one of those rare African countries where — in spite of the authoritarian shackles of neo-colonialism and military governments — a multi-party system was maintained officially or de facto. The new regime had to incorporate this heritage into its own project, which it did partly by including specifically the LIPAD and the Union of Communist Struggles (ULC) in the government. But inasmuch as these

realism becomes utopia.

The agrarian reform of August 9, 1984, nationalized both the surface and what lay under it. But at the same time it eliminated the traditional system of "landed chiefs", which amounted to taking on a project of overturning the whole social system in the countryside.<sup>8</sup>

Were the peasant masses ready for such changes of attitudes? Unquestionably, the answer is yes for a section of them during the first period. But in the longer term, in the absence of a real mobilization, the chiefs were to regain ideological and social control of the villages and families, and the affair would become much more difficult.

The first five-year plan explained that "the goal basically aimed at by the agrarian reform is to destroy the socio-economic fetters on production, to create a framework for production corresponding better to the conditions for real social advancement for the disinherited masses." However, among these fetters was the traditional structure that placed women and "younger sons" in a position of subordination to the "elders".

In a society like this, a revolution must also mean that women and "younger sons" take power. This revolution, an indispensable one, turned upside down the traditional circles, their lineage structure and their social hierarchies. It was at the same time a social and a cultural revolution. That indicates the difficult and long-drawn-out character of the process. Trying to speed things up could lead to terrible disappointments. But in order to succeed, it was necessary first to form a very extensive revolutionary movement including hundreds of cadres well implanted in their areas and able to gauge every day advances and setbacks in the peasants' consciousness. Such a revolution cannot be conducted in the same way as the expropriating a big feudalist or seizing a big capitalist plantation! "Class struggle" in a village or within a clan is far more difficult to master.<sup>9</sup> Every African regime that has sought to "revolutionize" the countryside has broken its teeth on this obstacle!

### Initial popular enthusiasm

In the towns also, the vigorousness of the social measures did not fail to pose grave problems. Cutting rents and school fees, eliminating the head tax, actions in favor of public transport and social housing promoted an initial popular enthusiasm. But at the same time, in order to come up with the money, the government "retrenched," retiring about 10 per cent of its functionaries, or 2,000 people.

Once it had saved a few billion CFA francs as a result of trials against corrupt and speculation, the regime called on wage earners and students directly to make a big financial contribution. It called on the better paid wage earners to give a month's

wages and to accept lower benefits. It called on students to contribute 2,500 CFA francs a month. At the same time, taxes on merchants were increased.

On January 4, 1984, Sankara decided to suspend payment of residential and commercial rents to the owners and to have these sums turned over directly to the state. All this led to a certain disorder, discontent on the part of the wage earners and students, a loss of credibility among the petty bourgeoisie, a drop in general buying power.

### "Main enemy left-wing reaction"

Confronting such discontent and resistance from the trade unions, the CDR of the Ouagadougou garrison demanded "extremely stiff penalties against all the renegades and their allies in the pay of imperialism." On February 6, 1985, before an assembly of high-school students, Sankara explained that "the main enemy is not right-wing reaction but left-wing reaction."<sup>10</sup>

But what was to most strain the alliances the government built up in the urban strata was the firing of hundreds of teachers who struck on March 20-21, 1984, demanding the release of two of their union leaders, who had been characterized as "counter-revolutionaries" by the CDRs. From that date on, relations between a Sankara and a part of the traditional left became conflict-ridden.

The break was to be consummated in recent months after the arrest on May 23, 1987, of Soumane Touré, the general secretary of the Burkinabe Trade-Union Confederation (CSB) and a member of LIPAD. It was his second arrest since 1983. The CDRs called for his execution, and LIPAD protested that the military were simply trying to "resolve contradictions by force."

A trade-union common front had already

taken May 1 as an occasion for denouncing the austerity, firings and restrictings of union rights. Numerous leaflets and united appeals were circulating, calling for the right to "commemorate May 1 in tranquility and independence." On April 30 the army had occupied the Ouagadougou Labor Exchange, inviting the unionists to organize a rally under the government's aegis. According to the unionists, the employment minister at the time characterized the union leaders as "outright feudalists," "corrupt politicians," and "bureaucrats."<sup>11</sup>

On June 6, LIPAD published a statement arguing notably that "material and economic achievements can never be a justification for doing away with democratic freedoms or a substitute for them." Thus, a very grave crisis existed in recent months in Sankara's relations with his "natural allies." Caught between the CDR and the unions, he was visibly looking for a way out, but he ran up against the contradictions of the "Burkinabe Revolution" itself.

Was it this risk of isolation that convinced Campaoré and the majority in the CNR to eliminate him? Over and above the personal quarrels and clique conflicts in the government, it seems that the real problem was what class alliances to build around the army. Could the revolution of the poor do without the unions and the urban wage earners? May not Thomas Sankara's tragic end revive the debate on the unfinished revolutionary processes that have now become a well-known phenomenon in Black Africa? ★

8. Moro Naba, emperor of Mossi, at one time had his electricity cut off because he didn't want to pay for it.

9. In *Lolowullen*, *ibid*, an article on agrarian reform explained: "It is therefore a question of sparking off the class struggle between the peasants and feudal and backward forces. In fact, this form of class struggle seems now to be predominant in the countryside."

10. *Le Monde*, February 23, 1985. At the end of 1984, the regime — in spite of good official relations with Moscow — expelled the first advisor of the USSR embassy, accusing him of having too open relations with the LIPAD.

11. Union front. Appeal dated May 18, 1987, and signed by nine unions. (Duplicated document).

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# AROUND THE WORLD



## IRELAND

### Anti-Extradition Campaign

THE DATE set by the outgoing Fine Gael/Labour administration for the coming into operation in South Ireland of the new Extradition Bill was December 1, 1987. Until recently, it did not seem that there was much doubt that the new Fianna Fail administration under Charles Haughey would maintain this arrangement.

But growing questions against extradition in the formally independent part of the country, and the British government's arrogant refusal to offer even token concessions, has led to public tensions between Dublin and London that have made the December 1 date the focus of speculation. Allsair Rutherford reports from Dublin.

The new Extradition Bill is aimed to allow Southern Ireland to sign the so-called European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism and remove the political exception to extradition for a wide range of offenses.

Until 1982, the Irish Courts had refused to extradite persons to the North for political offences — this old principle of international law dates back to 1852 and, ironically, was established by the English courts, which refused to extradite a man called Castioni, who was wanted by the Swiss authorities for the killing of a Conservative administrator.

During the 1970s, Irish courts had refused to extradite Irish Republicans to the North. This was changed by the Supreme Court decision in the case of Dominic McGlinchey, when the notorious Justice O'Higgins ruled that the political exception only applied to what "reasonable, civilized people would regard as political activity," thus leaving the way open for Republican prisoners to be handed over to the Northern judicial system.

Whatever remains of the political exception would be removed by this new Bill, which was another sop handed by Fine Gael to their allies in NATO and in Britain. The establishment parties have been anxious to move away from Ireland's traditional neutral position into an alliance with the Western powers. Fine Gael attempted to con the Irish people by delaying implementation of the Bill for a year to

allow for improvements in the Northern Court system within the Anglo-Irish Agreement. Proposed changes, such as three judges instead of one (but still no jury) would make little difference to a court system that is corrupt beyond repair.

The Irish Anti-Extradition Campaign, a broad-based group, has pointed out that features of Northern justice include remand periods without trial of up to two and a half years; a predominantly Unionist judiciary; show trials with paid accomplices giving detailed, rehearsed evidence against up to 35 people at a time, where up to 80 per cent of those convicted have signed "confessions".

The Campaign was launched with a public meeting in July, with speakers including a former prisoner, Anne Gillespie, and the journalist Michael Farrell. An extensive leaflet and poster campaign is planned for Dublin and other areas of the Six and 26 Counties. Support is being sought from progressive organizations abroad, which can contact the campaign at 5 Henrietta Street, Dublin 1, Eire. ★

## NAMIBIA

### Miners' strike

WHILE media attention has focussed on the miners' strike in South Africa, it has all but ignored the nationwide mining strike now taking place in Namibia, the largest strike there since 1971.

