

International VIEWPOINT

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Correction: An error found its way into the article by Ernest Mandel entitled "Glasnost and the crisis of the communist parties" in IV 172. On p.25, column 3, para. 2, line 4, the phrase "a restoration of the market" should read "a restoration of capitalism."

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The Costa Rica statement should be rejected



THE PRESIDENTS of the five central American countries met December 10-12 in San Isidro de Coronado. The result of this summit was made public in a statement signed by the chief executives of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua. In effect, it benefited the government of the Salvadoran president, Cristiani, and the death squads. What surprised everybody is that Daniel Ortega, president of Nicaragua, supported such a statement, which does not offer any realizable solution to the war that has been going on for ten years in El Salvador.

ALFONSO MORO

HERE IS NO DOUBT that the Nicaraguan government's support for the San Isidro de Coronado statement is a step backward in comparison to the policy that it has followed up till now. Still worse, it is clear that Managua's backing for this accord is beginning to be used by the death squads' government in an attempt to deny the legitimacy of the struggle waged by the *compañeros* of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN).

Cristiani severs relations with Nicaragua

As will be remembered, Cristiani decided unilaterally to break off political relations between his government and Nicaragua; and only days before the start of the meeting in Costa Rica, President Ortega himself clearly put his finger on the sore point, saying: "The Cristiani government is a façade for an armed force that is also killing Nicaraguan people. It is time to speak out clearly. All the world's governments should break off relations with this government of mass murder and forget about diplomatic language."

Unfortunately, over and above the diplomatic game that has unavoidably to be played in a situation as complicated as the one today in Central America, the San Isidro statement says the following: "The presidents [including Ortega] expressed their determined support for the president of El Salvador...and his government as a faithful demonstration of their unalterable policy of supporting governments that are the product of democratic and pluralistic processes with popular involvement."

This decision will have a high political

cost, inasmuch as it complicates international solidarity with the *compañeros* of the FMLN. In fact, the statement goes on to say: "the presidents...reiterate their urgent call on the FMLN to cease hostilities immediately....Likewise, they insistently appeal to the FMLN to publicly renounce any type of violent activity that directly or indirectly affects the civilian population."

These words suggest that the FMLN is responsible for the war, responsible for the hostilities and resistant to any negotiation. It is precisely the contrary that is true. Cristiani is the one responsible for the war, which has been escalated to undreamed-of levels. He has clearly not been seeking a political agreement but the FMLN's unconditional surrender.

Perestroika affects Nicaraguan government

In our opinion, this change in the Nicaraguan government's attitude represents a political miscalculation. We do not think by any means that the revolutionary leadership of Nicaragua intends to sell out the revolution in El Salvador. However, to put your bets on a projection that what is best for Nicaragua from now until the February elections is not the extension of the revolution but, at best, an impasse in El Salvador, is to get caught up in the game that Bush and Gorbachev have been trying for a good while to impose. It seems that the the worst aspect of perestroika has crept into the Nicaraguan government through the back door.

In fact, no one can fail to recognize all the pressures that have been put on the Nicaraguan revolution since its triumph

in 1979. The US government's support for the Nicaraguan contras and the blocking of all economic aid by most capitalist governments are clear examples of this. But historical experience shows that the only way to overcome imperialist harassment is to extend the revolution. In this area, Nicaragua does not gain anything from the Costa Rica statement; to the contrary, it does Cristiani and the death squads an enormous favor.

Inasmuch as the FMLN's proposals for dialogue continue to get no serious attention from Cristiani, no one can ask them to give up their right to defend the Salvadoran people and still less ask them to lay down their arms. That would represent a defeat of incalculable consequences. It is even more absurd, after they have demonstrated their political and social base in the majority of the population and proved in practice that they are an alternative political force with their own project, to try to compare the FMLN, by calling it an "irregular force," with the Nicaraguan reaction financed by the United States.

Break diplomatic relations with Cristiani

More than ever before, it is necessary to demand that all governments recognize the FMLN as a belligerent force, and in fact break diplomatic relations with the Cristiani government as long as it continues to slaughter the population, fails to clear up the political assassinations and keeps US military advisors in the country.

As the FMLN General Command has pointed out, no mere agreement among governments is going to help to solve the regional crisis in Central America and still less the war in El Salvador. In order to accomplish that, to guarantee a real agreement favorable to the interests of this brother country, it is necessary to redouble all the solidarity actions with the Salvadoran revolution, to show that Cristiani, the high command of the Salvadoran army and the US government have no interest in resolving this conflict. That is the correct road. ★

The political game begins

THE organization of the mass movement in Czechoslovakia showed a sharp rise at the end of November. More than 900 local committees of the Civic Forum (CF) had then been set up, and 7,200 factory strike committees had been formed. The relatively autonomous student movement is also highly structured with an elected leadership representing all the strike committees in the country. Moreover, the movement exists on a nationwide basis, even if until now liaison with Prague seems to have been limited and difficult. This has largely been made possible by the activity of the students who have gone all over the country to explain their movement to the people, who, until the Friday preceding the general strike of November 27, had remained totally uninformed.

CLAUDE DEVILLIERS

TODAY, the crisis inside the Czechoslovak Communist Party (CzCP) seems to be very deep. The initial regroupments and differentiations which are now going on bear witness to this situation, which may have existed latently inside the party before the current events.

There is then a very important rise of the mass movement and the beginning of self-organization, the indispensable preconditions for any revolutionary situation.

Dismantling of militia obtained

The people are conscious of the fact that, whilst changing the government is one thing, it is another to clear the system of its bureaucratic structure. And in this area, the movement, backed up by the pressure of the streets, has already obtained the dismantling of the militias. The question objectively posed today is that of generalized self-organization and inspection. Such an objective would require the formation of the initial elements of a vanguard leadership that could accompany, promote and lead such a process. The spontaneous movement will not be enough to do this. For the moment, the emergence of such a leadership remains hypothetical.

The leading personalities of the CF initially explained that they had no desire to participate in the government. This position followed mainly from the fact that the CF is a structure created very recently, after the repression against the students, and it has no political homogeneity. It functions as a more or less centralized network, around a group

of personalities in Prague and in Bratislava¹, but, for the moment, there is no organizational project. It is very significant that, until now, the local committees of the CF have formed spontaneously and have not yet given rise to a centralized movement with an elected leadership.

However, the fear of a political vacuum, in the absence of parties and clear strategic projects, has forced the CF to present itself as a candidate for power. You cannot continually demand a better governmental composition, if you are not prepared to participate yourself. There are then, at first sight, two Civic Forums — a Civic Forum of the leadership and another of the base, with few organizational links between them and different social compositions, even if the latter for the moment accepts the former as its natural leadership.

The general programme of the CF is radical democratic in nature. If the CF had to take a position today on the economic and political future of the country, on the great strategic choices, it would certainly split quickly enough. At Brno, in Moravia, the movement demanded at the start a place in all the institutions of the Czech republic, a bit like a monitoring structure. The expressed objective is then a radical reformist one.

Until now the CF has played the card of dialogue with possible reformers within the party. At first, hope was placed in Adamec (the former prime minister). But the sort of government he proposed (including a large majority of CzCP members) led it to draw a negative balance sheet of the negotiations, and forced it to step up its pressure, particularly by threatening a new general strike. Continuing to negotiate with Adamec, although

he was discredited in their eyes, then with Marian Calfa, the new Prime Minister, it got a government that this time had a majority of non-CP members.

The CF's main tactic has been to get a transitional government acceptable to it, which could organize free elections (that is, with freedom to put forward candidates) for no later than July 1990 (Calfa has expressed a preference for the end of June). Their hope, obviously, is that the CzCP will then be definitively and democratically put in a minority position. Recent events show that the CF intends to put itself forward at these elections². This could pose a certain number of problems — how are radically different opinions on the major choices facing society going to be expressed within the CF current? This will imply that so as not to put itself in a minority, each component will have to stand in the name of the CF. Of course, all this remains uncertain, because the more the debates develop, the more the CF is itself going to be exposed to numerous pressures, and the experience of government will be a major test.

It should be stressed that this movement has only existed for some weeks. Any activist current would have a lot of trouble in linking itself up rapidly with such a massive and spontaneous movement. But, this said, the social composition of the CF leadership limits today its organizational capacities. The CF is made up of intellectuals, artists, journalists, ex-dissidents, etc., and this does not permit it to turn rapidly towards the militant workers in the factories.

Leading personalities dominate Civic Forum

Moreover, the CF does not have, at present, the structure of an organization, a party, and, consequently, cannot be organized in a democratic way. It is leading personalities of the CF who play the central role, whilst the amount of control the rank and file have over them is very limited. The decision to enter the government is characteristic of decisions taken "from above". But it would be wrong to think that these figures do not more or less reflect the general feeling. They remain the unchallenged leadership of the mass movement, even if this could be called into question as a result of their secret negotiations with the government.

The liberalization of the media remains partial. The bulk of the party press remains entirely controlled by the conservatives (see interview with Václav Havel page 5). The democratic movement has not yet been able to build its own mass press. Cer-

1. At Bratislava, in Slovakia, the equivalent of the Civic Forum calls itself "The Public Against Violence".

2. The Civic Forum and "The Public Against Violence" will present themselves at the elections as a coalition of all the democratic forces within society, with a common list. Each group or political party would have the opportunity to participate in this coalition.



the "Prague Spring" with nostalgia, most of them no longer believe at all that the CzCP or a wing of the CzCP are capable of participating anew in such a process.

Some critical currents have recently appeared inside the CzCP. A small group of journalists on the editorial board of a party cultural journal (*Tvorba*) have formed an independent Marxist club which seeks to renew Marxist thought in Czechoslovakia. Another current has been set up within the CzCP, the Democratic Communist Forum (DCF), of which little is as yet known. The DCF

tainly, it might be thought that this movement is irreversible, and that the conservatives have played their last cards. The people are in general not very well informed on what happens abroad, including in the rest of Eastern Europe. But undoubtedly it is possible to talk about a search for an original road, a "Czechoslovak road". As in the GDR, the people in the street are relatively favourable to Gorbachev. People in Prague say, only half jokingly, that if the CzCP had sent tanks against the demonstrators, the Soviet tanks would have come to the aid of the people!

For the moment, discussions on economic options are restricted to a few closed circles around the CF and have not yet extended as far as the general public. When "the street" and the factories participate in this debate, the CF will be confronted by great tensions and internal differentiations. The Institute for Forecasts around Komarec (who has just been named first vice-prime minister) is one of the principal figures in this debate, of which the general line is clearly one of a return to the market. But everything remains fairly unclear for now. An element which will undoubtedly play a strong role in these debates in future is national sentiment, and the very widespread axiom that "the country should not be sold to foreigners". Despite the ravages of the bureaucracy, or the "mafia" as the people call them, the Czech population retains a strong consciousness of a collective "public good" and of social ownership³. Consequently, the questions of privatization, opening up to foreign capital etc. could rapidly run into a serious opposition.

Although well represented in the CF, the students have maintained a real auton-

omy, like the movement in the factories. Notably, despite the CF's directives, they have maintained their continuous strike, with occupations of the faculties, until all their demands are met and tangible results are obtained, in particular as concerns the commission of enquiry into the violence on 17 November. This movement too takes the form of a radical democratic movement but it is still difficult to know if crystallized ideological positions have appeared within it. Some of the debates centre on a reorganization of the teaching system. A plan to create a student trade union based on the strike committees set up throughout the country is today being discussed. The students have also criticized the CF's waiting game and manoeuvres in relation to the government. Nonetheless, the movement has been very disciplined and has recognized the CF as its leadership — which has not stopped it from demanding more initiatives and more actions.

Who signed the appeal for the 1968 invasion?

The question of the 1968 "Prague Spring" continues to play an important role. One of the CF's main demands was for the publication of the list of CzCP members who had allegedly signed the appeal for the intervention of Warsaw Pact troops. The CF does not propose a general purge, but demands that the names of those responsible for this "appeal" be made known. As for those compromised during the period of "normalization", the CF demands that they be dismissed, but through constitutional mechanisms. The 1968 invasion is very much present in the collective memory. Even though a lot of people look back to

claims to have had some tens of thousands of membership applications within a week. A great many CzCP members are involved in the rank and file organizations, in the student movement — notably through the Young Socialist Organization (SSM, linked to the CzCP) — or in the factories. The base units of CF and the strike committees have confronted this problem and debated whether to admit them into the structures of the opposition. In general, they have been admitted as individuals, on condition that they do not operate as a CzCP faction.

One of the characteristics of the movement is the rejection of violence. The repression of the demonstration of November 17 sent shock waves running through the population. The memory of November 17 is constantly refreshed in leaflets, the demonstrations, and around the Wenceslas monument where a continuous rally goes on. As to the self-organization structures in the factories, it is still too soon to know what they will become. For the moment, it seems that the strike committees will not transform themselves into self-management structures, but, on the contrary, are going to try to work inside the official trade unions with the goal of renewing them. One of the demands is that the trade union congress not be held before the mass movement can take possession of the trade unions, of their infrastructure and their branches. Certainly, some explain that in the event of the defeat of this initiative, it will be necessary to build new trade unions. But the first step is the reconquest of the existing trade unions. ★

3. Prague is covered by thousands of posters which are fastidiously stuck on the walls, the metro, the windows, and regularly student teams organize the taking down of these posters and the cleaning of the town.

Czechs and Slovaks — two nations in the Central European cauldron

THE CZECH LANDS were historically part of the German (Holy Roman) Empire, where Bohemia sometimes played a leading role. In 1620, the Catholic Habsburgs annihilated the Protestant Czech nobility at the Battle of the White Mountain, and the Czech Lands were parcelled up amongst loyal lieutenants of the Habsburgs. Thereafter Czech language and nationality were primarily associated with the Third Estate; the nobility spoke German.

In the 19th century, the Czech Lands became the economic heartland of the Empire. With economic growth came both a rise in Czech bourgeois nationalism and the development of a mass labour movement. By the outbreak of the first world war, the social democrats were the strongest party in the Czech Lands, and by proportion of population were the strongest element in Austrian social democracy.

Inadequate positions of workers' movement

However the Czech social democrats were at a loss in front of the rising national tensions in the Empire. The prevailing traditions of the political workers' movement did not help them. A bad precedent was set by one Friedrich Engels, who, accusing the Czech national movement of 1848 for splitting the fight against the Habsburg state and blocking the path to German reunification, threw them into the dustbin of history along with the Welsh, the Basques, the Bretons and other "remnants". When the Czechoslovak social democrat leaders split the Austrian trade unions along national lines, they were roundly condemned by the Second International in 1910. As Leon Trotsky remarked, "the Austrian Marxists advanced, against the split in the trade organizations, arguments which skilfully counterfeited internationalism." (My Life New York, 1970 p.217).

