

International VIEWPOINT

Issue 198

January 21, 1991

£1; \$2.25; C\$3; 14FF

Worldwide action to stop the wardrive

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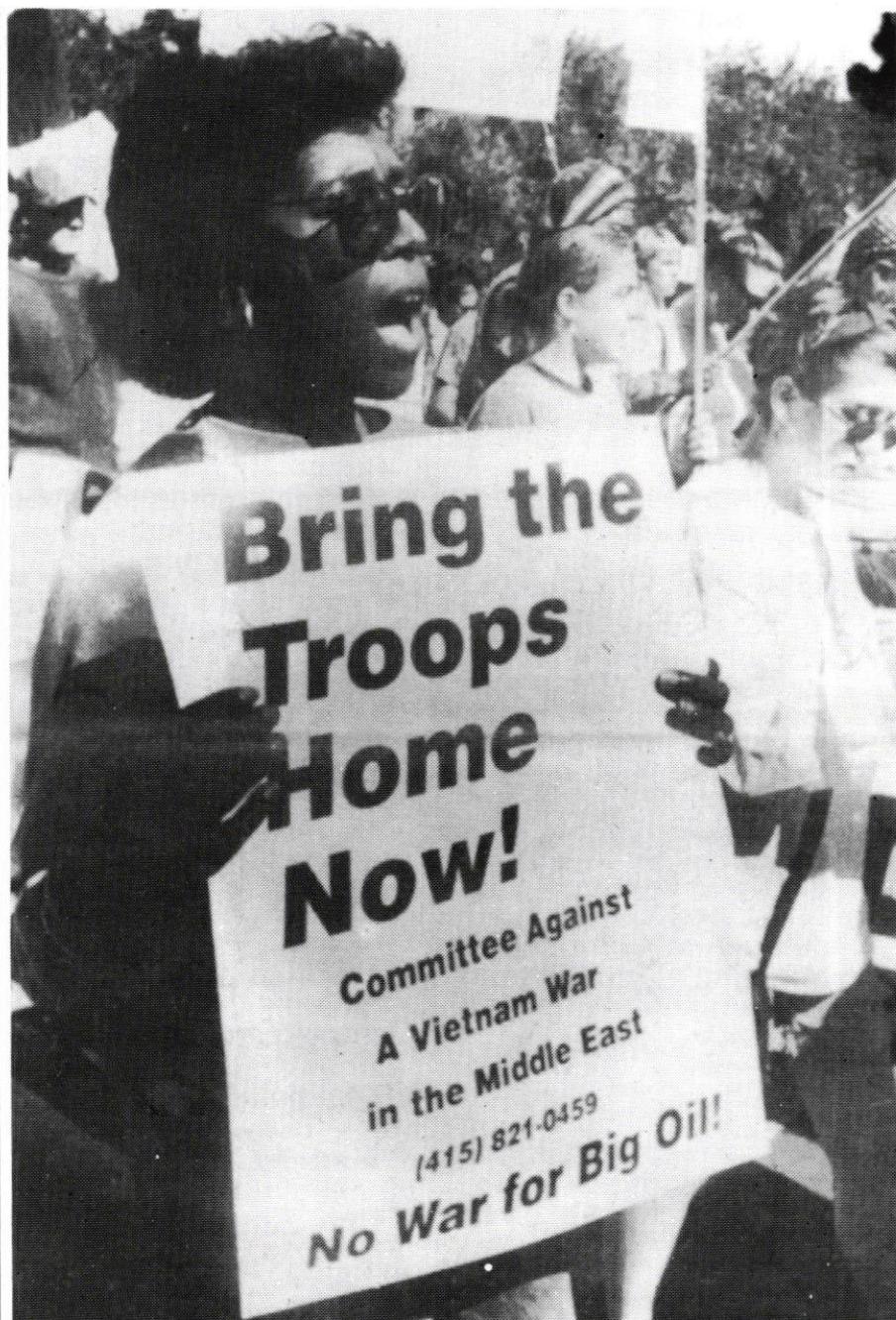
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International VIEWPOINT

A fortnightly review of news and analysis published under the auspices of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International, in conjunction with the French language *Inprecor*, which appears on alternate fortnights.

All editorial and subscription correspondence should be mailed to: International Viewpoint, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France. Fax: 43 79 21 06.