On July 27, 6,000 members of the Mineworkers Union of Namibia (MUN) struck at three copper mines owned by the Tsumeb Corporation Ltd. The workers are demanding an increase in base pay, currently 50 cents per hour; an end to the migrant labor system, under which workers are forced to live in single sex hostels separated from their families; and improvements in safety conditions. They are also demanding that the company pressure the South African government to implement the United Nations peace plan for Namibia....

In an effort to defuse the crisis, workers offered to return to work if Tsumeb agreed to bargain in good faith. Instead, Tsumeb fired the workers and evicted them from their hostels. South African troops were rushed to the mines to enforce the firings.

On August 18, South African authorities raided the offices of the union and the opposition South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO). Six leaders were

arrested and held under the Terrorism Act, with no charges brought against them. They were released on September 10, after labor, church and community organizations in the US began a letter-writing campaign.

The United Mine Workers of America recently joined other organizations in demanding that the New York-based Newmont Mining Corporation, which holds 32.6% of Tsumeb, push for negotiations between MUN and Tsumeb. However, a Newmont spokesperson maintained that the company is in the process of divesting its Tsumeb holdings, and has, therefore, "removed itself from management responsibilities".

There are a number of things you can do to support the Namibian Mineworkers' Union. Protest against the firing of the workers and the failure of the company to negotiate in good faith by writing to Newmont Mining Corporation, 200 Park Ave., New York, NY 10166, USA. Demand an end to South African intervention in the strike by writing to State President P.W. Botha, Union Hall, Pretoria, South Africa. Messages of solidarity can be sent to the Mineworkers Union of Namibia, Box 1566, Windhoek, 9000 Namibia. ★

[From the US trade-union magazine Labor Notes, October 1987.]

## SPANISH STATE

### Accords with Uncle Sam

FORTY THOUSAND people demonstrated on Sunday, October 25, in Madrid against NATO. The anti-NATO movement is in good health, despite the attempts of Felipe Gonzalez and a part of the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Party] to undermine it by concealing the truth about the accords with Uncle Sam on the US military bases in the Spanish state.

This question continues, moreover, to sow discord in the PSOE. Some of the party's notables demonstrated alongside the Communist Party and the Workers' Commissions.

The US still has 12,345 soldiers and 1,669 civilian employees, as well as 196 airplanes, based on Spanish state territory, in accordance with a decree signed under the dictatorship in 1953. ★

[From the October 29 issue of Rouge, paper of the French section of the Fourth International.]

## CUBA

### Debate on economy

THE ITALIAN Communist Party daily *l'Unità*, in its October 21 issue, reported a public debate between representatives of the Cuban and Soviet Communist parties in the columns of the Soviet magazine *New Times*. The article, datelined Mexico City, was by the paper's correspondent,

Massimo Cavallini.

The Soviet writer Vladislav Chirkov, Cavallini wrote, presented a strong indictment. "Despite the good climatic conditions, his article says in substance that the government has still not succeeded in solving the problem of feeding the population. Almost 30 years after the revolutionary victory, it continues to resort to a system of rationing. Moreover, the productivity of labor is quite low. A third of the enterprises are operating at a loss, although the socialist countries buy Cuban raw materials at prices much higher than those prevailing on the market. The country has not managed to meet its international financial obligations."

Even these accusations were not enough for the Soviet writer, Cavallini stressed: "Chirkov's criticism even touches on one of the most sacred aspects of Cuban policy — defence. The Soviet journalist said that the government is spending sums on this out of proportion to the size of the country."

Carlos Rafael Rodriguez's reply in *New Times* was said to be "elegant in form but biting in substance." The Cuban leader wrote, according to Cavallini, that Chirkov had "succumbed to the temptation to repeat the generalities of US Cubanologists" by stressing only negative aspects that are "objects of criticism in Cuba, as well." The accusation of low productivity and the poor profitability of the enterprises was certainly a real element, but they were described in superficial and anti-historical terms.

"The same accusation," Rodriguez said, "could be easily leveled against the Soviet economy, if you compared it to that of Japan, Sweden or the United States." As for defence, Rodriguez added, "there could be similar disagreements about whether or not the US intends to attack Cuba," but "the Cubans prefer a strong de-

fence." Cavallini concluded with the following comment:

"It is hard to say whether the polemic is intended to end with this short, sharp exchange or to be broadened. After years of unquestionable successes, the Cuban economy is in fact in a delicate phase. Its model of economic development, based on favorable conditions of exchange with the Comecon countries, seemed to have reached a limit in the past year. Owing to the fall of the dollar, the collapse of the oil price and the poor yield of agriculture, the country has entered into a severe economic crisis. Since the middle of last year, Castro has seemed to confront the situation by taking an opposite tack to the rest of the socialist world. Many liberal reforms initiated at the start of the 1980s have been cancelled, and the emphasis has been shifted back to centralizing the management of the economy, to the role of the party, and — almost in a return to the 'idealistic' phases of the 1960s — to 'revolutionary morality.'

"This is probably the real background to the polemics initiated in *New Times*. On October 8, commemorating the death of Ernesto Che Guevara in Pinar del Rio, Castro invited 'the socialist countries also to study Che's economic thought.' Many people interpreted this invitation as a veiled criticism of Gorbachev's reformism." Undoubtedly the Italian Communist Party also has its own angle on polemics over such issues between the Cuban and Soviet leaderships. ★

SWEDEN

Garment workers victory

AFTER a week-long strike, 270 garment workers at the Malmö Strumpfabrik company won a big victory on September 16.

The firm were forced to completely retreat, and to re-employ the chair of the union, Bengt Svensson, that they had fired. They had been threatening to fire him for some time, because of his commitment to improve working conditions and low wages.

The workers at the company had become famous all over Sweden after a TV film had shown their terrible working speed and low, piece-work wages, often in extreme heat and bad conditions.

Bengt was dismissed on the pretext of causing a worker to switch off her machine for 18 minutes so that he could talk to her, thereby causing "a halt in production". He was also accused of "slandering" the company in a local radio programme.

Under Sweden's labour laws, companies should have verifiable reasons for dismissing a worker. On the other hand, even if the Labour Court finds that the dismissal is illegal, the company can get rid of the worker by paying a certain amount of compensation, specified in law. The dispute escalated after the company sued 143 of the garment workers for "illegally striking".

The strike received wide support from trade-union branches all over Sweden within a matter of days. A national meeting of 500 workers representing between 200,000 and 300,000 workers to discuss the fight around the coming contract negotiations (see article on page 6) became a forum to spread solidarity.

It was the determination of the strikers, and the growing solidarity from other unions, that forced the company to back down. Both Bengt and the union received damages, and the legal action against the 143 workers was withdrawn. "If we had not won, who would then dare to work as a union official?" said the garment workers.

★ Catharina Tirsén



Cartoons by Steve Bell, from "The IF Chronicles", Methuen, London



# Communist Party youth join Socialist International

**THE HEAD** of the Italian CP youth organization's international relations, Luciano Vecchi, announced at a press conference on October 6 that the **Federazione Giovanile Comunista Italiana (FGCI, Italian Communist Youth Federation)** would henceforth participate in the **Socialist Youth International** as a "consultative partner."

Vecchi said that a proposal by the leaders of the social-democratic organization had been sent to the FGCI before the Socialist Youth International's recent conference in Brussels. After a discussion in its leadership and its Federal Council, the FGCI decided unanimously to accept. The Brussels congress of the Socialist Youth International voted to admit the FGCI, with only one abstention.

The FGCI leaders explained that joining the Socialist International was not incompatible with remaining in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which is made up largely of the youth organizations of the various Communist parties.

## LIVIO MAITAN

**I**T IS USEFUL to go back over the vicissitudes of the Italian CP youth organization in recent years. The FGCI encountered difficulties in the 1950s, but it experienced a certain revival in the 1960s, when the youth radicalization began to take form. However, it was precisely when this radicalization took off, taking it by surprise, that the FGCI went into a sudden decline.