Nonetheless Czech social democrats did not develop an alternative policy on the national question to the prevailing orthodoxies of the Second International, and during the first world war, the social democrats remained opposed to the break up of the Habsburg monarchy until the final moment, leaving the initiative to the far-sighted Czech bourgeois politician

6 Tomas Masaryk. This latter took the lead of the massive popular desire in the

CZECHOSLOVAKIA is a federal state of two nations, the Czechs and Slovaks and the two regions of the country have very different histories. They were united for the first time (if we leave aside a shadowy Great Moravian Empire in the Eighth century) in 1918 and were separated again between 1939 and 1945. In 1969, after years of campaigning by Slovak intellectuals, the state formally became a federation. It is important not to overlook this duality: what happens in the Czech Lands (Bohemia and Moravia) does not necessarily apply in Slovakia and vice versa. Furthermore any crisis of the diplomatic arrangements on a pan-European level always has its reflection in relations between Czechs and Slovaks.

COLIN MEADE

Czech Lands to put an end to the Empire, at the same time selling the idea of the independent Czechoslovak state to the Entente powers as means of containing the Germans, and as an anti-Bolshevik force in Central Europe. The conflict between the Czechoslovak Legion in Russia and the Bolsheviks was also a point in Masaryk's favour in the eyes of the imperialist powers.

Masaryk takes up cudgels against Bolshevism

Czechoslovakia was consolidated in the struggle against the Hungarian revolution of Béla Kun, by the driving out of Hungarian forces from Slovakia. In this way carrying out the counter-revolutionary state-building tasks were carried out at a single stroke. The growing Czech revolutionary movement was unable to make the link up with the Hungarian revolution and when the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPCz) was finally founded in 1920 the revolutionary wave was over. The majority of the social democracy came over to the Third International and the CPCz retained mass support throughout the interwar period, despite the twists and turns of policy imposed from Moscow, each of which involved taking a position either for or against the territorial integrity of the Czechoslovak state, which at that time also contained a 3 million strong German population. All the positions reflected the current attitude of the Kremlin towards the Czechoslovak state. Direct subordination to the Soviet Union with, (in the early period especially, some reticences)

had thus replaced subordination (with rather more vociferous protests) to the pan-German framework of the Second International.

In 1939 an independent pro-German Slovak state came into being, while the Czech Lands were annexed to the Reich. The Slovak and Czech CPs separated, and at one stage the idea of a Slovak Socialist Republic as a part of the USSR was discussed in Slovak CP circles. When the end of the war came however, the CPs reunited and at Moscow's bidding, entered into the pro-Soviet coalition government led by Eduard Benes which strove to re-establish the prewar Czechoslovakia. Under this government the CP became the largest party, winning 38% of the votes in the 1946 elections, although it was considerably weaker in Slovakia.

Tens of thousands persecuted by Stalinists

In February 1948, as the Marshall Plan threatened to pull Czechoslovakia out of Moscow's orbit, the CP took total power and began to impose a full-scale Stalinist dictatorship. All areas of social life were subjected to bureaucratic diktat; tens of thousands were thrown into camps, while the party itself was racked by a series of bloody purges. Among the victims of these purges was the current (for the moment) President Gustav Husak, leader of the Slovak CP, accused of "Slovak bourgeois nationalism".

Given the mass nature of the CP, there can be no question that a vast number of people threw themselves into the task of "building socialism" with genuine enthu-

siasm. Furthermore, the alliance with the Soviet Union was popular with Czechs and Slovaks disillusioned with the "democratic" imperialist powers who had dropped them at Munich in 1938. Much of the intelligentsia identified itself with the new regime. Czechoslovakia remained quiet throughout 1956. By the early 1960s, however, signs of crisis became apparent. In 1962 the economy failed to grow as unrealistic plans were abandoned (perhaps because of the sudden closure of the Chinese market due to the Sino-Soviet split). The issue of the rehabilitation of all those who had suffered in the 1950s threatened the positions of many who had risen to power in those years. In particular the Slovaks began the campaign that would finally lead to the federalization of the country. Husak was at the head of these developments. All these things were perceived by a wide section of the CP as the results of an uncritical adoption of the "Soviet model" by the CzCP. The idea of a specific "Czechoslovak road to socialism" gained ground.

Abolition of censorship opens floodgates

In January 1968, Antonin Novotny (whose style of rule was described as a "personality cult without a personality") was removed as party first secretary and replaced by Slovak party boss Alexander Dubcek. As the factional struggle inside the party intensified the reformist wing took a dramatic step: they abolished censorship. The long-suppressed society found its voice. Independent groups emerged and public demonstrations took place. The Dubcek leadership attempted to control these developments — an attempt to legally refound the Social Democratic Party was for example rejected — but by dialogue rather than repression. The idea of "socialism with a human face" caught the imagination of people throughout the world who wanted socialism but not Stalinism. It is probable that if there had been

free elections at this time, the CzCP would have won.

But this was not to be. Alarmed by the threat to the entire bureaucratic system posed by the "Czechoslovak road", 500,000 troops of five Warsaw Pact countries entered Czechoslovakia from all directions on the night of August 21, 1968, claiming that they had been invited to by a group of (still unidentified) "internationalists". The population responded to the "internationalist aid" by a solid general strike, and throughout the next few months protests continued, especially among the students.

Dubcek leadership demobilizes protests

This movement was demobilized by the Dubcek leadership. When, for example, a general strike was proposed to prevent the removal of popular leader Josef Smrkovsky as head of government, Smrkovsky himself went on television to plead for calm. On January 21 student Jan Palach burned himself to death in protest against his people's acceptance of the invasion and its results.

The CPCz leadership however, continued to refuse to engage in the large-scale repression demanded by Brezhnev and co. and in April 1969 Dubcek was replaced by Gustav Husak as first secretary of the party. Husak started his bid for power from Slovakia. Immediately after the invasion he succeeded in getting the Slovak CP to accept the "new reality", thus gaining a solid base for the reversal of the Prague Spring. Key to his success was a promise that the process of federalization would continue.

The new team rapidly moved to "normalize" the country. Some 500,000 people were purged from the party, and anybody who refused to condemn the Prague Spring was removed from responsible posts, to be replaced by the cynical opportunists who have made up the base of the regime for the past 20 years.

During those decades the overwhelming facts of military force, along with relatively high living standards have kept the population subdued, restricting open opposition to small groups that could be easily repressed and isolated. In Slovakia an additional factor of stability has been at work: the intelligentsia has been hard at work in the satisfying task of producing the basic historical texts of a nation. At the same time lack of investment led to growing industrial backwardness along with a terrible ecological deterioration. It is estimated, for example, that a third of the country's rivers can no longer support life.

The opposition never wholly disappeared. In 1977 hundreds of people signed Charter 77, calling for basic democratic rights, and attempting to create a space for free discussion.

Despite imprisonment, forced exile, physical attacks, and above all, extreme isolation, the movement persisted and slowly grew. Oppositionists always claimed that they represented a silent majority, and have been proved right. The coming of the *glasnost* era in the Soviet Union, the opening of the Berlin Wall, the regime's stupefyingly brutal response to the peaceful demonstration of Friday November 24, and the determination of the youth, especially students, not to put up with any more have propelled the dissidents out of their ghetto to the front of the political stage.

Opposition ranges from Marxists to monarchists

The opposition is very diverse politically, ranging from revolutionary Marxists to monarchists. Catholic activists have played a central role and in 1988 some 500,000 people signed a petition for religious rights. Catholic activism is very strong in Slovakia. The vast majority of the opposition think of a market economy and parliamentary democracy as the solution to the crisis.

On the other hand the opposition has a radical democratic edge. Systematic attempts have been made to overcome historic national enmities and work with movements in neighbouring East European countries. Groups of young people opposed to the militarization of Czechoslovak society and open to dialogue with the peace movements in the West have been prominent in recent years.

The opposition's ideology embodies a revulsion against the subordination of the individual to a "general interest" which turned out to be the self-interest of an elite. The history of the Czechs and Slovaks, whose national interests have so often been sacrificed by both bourgeois and bureaucratic forces to the "needs of history" have an exemplary significance. Such issues will form a part of the renewal of the socialist project that is now possible and necessary. ★



OUR COUNTRY has found itself in a deep moral, spiritual, ecological, social, economic and political crisis. This crisis is testimony to the ineffectiveness of the hitherto existing political and economic system. Almost all the mechanisms that are necessary for society to react to changing domestic and foreign conditions have been scrapped. The self-evident principle that whoever holds authority must take responsibility has not been respected for many decades. All three fundamental powers in the state — the legislative, executive and judicial — have all been merged in the hands of a narrow ruling group, consisting almost exclusively of Communist Party members. All this has led to the destruction of the foundations of a legal state.

The Communist Party monopoly on all important posts creates an unjust feudal system, which paralyses all of society. People are thus condemned to the role of mere executors of the orders of the powers-that-be. They are denied a long list of human, civic and political rights.

The command system of centralized management of the national economy has obviously failed. The promised restructuring of the economic mechanism has been slow and inconsistent and has not been accompanied by the necessary political changes.

Changes of personnel not enough

These problems will not be solved by changing several persons in positions of power or by several politicians resigning from public life.

The Civic Forum is therefore striving for the following objectives:

1. The Law:

The Czechoslovak republic must be a legal, democratic state in the spirit of the traditions of Czechoslovak statehood and in the spirit of internationally accepted principles, expressed above all in the Universal Declaration and Human Rights and The International Pact on Civic and Political Rights.

In this spirit a new constitution must be worked out which will above all make more precise the relations between the citizens and the state. Such a constitution can only be passed by a newly elected constituent assembly. The implementation of civic rights and freedoms should be reliably assured by a developed system of legal guarantees. An independent judiciary should also include constitutional and administrative courts.

The whole Czechoslovak legal system will gradually have to be brought into line with these principles and made binding not only for citizens but also for state officials and bodies.

We insist that the wrongs which occurred in the past as a consequence of politically motivated persecution be set

8

Civic Forum: "What we want"

WE PUBLISH below the full text of the programme of the opposition co-ordination Civic Forum. Among the groups involved in Civic Forum are: Charter 77, The Czechoslovak Helsinki committee, Obroda (Renewal), the independent students, the Czechoslovak Democratic Initiative, the Independent Peace Association, members of the two official Czech non-communist parties, the Churches and "other citizens of democratic tendencies". The translation into English was done by members of Civic Forum and has been slightly modified.

DOCUMENT

2. Political system: We demand fundamental and permanent changes in the political system in our society. We must establish or renew democratic institutions and mechanisms to allow the real participation of all citizens in public affairs and at the same time to form effective barriers against the abuse of political and economic power. All existing and newly founded political parties and other political and social associations should be able to participate equally in free elections for all levels of government. This assumes, however, that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia abandons its constitutionally guaranteed leading role within our society, as well as the monopoly control of the communications media. There is nothing to prevent it from doing this tomorrow.

Federation should be retained

While retaining Czechoslovakia as a federation, it should at the same time become a union of both our nations and other nationalities with equal rights for all.

3. Foreign Policy: We want our country to again assume its honorable place within Europe and the world. We are a part of Central Europe and therefore want to maintain good relations with all our neighbours.

We envisage joining European integration. We would also like to subordinate our policy towards our Warsaw Pact partners and those in CMEA to the idea of a common European home. We want to respect our international legal commitments while fully maintaining our state sovereignty.

4. National Economy: We intend to abandon our long-standing method of

running the economy. It dampens people's motivation to work and it wastes the results of their labour. It plunders natural resources, destroys the environment and widens the gap between Czechoslovakia and the rest of the world. We are convinced that this economic system cannot be improved by minor modifications. We want to create a developed market, not deformed by bureaucratic interventions. Its success depends on breaking up the monopolies currently enjoyed by existing large enterprises and creating real competition. This can come into existence only on the basis of the parallel and equal existence of various types of ownership and the gradual opening of our economy to the world.

State must guarantee equal conditions

The state will of course continue to have a number of functions, which cannot be replaced. It will guarantee general and equal conditions for everyone in the economy and will carry out a macro-economic policy with the aim of controlling inflation, an increase in the foreign debt and the threat of unemployment. Only the state can guarantee the necessary minimum of public and social services and protection of the environment.

5. Social Justice: It is imperative for us that conditions are created in our society for the development and implementation of the abilities of all.

Czechoslovakia must be a country with social justice, where the elderly are taken care of, where the sick and needy receive aid. An important prerequisite for such a society is, however, a prosperous national economy.

Churches, communities, enterprises and various state and voluntary organizations

overall network of social services. This will broaden human solidarity, responsibility and love of our neighbours. It is these humanitarian principles which at present are necessary for welding our society together.

6. The Environment: We must all seek a method of restoring harmony between man and his environment. We will strive for a gradual repairing of the damage which has been inflicted upon nature in recent decades. We will attempt to return beauty to our landscape and human dwellings and assure the better conservation of nature and natural resources. We will do our best in the shortest time possible to improve basic living conditions and assure healthy drinking water, clean air and uncontaminated food. We will insist on a basic improvement in the system of caring for the environment which will concentrate not only on eliminating existing sources of pollution, but above all on preventing further environmental damage.

At the same time we will have to change the structure and orientation of the national economy and thereby specifically decrease energy and raw material inputs. We are aware that this will mean sacrifices on the part of all of us. This will require a change in value scales and lifestyles.

Freedom from all restrictive Ideologies

7. Culture: Culture cannot only be the concern of artists, scientists and teachers, but a way of life of all our society. We must free ourselves from all restrictive ideologies and overcome the existing artificial separation of our culture from the rest of world culture. Art and literature must not be restricted and they must have the possibility for publication and contacts with the public.

Science should have its rightful place in society. In this way naive and demagogic over-expectations of science can be overcome, as well as its subservient status which makes it the handmaiden of the ruling party.

A democratic educational system should be based on humanitarian principles, without a state monopoly on education. Society must have respect for the teacher in all types of schools and must give them space for their individuality. The historical rights of institutions of higher learning should be renewed, thus guaranteeing independence and freedom of academic expression, both for teachers and students.

We consider education our most precious national asset. Education must lead to independent thought and high moral responsibility.

This is what we want. Our programme now is brief. However we are preparing to make it more specific. The Civic forum is an open association of citizens. We thus appeal to all who can contribute to this work to do so. ★

Party paper interviews Václav Havel

THE FOLLOWING interview with Civic Forum leader and presidential candidate Václav Havel was carried out by Jan Lipavsky for the Communist Party daily *Rudé Právo* on December 2, 1989.

DOCUMENT

REAL DIALOGUE requires that the partners know one another. In the case of the dramatist Václav Havel, one of the representatives of Civic Forum, there have certainly been things written about him in *Rudé právo* (RP) but he has never spoken for himself. We rectify this gap in the following conversation, offered to RP this week. Havel was born on October 5, 1936 in Prague. He is a graduate of the drama faculty at the Academic of Performing Arts and the author of a number of theatrical works. He has been a spokesperson of Charter 77 and has been imprisoned several times.

■ I have come and asked you for this interview, and you have agreed, although I suppose that you are not madly in love with the paper of the Communist Party Central Committee.

RP has not had much good to say about me. However this is not the time for recriminations. We have to think about the future. I am glad that your paper has decided to interview me, because there is something I would like to say to the members of the CP.

■ Very well, but first tell me what picture RP has given of you — would you say that it was inaccurate?