The great majority of the youth, especially in the high schools and universities followed the far left movements. To them, the FGCI seemed a conservative organization incapable of giving political leadership to their mobilizations, while at the same time it latched onto them at the last minute simply to avoid total isolation. A rather long period opened up in which the CP youth were relegated to the sidelines, even though, thanks to the growth of the party's influence in the mid-1970s, its membership remained in the tens of thousands. So, at the beginning of the 1980s, the FGCI was unable either to polarize mass movements or to influence major sectors of the youth. It was no longer a res-

ervoir of recruitment for the party. In fact, its weakness aggravated the CP's problem of an aging membership. Some significant statistics should be noted, taken from the party's own publications:

### Parent party refounds youth organization

In the second half of 1984, for example, the PCI (Partito Comunista Italiano) had 187,000 members over 70 years of age and 178,000 under 30.<sup>1</sup> Some 4.62% of its members were over 80, and 4.10% under 26. At the time, the average age of the membership was 49. The situation has not changed notably since then.

At the end of 1984, the PCI Central Committee endorsed a project that the FGCI leadership had prepared for the youth organization's Twenty-Third Congress. The aim of this scheme was to create the conditions for reviving the organization, "to launch an operation of re-founding the organization and open up a full-fledged phase of rebuilding."

This project started off from a very general correct observation: "A large part of the most important struggles in recent years are owing to the youth — the fight for peace, for saving the environment, against the criminal powers (the Mafia and the Camorra), for a new quality of life and a new culture." It explained, "Young people seem more and more to come into political activity via choices on big issues, such as peace, freedom and defense of the environment. On the basis of these big options, the problem arises of giving the organized forces themselves a new identity."

The crisis of the traditional youth organizations linked to parties and which only transmitted a political line determined by the adults was considered absolutely "irreversible." In this project, the conclusion was drawn that the FGCI had to acquire full independence from the party and transform its structures quite radically. "We have to envisage a very broad network with a pronounced federal character to assure that young Communists are on the spot." More concretely, the FGCI had to maintain "a federation of several organizations with their own membership card systems and their own leading groups."

### Abandoning of democratic centralism

Four organizational levels were envisaged: 1) a league of Communist high school students and a league of Communist university students; 2) a league of the unemployed and of young workers; 3) a league of clubs organized on a territorial basis; 4) initiative centers.

The Twenty-Third Congress of the FGCI held in February 1985 approved this project and the changes it involved. At the same time, it decided to abandon democratic centralism. Two years later, the Modena conference pushed the organizational transformation still further in the direction of decentralization. The Communist Party daily *l'Unità* of February 10, 1985, explained, "The leagues, clubs and centers will be grouped in territorial federal councils made up half of members elected by the organization as a whole, and half of members elected on a proportional basis by the structures existing in the territory covered by the council." A national federal council was to be elected on the same bases.

This organizational change was not accompanied by real changes on the political level. The leitmotiv of the resolutions, reports and innumerable articles and interviews by leaders, notably with Pietro Folena, the secretary of the organization, was the repeated proclamation of the need for "taking a qualitative leap," "renovating," "discovering," "inventing," "refounding", and so on and so on. But

1. The PCI's membership oscillates around 1.5 million.

most often such fine intentions led only to the emission of vague concepts and a terminology that was supposed to be sophisticated, or to idealist or even moralistic interpretations of the fundamental ideas of Marxism and the workers' movement.

For example, the document of the Twenty-Third Congress spoke of a "new socialism," explaining, for example, "We consider that the structural modification of society, the constant process of the socialization of formerly private functions, is a need that cannot be avoided. But at the same time, such a need arises only if you make an ethical choice in favor of the values of equality, justice and liberty.... For us, socialism is no longer a process desired and thought about by a single protagonist, the working class, which as it liberates itself will liberate the whole of society. It is, rather, the construction of various protagonists [sic!] looking for answers to the crucial questions of our age."

The debate at the congress offered hardly any more clarification. *L'Unità* itself remarked in its commentary that the speeches did not provide a lot of elements for making proposals to young people or for indicating what should be done.

The fact is that the FGCI had no political project of its own, and still does not. Fundamentally, its strategic axes remain the same as those of the Communist Party, and it has followed the CP's more and more open evolution toward social democracy. The FGCI accepts the framework of bourgeois society, limiting itself to proposing reforms of the system. It likewise shares the party's "European" perspective. It opposes "both blocs," which it puts on the same level. But it accepts NATO's false pretences of being "defensive pact." In passing, it should be noted that there was a very sharp debate on this question at the Twenty-Third Congress, because delegates proposed that the FGCI declare itself in favor of the Italy withdrawing from NATO. The leaders extricated themselves by proposing an ambiguous amendment that enabled them to maintain the essential orientation of their project.

Nonetheless, in the framework of its organizational independence, all of this has not prevented the FGCI at times from adopting attitudes different from those of the party. For example, when the PCI's parliamentary group took an ambiguous position in the debate on nuclear power, in substance approving the government's energy plan, the youth organization publicly expressed its disagreement. Then it engaged in the campaign of collecting signatures for the three referendums on nuclear power, while the PCI advocated a purely consultative referendum.

Most recently, the FGCI criticized the



PCI's decision to vote for former premier Spadolini, a hard-nosed Reaganite, for president of the Senate. On several occasions, it has not concealed its discontent with the unions, criticizing them, for example, because they called no strikes to coincide with the March for Jobs launched very successfully in December 1985 by several youth movements and organizations.

### Debate following electoral defeat

From the organizational standpoint, the FGCI has not been able to increase its strength substantially, even if it has been able to report some recruitment over recent years. At the beginning of 1985, it had 45,000 members, including 16,000 women. Two years later, at the Modena conference, it set the goal of 55,000 members (and 100,000 for 1990). It should be added that its standards for membership are not terribly strict. One need only note that in the preparatory meetings for the Twenty-Third Congress, only 10,000 members participated, and in the preparations for the Modena conference, only 13,800. The reporter at the latter conference, Pietro Folena, even mentioned members who had only one contact a year with the organization!

At the end of 1986, the FGCI pointed up successes in the elections for the high school councils. Its "Rainbow" slates got, from area to area, between 40% and 50% of the votes. But these elections have a very limited importance, since only a small minority of the students participate in them.

The debate following the PCI's electoral defeat in June 1987 was also an occasion for drawing a balance sheet of the youth organization. In fact, the secretary, Pietro

Folena, made a realistic accounting to the party Central Committee. The FGCI was present in only 20% of high schools, schools and higher education and universities, in 15% of the local government districts and in a derisory number of factories. In the big cities, "it is even thinner on the ground."

The election results, moreover, were even more eloquent. According to a study that no one disputes, while the PCI got 26.6% of the vote; the Socialist Party (PSI), 14%; and the Christian Democrats (DC), 24%, among the youth the PCI got 14%; the PSI, 18.4%; and the DC, 24%. (In the big cities, the respective percentages were 15.8%, 20.2% and 22.3%). So, the PCI and the FGCI have good reasons for worrying.

It is clear that the FGCI's decision to join the Socialist Youth International was prompted by a hope that the organization could widen its room for maneuver internationally and to reinforce the relations that it already had with Socialist organizations, first of all the youth of the German social democracy.

In the spirit of what it calls "new internationalism" — in other words, an internationalism that implies the most motley sort of international relations without any commitment — the FGCI leaders explained that joining the Socialist International was not incompatible with membership in the World Federation of Democratic Youth, to which the FGCI has belonged since it was founded.

It should be stressed that the FGCI's decision, which — needless to say — was taken without calling any congress or national conference, provoked reactions in the party. This led *L'Unità* on October 8 to publish an article by Armando Cossutta, one of the best known oppositionists calling for a discussion in all the party leadership bodies.<sup>2</sup> He expressed his disagreement with the FGCI's action, saying notably: "The Socialist International is a world organization (not just European) made up of Socialists and social democrats. Why should Communists enter it?"

In the same issue of the paper, the PCI's press bureau published its own commentary explaining that "the FGCI's decision is not only an action in the framework of long-established independence but it is also in harmony with the PCI's general orientations."

This last point could not be challenged. The FGCI's decision corresponds to an undeniable political logic. Whether Cossutta likes or not, the Italian "Communist" youth have chosen a home that suits them perfectly. ★

2. See "Italian CP sinks deeper in reformist mire," *IV* 92, February 10, 1986.

# Irish feminism: a third-world model?

THE THIRD International Inter-disciplinary Congress on Women took place in Dublin on July 6-10 this year. Over 1,000 women attended, for the most part from Europe and North America, but also from the underdeveloped countries.