As for the picture that RP has painted of me, well it is pretty dark. But a real assessment of my character can only be made by people who know me and my work and who are not prejudiced.

■ Do you think that a real dialogue is possible in this country between people with different political opinions, between you, who clearly want nothing to do with Marx and me as a



Communist? Are you a social democrat or an anti-Communist without a definite political ideology?

I do not adhere to any ideology, doctrine or ready made worldview defined by someone else. Nor does it seem to me that I could belong to this or that concretely defined and ideologically limited political movement. I am simply on the side of truth against lies, on the side of meaning against nonsense, on the side of justice against injustice and on the side of order against disorder.

■ But you call for, as it says in your programme, pluralist democracy and for a coalition government. Thus you have a definite ideology and political opinion. But do you know what surprised and shocked me in your negotiations with the prime minister? The way in which you, excuse me, clamoured for the fulfillment of your demands. It was hardly a dialogue between equals. It looks like you threw your principles overboard.

Our negotiations took place in the way they did in the interests of our nations. Several times we told the prime minister that there were good reasons to believe that at that moment we were transmitting the demands of a large part or a majority of the public, and we also said several times that it would be in everybody's interest if the problems in our country did not get to the point of uncontrolled strikes, bloodshed, confusion and confrontation. If we are going to organize our society in a democratic, peaceful, orderly and neighbourly fashion and avoid conflicts, then the government must not only announce things; it must do things. Any sort of delay would hurt not only us, that is the Civic Forum, but also the government and society as a whole. That would mean that all of us would have lost control of the situation.

■ **But you do not rule out the neighbourly road.**

That is the programme of my whole life.

■ **Time will tell about that. Now, tell me what Civic Forum is. You said something about this in your television broadcast on Sunday, but what you said personally disturbed me. Are you not putting yourself forward in something other than your true colours? Is it really true that you are a voluntary association of citizens and the self-organization of society, or, as it seems to me, a nucleus of a political party with an as yet undefined ideology?**

I personally, but not only me personally, but everyone here in the Magic Lantern where we are sitting, agree that the Civic Forum is precisely a forum. "Forum" originally meant a place where whoever wanted to could come and say whatever they wanted. In order to ensure that everybody does not talk at once and thus fail to hear anybody else, some form of coordination is necessary. What we are trying to do here is an improvised and dramatic attempt at coordinating the popular and social movements, mirroring the lack of confidence in the existing structures and social organizations.

■ **The reader might reproach you with being a self-appointed leader.**

If that were true there would not be so many people involved here. Without Civic Forum and its coordinating centre there would be a dangerous situation for the whole of society. There would be a danger of various confrontations and conflicts. The Civic Forum offers the possibility for some kind of united action in situations of crisis....

■ **Active strike unity....**

Being ready to strike is more than just a question of preparing strikes to make a point. It is also a form of social self-organization. The strike committees are getting in touch with each other. Some support the Civic Forum, others are setting up their own civic forums. All are connected at the level of information and communication, but there is no central leadership.

■ **I am still not wholly certain that you are not a centre, but never mind. And, if I have understood you correctly, your action has a definite time limit.**

Civic Forum will continue to exist only as long as it is needed. Its aim and ideal is real pluralism. It should not continue for so long that it becomes an obstacle to pluralism. What I say is: let us cross over from a totalitarian form of government to real democracy. There would then very quickly arise independent political units and social subjects, independent from each other,

which will then be the basis of the real democratic pluralism that we want.

■ **Could the Civic Forum be the realization of this pluralism?**

It must not become a second National Front. We do not want to set up another giant to confront the existing one. We do not want to close the doors of pluralism, but to fully open them.

■ **Let's go further. Do you know what strikes me? That is, that in the public life, at the various meetings and assemblies, including, if not especially, on Letná plain all we hear is a monologue. One monologue has replaced another, I say. Or do my ears deceive me? Do you not then fear that history could repeat itself?**

That is not my impression. As we sit here, representatives of the Civic Forum are meeting in the Oriental salon of the People's House with a member of the CP Presidium and other CC members. Civic Forum does not want to exclude anybody from public life and reckons with all the Communists, who I number at about 1,700,000.

■ **What is your attitude to Communists, to members of the CPCs?**

Among them are many intelligent, capable and productive people, who have been silenced for decades, just as non-Communists have been silenced.

■ **Excuse me if I interrupt you, but they did not have to keep silent. There was also the question of their courage.**

Possibly they did not absolutely have to keep silent. But if they spoke out, they had problems or were not listened to. I think that our fellow citizens, members of the party, are speaking out along with the whole of society, because they feel that

now they have the opportunity to be heard. And this is very important for this society. It seems to me that it is the task of the communists to renew their party as soon as possible, and become a modern party that gives up the totalitarian method of rule and takes its place in the future pluralist democratic system, along with every other political force. And the whole of this uprising, to put it dramatically, that we are going through right now, and which is symbolized by the Civic Forum, is not an uprising against the Communists, but against the totalitarian method of rule.

■ **What kind of person are you? Are you tolerant of opinions that are not yours or close to yours? Do you recognize another truth apart from your own?**

If it had been possible for me to publish my books in this country for the past 20 years, the public would know me. That I am tolerant and want a tolerant world. There is perhaps not the time at the moment to explain all this.

■ **Why does the word socialism not appear in your programme?**

Because in the Czechoslovak context the word has lost all meaning. We simply do not know what it means. The word must be newly defined, since it has become a ritual incantation. Everything that the ruling group did not like or which it found uncomfortable, or was done freely, was called anti-socialist. "Socialism" it identified with itself.

■ **Do you rule it out of existence?**

Our ideas about the future and about social justice and a democratic social order must not be dominated by the ideas of those who currently say that they are socialists. I presented myself as a socialist perhaps 14 or 15 years ago, but then I stopped using the word simply because it



had become devalued. Perhaps the real task of socialists is to give the word a new content and thereby return it to the language.

■ **Even so, do you think that we should retain a socialist system or not?**

I cannot answer this question because I do not know what it means or what you mean by it. I can only tell you what my idea is. You have to decide yourself if you would call it socialist or not. I believe that we should be decent, neighbourly, upright, and should begin to behave freely and think of other people as well as ourselves. This is the basis for political life and a political system.

■ **How do you envisage this system?**

As a democratic and pluralist system, both in the political and economic spheres. Experience has shown that the guarantee of economic prosperity is the autonomy of economic subjects and their plurality, which is unthinkable without political pluralism.

■ **Ownership is not decisive?**

I don't think so. There could be state, cooperative, joint ownership, self-managing property. Certainly private property would retain a space, chiefly in the sphere of services and small businesses. In my view, it is not the type of ownership but the prosperity of the enterprises and of the whole country that is decisive from the point of view of economic prosperity. A prosperous economy can then ensure social services to everyone. There is the Swedish model and others that prove this. Such societies offer much better social security, which is what you are driving at in this question, than the existing system in our country. Only prosperity can allow social security.

■ **Nonetheless, we could clearly differ on the theme of just distribution as one of the basic features of a social system. But that is not the theme of our talk.**

Permit me one final question, if rather hypothetical. Given your position on the political scene: are you prepared to accept some state function, if you are a candidate and are elected?

Everything that I have done, I have done as a citizen of this country, to whose fate I am not indifferent. My original vocation was as a writer, and that is what I would like to stay. I never had political ambitions, and I do not feel qualified. I want to go back to the theatre. I firmly believe and hope that there will be no need and that the general interest, which I consider to also be my own, will not compel me into the situation with which you threaten me.

■ **Thank you. ★**

Full extent of economic crisis begins to emerge

THE EAST GERMAN ECONOMY is in open crisis. There are many indications that this dramatic situation was, and continues to be, decisive for the development of the political crisis. All those, like us, who said that the East German economy was in "relatively good shape" were wrong, even if the comparison was always with the other Comecon countries. Unless the comparison were limited to Poland, even that assessment was wrong.

WINFRIED WOLF

It is true the entire Comecon economy is in a deep crisis, and the problems in each country are aggravating those in the others (this is especially true of Czechoslovakia, where the crisis threatens to erupt still more violently). It is also true that the real state of these economies, and especially that of the GDR, has been relatively successfully covered up. And Western, especially West German, official agencies have become accomplices with East German institutions in this coverup.

● Up until the end of the 1960s, the East German economy went through a period of relatively rapid growth. At that time, a number of its industries were competitive on the world market.

Massive costs of population flight

● This growth was achieved to a considerable extent through a lag in consumption, and a corresponding lower living standard. The continuing confrontation with West Germany and the failure to compensate for this situation by other "values" (such as direct democracy, and so on) led to the well known flight from the country (with high general social costs, officially 130 billion East German Marks up until 1961 [when the border was closed]) and, after the building of the Berlin Wall, to rising "consumer expectations."

● The Honecker era, starting in the early 1960s, brought a turn, inasmuch as there was an attempt to shut the people up by expanding the consumer fund and raising

living standard accordingly, as a substitute for satisfying the need for democracy. Thus, already during the first five-year plan under Honecker, there was a sharp decline in the growth rate of industrial production and investment, going hand in hand with an increase in the production of consumer goods.

The official East German statistics show that while investment in mining, energy and manufacturing doubled between 1960 and 1970 (from 10 billion marks in 1960 to 21 in 1970) and rose by another 50% in the following period to 34 billion Marks in 1980, in recent years it has hardly risen at all (it stood at 36 billion Marks in 1986).

Investment in modern means of production threatened

● Even under the conditions of holding fast to the rigid super-centralized, undemocratic planned economy, this orientation meant a growth in tendencies toward crisis. Above all, the reproduction of the basic funds for modern means of production in the central industries was threatened.

According to the official date, accumulation (net investment, additional investment for new means of production) was at its highest as a percentage of the national income in 1970 and 1976. In 1970, it was 29%; in 1976, 28%. Since then it has steadily declined. In 1986, the figure of 21.6% has been given. The share of consumption has increased accordingly.

● This was to sharpen after the mid-

1970s and especially after 1984 as a result of rising raw materials prices and above all the ensuing rise in the prices of raw materials from the USSR. The prices of Soviet raw materials were linked to the evolution of world-market prices, even if the price-fixing mechanism provided for a certain moderation of conjunctural swings.

● Finally in the mid-1970s, all this combined with the crisis tendencies in the capitalist West and sharpened competition on the world market.

In a nutshell, with the growing difficulties of exporting "enough" to the West and with productivity in the capitalist countries growing under the goad of competition and mass unemployment (rationalization, automation, flexible working hours), the internal crisis of the East German economy sharpened. The phenomena of breakup in Comecon accelerated the GDR's turn toward the world market.

Higher prices for energy imports from the USSR led to the GDR trying to sell more petroleum products (chemicals) in the West. The USSR's decision to depend primarily on the West for electronic products (the Siemens contract) meant that the East German Robotron concern, the leading producer in Comecon, had to step up its orientation to the world market. This means that crises occurred that turned the advantages of membership in Comecon into disadvantages.

The Modrow government and its new economics minister, Christa Luft, have just lifted a corner of the veil that has covered up this disturbing situation. An irony, or else a clever move, for the first time a woman holds a key position in this gerontocratic, male-chauvinist society. She has now to pledge to open everything up and demand that the working class make sacrifices (like the new union head).

Five years of economic stagnation

Leaving all the euphemisms and juggling aside, the reality is that in the last five years the GDR's economy has stagnated. The continuing orientation of raising or maintaining the level of consumption in the conditions of the much described political-bureaucratic command structure has led to an "accelerated plundering of nature and of decisive funds for means of production in heavy industry."

As a result of the latter factor—deficient reproduction and lack of modernization—the society faces constantly rising repair costs (the result of neglect of quality in production) and growing income losses in export (return and refusal of East German exports by the importing countries, including the USSR) or being forced, because of poor quality, to sell

products below production cost.

Parallel to this, the infrastructure is being pillaged. In order to be able to maintain the relatively high consumption fund, necessary investment in the infrastructure is being neglected. For example, in the 1980s, production of railway rolling stock has declined sharply (in 1981, 6,420 railway cars were produced; in 1986, 4,522). And in the GDR, rail transport is decisive. Four times as much freight is transported by rail as by road.

Maintenance of the status quo is also dependent on *pump priming*. East Germany's domestic and foreign debts are growing both absolutely and relatively. Only a few weeks ago, Wolfgang and Thomas Klein, both members of the United Left, wrote the following sentence in what I consider a profound article:

"Unlike Poland, the GDR could limit in time the catastrophic effects of a foreign trade orientation of the socialist countries based from 1974-1975 on increasing and partially loan-financed imports of technology from the West." (*Kontext — Beiträge aus Kirche & Gesellschaft. Kultur*, No. 6, 1989.)

Per capita debt to West may be higher than Poland's

This is contradicted by new reports that the GDR's real foreign debt to the West is twice what had previously been given — \$21 billion. The much cited compensatory claims by the GDR in the West have been revealed to be fictitious and had to be written off a long time ago (for example, claims on Afghanistan and Vietnam for earlier East German loans or goods). If these figures are correct, and so far the worst ones have always proven to be the right ones, East Germany's per capita debt to the West is *higher than the previous unhappy record held by Poland*.

This is further aggravated by an enormous internal debt in the GDR, arising above all out of credit-financed home building. In one of the first communiqués of the new East German finance minister, Ernst Höfner, it was announced that the GDR's internal debt was around 130 billion East German Marks, of which 55 billion were accounted for by loan-financed home building. The GDR's information agency itself, the ADN, has reported that members of the GDR's parliament were astounded when the figures were given to them on April 13, 1989.

If you weigh up these facts about the East German economy, then you have to draw a startling parallel: with these methods, the East German authorities led their economy to the brink of the abyss, as the Polish leadership did in the 1960s under Gierek. ★

IN OPENING the meeting, a representative of the Council of Spokespersons presented the view that the "For a United Left Project is attempting to bring together those people in our country who are working for socialism with freedom and democracy in order to take part collectively in the competition of ideas about the future of our country." He referred to a "left, organized in the SED, non-party or belonging to independent groups." He went on to say:

"Of course, in some respects the conceptions will differ widely, and not the least objective is to get to know each other. We should not be worried by the fact that perhaps at the outset only a very narrow range of consensus can be achieved. Our strength is that a *united left* has room for all currents that identify with socialism and helps to give a public projection to all voices that make proposals for moving in that direction. So far the struggle of ideas is taking precedence over questions of organizational coordination. But we strive for ongoing, committed and, above all, substantive collaboration".

Some had hoped that this weekend it would be possible to achieve a tighter coordination of the left groups. But the conditions for that were lacking.

Discussion about forms of self-management

Based on the previous method of work, the discussion was mainly theoretical. In the Economics Workshop, the discussion was about forms of balancing self-managed enterprises and social interests, about self-managed enterprises (including the lessons of the Yugoslav "model"), about the possibilities of social participation and contributing to the solution of threatening general problems, about the attitude to take toward unions and the Initiative for an Independent Union.

In the Politics Workshop, the discussion was concentrated on what attitude to take toward the Modrow government and the model of council democracy as a long-term alternative, if not an immediate counter, to the return of bourgeois parliamentarianism.