The following article from the autumn issue of *An Réabhlóid*, the journal of People's Democracy, Irish section of the Fourth International, was their contribution to the conference that aimed to open up a discussion on feminism in Ireland.

SUE PENTEL

THESE ARE challenging times for Irish feminists. Since 1983, women have suffered a series of defeats on abortion and divorce: women now bear the brunt of unemployment, cutbacks and the recession. Women political prisoners in Maghaberry Gaol still suffer the degradation and torture of strip-searching.

So it is important to look at the development of Irish feminism and its relationship to the major political question facing the Irish working class today — the unresolved national question and the partition of Ireland into two unstable and reactionary statelets.

I would like to...take up the threads of the debate which took place around the question of feminist solidarity with the Armagh political prisoners in the late 1970s. This debate on the way forward for the Irish feminist movement was eclipsed along with the independent anti-imperialist feminist current, by the hunger strike....

The discussion between Irish feminists and Irish republicans has somehow got stuck. Perhaps stuck between a tendency to look at two models of development for feminism. One, the European model of a strong movement and, secondly, the Latin American model of women participating in mass and revolutionary struggles.

People's Democracy believe that we must move forward to develop an analysis of the unique problems that Irish women face. Looking to European and Latin American models can be useful, but Irish feminism must chart its own way forward. Learning from international experience will shed light on what this involves.

In our approach to analyzing Irish women's oppression and their responses, we are using the Marxist method which situates the oppression of women in the rise of class society and firmly places the responsibility

for fighting this oppression on the working class. In Ireland, a country dominated by British imperialism, that responsibility falls to both the working class and anti-imperialist forces.

The feminist movement in Ireland arose as part of a general upsurge in the late 1960s. However, the movement in Ireland has always been small and weak compared to feminist movements in advanced capitalist countries. In order to understand why we must look at the roots of the women's movement that grew to such strength in England, Europe and North America.

## Rejection of the family

Essentially, those movements were based on the contradiction between increased educational and job opportunities for a layer of young middle-class women (as a result of the post-war boom), and their role in the family. In a sense, feminism, a movement of women organized autonomously around their oppression as a sex, can be characterized by its rejection of the family. Thus feminists internationally have prioritized questions relating to women's role in the family, sexuality, reproductive rights and so on.

But the social and economic preconditions for a similar widespread radicalization of middle-class women do not exist in Ireland. In addition there are severe political and ideological obstacles in Irish society to the development of feminist ideas. These are directly the result of imperialist domination, reflected in the backwardness of the economy, the ideological hold of the Church and the effects of partition.

Because of all these unique features of Irish society, the women's movement that does exist is small and fragmented. It is ab-

solutely clear that this small nucleus will not develop into a feminist movement of semi-mass proportions as it has done in Europe, and that it would be wrong to use the model of a European feminist movement and transplant it onto Irish society.

But if imperialist domination is the key to understanding Ireland's economic and social underdevelopment, a major feature of this is the hold of the Church. The imposition of partition led to the establishment of two artificial state, locked in the grip of religion — Catholicism and Protestantism.

The lack of democratic rights of all Irish women, North and South, is a direct result of this artificial division of the country. The commonly held view that women in the North live in a "liberal" society is patently untrue. The domination of the Northern Stormont parliament by the mediaeval ethos of Ulster Unionism (who were, for example, against the opening of public parks on Sundays) was as restrictive to women in the six counties as the Catholic Church was to women in the 26 counties. In the North divorce was severely restricted, abortion and homosexuality illegal, nursery facilities for working women almost non-existent. While there have been reforms under direct rule since the abolition of the Stormont parliament in the fields of divorce, on homosexuality and legislation on domestic violence, in both states abortion is still illegal, and the levels of economic and social problems faced by women very similar.

Irish women suffer a common oppression. While partition created two different legal and political entities, it also divided working class and progressive movements. We must fight this disunity and build a 32-county movement based on our common goals.

In looking at the role of the Church in Irish society, it is analogous to the situation in Latin America. The power and influence of organized religion is especially strong in the colonial and semi-colonial countries because of the economic backwardness and protection of the religious hierarchies by imperialism. In many countries, as in Ireland, there is no separation of religious institutions and state. Even where there is official separation, religious dogma and customs retain great weight.

Again, both here and in Latin America, the Church's specific power rests in its historic political association with the struggles of an oppressed people. In Latin America, the Roman Catholic Church is in crisis, split between the pro-Vatican section and the Liberation Theology section.

The hold of the Church and the relative strength of the family unit in this context (although the family is no longer the predominant economic unit in Irish society) pose political problems for feminists in these countries. The problem of unwanted pregnancies in Latin America is a problem of catastrophic proportions for masses of women, but it does not mobilize them. This is also true in Ireland. Thus, women have

far less control over their reproductive functions than women in advanced capitalist countries.

If we look at the position of women in the workforce we see, as with partition, features unique to Irish society. While Irish women in the workforce remain weaker and more vulnerable to crisis than women in advanced capitalist countries, they are clearly in an advanced position in comparison with the majority of underdeveloped countries. Recent figures show that 27.6% of the 26 County workforce is female compared with an EEC average of 37.9%. Employment of females in Northern Ireland is just above the EEC average of 37%.

While this has brought more women into the workforce, their role in trade unions is generally less developed than in, for example, Britain in terms of union positions, women's committees and so on — although women workers have been to the fore in some notable struggles such as Dunnes Stores and the protests against health cutbacks.<sup>1</sup> When we look at the pattern of women's participation in working class struggles it is strikingly analogous to the experiences in Latin America.

### Analogous to Latin American experience

Historically, the struggles of women in Latin America have developed in close relation to social movements in general. Women have come on to the political scene in the key moments of Latin American history from the colonization period up until today.

Faced with massive economic crisis, deteriorating standard of living and democratic rights, women have been forced to respond. In the trade-union and peasant struggles the mass opposition has involved millions of women. At the same time, the growth of shanty towns and rings of poverty around the cities has resulted in popular social and civic urban movements, whose base of support is almost exclusively female.

On the issue of human rights women have again come to the fore. The committees of families of political prisoners and of the "disappeared" have been formed in different Latin American countries, the best-known being the "Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo", who have become the vanguard of the movement to re-establish democracy in Argentina, Chile, Peru, Uruguay, Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala and many other countries have seen groups of this type emerge.

Around the basic questions of survival women have also organized in their masses: the struggle for milk in Brazil, the communal kitchens and food cooperatives in Chile, the people's canteens and the Vaso de Leche (Glass of Milk) committees in Peru, women's role in the urban popular movement (CONAMUP) in Mexico,

which also experienced a successful struggle by seamstresses since the 1985 earthquake.

In Ireland women have played a leading role in the working class and anti-imperialist struggles, particularly at moments of great social upheaval and crisis. For example, the Ladies' Land League, whose general secretary was Anna Parnell, was created because of repression of the all-male Land League. Founded in 1881, it had over 500 branches in 1882 due to its militant policy of fighting the evictions of impoverished tenants and organizing independent committees for that purpose around the country. Children's branches were also instituted, their function being to teach children Irish history.<sup>2</sup>

In every major struggle of the Irish working class, women have been to the fore, from their involvement in the 1916 rising in the Irish Citizen's Army organized by James Connolly; in the suffrage struggle, in Cumann na mBan [the women's organization of the republican movement], in the formation of Relative's Action Committees (RACs) in support of political prisoners in the six counties, fighting the British government's criminalization policy.

The RACs bear some similarity to the committees of relatives of prisoners and the disappeared in Argentina and Chile. Women's activity in these committees was a direct extension of their role in the family — they got involved as wives and mothers.

In becoming active in this way women were at the same time challenging their traditional family roles and would come up against traditional male attitudes at a family and local level. Yet this did not automatically lead to a leap in ideas from being an activist to embracing feminism. Here the similarity ends. While the form of struggle is similar, the scope and political development of women's struggles in Latin America is much broader, corresponding to the more advanced level of revolutionary struggle in that continent.

Although in some Latin American countries feminism remains small and isolated, in others, such as Chile and Mexico, a national network of women's organizations, which includes women in popular struggles as well as feminists, are developing. Thus the weakness of Irish feminism can be related to the overall weakness and lack of development of the Irish anti-imperialist struggle, and, in particular, the weakness of Irish revolutionary Marxism.