The common basis for all the assembled groups was six points from the Böhlen Platform:

1. Social ownership of the means of production as the main foundation now and for the future for socialist socialization.
2. Extending self-determination of the producers in carrying through real socialization of total economic activity.
3. Consistent implementation of the principle of social security and social justice for all members of the society.
4. Political democracy, the rule of law, consistent application of unrestricted human rights and the free development of the individuality of every member of society.
5. Restructuring of society in accor-

Conference of the United Left

The National Meeting of the Initiative for a United Left in the GDR took place on November 25-26 in East Berlin. About 300 people participated, about half of whom were from East Germany. This was the first national gathering of the local groups and various currents from Berlin, Dresden, Leipzig and Rostock. The meeting was called by a council of spokespersons to which the various groups sent representatives. The following currents were represented: Independent Marxists, the Grass-roots Church, leftists (still) in the SED and *Autonome* [neo-anarchists].

ANGELA KLEIN

dance with environmentalist principles.

6. All these principles are valid worldwide.

On this basis, the participants tried to develop a conception of a socialist economic order that would enable people to identify once again with the GDR as a state in its own right on a non-capitalist but also non-bureaucratic basis. The starting point was expressed in the motto of the gathering: "Self-management rather than sellout." This meant that the sellout of the GDR could only be stopped if wide-ranging self-determination of the working people and self-management of production were put into practice.

For external and internal reasons (respectively, the pressure of West German imperialism and lack of capital), most considered an extension of market mechanisms to be inevitable. There was no question of cutting loose from the world

market. The GDR is already too deeply involved in the international division of labor. Detaching itself from the world market would only be possible with a perspective of rebuilding the Wall.

The participants in the conference saw the starting point for a socialist economic order in creating production relations that finally give the producers themselves the possibility to run the economy. This was in explicit opposition to the attempts of the reform forces in the SED (and naturally also in the "Bloc Parties")¹ to transfer all powers to the managers of the combines.

From this point of departure, very detailed conceptions of extensive council democracy were developed, both at the plant and territorial levels.

Some people demanded introduction of pure use-value production. Others called for "separation of power and ownership,"

that is, introducing group ownership of enterprises linked to plant self-management, similar to Yugoslavia. A third current was close to Bahro.²

On the political level, there was a conflict over the question of whether the Modrow government was only "old wine in new bottles," and whether or not to support the demand for elections to the Volkskammer [parliament].

Feminist group presents its views

A whole series of other questions were raised, such as restructuring in accordance with environmentalist principles (with a sharp controversy over the possibility of immediate abandonment of nuclear energy) and problems of computer technology and so on. The feminist group "Lilac Offensive" presented its views on the patriarchal and not simply class origins of women's oppression "because the United Left is the only organization that takes up women's oppression in its program."

The debate over structure took up the question of whether there should be closer collaboration, in the form of an editorial board for publishing a newspaper and an information bureau for interchange among independent local groups. A two-thirds majority voted for this. But they did not want to oblige all those present to go along, in order not to provoke splits. So, the United Left remained an initiative. Those who wanted more than that met to form a closer coordination within it.

At the end, the Spokespersons' Council made certain proposals for the immediate future, such as setting up a "Round-Table" project group, holding a demonstration on the occasion of Kohl's visit on November 19, and organizing a demonstration for the upcoming anniversary of the murder of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg.★

1. Small non-Communist parties allowed a token existence as a figleaf of pluralism in the one-party state.
2. Bahro holds "Fundamentalist" Green views.



The United Left conference — "Self-management not sell-offs"

Kohl's plan for "re-unification"

ONLY the Greens expressed some criticisms, defending in a more or less clear way the right to self-determination of East German citizens. It was only some days later that some SPD leaders called for recognition of the frontier with Poland and for drawing conclusions from the new situation as regards armament. But there was still an agreement in principle, even if the rhetoric invoking "reunification" was rejected, for example by Willy Brandt, who prefers to talk about a "new unification" (*Neuvereinigung*) to avoid allusions to the Third Reich.

The following are the ten points of the Kohl Plan:

1. Immediate financial aid for medical and humanitarian purposes. In the relatively near future, abolition of "welcome money" (*Begrüßungsgeld*) in favor of joint financing by East and West Germany of currency for East Germans visiting West Germany.

2. Intensification of economic and technical cooperation, starting with public transport; greater cooperation in the ecological sphere.

Creation of market conditions demanded

3. Free elections, "irreversible" political and economic reform and abolition of "bureaucratic planning" as conditions for massive aid, because "it is clear that the people want economic freedom," opening up East Germany to investment from the West and creation of "market conditions."

4. "A contractual community" of East and West Germany (as proposed by Modrow, the new East German head of government), reflecting a myriad of agreements and joint commissions (on economic affairs, transport, science, medical care, ecology and so on).

5. A "confederal structure" leading to a federation of the two Germanies, and therefore to a unitary state along federal lines (as West Germany is now). The precondition for this was free elections in East Germany. German reunification would not be carried out in one stroke.

6. Integration of German reunification in the process of economic, political and cultural reunification of Europe and in the context of overall East-West relations.

THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT chancellor Helmut Kohl presented his famous ten-point plan to the West German parliament on November 28. The scheme aimed at a reunification of the two Germanies, more concretely at a takeover of the East German territory and economy by West German imperialism. The liberal partner in the right-wing coalition government, the FDP, and also the SPD (social democrats) immediately indicated their agreement in principle.

MANUEL KELLNER

7. Association of East Germany with the capitalist EEC through a trade and cooperation treaty, including involvement in "the 1992 perspective" [the Single Act].

8. Intensification of the process begun in Helsinki in building institutions to organize mutual relations in the economic, ecological and cultural spheres between the Eastern and Western European countries.

9. "Supporting" the negotiations for disarmament in line with the world situation by negotiating with East Germany (i.e., nothing concrete as regards West German disarmament).

10. An overall policy, with an awareness of the problems that it can run into at each stage, aimed at the fulfillment of the right of the German people to national self-determination.

East German intellectuals oppose Kohl plan

In opposition to this, a group of left intellectuals in East Germany issued a public appeal on November 26, whose main passages were aimed at defending the sovereignty of East Germany and the historic opportunity to build a credible socialist alternative: "Either we stress the independence of East Germany as a state and try with all our strength...to build a society of solidarity in our country, in which peace, social justice, individual freedom, freedom to travel and the protection of the environment are guaranteed. Or else, we give in to the brutal and unacceptable economic pressures posed by the influential economic and political circles as conditions for aid to East Germany and...sooner or later East Germany will be taken over by West Germany.

"Let us take the first road. We still have an opportunity to develop a socialist alter-

native to West Germany in the framework of equal and respectful relations with all states in Europe. We can still hark back to the antifascist and humanist ideals that were our starting point..."

We cannot harbor any illusions about the mood and consciousness among the population in East Germany. It is true that opposition groups have come out against "reunification," as well as the SED (a few days before he lost his job as secretary general, Krenz did his best to discredit the appeal

mentioned above by signing it). In vain, because the people of East Germany are familiar with the political and moral difference between "socialists" like Krenz and socialists like Stefan Heym and Christa Wolf, who were in the group that issued the appeal.

Slogans for a united German homeland

However, the majority of opposition groups and also in the SED are for some sort of confederation, or simply for unification without calling it "reunification." And in the great mass demonstrations, especially in Leipzig, slogans for "a united German homeland" have become very popular. Some speakers have even gotten hoots and whistles when they have pointed to the dangers of being gobbled up by West German capital and by the powerful West German state.

In recent days, there has been a very clear differentiation in the positions in the mass demonstrations, with some calling for a united Germany and others waving banners or placards with slogans such as "We do not want to become a cabbage [Kohl] plantation."

Nonetheless, unlike the first weeks of the mass upsurge in East Germany, revanchist and reactionary restorationist plans can base themselves on feelings expressed by a section of the masses. Of course, these plans aim at a restoration of capitalism in a form dominated by the big West German trusts, and thus also at the abolition of all remaining gains of the non-capitalist economy, especially in terms of social benefits and work tempos.

If these plans begin to be carried out concretely, the workers will probably be able to see more concretely that they are the ones who will have to pay. ★

THE PRINCIPLES of counter-insurrection, being preached today in both Manila and Washington, are not really new. They include ideas which had already been put into practice in the Philippines in the 1950s, when the government succeeded in defeating the Huk peasant rebellion, which was based in the centre of Luzon island.

But today's doctrine of "Low Intensity Conflict" (LIC) is conspicuously different from the dominant orientation during the decade 1965-1975 — that of military escalation in reaction to the development of an armed revolutionary movement. This re-evaluation of the politics of counter-insurgency follows a double failure: the defeat of the American army in Vietnam and the inability of the Marcos regime to halt the expansion of the guerrilla movement in the Philippines.

What then does LIC entail? The accent is no longer put on big and costly military operations, which often prove politically counter-productive, inasmuch as they carry the risk of "unfortunate mistakes" with regard to the civilian population. Nonetheless, as Colonel John Waghelstein notes³, this doctrine does not only advocate limited engagement.

What LIC means, in fact, is "political, economic and psychological warfare, with the military being a distant fourth in many cases". In a chilling formula, Waghelstein explains that Low Intensity Conflict is "total war at the grassroots level."

Because it puts the accent on psychological warfare, LIC is sometimes seen by far left activists as a veritable *Deus ex machina*, allowing Washington to manipulate at will the situation in the Philippines. Every division inside the workers' movement, every significant divergence within the Communist movement risks being simply analyzed as the product of imperialist manipulation. So there is a great danger

Counter-insurgency, terror and democracy

"THE KEY to the counter-revolution is counter-mobilization and counter-organization"¹. Since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship², US and Philippine military leaders have rediscovered the importance of politics, psychological operations and the local organization of the population in the struggle against the Communist movement. In the long term, the implementation of this new doctrine risks posing more problems than it will solve. But, in the short term, it has enabled the government on several occasions to score some successes, in placing the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and the guerrillas on the defensive politically.

PAUL PETITJEAN

that the only response to disunity will be the denunciation of the manipulative hand and of the suspicious naïveté of the manipulated.

Things are certainly much less clear. The US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and other intelligence services evidently try to exploit the divisions of the left both at the trade union and political level, and indeed the divergences that are expressed even inside the CPP. But disunity is also, indeed above all, rooted in the socio-political history of the country and in the complex experience of international socialism. To overcome it, responses other than mere denunciation are necessary.

It is not simply a matter of the involve-

ment of the US secret services. Strong tensions express themselves regularly between the several trade-union confederations of the Philippines. European social democracy seeks to exploit these to isolate the most radical confederation, the May 1 Movement (KMU). Under Marcos, its activity was limited by the fact that the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), the local affiliate of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU — dominated by the social democratic led confederations), was linked to the dictatorship. Today, it is orientated towards the Aquino regime, which is a good deal more presentable in the international arena.

In the Philippines, one of the principal characteristics of LIC is the organization of the civilian population into armed militias (the "vigilante" groups) which directly engage in counter-revolutionary action. The core of these militias is constituted by the paramilitary groups officially termed Civilian Armed Forces Geographic Units (CAFGU), the religious sects, the private guards of local notables or "Godfathers", former soldiers and officers, and repentant ex-guerrillas (see IV 141, May 16, 1988).

Clark air base

13th Air Force

Area: 55,000 hectares
Military personnel: 8,000
Civilians: 800
Dependants: 12,000

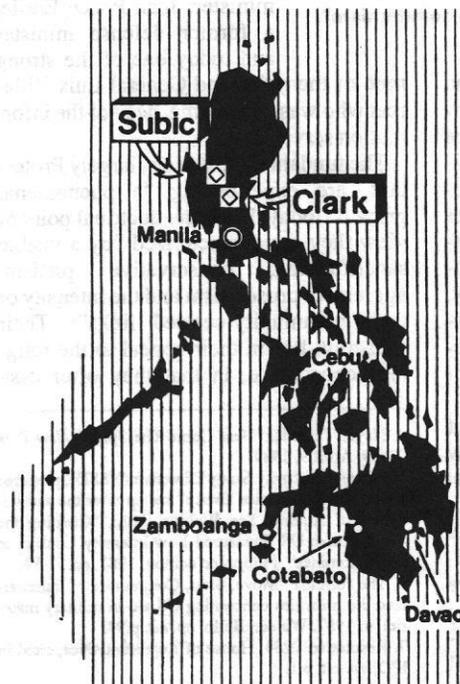
Injection into economy: \$115 m.
Capacity: 800 aircraft

Subic naval base

Radar & supply depot of US 7th Fleet

Area: 26,000 hectares (11,000 water)
Military personnel: 7,000
Civilians: 500
Dependants: 6,200

Injection into economy: \$200 m.
Ships in port daily: 12



MI 1035

1. Colonel Ismael Villareal, Deputy Commander in Chief of Operations, cited by the Institute for Popular Democracy (IPD) in "The Political and Religious Right in the Philippines".

2. Ferdinand Marcos was elected president in 1965 following an election considered to be fraudulent. He reinforced his dictatorship from 1972 onwards, with the declaration of martial law, which was not lifted until 1981. He was overthrown by the mass mobilizations that followed the massive fraud in the presidential election of February 7, 1986, when Marcos was declared to have "defeated" Cory Aquino (see IVs 92, February 10, 1986, 93, February 24, 1986, 95, March 24, 1986).

3. Colonel John Waghelstein commands the 7th Special Force of the US Army.

These local organizations multiplied in the archipelago after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship; the old para-military militias — the Civilian Home Defence Forces (CHDF) of painful memory — were discredited and there was no longer a strong central power capable of controlling the proliferation of armed groups of every kind. The widespread emergence of the “vigilantes” is above all a specifically Philippine phenomenon, the heritage of a past both distant (the fragmentation of state power and the strength of the great provincial families) and more recent (the politicization of the army under Marcos and the emergence of extreme-right, religious fundamentalist currents). The proponents of LIC understood well how to profit from this windfall.

The chief strength of LIC lies in its ability to utilize existing and deeply-rooted organizations produced by local history, rather than creating brand new counter-revolutionary organizations. LIC benefits also from the country's colonial past. This has generated a multitude of links between the United States and the Philippines which facilitate considerably the multi-faceted intervention of US imperialism in the formulation and implementation of the politics of counter-insurgency.

In April 1987 President Reagan officially authorized the CIA to operate in the Philippines. A budget of \$10 million was allocated to surveillance and covert actions.⁴ As for the CPP, it decided to launch direct attacks on the American presence. In April 1989, an urban unit of the New People's Army (NPA — guerrilla movement led by the CPP) killed Colonel James Rowe, an American officer specializing in counter-revolutionary activity.

US policy in the Philippines is not without its contradictions. Diverse governmental agencies and numerous private pressure groups are involved, and their actions are sometimes difficult to homogenize. Genuine conflicts of orientation divided the US administration following the assassination of opposition politician Benigno Aquino in 1983. But this diversity also permits Washington to maintain contacts with a wide spectrum of political forces in the Philippines, from moderate to extreme right, from the government to dissident elements in the army.

The growth of the NPA led Washington to re-evaluate its priorities in the area of counter-insurgency, putting the accent on its non-military aspect. Faced by the crisis

of the dictatorship, the US government sensed the need to widen the base of the Philippine regime among the bourgeoisie and to reinforce the organization of the population. In a document adopted in January 1985⁵, it came out in favour of political and economic reforms to make the corridors of power more open to the Philippine elite, without however putting in question the existence of the Marcos regime itself.

Other measures concerned the armed forces. The aim was first and foremost to reinforce their efficiency by improving

has strengthened the formal bonds between our governments and added a human dimension which makes US-Philippine ties a special relationship for both countries. If we are to have such special relationships among the future American and Philippine military leaders, we must invest in them now, by providing opportunities to train and associate together”.

The “special relations” between the US and the Philippines are not confined to the military sphere. They concern also political movements, religious sects and private lobbies. Particularly close links have grown up between the “New Right” in the United States and the religious right in the Philippines. The activity of American far right personalities has been so flagrant that it has provoked a warning from the Chamber of Representatives, which passed a resolution saying that such “blatant interference in the domestic affairs” of the Philippines constituted “a threat to the development of a truly democratic and pluralist society”⁷.

Among the individuals involved are Ray Cline, former deputy director of the CIA; and John Singlaub, a retired army officer who is head of the World Anti-Communist League. During his stay in the Philippines, Singlaub benefitted from numerous contacts with highly placed personalities, such as Teodoro Locsin, adviser to President Aquino; Fidel Ramos, the defense minister; Juan Ponce Enrile, a former defense minister and today one of the strong

men of the right; and General Luis Villareal who was, at the time, head of the information services.

The fundamentalist sects, largely Protestant, are experiencing “a phenomenal growth” today. From the doctrinal point of view they are characterized “by a visible sanctification, conservative pietism, aggressive proselytism and the intensity of their community-centred links”⁸ Their attraction lies in their appeal to the religious conscience, in that they offer easy



Demonstration in Manila: the placard reads “Death to communism” (DR)

the quality of “counter-propaganda” and the civic actions presented as “a necessary adjunct to military action”. Aid should be directed above all to improving the mobility of the government forces, their firepower and their communications⁶. Rather than ultra-modern F16 planes, the Pentagon offered trucks, armored vehicles, helicopter parts and radio material. Finally, Washington wished to reinforce its control over the Philippine army and therefore extended the programme of formation and training.

One of the most important members of the Defense Department unambiguously spelled out the implications of this last measure: “Most importantly, the programme promotes rapports with the younger AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) officers who will be its future leaders. The special friendship among American and Philippine military personnel which was forged during World War II

4. Nayan Chanda, “Here Come The Spies”, *New York Times*, April 9, 1987.

5. National Security Study Directive (NSSD), prepared by an “Inter-Agencies Group” set up after the assassination of Aquino. See Walden Bello, “Creating the Third Force: US Sponsored Low-Intensity Conflict in the Philippines”, Philippine edition, 1987, pp.57-59.

6. The formula “Move, Shut, Communicate” summarized the priorities concerning US aid in military materiel, in 1987. Walden Bello, *op. cit.* p.94.

7. Resolution 0284, House of Representatives, cited in IPD, *op. cit.* p.1.

answers, a feeling of belonging, a genuine community support in a time of crisis. Today they constitute a special culture medium for the most virulent anti-communism.

So the Philippine extreme right comprises a wide spectrum of political organizations, religious sects, armed militias and paramilitary groups. For the first time, 60 of these movements have formed a broad coalition, the National Alliance for Democracy. General Ramos, defense minister and aspirant for the Presidency of the Republic, has sponsored the formation of this new movement. At the inaugural meeting of the Alliance, he invited the fundamentalist sects to incorporate themselves directly into the counter-insurgency strategy: "You have to show the rest of the country that the citizenry can be organized and motivated [so as to participate in the anti-Communist struggle]. You are part of the people's war for democracy"⁹.

Rightist leader aims to smash unions

The far-right organizations operate in the countryside as well as in the capital, Manila. They do not conceal their objectives. One of them, "Bantay Bayan" (Guardians of the People) offers its services to firms wishing to bring their workers into line. Its leader, Ernie Camino, has stated that his ambition is to "educate the workers on the torments and dangers of the red trade unions" and to "smash these unions which are only Communist fronts". In March 1989, 34 private enterprises — amongst them the multinational Nestlé¹⁰ — had already made use of the good offices of Camino's organization.

Camino also collaborates with the military and the provincial governors. He gives courses in anti-communism to villagers, under the protection of teams specially constituted for psychological warfare, the SOT (Special Operations Teams). To this end, he uses the instruction manual of Causa International (Confederation of Associations for the Unity of the Societies of America) — 264 pages of great polemical clarity on glossy paper. In the politics of pacification in the Philippines, the cooperation between SOT and Causa is a long story.

Causa is the political arm of the Unification Church, better known as the "Moonie" sect. This religious cult, founded in 1954, has been sustained by Korean, Taiwanese and Japanese funding. Established in 1980, Causa's original objective was to offer an anti-Communist ideology to the Latin American countries. Causa International is now present in Europe, the United States and in Africa. Its president, Bo Hi Pak, is a former liaison officer between the Korean and US secret services.

As for SOT, it consists of teams which have been recently constituted to lead local counter-insurgency operations with the aim of neutralizing the activity of the

guerillas and undermining their popular base. According to a military document, "SOT operations will concentrate on the destruction of Communist political cells in the urban areas as well as in the countryside, aimed to isolate the insurgents from their respective mass bases. Effective psyops [psychological operations], therefore, carry a major role in this operation"¹¹. In concentrating their attack on the political structure of the insurgent movement, the SOTs are supposed to "submerge themselves" in the villages and neighbourhoods. They must help the population, offering free health care or help to sink wells. In short, they must beat the guerillas on their own terrain, that of mass implementation.

Selective attacks on CPP cadres

Obviously there is a darker side to counter-insurgency. It is also about attacking selectively the cadres of the CPP, even if it means multiplying summary executions. The intelligence tasks remain essential. It is reminiscent of Operation Phoenix, implemented by the Americans in Vietnam, which cost the lives of around 40,000 "suspects", killed and often tortured without trial.

For Alfred McCoy, the doctrine of LIC runs a strong risk of initiating "a campaign of civilian liquidations" through "promoting a pacification policy that may ultimately encourage death squad activity". For McCoy, the Philippines are on the threshold "of a savage civil war" — a veritable "downward spiral of kill and counter-kill"¹².

The field of ideology is the preferred terrain for Causa International. For Unification Church leader Reverend Sun Myung Moon, "Communism cannot be eliminated unless a superior ideology or vision of the world is opposed to it. This vision of the world must start from the idea of God"¹³. Causa's instruction manual is premised from beginning to end on the opposition between religion and Marxism. Distributed in the army, it is used by the SOT in the "counter-propaganda" seminars it organizes in the localities¹⁴.

The Reverend Moon has been found guilty of fraud by the American courts, but this has not prevented his organization from basing its international operations from the United States. His religious sect would be laughable were it not for its numerical, financial and political strength. Moon and his wife are known to their disciples as "True Parents" and run their church in a thoroughly autocratic fashion. Moon claims modestly to be the new Messiah. He has "been chosen by God to initiate a new way of fighting communism"¹⁵.

Reverend Moon's anti-Communist crusade is conducted under the banner of freedom. His idea of democracy, however, is somewhat unusual: "When it comes

to our age, we must have an automatic theocracy to rule the world. So we cannot separate the political field from the religious... Separation between religion and politics is what Satan likes more"¹⁶. Causa International presents a civilized version of the Moon doctrine. But this organization has established firm relations with a number of fascist organizations around the world, notably the French National Front of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Manipulation of popular beliefs and superstitions

Religion, then, is systematically manipulated towards counter-revolutionary ends. The manipulation of popular beliefs and superstitions by American and Philippine experts is nothing new. For example, during the 1950s government forces utilized the fear of vampires. They would drain the body of a captured militant of blood through incisions in the neck and leave it to be found, enough to put to flight the bravest of guerrilla units¹⁷. But "psychological warfare" is also conducted on a more strictly political plane.

The creation of suspicion is one of the tasks prioritized by the SOTs. The intervention of the special counter-insurgency forces operates in several phases — the organization and training of the SOT first, then intelligence work and, finally, the psychological operations which accompany the "submergence" of the military unit in the locality¹⁸. The SOT first spreads the rumour that the soldiers "know everything" about the local Communist infrastructure and then announces that the militants have only a few days in which to give themselves up. Once a certain amount of information is gathered, the SOT has recourse to the "magic box".

The military document on the SOTs sets out in detailed fashion the role of this box, "made of plywood, one foot square with a

8. Thomas Marti, "Fundamentalist Sects and the Political Right", SPI series special issue number 3, Socio-Pastoral Institute, Quezon City, 1987. Pro-Mundi Vita number 100, Brussels, 1985/1. See also Rev. Thomas Marti, Fundamentalist Religion, SPI series D3-88, 1988.

9. Cited by Sheila S. Coronel, *The Globe*, March 29, 1989.

10. See Alain Marc, *Le Journal de Genève*, March 2, 1989.

11. "Subject: SOT", typed military document dated December 1, 1987. See also "Special Operation Team (SOT) Concept", published in Victor Corpus, "Silent War", VNC Enterprise, Quezon City, 1989.

12. Alfred W. McCoy, "Demystifying LIC", *Kasarinian*, vol. 4 number 3, first quarter 1989, p.40.

13. "Causa Lecture Manual", Causa Institute, New York, January 1985, p. 11.

14. see Alain Marc, *op. cit.*

15. "Causa Lecture Manual", *op. cit.* p.111.

16. "Master Speaks", cited by Fred Clarkson, "The Causa Kingdom", SPI series special issue 2, Socio-Pastoral Institute, Quezon City, 1987.

17. See McCoy, *op. cit.*

18. Victor Corpus, *op. cit.* The four subsequent phases are the neutralization of the Communist movement, the mobilization of the population, the implementation of a program of village defense and economic development.

small drop hole and a padlock". During a public meeting, termed a "dialogue", the inhabitants are enjoined to put in this sinister box ballot papers on which they have written the names of Communist activists they know. The SOTs leave nothing to chance. Fearing that the inhabitants will not give satisfactory information, and "to ensure that there will be personalities identified, it is necessary to have a ready name of a personality based from collected information, and let someone drop said name in the 'magic box', or place it in the box prior to the dialogue". Thus to benefit from the general confusion when the ballots are gone through in public and the name of the militant is revealed.

A mixture of psychological action, information work, and political operation, the affair of the "Deep Penetration Agents" (DPAs) — nicknamed "Zombies", has not ceased to pose grave problems for the CPP (see IV 102, June 30, 1986).

Army plants agents in guerrilla ranks

For a long time, the army has sought to penetrate the ranks of the guerrillas by "planting" agents in advance in areas where the NPA is expected soon to recruit. This tactic was notably successful in the southern island of Mindanao where the Communist movement grew very rapidly during the last years of the Marcos regime. It succeeded also in leading the Communist leadership to believe that the infiltration was much more extensive than was actually the case²⁰. The ensuing panic led to a massive purge being launched in several provinces of the island in the ranks of the CPP, the NPA and the National Democratic Front. Dozens of militants were killed, most of whom were innocent.

Torture has been used more than once in the Communist ranks, and has served only to worsen things, generating an infernal spiral of confessions and forced denunciations — after having confessed to crimes which they had never committed, militants have been ordered to name their fictitious accomplices. Subsequently other militants have been implicated and condemned.

A document in Tagalog drawing a balance-sheet of these purges, drawn up by a leadership body of the CPP (perhaps regional) and dated January 4 1989, was seized by the military and published last June. It is both damning in terms of revealing what happened, and essential because of the questions that it raises and the measures it proposes. It recognizes that there is still a lot to learn about how to conduct "judicial/criminal procedures inside the party and the [national democratic] movement".

In view of recent experience, this circular enjoins party leaders not to condemn solely on the basis of "circumstantial evidence such as weaknesses in action, association with suspected enemies or personal weaknesses", all things "which happened"

during the recent anti-DPA purges.

The proof of guilt must not be, for the main part, put together during the interrogation but during the enquiry which precedes the laying of charges. Confessions obtained during interrogation are dubious, especially if obtained by torture — "it can be expected that a person being tortured can make up a story for the torture to be stopped". In general, "the use of torture is strictly forbidden". Suspects should be given a real opportunity to defend themselves and the investigators must be wary of taking a one-sided stance²¹.

Two further cases of murderous purges are known, in the provinces of Quezon and of Laguna (on Luzon island) — two cases still graver in that they happened after the disastrous experience of Mindanao. According to the testimony of survivors, the national leadership of the CPP intervened to stop the summary liquidations (as seems also to have been the case at Mindanao).

Former NPA members tell of executions

Two former members of the NPA surrendered to the authorities and have given interviews on the wave of executions which struck members of their units during the second half of 1988. Themselves suspects, although innocent, they were going to be killed by their own comrades. It was the arrival on the scene of Satur Ocampo and Bobbie Malay, two leaders of the CPP²², which saved them *in extremis* — they brought an order, dated November 15 1988, according to which "all executions of DPA should be stopped²³".

To our knowledge, such paranoid purges occurred only in a relatively small number of provinces, and not the entire party. One can nonetheless affirm that the damage they inflicted on the CPP was far greater than that provoked by the infiltration the purges were intended to combat. Besides the loss of irreplaceable human lives, the moral credit of the movement has been hard hit, a number of militants have lost confidence in their own organization, and it is feared that internal political debate has become sterilized. For how can anybody dare to formulate a criticism, if another cadre could see in it a proof of guilt, inasmuch as the task of agents is precisely to foment division?

The use of torture, has besides, profoundly shocked a number of militants and cadres of the party or national-democratic movement. They have fought it on grounds of principle when it has been employed by the military. Now, CPP leaders, at least at a provincial level, have defended the recourse to torture under the pretext of efficacy²⁴. All information gathered by this method is however very uncertain, as is shown anew by the recent experience of the anti-DPA purges.

es. There are other more profound reasons for forbidding the use of such methods. Torture cannot be, like a gun, turned against the bourgeois state. A negation of the very humanity of both tortured and torturer, it morally corrupts the organization which practices it. It is to be hoped that the forbidding of any recourse to torture, as mentioned in the circulars of the CPP, will henceforth be applied to the whole of Philippine territory.

Process of savage militarization

Behind the question of the anti-DPA purges, it is the organizational quality of the CPP and the NPA which has been put in doubt — as has their capacity to respect the most elementary human rights even in times of war and in their own camp. The "massacre of Digos" put in doubt their ability to protect the civilian population, in a country subjected to an increasingly savage process of militarization.

The multiplication of vigilante groups and other CAFGUs has created an extremely dangerous situation. The regime tends to blur the distinction between civil and military, implicating the population in its counter-insurgency operations. The government army has been already accustomed to murderous "errors", with innocent inhabitants being killed in the course of military operations. The far-right militias and private armies often exert local reigns of terror. But, recently, the NPA itself has been accused of violations in Digos, a small village in Mindanao.