The gains that women can make when the revolutionary tide is high can be clearly seen in Nicaragua. Women were organized relatively shortly before the revolution, but advanced by leaps and bounds with the acceleration of huge popular mobilizations from 1979. Women form part of the revolutionary leadership and became active at all levels of struggle. Through this women made major political gains after the revolution in legislation on equal pay, abolition of patriarchal laws relating to the family and abolition of illegitimacy and a ban on sexist

advertising....

By comparing Irish women's lives to women in Europe and Latin America we can see that Ireland combines many features of the neo-colonial societies with outward similarities to European countries.

Irish feminism has much in common with small and scattered groups of feminists throughout Latin America, overshadowed as they are by massive social struggles involving women. Yet despite this, the existence of Irish feminism is itself due to the strength and weight of the feminist movement in the advanced imperialist countries. Feminism is an international movement and we must draw strength and support from that. It is the autonomy and independence of the feminist movement which initially allowed it to develop. Yet it will develop no further in splendid isolation....

### Feminism is an international movement

Women are asserting their freedom and organizing themselves to take their struggle forward. Despite the weakness of the Irish feminist movement, it strikes terror into the hearts and minds of the men who lead the bourgeois political parties, who lead the Church, who lead the trade-union movement, who lead the anti-imperialist movement.

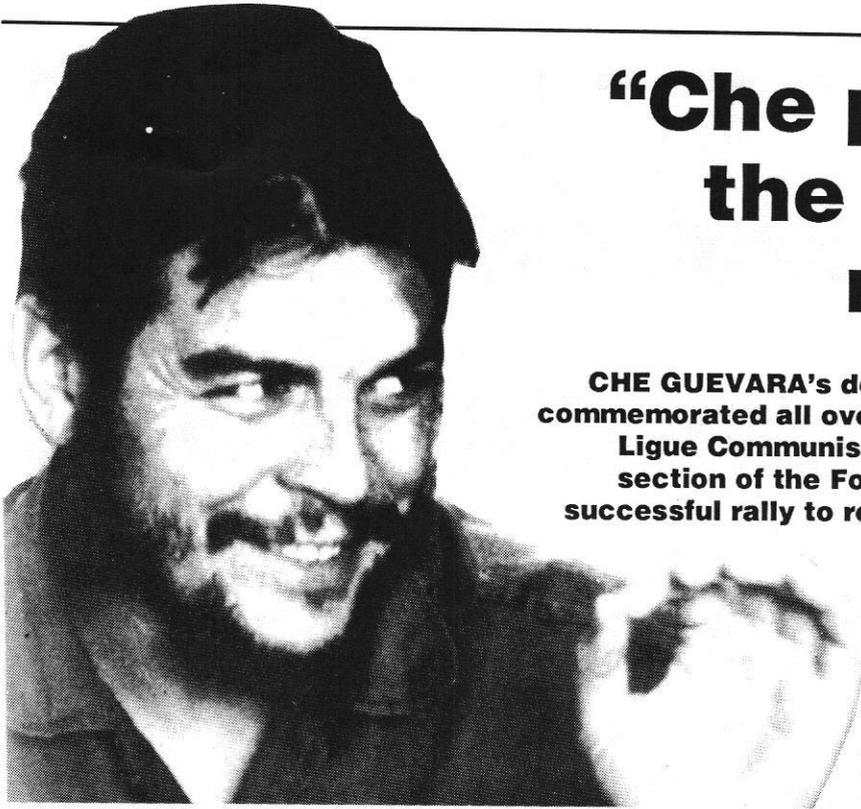
Of course, this is intimidating and has the effect of locking women into their different traditions. Only if the feminist movement turns outwards towards the struggle of the working class and anti-imperialist movement can it begin to break out of this mould.

These leaders must be challenged and they must be challenged on issues of importance to women such as the right to choose and the Defend the Clinics campaign. Only in this way will the issues of women's liberation be taken to the heart of the anti-imperialist and workers' movements. Perhaps a quote from a Chilean in exile, Gladys Diaz, sums it up: "We understand that our liberation will not occur within capitalist society. The struggle for liberation will only really begin seriously when the working class has conquered power.

"We are convinced, and history and experience show us, that our liberation as women is not a gift that will be given automatically with socialism. Our struggle is a long one, as long as the history of the enemy's ideological presence within us, within our *compañeros* and within all of society; and that is why the struggle is necessarily long and difficult — that ideological battle to erase distortions, prejudices, obstacles which the present situation of women in society has created and which women suffer even in the relationship with their mates." ★

1. On the Dunnes Stores strike of women shopworkers who refused to handle goods from apartheid South Africa, see IV 99, May 19, 1986.

2. Unmanageable Revolutionaries, Margaret Ward.



# “Che personifies the soul of the revolution”

**CHE GUEVARA's death twenty years ago has been commemorated all over the world. On October 21, the Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire (LCR, French section of the Fourth International) held a highly successful rally to remember Che's life and political contribution (see box). The speech below was given at the meeting by Janette Habel, a member of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.**

**JANETTE HABEL**

## LCR pays tribute to Che Guevara

OVER 1,500 people crowded into the LCR meeting in Paris on October 21 to hear a series of speakers and singers pay tribute to Che Guevara. In addition to Janette Habel [see main article], a leading member and founder of the Tupamaros, Raul Sendic, flew from Uruguay to be at the rally. Also on the platform was Jean Zeigler, a member of the executive of the Socialist International.

Speaking first, Jean Zeigler quoted Rosa Luxemburg in the last issue of *Red Flag*: the revolutionary movement is unique in the world in that it advances only by its defeats. The death of Che and his comrades was a terrible defeat, but it was transformed into a victory because all over the world men and women are commemorating his life and reading his works.

Raul Sendic received a standing ovation when he rose to speak, and an even longer one at the conclusion of his speech. Through an interpreter, he addressed the rally in a voice severely strained due to an injury to his throat after being hit by a bullet in the 1960s. He explained that Che remained in the hearts of the people, and that every day he was reincarnated because his ideas lived on.

Raul also spoke at length about the problems and tasks facing revolutionaries in the imperialist heartlands, referring to Che's dictum recounted earlier by Zeigler: You were born in the brain of the monster — it's there you must struggle. ★

**T**ONIGHT should not be just a memorial service, a routine and mechanical ritual. For people today, Che embodies above all the immediate relevance of the revolution in his time, a time which he described as “an illogical moment in the history of humanity”. Today, when revolutionary prospects are not as clear as they were 20 years ago, it is more necessary than ever to draw on Che's lessons and teachings.

We identify with Che because of his militant ideals, his understanding of the revolution, his conception of socialism and communism, and his rebellion against the established order. Che personified — and personifies — the soul, the reality of the revolution.

It is no accident that the emblematic figures of the JCR [the LCR's predecessor] and the LCR were and are Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin, Trotsky and Che Guevara. You might think that this isn't much for a whole century. But if you look hard, few others had a revolutionary record so spotless, a message so relevant. This is why we should not talk about Che in the past tense, nor turn him into a monument or an icon.

As always there are those for whom the only good revolutionary is a dead one. Georges Fournial, for instance — an old unrepentant Stalinist — for whom Che Guevara was a “petty-bourgeois revolutionary”. He manages in a recent issue of *l'Humanité* to pull off the *tour de force* of saluting Che's physical courage and moral values without a word about his revolutionary ideas.

There are others in the right-wing press — and even the so-called left press — who claim that Che was a victim of his own

mistakes. They say that it is not surprising that he has been forgotten, and that young people are more interested in Madonna. Reality has proven them wrong but, never mind, it's a convenient notion.

Neither Che Guevara himself nor his ideas can be taken over and used by imperialism, by Stalinism or its successors. What he said in 1960 in his tribute to José Martí, the hero of the Cuban independence struggle, applies to himself: Heroes are neither gods nor dead souls. “They should not be made into museum pieces, but their ideas incorporated into the struggle”.

## An anti-bureaucratic and internationalist fighter

This is why we are paying homage to Che. Homage to a revolutionary leader, a Marxist theoretician, an anti-bureaucratic and internationalist fighter. At the same time we do not overlook his mistakes and our criticism, because revolutionary leaders are not oracles.