In the remote village of Digos, a Protestant sect had set up an armed anti-Communist militia. On June 25 1989, when the population was gathered at a religious service, an NPA unit which had approached for a "dialogue" became involved in a military confrontation with the "vigilantes". In the ensuing conflict, 37 villagers died, including many women and children, unarmed and taking refuge in a building. In control of the area, the guerrilla unit provided health care. But before it withdrew, two corpses were decapitated.

The national Protestant representative body, the Unified Council of Churches of the Philippines (UCCP), has warned the government, noting how much the creation of vigilante groups provokes a new

19. Document: SOT" *op. cit.* pp. 6-7. See also Kim Gordon Bates, *Politis* number 53, March 1989.

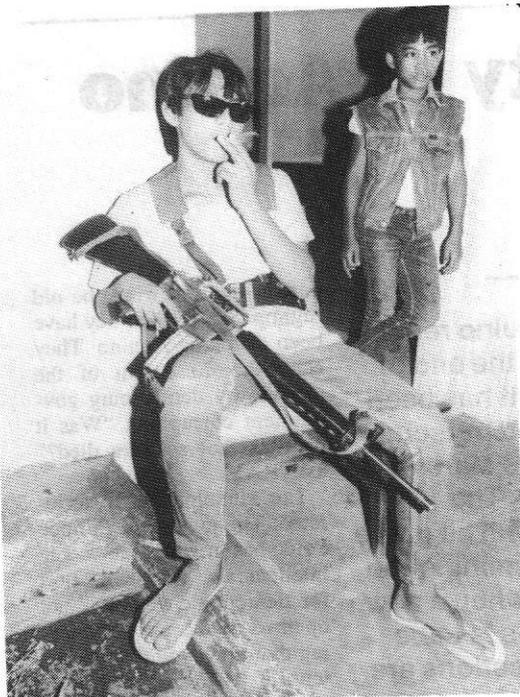
20. Alfred McCoy, *op. cit.*

21. Letter and document dated January 4, 1989, in: "The New Killing Fields", Civil Relations Forces, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Quezon City, June 1989.

22. They were both arrested in July 1989, and are now in detention.

23. Cited in an article of Pauline Sycam, *The Manila Chronicle*, May 31, 1989.

24. This has been recognized by several ex-members of the NDF or of the CPP, on the occasion of diverse political discussions — all affirming their complete disagreement with such a practice.



A "vigilante"

aggravation of the militarization of the country. But it holds the guerillas responsible for this disaster. It has demanded that the NPA admit its errors, punish the guilty and compensate the families of the victims. Nothing in the course of the events could justify the gravity of the losses suffered by the civilian population — the guerrilla unit was in control of the situation. In the national-democratic milieu (favourable to the NPA) emotions again ran very high.

The leadership of the National Democratic Front (NDF) has set up its own commission of enquiry, which presented its report on August 12, 1989. On August 21, the National Council of the NDF published a declaration in which it accepted the conclusions of the commission of enquiry, namely: the arraignment and trial of the NPA unit involved in the events; the arraignment and trial of the two guerillas who admitted having decapitated the corpses; the compensation of the victims' families; the intensification of the political education campaigns inside the NPA. The regional command of Davao del Sur (Mindanao) must, in addition, draw a serious balance-sheet of what happened, to determine the best way to deal with the problem of the vigilante groups.

With the anti-DPA purges and the "Digos massacre", it is the revolutionary movement which, for once, has found itself on the bench of the accused. The government has accordingly taken the opportunity to present itself as a moderate force, claiming that a "current of the centre" has emerged since the fall of the dictatorship in 1986.

Aquino being menaced as much by the extreme right as by the extreme left, continues to regroup behind her the elements frightened by the dynamic of militarization in the country — those elements

which reject violence, from whatever source it comes. It is a very important factor of the situation in the Philippines. It is vital for any counter-insurgency doctrine which seeks to put the accent on the political situation of the revolutionary movement, and which accords such importance to the ideological front.

As Walden Bello already noted in 1987, "the NDF and the NPA were in the unprecedented situation of being on the political defensive while maintaining the military initiative"²⁵. The balance-sheet of the past three years is certainly not unequivocal, but a succession of "affairs" have regularly thrown the national-democratic movement on the political and moral defensive. The stakes here are considerable. The Aquino presidency seeks to cut the far-left off from "intermediary forces" and to use the flag of democracy for her own purposes.

Democratic slogans used by anti-democratic forces

In the Philippines, the democratic terrain is clearly an essential field of struggle for revolutionaries. Joel Rocamora raises the importance of this question, in an interview published in the Philippines in February 1989: "The left in several third-world countries needs some self-criticism. We have a situation where anti-democratic forces...have been able to grab the banner of democracy for their own anti-democratic needs. The forces of the left must begin to reflect very seriously what it is about their ideology, their past practices, their internal situations that has made it difficult for them to grab the banner of democracy"²⁶. The doctrine of LIC has however an Achilles Heel... and a big one. It affects to implement a revolutionary policy thanks to the good offices of a profoundly conservative regime. Ingenuously, General Honesto Isleta has explained that, "it's about using the techniques employed by the Communists ourselves, except that we will be more successful than them because we have more resources..."²⁷. As if it was simply an affair of technicians and money!

The big provincial families — the social base of the Aquino regime — are past masters in the art of emptying the successive laws on agrarian reform of their official content. The industrial and financial bourgeoisie has not been able to make a common front, faced with the IMF, to relieve the economy of a part of the weight of the debt — at which point the planning minister, Solita Monsod, although a disciple of the free market, ended up resigning from the government in protest. The military have not changed. Their support for the government remains grudging and conditional. The army

remains torn by factional struggles; it is the future of the police (integrated or not into the army) which now raises the most heightened passions. Today, the government has not succeeded any more than it did in the past in imposing unity and effective control on the armed forces.

The theorists of LIC hope that the government will be able to repeat the success of the 1950s campaign against the Huks. They hoped that the guerillas would rapidly fall apart after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship. They have learnt otherwise to their cost. The situation has changed so much in 30 years that the politics of counter-insurgency come up against new structural obstacles.

The revolutionary movement has learnt a great deal from the defeat of the preceding generation — even if there remains certainly a lot to learn from the very rich experience of the 1980s. The CPP and the NPA are organizations implanted at a national level, and in all the popular strata. The Huk insurrection was limited to the centre of the island of Luzon, which made its suppression much easier.

Philippine society itself has undergone deep changes. In the 1950s, the Philippines had one of the highest growth rates in the region. Today, the country is a tail-ender in development terms, compared to its neighbours in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). The peasantry could believe the promises concerning agrarian reform made by the president of the time, Magsaysay. It is no longer the case since that first bitter experience. Numerous Christian colonists were able to leave the overpopulated countryside of Luzon in the north of the archipelago and of Vizayas in the centre, to set up in Mindanao, depriving the local Muslims of their land. This safety-valve is now closed. The workers' movement was still in its infancy. While still very much a minority, it is now more hardened. The army was, at that time, a professional army, subject to the orders of the civilian government. Today it represents a political force and a constant menace.

The situation which is opening up could be difficult for President Aquino. The negotiation of new accords on the presence of American bases in the archipelago, in 1991, stirs up the opposition of nationalist elements. It occurs at a time when the preparation of the general elections of 1992 will bring to a head the tensions inside the dominant classes. If the left can develop responses adapted to the current situation and can regain the political initiative, the run-up to 1992 could see a further deepening of the crisis of the regime. ★

25. Walden Bello, *op. cit.* p. 75.

26. Joel Rocamora, "Burdens of a Client State", interview, *Mikweek*, February 15, 1989, p.45.

27. Cited by Alain Marc, *Le Journal de Genève*, July 29, 1988.

Coup reveals fragility of Aquino regime

THE LAST attempted coup took place in August 1987. A precarious equilibrium was then negotiated between the civil administration and the military.¹ It lasted 27 months, but it did not hold up against the erosion of Aquino's popularity and the approach of the elections scheduled for 1992. The President's decision to set up a strong police force independent of the army probably precipitated the crisis. But above all it is the very nature of the regime itself which is being challenged.

The rebel officers kept quiet for a long time, but finally made known their demands — the resignation of Aquino and the government, the formation of a military junta, including politicians and civilian experts. Over and above the intense factional struggles inside the military, however, and its differences over timing and means, a growing section of the armed forces seems to aspire to outright conquest of power.

Mutineers hold positions for more than a week

Several thousand soldiers and officers participated actively in the recent attempted coup, amongst them elite units such as the Marines, who were well armed with light tanks, mortars and heavy machine guns. For more than a week, the mutineers held positions in the business district of Makati, in the capital, as well as the Mactan air base in the centre of the archipelago. According to the press, they enjoyed "widespread support from various military units throughout the country".² On Cebu, an island in the centre of the archipelago, and in the province of Cagayan, in the north of the country, this support was expressed very openly.

We are no longer dealing with putsches intended to put pressure on the government, "shots across the bow" like that of July 1986. What has happened now is "a veritable insurrection of a part of the army".³ It seems an established fact that the rebel troops would have been victorious were it not for the intervention of US forces — US fighter planes provided air cover for the regime on Wednesday 1 December when the government air force was paralyzed and the presidential palace

THE COUP D'ETAT against the Aquino regime in the Philippines, which began at the end of November, has been defeated. But it has been the most serious of the six attempted putsches in the country since the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in February 1986. The consequences of the recent events will be grave and lasting. This instability is undermining the authority of the President at a time when a new treaty on the presence of US bases is to be signed in 1991 and when general elections are scheduled for 1992.

PAUL PETITJEAN



had been attacked. The situation was so serious that Aquino had even asked Washington to bombard the positions held by the mutineers — which Bush refused to order.⁴

The intervention of the American forces constitutes a very dangerous precedent which could help Washington to justify a growing interference in the political life of the archipelago. It places the Aquino presidency in a position of great weakness at the moment when negotiations on a new treaty on the presence of US bases are due to begin. The various mass organizations of the Philippine left have sharply denounced this resorting to foreign intervention, when the population was not actively mobilized to combat the coup.

For their part, the rebel officers played on populist and nationalist sentiments. They denounced both the American intervention and the incompetence of the regime, and called for an "honest" military junta. They frequently claimed to be the heirs of the RAM — the Movement for Reform of the Armed Forces of the Philippines — that prepared the 1985 coup against Marcos and in 1986 took

part in overthrowing the old regime. Since 1987 they have been attacking Aquino. They echo the discontent of the officers by denouncing government corruption. "Was it for this that soldiers died?" asks RAM.

The situation has deteriorated. The journalist Philippe Pons has noted that "some intellectuals, whose support for democratic values is not open to doubt, are now saying that they would support a junta if it were able to put a stop to the current breakdown."⁵

Nonetheless the Philippine left has violently denounced the putsch, and unambiguously rejects any kind of military regime. A vast coalition was formed under the name "Kilos" to fight against the coup d'etat; the socialist organization Bisig and the Volunteers for Popular Democracy are a part of this coalition. Kilos, along with sectors of the Church, took the initiative of calling on the population to demonstrate at EDSA, the highway where the uprising against Marcos took place in 1986. Corazon Aquino "co-opted" this initiative, turning it into a demonstration of support for her presidency that attracted over 100,000 people.

State of emergency opposed by left

The political independence of the popular organizations has however been clearly affirmed. In particular, Kilos⁶ has opposed Aquino's declaration of a state of emergency. The restrictions on democratic rights entailed by this measure could very easily be turned against the mass movement. The clandestine organizations like the National Democratic Front have also condemned both the attempted coup and the declaration of the state of emergency.

The Aquino presidency has been weakened still further by this experience. Before the 1992 election campaign has even begun, the Philippines have been shown to be more unstable than at any time since the fall of Marcos. ★

1. See IV 126, September 28, 1987.

2. Keith Richburg, *International Herald Tribune*, December 9-10, 1989.

3. Philippe Pons, *Le Monde*, December 8, 1989.

4. *International Herald Tribune*, December 4, 1989.

5. *Le Monde*, December 7, 1989.

6. Kilos — Kilusan Laban sa Kudeta (Anti-Coup Movement).

EUSKADI

Murderous attack on Basque deputies



The murky background

THE FIRST point is that there is a growing conviction as the days go by that the state apparatuses were implicated in the outrage. The round of discussions by the police minister, Corcuera, with the various parties — except the one that Muguruza belonged to! — confirms the impression that they have something to hide from public opinion.

The political cover the perpetrators enjoyed is evident. There has been an operation to cut Herri Batasuna off from the society. And all the parties of the system, from the "right" to the "left," all the media from the "official" to the "independent," are implicated in this.

The terrorist attack on elected representatives of HB, on the democratic rights of 200,000 citizens of this country, knocked the props out from under the pretences of a good part of the so-called constitutional "bloc." Its orientation has been to close ranks, to prevent dissident voices from being heard, and to try to put the moral responsibility on HB, to reduce street protest or strikes.

As regards the reactions of parties and state institutions outside Euzkadi, the picture is still worse. The culture of "anti-terrorism" is soaking into the society, and an attack on a section of the Basque people in conflict with the state institutions can be presented as an attack on "Spanish democracy" and turned against Herri Batasuna itself.

Herri Batasuna called for street demonstrations and a general strike. The result was a powerful mobilization. It is evident that these expressed a mass revolution. In particular, the November 22 rally to pay homage to Josu Muguruza is comparable to what happened five years ago when they assassinated Santi Brouard. It represented one of the peaks of mobilization for our people. ★

Zutik

TWO LEADERS of the revolutionary Basque nationalist party Herri Batasuna (HB — The People United) were gunned down by attackers in the Alcalá Hotel in Madrid on November 20. Josu Muguruza was killed, with a bullet in the head. Iñaki Esnaola was gravely wounded, with four bullets in the lungs. Both were deputies to the Spanish state parliament. The attack took place hours before the HB parliamentary group was to take the oath and begin to participate for the first time in the central legislative body. They were dining in the restaurant of their hotel, along with the manager of *Egin*, a bilingual radical nationalist Basque daily; and two journalists from the paper. The attackers were two men in their thirties, one wearing a hood and the other a ski mask. In its November 21 issue, the Madrid daily *El País* noted that in the Spanish state the 9-millimetre shells fired by the assassins are used almost exclusively by the military. The operation resembled other attacks and assassinations carried out by a shadowy murder gang calling itself the Grupo Antiterrorista de Liberación (GAL, Anti-terrorist Liberation Group), which evidence in court cases has linked to the Spanish state police secret services.

The murders caused an outcry in the Basque country, leading to militant street protests and a massive, if very uneven general strike on November 22. The following are excerpts from an eye-witness account of the shooting by Teresa Toda in *Zutik*, the journal of the Liga Komunista Iraultzailea (LKI, Revolutionary Communist League, the Fourth Internationalist organization in the part of the Basque country in the Spanish state) and from the paper's editorial.

MORE THAN a week after the attack in the Hotel Alcalá, I still find it hard to believe.

How could this happen? As we told ourselves that night, this cannot be true. But it is. And as the days go by, the terrible, unalterable facts are beginning to add up. There was a press conference where Herri Batasuna explained its proposals for the Madrid parliament.

Afterwards, they went to lunch, accompanied by HB's press secretary, Xabier Olega; Ramón Uranga the manager of *Egin*, and the paper's Madrid correspondent. The same people met again, some hours later, for dinner. At 11:10 [dinner hour comes late in the Spanish state], the first two shots could be heard, terribly dry, hard sounds, followed by others, up to 12 of them.

Under the tables, which were used as precarious cover by the diners, lay the bodies of Josu Muguruza and Iñaki Esnaola. Josu was close to death, and Iñaki was very badly wounded.

After the police arrived, they started asking all sorts of absurd questions, and adopted an attitude that verged on the offensive for those who had just come through such a trying experience. Remarks such as "What, don't tell us this is

your first terrorist attack?" addressed to some of the eye-witnesses did not help matters any.

The facts are irrevocable. The question marks remain. How the attack was carried out seems to be becoming clear, although they have not managed to arrest the perpetrators. Who the targets were and why is another matter.

It is curious to watch the shifting back and forth in the police theories over whether the shots were aimed only at Esnaola or also at Muguruza. My impression is that the assassins knew quite well what they were doing, that they had definite targets.

It seemed to be quite a professional operation, in view of its rapidity (no more than 30 seconds) and the fact that more people were not hit. If they had been hyped-up amateurs, as has also been suggested, they probably would have hit more of the people in the dining room.

Another of the big enigmas is the possible presence in the same hotel of agents of the State Security Forces. Their mission, to judge from some information that appeared in the press, was clearly not to protect the deputies and senators but to keep track of their movements and even of their conversations. ★

East meets West at socialist feminist conference

ON NOVEMBER 24-26, the Swedish town of Göteborg was the meeting place for the fifth European Forum of Socialist Feminists. Over 100 women came from all over Europe, including for the first time an important participation of socialist feminists from Eastern Europe.

The Forum, first launched in 1985, was organized this year by Swedish and Norwegian feminists. It has now become an important annual event where socialist feminists from varied political backgrounds can get together to exchange experiences and discuss common strategies.

NATACHA BRINK

IT WAS an extremely pleasurable experience to find oneself among more than 100 women at the end of November in a meeting place that is highly symbolic for the Scandinavian women's movement.

The *Kvinnofolkhögskolan* is a women's institute, and the only parallel school to come out of the women's movement. It is run democratically by teachers and students, and often welcomes refugees. For Swedish feminists it is popular both as a meeting place and a research centre.

That weekend, we had another reason to be happy: attending the Forum with us were Maria from Hungary; Andjelska from Yugoslavia; Natalya, Anastasia and Valentina from the USSR; and Ewa and Yolanta from Poland. The possibility of hearing reports from our different countries and comparing our experiences and analyses directly, without going through the medium of official institutions, was truly extraordinary.

Women, first victims of economic crisis

Coming from the countries of so-called "actually existing socialism", these women described a patriarchal society where women are the first victims of the deepening economic crisis. At a time when all these countries are going through profound changes, they denounced the "stagnant" situation of women: "There are so many urgent questions to resolve that women's problems are forgotten!" The women from Eastern Europe also criticized the male chauvinist paternalism of the reformers, and said that they were fighting to set up the first groups of independent feminists.

In Moscow, Valentina, Natalya and Anastasia have set up an informal research group with the following programme: publishing a list of social statistics, which is indispensable for feminist research, notably sociological research; introducing the feminist dimension in general into political life and, to reach this objective, establishing real interdisciplinary collaboration; and, finally, preparing women candidates for the local soviet elections, which involves defining a feminist strategy within the informal groups that already exist. They hope to link up with other feminists in the Soviet Union and plan to organize a first national feminist meeting in Leningrad or Moscow.

Influence of Catholic Church in Poland

In Poland, feminists feel as though they are swimming against the tide of the dominant ideology — in particular that of the Catholic Church, which has a strong influence on Solidarnosc — and of the whole of male society for whom "Polish women are far too liberated, to the point where it would suit them to found a men's movement to protect themselves..." In spite of everything, the first public feminist association has been formed. It is very small, with only around 20 women members, explained by the fact that the label "feminist" still appears incongruous over there. They came into the streets to demonstrate in solidarity with American women in their fight for a woman's right to choose [see IV 175].

In Budapest, the first independent feminist group has appeared, while the official, ossified women's movement seems



to want to become autonomous. Crystallizing a relation of forces in favour of feminism will be decisive during the transitional period that Hungary is presently going through. The current reforms have affected men and women in different ways, and there is a danger that they will be interpreted as heralding a new period of necessary sacrifices for women in order to improve the economic situation. Women have by and large remained outside of the development of new parties, due to lack of information. Also, they have stayed on the sidelines because they feel the need to protect themselves from a world of politics that they have had a daunting vision of up until now.

Yugoslav women fight for economic survival

Andjelska stressed the passivity of women in Yugoslavia, where the situation seems to be the most blocked, such is the scale of women's apparent resignation. Their central preoccupation is simply fighting for the economic survival of their families in a country rocked by galloping inflation — running at 2,000% this year.

If they were incontestably "the stars" of the Forum, the women from Eastern Europe did not monopolize the conference. They took part in the debates and workshops on the women's work and their current struggles; on the new technologies; on the relationship between the informal and formal sectors; and on the massive reduction of the working week. The largest number of representatives were from the Scandinavian countries and Britain, but nearly every country in Western Europe was present. In addition, there were participants from Australia and India, and feminists from the immigrant communities in Europe, in particular Turkish women from West Germany and Sweden.

This diversity enriched our exchanges and enabled us — in spite of our different national situations — to take a fresh look at the common aspirations of the feminist struggle. ★

The veil of racism is lifted

THE AFFAIR of the "Islamic headscarves" has aroused unprecedented publicity. Things began on September 18 at a high school in Creil. The school's director decided to send home three young North African women "guilty of wearing the Islamic headscarf" and thus infringing on secularism. It took two weeks for the affair to explode in the media. At first the tone was one of tolerance, and outrage at the expulsion. But the situation developed rapidly into a major public issue.

The battle was conducted under the banner of secularism, but if the logic of this secularism were carried through, it would leave young Muslim women no choice but to go to Koranic schools.

BÉATRICE RAYMAN

UNDER pressure from their families, their co-religionists, the media and the administration, two of the teenagers first of all agreed to wear the headscarf only in the school courtyard and the corridors and to allow it to rest on their shoulders during class. But a few days later, denouncing the discriminatory nature of this measure (and it is certain that if any similar rule were made about symbols from other religions there would be energetic protests) they decided to refuse to lower the headscarf in class. They were then expelled.

From the start, SOS-racisme and the Movement against Racism and for the Friendship of Peoples (MRAP) spoke out against this hypocritical secularism that closed its eyes to the Christian cross and Jewish skull-caps, but began to shriek at the sight of a few headscarves. The story becomes more complicated insofar as these implacable secularists seem to want to get their revenge, at the expense of young North African women, for the failure of 1984 battle against public financing for confessional schools. Then, after big demonstrations by the right and by Christians, the Socialist government back-tracked on the question.

Debate over headscarves in Socialist Party

Cutting across the alignments of parties and tendencies, the headscarf issue has even aroused unlikely changes of position. The Socialist education minister started off in favour of tolerance and against the expulsion of the young women. But then there were noises in the Socialist Party and the issue became a part

of the debate leading up to the SP congress. At the start of November some SP officials went as far as to publish an alarmist appeal along with other intellectuals (Elisabeth Badinter, Régis Debray, Alain Finkelkraut, Elisabeth de Fontenay, Catherine Kintzler): "teachers, do not give in!", calling on the teachers to "resist" the minister's position, justifying the expulsions in the name of secularism and the emancipation of Muslim women oppressed by the veils of Islam. A few days later other personalities (Joelle Brunerie Kaffmann, Harlem Désir, René Dumont, Gilles Perrault, Alain Touraine) denounced the notion of "heavy-handed integration" that could only benefit the Catholic fundamentalists of Le Pen's neo-fascist National Front (FN). The Communist Party denounced the position of *Nouvel Observateur* "intellectuals", and went so far as condemning the position of the Council of State, which had said that in and of itself there was no incompatibility between the headscarf and secularism. The CP stated that this judgement would only "boost Le Pen's rise".

On October 20, the National Teachers Federation (FEN) published a joint declaration with SOS Racism explaining that "the schools must welcome everybody without discrimination." However, when, on November 7, the teachers at Creil prevented the young women from joining classes, the FEN General Secretary gave them the union's official support!

At the end of October, Hayette Boudjema, the vice-president of SOS-racisme, pointing out that "exclusion is always the worst possible solution", launched an appeal entitled "the Stakes in Education" that gathered the signatures of representatives of all the anti-racist organizations

and of well-known figures from the feminist movement, which has also been divided by the issue. This appeal, even if it did not get unanimous support from feminists, proved that the rights of immigrants and the rights of women were not necessarily incompatible.

The Revolutionary Communist League (LCR — French section of the Fourth International) quickly took up a position against any exclusion. Without denying that Islam — along with all religions — oppresses women, the LCR nonetheless believes that oppression cannot be fought by repressing the victim, and that exclusion has never been a weapon in the fight for women's liberation. It considered it more important that immigrant children should have a normal education and that families should be given no excuse to withdraw girls from school. Furthermore, the LCR pointed out that in an imperialist country like France immigrants suffer daily racist oppression because of their culture and religion. In this situation it was important that explanations of the reactionary role of religion and of sexist displays should get mixed up with racist propaganda.

On November 27, the Council of State, at the request of the Education Minister declared that there was not, in itself, any incompatibility between secularism and carrying a religious symbol. Nothing could therefore justify the continued exclusion of Fatima, Leila, Samira and the others from school, except an obstinacy that approached racism.

The resonance of this affair throughout French society is not accidental. The fundamentalists and racists, the main beneficiaries from the whole business, had every interest in stirring things up. Furthermore, the issue arose at the same time as an increase in demands that the Islamic headscarf should be worn in schools and other public institutions in Western Europe and Turkey.

Right take on mantle of secularism

Profiting from the division of the left-wing organizations, the right and far right have been promoting the idea of the exclusion of immigrants. Immigrants, fundamentalists and terrorists have all been lumped together. The right have taken on the mantle of secularism and demanded a reform of the right of asylum and of the nationality code. This campaign, led in the name of defence of the "superior and universal cultural values of the West", has resulted in a massive vote for the FN in the legislative by-elections on December 4. At Dreux, the FN candidate ran a racist campaign, with the inscription on her ballot papers "no to chadors in the school, no to mosques." She was elected with 60% of the vote in the second round, while in Marseille another FN candidate only just lost in the second round, with 47%.★

THE FULL session started in the evening of September 21. Formally, 631 delegates with the right to speak and vote were registered. Of these, 48% represented workers, 16% peasants, 28% urban and middle-class organizations and 8% the regional leaderships. In addition, there were about 350 fraternal delegates with the right to speak but not to vote. The presidium was headed by a leader of the Oruro district of the COB. Also present were guests from the French General Workers' Confederation (CGT), the Portuguese CGT, the Argentinian CGT, the Federation of Unions of People's China and the World Confederation of Trade-Unions.

The work of the congress was carried out in six commissions — on politics, economic affairs, social questions, education and cultural affairs, internal functioning and defense of the coca growers. The first four commissions were chaired by miners, the fifth by a factory worker and the last by a peasant.

The first point on the agenda was a report by the outgoing National Executive Committee (CEN). In reality, this report was not an honest balance sheet of two years of leading the COB. It served in fact to cover up the failure of the COB leadership. Rather than a critical review of the struggles of the working masses, it was an inflated account of the victories of the oligarchic government.

Correct considerations and false assessments

Divided into four headings, the report mixed up correct considerations with false assessments of the situation of the trade-union movement. For example, it began by noting that at the beginning of the leadership's term of office, the workers' and people's movement was in an ebb, and that this made it impossible to "score big victories." In fact, we would say, there were neither big ones nor little ones.

In its anxiety to justify itself, the outgoing CEN used the traditional argument of bureaucrats: "the conditions did not exist" and gave a false impression of the mood of the masses: "Calls for action could not succeed when the forces of labor were decimated and dispersed by an implacable social policy," "the class enemy demobilized the masses and rescinded calls for action [sic]." A delegate asked, quite rightly, what the leadership had done to change this situation. It engaged in dialogue, social partnership and dialogue again, without mobilizing the masses.

It is false to say that the movement has been in an ebb; witness the struggles that have been waged in the last four years by the miners, factory workers, professionals and teachers. The tens of thousands of workers who took part in walkouts, hunger strikes, street rallies and mobilization,

A parliament of the oppressed

THE EIGHTH National Congress of the Bolivian Labor Confederation (COB) was held September 18-28 in Ururo. It began with a Great United March of the Exploited People.

Thousands of miners, metalworkers, railroad workers, manufacturing workers, peasants, university teachers, and students took part in this action, which culminated in a rally at the Miners' Monument.

The choice of destination point was not arbitrary. One of the "symbolic" acts of the García Meza dictatorship was to remove the gun from the hands of the bronze and tin statue of a miner. On this occasion, in the midst of general enthusiasm and the echo of dynamite blasts, the symbol of the struggle of the Bolivian proletariat was again placed in the hands of the miner. In this way the participants expressed their determination to re-appropriate the best of the revolutionary arsenal accumulated over nearly a half century of struggles. In more than one sense, this spirit inspired the congress, its discussions, definitions and appeals.

HUGO GONZALEZ MOSCOSO

as well as in blocking streets and roads, resoundingly refuted the outgoing CEN's version. The real situation is that the spirit and struggle of the masses were not centralized or led by a leadership which was compromised by its view of "dialogue-social-partnership." No one denies that the balance sheet is negative. But it is not the working people who are to blame, but rather the reformist and capitulationist conceptions of the COB leadership.

Report useless for understanding the past

As might be expected, the report did not satisfy people. Firstly, the delegates criticized its scanty, telegraphic character, which they said made it useless for understanding the past, let alone for arming people for the present and future. They went on immediately to deepen their criticism of the reformist social-partnership line of the leadership. In this way, they highlighted the divorce between the tops negotiating constantly with the government and the ranks in constant conflict with the oligarchy.

The delegates criticized the leadership's inability to unite sectoral conflicts into a single mobilization, an incapacity that frittered away the exceptional efforts generated by the struggle of the working people. The plenary session divided be-

tween the revolutionary current that attacked the report and the "establishment" current seeking at all costs to justify the work of the outgoing leadership. But at the same time, the revolutionary current divided between those wishing to censure the leadership and put it on trial, and those who proposed simply rejecting the report and drawing up another. Besides this split, many delegates got tired and left. Both factors played into the hands of the outgoing CEN, and finally, in the morning of Friday, September 22, the report was approved by the vote of only 160 delegates.