We should discuss first Che's revolutionary strategy, which has been obscured by the circumstances of his death, and the caricature made of his military policy. In revolutions, victories often wipe out the memory of defeats. But when defeats have not yet been overcome, they are used to invalidate the strategy of those who were defeated. Rosa Luxemburg answered this when she said that the history of revolutions is full of “dress rehearsals” which make possible subsequent victories.

Che's guerrilla warfare in Bolivia was a failure. But we have to understand the reasons for this. The image of Che preserved in semi-religious imagery as an adventurist

guerrilla fighter, a sort of martyr, stands counter to the whole meaning of his life. This view of him is propagated the better to bury his revolutionary thinking.

We think that it was not Che's strategy that was wrong. It is as valid today as it was then. This strategy was first of all a complete break with *realpolitik*, and with the fatalism of those who thought that because of the strength of US imperialism it was impossible to take power. Che reaffirmed the possibility of taking power by destroying the bourgeois state apparatus and resisting imperialist intervention through armed struggle. Victory could be ensured if the leadership of the struggle was kept out of the hands of the bourgeoisie and in those of a revolutionary vanguard, because in Latin America the choice was "either socialist revolution, or the caricature of revolution". For Che, the Cuban revolution was not an exception. Its example could be repeated by putting into operation a continent-wide strategy.

### Tactic of rural guerrilla warfare

The balance sheet is most critical on the tactics and forms of struggle. Che believed that the struggle should take the form of rural guerrilla warfare for both social and military reasons. It should begin in the countryside in order to combine the advantages of guerrilla warfare and the possibility for the guerrilla fighters to be "social reformers" in the liberated zones. (This doesn't have much in common with a *focoist* strategy, a struggle isolated from the masses, which Che was later accused of advocating.)

What balance sheet should we make today? On the strategic questions, Che was right. No electoralist or peaceful road has led to socialism. Moreover, no alternative to the path proposed by Che has appeared. Five years after Che's death, Pinochet overthrew the Popular Unity government in Chile by a military coup. Twelve years later, the revolution triumphed in Nicaragua, and revolutionary struggle erupted in El Salvador. This is a posthumous victory for Che Guevara, and a blow against those who insisted on the exceptional nature of the Cuban revolution.

So what do we criticize? What were the mistakes? For us they were of two types. In the first place, an analytical weakness concerning the social base of the revolution. The guerrilla warfare tactic advocated by Che was based primarily on the peasantry at a time when urbanization and the beginning of industrialization were changing the social conditions of the revolution. Che did not understand this, or understood it only very partially.

Secondly, Che Guevara left Cuba for Bolivia with the Bolivian Communist Party as his support. A prop that would betray him, as Fidel Castro said later. Obviously we can ask ourselves how could the author



of the Algiers speech (which denounced the complicity of the socialist camp with capitalism), or the message to the Tri-Continental (which waxed indignant about the tragic solitude of the Vietnamese) — how could this leader in open conflict with the Soviet leadership and its international policy involve himself in a continent-wide struggle in these conditions?

The answer to this question is still not clear; we can only put forward some hypotheses. Che may have underestimated the degeneration of the Bolivian CP, or — but this comes down to the same thing — overestimated his own capacities to isolate the leadership and win over the rank-and-file to his cause, as he was able to do among the Communist youth along with Inti and Coco Peredo.

### Difficulties for the Cuban leadership

Perhaps he had no other choice. The Algiers speech had shown clearly the contradictions and difficulties of the Cuban leadership, caught on the one hand between its realism and state policy and, on the other, its policy of support to the Latin American revolutions; caught between the need to negotiate with governments and the need to support revolutionary organizations; and the difficulty of criticizing Soviet policy while depending for one's survival on Soviet aid, with all that that implies in terms of "good relations" with the CPSU's sister parties. Che left Cuba caught in the grip of these contradictions, and thus it is in this framework that we have to look for the origin of his political mistakes.

But leaving aside these political and tactical aspects, the fatalism and passivity

which Che denounced have re-emerged in different forms. Once again the world seems divided between the USSR and the USA, and the full weight of "realism" has re-emerged. Once again, the idea that the revolution is impossible — or not even desirable — is spreading.

### Che's response primarily political, not military

Some say that the revolution in Grenada was crushed because the island is so small. That in Nicaragua the price exacted by the counter-revolution is too high. That we shouldn't even talk about Vietnam, which has been turned into a gulag. But that in Poland, on the other hand, people are more reasonable.

What is considered reasonable is to steer a middle course between the pitfalls, to take account of world reality, to be responsible when one is small — in other words, to self-limit the revolution. This sort of talk has not really changed in 20 years, and Che's response is just as relevant now as then. Because, contrary to what he is reputed to have said, his response was primarily political, not military.

He understood that 50 years after the Russian revolution there had to be a two-fold answer to the problems encountered in the building of socialism since the October revolution. First, to extend the revolution, because one cannot have socialism on a single island. Second, to analyze and find answers to the problem of bureaucratization of post-capitalist societies.

The first answer was internationalist. Che understood that the fate of the Cuban revolution depended on the weakening of imperialism by other revolutions. This is the

political content of the formula "Create two, three, many Vietnams". This has nothing to do with adventurism or irresponsibility. Once the conditions for taking power have been defined, one has to defend this power, both internally and externally.

As a materialist, Che approached internationalism as a practical necessity — not as a moral imperative, not as an international Red Cross, but as a realistic solution. His insistence on Vietnam appears in retrospect as prophetic, because we ourselves underestimated the terrible consequences of the almost total isolation of the Vietnamese after they took power. It is not to hide or to minimize the criticisms that should be made of the Vietnamese leadership to say how much these dramatic conditions of isolation weighed, and still weigh, on Vietnamese society.

For the first time since the Russian revolution, a communist leader sketched out an international revolutionary strategy, one was not shaped by the interests of the Cuban state, but which was conceived in class terms in the interests of all those struggling against imperialism.

## Link with traditions of Communist International

In this sense, Che linked up with the revolutionary traditions of the Communist International. He broke with the illusions of those who thought it was possible to build socialism in one country, or in its other more or less Maoist variant — those who, under the pretext of relying on their own forces, mask a conception distorted by nationalism.

It was inspired by these principles that Che, a consistent Marxist who said what he thought and did what he said, went first of all to Africa and then to Bolivia.

This internationalist understanding cannot be separated from his conception of the transition to socialism. As he said in 1961: "The Cuban revolution is a humanist revolution, and is in solidarity with all the oppressed people." His last political fight in Cuba, which is perhaps the most relevant today, took place from 1963-65. A number of Cuba's revolutionary leaders were involved and took different positions. This discussion was not simply about economic problems, but about the conception and the significance of socialism.

This debate is summarized in one of Che's most remarkable writings, *Man and socialism in Cuba*, and is surprisingly modern. It is relevant in today's world where it is fashionable to associate socialism with the gulag, and Marxism with totalitarian ideology. Where it is the thing to present socialism and humanism as contradictory, and the fiction of the "state based on law" masks the class character of the state, the position of Che restored the dimension of revolutionary humanism to socialism, of a struggle for a society free of exploitation and alienation.

Above and beyond the discussion on the survival of market forces in a transitional society, which we cannot get into here, Che Guevara once again linked up with the communist tradition and broke with Stalinist and economic tendencies. He stated that socialism cannot be measured in terms of how many million tons of coal are produced — that communism cannot be simply a "goulash communism".

Obviously, in order to construct communism, the economic basis has to be changed. But "man has to be changed at the same time". Socialism cannot have as its final outcome the building of a super-consumer society. Its objective is to build a new society, a new humanity, a new citizen — the "citizen of the 21st century".

The "scale of values" has to be changed. In other words, simply the development of the productive forces is not enough. There is no spontaneous or mechanical link between economic development and the birth of a new society, communist society.

This explains the emphasis on the role of consciousness and on the education of the masses in building socialism. Here Che sometimes repeated word for word Lenin who declared to the Communist youth in 1920 "that it was necessary to create a society that does not resemble the old one" by struggling against an education which says "my well-being is everything, and I couldn't give a damn about the rest".

The difficulties for Lenin were "the fact that our starting point is materials which have been bequeathed to us by the old society". Che confirms this in *Man and socialism in Cuba*: "The new society in formation has to fight very hard against the past, which still has its effects not only in individual consciousness, but in the character of this period of transition where market relations continue. Commodities are the economic cells of capitalist society, and while they exist there effects will be felt in production and thus in consciousness.... This is why it is so important to make a correct choice of the instrument for mass mobilization. That instrument must be fundamentally of a moral character, without forgetting the correct use of material incentives, especially those of a social nature."

He asks the question, can we build socialism using the rotten instruments left by capitalism: money, profit and individual interest? In fact, this question is at the heart of today's discussions on the meaning of the economic reforms in the USSR and people's democracies.

## Che's conception of socialist democracy

The timeliness of Che Guevara's thought is equally reflected in the concerns of Orlando Nuñez, the Nicaraguan leader, when he states that the economic resources of the transitional society should allow "a synthesis between what is individual and what is social. The lack of consciousness,

or the non-existence of a subjective project in the revolution, ends up undermining the revolution itself". [*Cuadernos de Sociología*, 1987.]

The degeneration of the Eastern European countries has only confirmed this forecast. Market economy reforms have not until now brought any remedy, as is shown by the Yugoslav experience.

But it would not be right to finish without pointing out the weak point in Che's thinking — the lack of an organized, institutional conception of socialist democracy. Che Guevara had not formalized a conception of the management of the transitional society, and his vision of the organization of power was still based more on example than on the producers themselves taking charge of production. The underdevelopment of Cuba and its economic and cultural backwardness undoubtedly count for a lot. But this weakness was compensated for to some extent because he did have an acute understanding of the bureaucracy and the need to struggle against privilege. He wanted to build an egalitarian society centred on solidarity, not on competition and individualism. This is not very fashionable today, but is still surprisingly relevant.

His personal intransigence and his rejection of any privileges was legendary. When he was ill with tuberculosis after the Cuban victory he was sent for a short time to convalesce in a rest-home belonging to a former friend of the dictator Batista. He made a public apology for this, considering it an insult to popular feeling. As minister of industry, he refused his salary, and only kept the equivalent of that of a commander in the rebel army.

In his life, as in his death, Che Guevara opposed all that Lenin characterized as "the most shocking feature of the former bourgeois society, the gap between theory and practice".

## A parenthesis in revolutionary history

In Western Europe, the period we are now in seems to be a parenthesis in revolutionary history, and so some believe that Che has fallen into oblivion. Because the present situation consists of temporary retreats and defensive struggles, Che's ideas — like those of all the great revolutionaries — are subject to doubt and questions which seem without answer. But wherever people are struggling, wherever the revolutionary spirit is being reborn, his name is reappearing. In Haiti, in Nicaragua as in El Salvador, in New Caledonia, and even — on a very small scale — in the Soviet Union, where a socialist club has taken his name.

History will again confirm, as it has for Lenin, Luxembourg and Trotsky, that the people will always pay the due tribute to those who died as they lived, in the service of the revolution. These great revolutionaries will never die. ★

# 4 NEWS FROM THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL

## An important congress for the PRT

IN THE CONTEXT of economic crisis and rising mass struggles, the Fifth Congress of the Partido Revolucionario de los Trabajadores (PRT, Mexican section of the Fourth International) was a particularly important one.

It marked the growth of an organization that began ten years ago with a nucleus of radicalized students into a small mass party with thousands of members and many thousands of followers. By the same token, it marked the emergence of the PRT as a visible political alternative for Mexican working people in the run-up to the Mexican presidential and congressional elections next June. The congress itself was the illustration of the kind of political alternative the PRT offers.

**"M**ORE THAN 3,500 people gathered in the opening meeting of the congress," *Rouge*, the paper of the French section of the Fourth International, noted in its October 8 issue. "The amphitheater in the Palace of Congresses was full to overflowing. There were huge banners with pictures of Che, Leon Trotsky, Zapata [the radical peasant leader of the Mexican revolution]. Dozens of messages came from mass organizations in the four corners of the country. Our comrades of the PRT could not have had a better start in undertaking the work of their Fifth Congress.

For a whole week after this meeting, from July 27 to August 2, the 350 delegates took up the congress debates, which reflected a particularly rich political and social situation. Two organizations, each with hundreds of members, joined the PRT at the time of the congress.

### Two groups fuse with PRT

"The Marxist Workers' League [LOM, an organization belonging to the Lambert current] decided to fuse with the PRT order 'to advance in building a mass workers' party in Mexico' and 'to build the Fourth International.' This move was made with the agreement of the leadership of the PCI [Parti Communiste Internationaliste, the major organization in this international current] in France. (A part of the LOM took some distance, but the others remain organized in a tendency in the PRT).

"The congress also welcomed in the activists of the Revolutionary Left Current (CIR), an organization that left the PMT [Mexican Workers' Party], when the latter fused with the PSUM [a regroupment involving the Mexican CP] to form the PSM [Mexican Socialist Party]. (See IV126, October 26, 1987.)

"The PRT has been involved in all the struggles in recent months, and PRT activists were in the leadership of the student mobilization last spring. It is widening its influence in the urban people's movement and the peasant movement, playing a leading role in building the Workers', Peasants, and People's General Union [UGOCP].

"The congress also reaffirmed the PRT's active solidarity with anti-imperialist struggles throughout the world, its support for revolution in Nicaragua and Central

America, and its firm commitment to building the Fourth International."

### Unanimous resolution on women's liberation

In the September 3 issue of *Internationalen* (the paper of the Swedish section of the Fourth International) a visitor at the congress, Lars Kjellander, described some of the congress' discussions:

"The demand not to pay the foreign debt was seen as especially important, since that was a problem common to all sections of the mass movement and could build bridges between the various groups that are fighting.

"The discussion on building the party was especially interesting, since the PRT faces special challenges.

"How can new members be integrated rapidly into the party's growth? How can the party be set firmly on its own feet economically? (Over 90 per cent of the party's income today comes from the monies paid by the state to the six members of parliament that the PRT has had since the 1985 elections).

"How should the party relate to the Christians who are more and more beginning to involve themselves in social questions, inspired by liberation theology in Latin America? On this point, the resolution adopted declared that the place for such believers was in revolutionary work and in the party.

"The women's resolution, which was adopted unanimously, gave a thorough picture of the way that women were being hit especially hard by the crisis. The congress decided, therefore, that special measures were needed in the party to assure that more women participated in leadership tasks.

"The discussions on every point were very long and exhaustive. Most of the delegates talked about their experiences, everything from land occupations and strikes to work among the young in the 'youth leagues,' a special phenomenon in big city life in Mexico. Unemployed youth join together in strong gangs with their 'laws,' and often engage in semi-criminal activities.

### A party with real roots among the people

"It was clear that the PRT is a party with real roots among the people."

One of the PRT's most important areas of work is in the peasant movement. This year on April 10, 1987, the anniversary of the murder of Emiliano Zapata, the UGOCP succeeded in organizing 17 major land occupations at various points in the country. In its October 8 issue, *Rouge* published an interview with Fausto Leon Uriarte, done at the PRT congress. Uriarte is a member of the Central Committee of

the PRT, who described what happened after the April 10 land occupations:

"On May 6, repression was unleashed against several leaders of the UGOCEP in Sonora. Picked up in the streets, they were taken away in cars to be questioned for an hour or two and then released. José de la Cruz Castro was arrested by the judicial police, taken to Santa Ana and tortured for three days.

"He was released when his family managed to find out where he was being held. He had to be taken to the Social Security Hospital, because he had serious injuries in his ribs, hands and neck.

"On June 20, in Navojoa, the brothers José María and Esteban Palomino Urbalejo were picked up. On Monday the 24th, José María was released, but Esteban, who was tortured continually, was only freed on July 4. He was released on bail and on condition that he declare publicly that he was breaking with the UGOCEP. He did that, saying that he had been manipulated by enemies of the system.

"After April 11, the press published

## Peasants fight for land

statements by the prosecutor who certified that we were in violation of the law and that he was going to prosecute me in particular. I will be prosecuted for various crimes: damage, theft, thief by violence, criminal association and I don't know what else. Comrades arrested have seen a list of 193 UGOCEP members sought by the police.

"At the end of June we organized a demonstration in Navojoa and distributed leaflets in Hermosillo. When the deputy Isidro Leyva denounced the repression on the floor of Congress and called for solidarity, the PRI [government party] members replied that they would not support any illegal actions.