Atmosphere rife with dissatisfaction

The atmosphere was still rife with dissatisfaction and oppositional feelings. For the great majority of the delegates it was essential to make a balance sheet pointing to the forces mobilized in recent years, and the possibilities for the future. There is no doubt, however, that this was a task for delegates rallied around the revolutionary current. Broad sections of the working masses have in fact been calling for such unity in a concrete organizational form.

Fourteen documents were presented to the Political Commission by trade-union organizations and political parties. Initially, 60 people put their names on the speak-



ers' list, but the democratic climate of the congress opened the way for many more to take the floor.

From the start of the work of this commission, the aim of the MIR¹, a government party, to control the course of events became obvious. Thus, one of the first to demand the floor was Heriberto Mamani, co-general secretary of the outgoing CEN and a MIR deputy. But as soon he started to present the MIR document, a dramatic conflict exploded. A shout went up of "Government agents out of the COB!" The great majority of the delegates participating in the commission rose to their feet and prevented Mamani from speaking, some even striking him. The MIR representative felt the workers' fierce rejection of his party's role in running the government directly.

Congress rejects establishment parties

After that, no "establishment" delegate was able to speak. This was the first political dividing line the congress drew — it would have nothing to do with the establishment and its parties, nothing to do with a government policy that means continuing the neo-free enterprise line instituted by the government of the MNR-ADN.² With the "establishment" isolated and defeated, the debate polarized between the revolutionary and reformist currents. Besides their opposition to the MIR-ADN government and their rejection of 21060³, they had nothing in common. The reformist current, rallied around Izquierda Unida (IU — United Left), took as its point of departure the report presented by the outgoing leadership. It therefore stressed the ebb of the mass movement and the wide margins for maneuver enjoyed by the MIR-ADN government.

The revolutionary current, on the other hand, reaffirmed its assessment that the workers were ready to struggle, and explained the need for centralizing forces in a national mobilization that could defeat the government's policy.

Although not a homogeneous or organized force, the revolutionary current managed to put across its points of view. The fact that it represented a majority was shown by the passage of the document submitted by the miners as the Political Declaration of the Congress and the election of López Arias as the new general secretary of the CEN.

Mineworkers call for socialist revolution

The document submitted by the Mine Workers' Federation of Bolivia (FST-MB) was entitled "Bolivia Will Not Be a Base for Yankee Aggression; It Will Be the Battlefield of Liberation." Approved with the support of 252 delegates, this document is a cry of anticapitalist and anti-imperialist rebellion and a call to socialist revolution.

Aside from limitations and points that should be deepened, the militant and optimistic spirit inspiring the Political Statement, its overall view of the national reality and its understanding of the way the relationship of forces is becoming more and more favorable to the workers,

make it a real weapon for the struggle of the working people. The main lines of the document are the following:

- a) A vigorous indictment of imperialism, ending with a call for renouncing the foreign debt and for opposing the US government's attempt to "Honduranize" Bolivia.
- b) A clear definition of the class nature of the MIR-ADN government, which serves as a basis for calling on the population not to accord it any sort of confidence.
- c) A clear understanding of the revival of the workers' movement, which foreshadows new confrontations with the oligarchy and its starvation economic plan.
- d) An urgent appeal for changing the methods of struggle, summed up in the slogan of "active resistance to subversion."
- e) Reaffirmation of internationalism, which found its best expression in calls for support to,

and solidarity with, the peoples fighting to liberate themselves (Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala, Chile) or that have begun to build socialism (Cuba).

Identification of workers with all the oppressed

f) A deepgoing assimilation of the vanguard role that the working class plays as a result of its position in the process of production, an identification of the workers' interests with those of the other oppressed sectors and reference to their leadership in struggles for more than half a century.

g) A correct and fundamentally important call for building a political leadership of the working people, that is, a mass revolutionary party, the synthesis of revolutionary theory and practice.

Few commissions aroused as much interests or drew as much participation as the one on economic questions. From the villages and cities, from the highlands and valleys, even from the Amazon jungle, complaints, denunciations and initiatives were reported that expressed the Bolivian people's anxiety and indignation at the IMF economic model adopted by the MNR-ADN government and continued by the MIR-ADN regime. There was hardly any sector or region that did not send petitions, demands or draft resolutions to be considered by the commission.

1. Of left origins and with an important tradition of active resistance to the various military dictatorships in Bolivia, the MIR has evolved toward an outright rightist position.

On the basis of a shameful alliance with ADN, the organization formed by former dictator Hugo Banzer, the MIR won the presidency of the republic in the 1989 elections.

2. The MNR headed the Bolivia revolution of 1952, one of the most radical anti-imperialist revolutions in

Latin-American history. An outstanding achievement of this revolution was the nationalization of the mining industry, the backbone of the Bolivian economy. After 30 years, however, the MNR, in alliance with the ADN, backtracked and applied a drastic IMF austerity plan, closed the big tin mines, sold other others, backed the private mine owners and dismantled the Bolivian Mining Company (COMIBOL).

3. Decree of the MNR-ADN government which "legalizes" the economic policy previously mentioned.

The delegates who spoke knew what they were talking about. The family shopping basket was studied with realism and responsibility. In this way, the official version that higher prices had had only a "slight" impact on the cost of living was exposed. There was a discussion of the enormous social cost arising from factory closures, unemployment and the paralysis of agricultural production owing to the loss of a market brought on by the shut-down of mines.

Programme of demands put forward

This discussion led to the raising of the following demands:

a) Higher wages.

— A minimum wage, indexed against inflation, of 929.50 Bolivian pesos⁴ per month, an amount sufficient to cover the expenses for food, rent, clothing, education and transport for a family of five.

— Restoration of the bonuses, including seniority payments, that were in force until 1985.

— Prompt payment of wages to teachers, health workers and public employees.

— Immediate payment of independent miners who work on the basis of leaseholds [*arrendatorios*].

b) Defense of jobs.

— Reopening and rehabilitation of the mines and factories closed.

— Getting the Catavi and Siglo Veinte mines working again on the basis of the plan submitted by the FSTMB.

— Opening and immediately starting up the Karachimpampa complex.

— Reactivation of the productive apparatus through involving the workers.

— Trade-union organization of unemployed workers and the creation of new sources of work.

— Stopping the policy of layoffs and giving job security to workers in work.

— Payment of severance pay through the duration of unemployment.

c) Mine workers and cooperatives.

— Respect for the integrity of the nationalized mining companies and cooperation of the private companies.

— Creation of a revolving fund to promote mining cooperatives.

— Exclusive responsibility of the Banco MInero (BAMIN) for sales of minerals, without any involvement of multinationals.

— Withdrawal of representatives of the middle-sized mining companies from BAMIN and the involvement of representatives of the cooperatives.

— Confirmation of the unity between cooperative members and mine workers, the pillars of the Bolivian economy.

3) Credits and banking.

— The creation of a Professionals' and Craftsmen's Development Bank.

— Guaranteed long-term loans at low interest without mortgage collateral,

insured on the basis of production, for peasants and craftsmen.

— Developmental credit for small producers of coffee, cacao and other tropical products, with equal treatment in export.

3) Professionals and craftsmen.

— Abolition of the double or multiple tax burden on professionals.

— Encouragement of craft production and the creation of a gold-cup prize for jewelry and watch makers.

— What stands out in the list of demands is the way the workers from various places and sectors came to the COB congress with proposals and in search of solutions. There could be no more resounding refutation of those who claimed in the pre-congress discussion that the COB had lost all its relevance.

Moreover, the Political and Economics Commissions' resolutions will be incorporated into a single list of demands that will constitute the axis for mobilizing the masses in the period ahead.

The work of the Social Commission turned basically around three points — defense of social security, reinstatement of those fired and respect for the trade-union statute.

Defense of the Railway Workers' Fund

Resolutions were adopted demanding full restoration of social security; a majority of workers' representatives in the insurance fund councils; defense of the Railway Workers' Fund, which is in crisis today because of the failure of the National Railway Company (ENFE) to pay its contribution; abolition of the National Reserve Fund (FONARE), whose way of functioning has been prejudicial to people living on pensions; abolition of the Housing Fund (FONVI); and return by the Ministry of Urban Life of all the property of the miners', factory workers', railway workers', teachers' and building workers' councils.

As regards the trade-union statute and job security, it was agreed that the new CEN should centralize complaints and organize defense. In the immediate period ahead, the struggle will be for reinstatement of all trade-unionists fired for political reasons, among whom are some rank-and-file oil workers and leaders and mineworkers in San José.

In opposition to the neo-free enterprise educational model established by the government, the Education and Culture Commission adopted the "People's Education Project." The starting point of this scheme is transforming Bolivian education into a force for liberation by giving the people a central role. On this basis, the project calls for technical, scientific, rounded, productive and intercultural and bilingual education. Likewise, it demands that 33% of the national budget be appropriated for education, including university education. It also calls for defending the present

Code for Education and the Siglo Veinte Workers' University, as well as opening teachers' colleges and universities in El Chaco and Camiri. Finally, it repudiates the privatization of education. With the agreement of the commission, these resolutions are to be applied immediately, based on a reactivation of the Committees to Defend and Improve Education.

United States agents attack coca workers

The work of the Commission to Defend the Coca Growers was marked by a clearly anti-imperialist content. The coca-leaf producers came to the congress feeling the impact of their clashes with UMOPAR troops commanded by Yankee officers and the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA). The casualty list was dramatic. Many *compañeros* were killed, wounded and imprisoned. Roads were bombed in an attempt to isolate the zones where coca is produced. But the delegates were also inspired by the unanimous support they got at the Fourth National Peasant Congress held a few days before in Tarija.

The following stand out among the resolutions adopted by this commission:

a) A firm defense of the growing of the coca leaf as part of the ancient culture of the Andean peoples and of the traditional consumption of *acullico*.⁵ The defense of coca, the resolution points out, is part of defending national sovereignty.

b) Sale of coca through cooperatives, trade-union federations and CORACA, as well industrial processing of it for food and medicine.

c) The formation of self-defense committees to prevent armed attacks by UMOPAR and the DEA and the destruction of crops through the use of noxious chemicals.

d) The calling off of the unjust and illegal prosecutions hanging over many peasants, as well their immediate release. On this point, the resolution stressed the need for forming a COB Human Rights Commission to investigate this situation.

e) Trial and punishment of those responsible for the attacks, murders and massacres perpetrated against the settlements in El Chapare.

f) Holding the Fifth National Meeting of Coca Producers with the immediate objective of planning all the tasks related to the defense of coca.

g) Condemning the internationally organized drug traffic directed from the imperialist centers that consume the drug. The coca leaf, it was pointed out, is not a narcotic.

h) International condemnation of the US government's criminal activity, which, under the pretext of fighting the drug traffic, is invading Bolivia and repressing its people. The resolution points to the need for demanding that US troops and DEA agents get out of El Chapare.

Parallel to this, the commission dis-

cussed the point on nationalities. Among its more important conclusions, it agreed on the following:

- a) The right of oppressed nationalities to self-determination.
- b) Compulsory instruction in the mother tongue in schools.
- c) The formation of a multinational state.
- d) Inclusion of the rights of nationalities in the program for national and social liberation.

Conclusions

1) Without any doubt, the Eighth Congress of the COB has been the most important social and political event in the recent period.

The holding of the congress was an objective sign of the revival and interconnection of the workers' struggles. Refuting those who talked about an ebb, loss of identity and dispersion of the mass movement, the congress highlighted the vitality, strength and militant spirit of the Bolivian people.

Far from losing its ability to rally people, the COB continues to be the framework and point of reference for the working masses. Two facts indicated this: the participation of a larger number of delegates and the incorporation of new sectors. As regards the first point, the presence of 631 delegates marked a significant increase from the 559 present at the Seventh Congress held in Santa Cruz. As regards the second, it is important to take note of the incorporation into the COB of the social security workers, the Light and Power Federation, the Confederation of University Professors, the Organization of Coffee Growers, the regional federations of workers in El Alto, Villamontes and Bermejo, as well as the Confederation of Rural Area Students. The problem, therefore, was not a loss of the ability to rally people but the relationship between the leadership and the ranks and methods of struggle.

Increase in number of delegates

The discussions, the resolutions, and above all the political declaration that were approved laid the bases for strengthening the COB organizationally and for a political ripening of the mass movement that can lead to a pre-revolutionary situation.

Rising above the so-called legitimacy of the parliament, the congress showed that the COB is the real representative of the interests of working people. For ten days, delegates from all regions and sectors of the country discussed the national problems and proposed solutions for them more knowledgeably and with greater political and moral authority than the discredited deputies and senators. Without exaggerating, we can say that millions of workers and peasants focused their attention and hopes on this congress.

2) Three political tendencies operated in the congress — the pro-government tendency rallied around the MIR and the vestiges of Maoism; the reformist current, grouped around the IU, dominated by the Communist Party of Bolivia (PCB) and which held the outgoing leadership of the COB; and the revolutionary current consisting of the independent left, the CP-Fifth Congress, the Socialists, the Axis organization, the various Trotskyist groups and some radicalized peasant groups, which without any previous accord and with an incipient coordination acted together around some questions.

The pro-government people were isolated from the outset of the congress. The discussions polarized between reformist and revolutionary currents. The relationship of forces between them was fluid. The IU based itself on the apparatus of the COB and the PCB, with tight control of its delegates and the advantage of some arbitrary rulings by the presidium.

Revolutionary current pays for lack of organization

The revolutionary current, for its part, paid the price of its lack of an organizational structure of its own. Although it won some important victories (the adoption of the miners' document as the Political Declaration and the general secretaryship of the new CEN), it could not keep the IU from grabbing the lion's share of the secretaries in the new COB leadership.

This polarization, however, can become dangerous. In the wake of the congress, some representatives of the IU made statements that in practice amounted to calling on people not to respect the Political Declaration, as well as challeng-

ing the legitimacy of the general secretary's election. Afterwards, they backed off from this thoughtless attitude and did not let themselves become a transmission belt for the government's positions and the attempt by the Ministry of Labor to create another confederation of labor, a project in fact that does not differ much from those undertaken by all the military dictatorships from Barrientos to García Meza.

Need to concretize worker-peasant alliance

3. The Eighth Congress of the COB is a clear victory for the masses. It is now up to the new CEN to respect the will of all the delegates. It has, in the first place, to concentrate all its efforts on concretizing the worker-peasant alliance. It has, also, to take up the task of building the instrument, or the leadership, that will lead the struggle toward the building of socialism. From our point of view, this task requires building a united front that can bring together the COB, the unions, the federations and the democratic and revolutionary political parties.

Neither objective is by any means easy. And one of the primary preconditions for achieving them is to drop all the bureaucratic and elitist attitudes that marked the work of the previous CEN. All discussions have to be taken to trade-union assemblies, and the CEN has to base itself on the ranks and the intermediate leaderships. Only such a process will generate the strength to carry through all the resolutions adopted by this historic Eighth Congress of the COB. ★

4. The ratio of the Bolivian peso to the US dollar is 2.90:1.

5. This Quechua word refers to the act of chewing coca.



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