"On July 1, the UGOCEP published a statement signed by more than 60 organizations (including the National Front Against Repression, unions, the most important student unions, the electrical workers' union, the garment workers' union, the National Coordinating Committee of the Urban Popular Movement and the United Coordinating Committee of Earth-quake Victims).

"We decided to organize a march on the party from every locality where the UGOCEP is active to demand an end to the repression and a solution to the present conflicts.

"Positive results have been achieved — 365 hectares of irrigated land were ceded [to the peasants] in the locality of Moncarit and authorization was given for the occupation of 5,200 hectares of pasture land in Bejamin-Hill. But other conflicts have still not been resolved....The fight continues."

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## TIBET

### "Brutal Repression against Tibetan people"

**LA GAUCHE, the French-language paper of the Belgian section of the Fourth International, commented in its October 20 issue on the recent clashes in Tibet:**

The protest demonstrations against Chinese policy in Tibet and the ensuing repression (at least seven deaths and hundreds of people sent into internal exile) represent a serious political setback for the regime in Peking.

In recent years, China has made considerable efforts to give Tibet a modern infrastructure — roads, hospitals, schools, factories and so on. These investments are part of an attempt to make up for the gross errors committed by the Maoists in the preceding period.

The military occupation of Tibet, which was motivated by strategic considerations (the border with India), provoked an uprising of the Tibetan people in 1959. Armed resistance was organized but it was crushed by Chinese military power. More than 100,000 Tibetans fled their country at the time (out of a population of 2 million!). The Cultural Revolution brought new Chinese brutality, temples destroyed, monks persecuted and oppositionists executed in public.

The Chinese bureaucracy's economic gifts to the region (which moreover are not disinterested, Tibet is rich in uranium) do not carry a lot of weight against a record like that.

Promoting a certain economic growth is not sufficient to resolve harmoniously the question of national minorities in a non-capitalist country such as China. The minorities have to be given real possibilities for self-government, for developing their culture, for practicing their religion and for safeguarding their traditions. This means the right to self-determination, which can go as far as independence.

Especially in a backward region such as Tibet, the combination of both factors — economic development and respect for national rights — is indispensable for fostering among the local population an alliance of workers and peasants that will fight the ancient monastic system. Such an alliance in the final analysis is the only lever for lasting change, because it comes from the people themselves.

The Sandinistas in Nicaragua have understood this. After making their errors with the Miskito national minority on the Atlantic coast, they made a self-criticism and changed course radically. A real autonomy statute was not only "given" to the minority, but discussed thoroughly by the minority population itself.

The attitude of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party is very differ-

ent. This leadership keeps repeating that "Tibet has been part of China since the seventh century," as if this made it possible to dismiss the demands of the Tibetans. They had to wait 15 years for Peking to recognize their country as an autonomous region and the boundaries of this region still do not embrace all of Tibet.

Peking's failure shows up clearly at the level of cadre policy. Forty years after the 1949 revolution, all the leaders are Chinese, and the Communist Party has proved incapable of finding a Tibetan leader to take the reins of the "autonomous region." The result is that instead of turning away from the Dalai Lama, the Tibetans are turning towards him.

It is clear that the Chinese Communist Party is demonstrating the same inability as the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to resolve harmoniously the question of the national minorities. This is not only explained by the "weight of the past" (the immemorial chauvinism of the Han Chinese and the Great Russians). It is also explained by the fact that China, like the USSR, is ruled by a bureaucracy. These bureaucracies tolerate no challenge to their monopoly of political power, whether from the workers, the students or the national minorities. That is the great difference between the regimes in Moscow and Peking and the one in Managua.

There is an indissoluble link between union freedoms, the right to strike, political pluralism and the rights of national minorities in a non-capitalist state. All of this makes up a whole that is called "socialist democracy," or just socialism, because the dictatorship of the bureaucracy is only a caricature of socialism. ★ *Alain Tondeur*

La Gauche

# Chirac's pogrom against Basque refugees

**THE EXTENSIVE raids against militant Basque nationalists in the French-ruled part of the Basque country in early October were a major step up in a joint campaign by the rightist government in France and the social-democratic government in the Spanish state. They provoked a joint report by French Lawyers Union (SAF) and the Judges Union (SM).**

**The report concluded that the raids "constituted a flagrant and major violation of the independence of the courts and an exceptionally grave challenge to the rule of law." The following comment on the raids is from the October 17 issue of *Zutik*, paper of the Fourth Internationalist organization in the Spanish-ruled Basque country.**

**MAGES captured by the press photographers were reminiscent of the Nazi occupation of France. They showed the brutality of the Franco-Spanish joint police operation, the savage uprooting of the community of political refugees in the**

northern Basque country (including a good number of children), their deportation en masse and delivery into the hands of the torturers. This pogrom was backed up by a police onslaught in the southern Basque country, accompanied by abundant denunciations of "ill treatment," several victims in the hospital, the "fall" of a person being arrested down a stairwell and the rape (the "attempted rape," in judicial terms) of a woman in the central station of the Guardia Civil in Madrid.

These events in the first days of October have been followed by anxiety and disquiet among a large part of the Basque population. On the other hand, the established parties have not shown any such worries. Those who three years ago still protested against the first extraditions [from the French state] have proved blind, deaf and dumb to the barbarism we have seen most recently. In fact, their hands are tied by their deals with the government.

## Military and political objectives

This operation was preceded by the whole flap over negotiations [with the Basque nationalist organization ETA] during the summer. The events confirm the real intentions of both the French and Spanish governments — to provide themselves with a cover for an unprecedented escalation of repression, to able to claim to the general public and to their moderate nationalist allies that it is ETA that does not want to negotiate.

The objective of the operation launched on October 3 was two-fold. It had both police-military objectives and political ones. In the first place, they wanted to deal a blow that would make deep inroads into ETA's structure and operational capacity for a long time. At the same time, this could be capitalized on politically and electorally as a victory (the first!) in the so-called "struggle against terrorism." This is even though it was evident that a repressive success would not abolish either the political causes that led a great number of Basque youths to look to ETA and a large part of the population to collaborate with it, nor would it prevent new efforts to rebuild ETA's apparatus and operational capacity.

But the political objectives were no less important. Above all, this involved eradicating the Basque political refugees. This means eliminating not what is described in police language as "ETA's sanctuary," but the fact that these refugees are received in the French state as victims of political persecution, the fact that they are one of the closest symbols for the national resistance movement and a constant reminder of the violation of democratic rights in the Spanish state.

For the French government, this operation is part of a more general offensive against civil liberties and against the historic rights of the Basque people under French



domination, which have come under new French chauvinist attack recently (the assault on Seaska [the Basque-language schools association], which the French government is trying to strangle financially, and the recent onslaught on Basque cultural and church circles). For the Spanish government, the operation fitted into a growing campaign against revolutionary nationalism involving a series of measures that amount to outlawing Herri Batasuna [HB, the revolutionary nationalist party].

They have tried to inflict a direct and clear defeat on the section of the Basque population that persists in a rebellious attitude (that part of the population in the Spanish state that recently voted for HB or those citizens of the French state who have participated in campaigns of support for the refugees), to demonstrate that the states are omnipotent and that resistance is impossible.

## Brutal repression in the streets

The response to this attack has not been adequate. This is despite the great number of actions held in recent days, particularly around the October 7 Day of Struggle, seen fundamentally as a day of very small protests. It is true that it is difficult to organize anything in the workplaces, that there is a risk of brutal repression in the streets, that the threat of a ban [on the revolutionary nationalist organizations] is hanging over us like the Sword of Damocles, that the parties are more implicated in the system than ever. But still the answer was weak and did not help to break the feeling of social isolation. This raises serious problems for revolutionists, such as how to recover the perspective for a mobilization based on the workplaces and schools and on the organizing in these centers.

It is true that the weather ahead looks gloomy. A new anti-terrorist law is being prepared that will continue a de facto state of siege and permit police excesses. A deal is being negotiated with the moderate nationalist parties that have demonstrated their usefulness on this occasion. From all the dark holes of this rotten society voices are being raised demanding the outlawing of 250,000 Basque citizens. Facing these threats, neither depression or false optimism are much help. The important thing is to maintain the idea of resistance as a long-term perspective. ★