Published by Presse-Edition-Communication (PEC). Directeur de publication: Christian Lamotte. Commission paritaire: 64324. ISSN: 0294-2925. Imprimé par Rotographie.

International Viewpoint is catalogued by the US Alternative Press Index.

● News closing date:
January 11, 1990
Fax no: 43 79 21 06

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Payment: French francs preferred. Cheques to PEC. Postal transfers to PEC, CCP No 2 322 42T Paris. Bank transfers to PEC, BNP Robespierre, Account 230179/90. IMPORTANT: ALL BANK OR POSTAL TRANSFERS MUST ALSO BE NOTIFIED BY LETTER.

Subscriptions and correspondence to International Viewpoint, 2 rue Richard Lenoir, 93108 Montreuil, France.

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Mobilize to stop the war!

BEFORE this issue of *International Viewpoint* reaches our readers, a terrible war may be unleashed in the Middle East. The combination of imperialist threats to launch a war against Arab nationalism and the threats of the Soviet bureaucracy to crush the national movements in the Baltic is reminiscent of 1956, when the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt offered the Kremlin the cover to smash the Hungarian revolution. It is another reminder of the connivance between the Stalinist bureaucracy and the imperialists.

What is different today from 1956, and offers grounds for optimism, is the strength of antiwar feeling in the main imperialist power, the United States, and the already very widespread rebellion against the rule of the bureaucracy in the USSR. It is peculiar to hear commentators say that Bush has the popular backing he needs to launch a war because the polls show that 60% of the population support him. In every other major war in which the US has become involved, the initial support has been overwhelming. Opponents have been a tiny persecuted minority.

Today, even before the first American soldier has been killed in action, the official media have to admit that almost half the US people are opposed to war, and, correspondingly, that doubts about the operation run deep in the political establishment itself. The antiwar movement in the imperialist countries, and especially in the United States, has become, potentially at least, a sort of new world power.

The political relationship of forces has shifted in an important way in favor of the mass antiwar movement. The responsibilities of the principled anti-imperialist, socialist and democratic forces that alone are capable of giving impetus to mass mobilizations against the war have increased in the same measure.

It is essential that every possible effort be made to assure the success of the upcoming demonstrations against the war that the imperialists are so clearly determined to wage. The next few weeks could shape the possibilities for the struggles of the oppressed and exploited throughout the world for many years. ★

After the "avalasse"

MORE than one Haitian bishop had to eat his mitre on December 16, 1990 when their number 1 enemy, Father Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was elected president of the republic with nearly 70% of the votes. Marc Bazin, the candidate of Imperialism, who also had the support of the majority of the bishops, got a mere 15%.

ARTHUR MAHON

ON JANUARY 1, 1991, the archbishop in Port-au-Prince declared war on the new president, who will assume office on January 7. He evoked in the cathedral for all the world to hear the spectre of a new dictatorship, asking "if the new leftwing orientation might not lead Haiti to put on the old Bolshevik clothes cast off by the East European countries."

These musings chimed in with those of the former boss of the Tonton Macoutes [terror gangs of the former dictators, the Duvaliers], Roger Lafontant, who stated: "we will never leave the country in the hands of communists."

A priest defined the significance of such remarks as "verbal hand grenades, comparable to the one which killed seven people on December 5" during a meeting addressed by Fr. Aristide. It is thus no surprise that the seat of the bishops' conference and the residence of the papal representative were attacked by angry demonstrators responding to Lafontant's coup d'état on January 7.

Lafontant's seizure of the National Palace with a small group of armed soldiers and civilians was a gamble. He declared that the army and police were with him.

In fact, however, the army chiefs denounced the putsch and surrounded the National Palace, arresting Lafontant after a brief struggle. Meanwhile, the USA had also denounced the attempted coup and barricades were being erected in the capital. Journalists talked about districts "in a state of insurrection."

This was a change of line by the USA. In 1987 they worked behind the scenes with the army and the Duvalierists who prevented by violence the holding of elections on November 29 of that year. The reality is that the USA have realized that their previous strategy had failed. They had believed that General Namphy, and then his successor, Prosper Avril, would follow US orders and would one day be ready to give up power to civilians when the US commanded it (see *IV* 181, March 26, 1990).

However the post-Duvalier generals rapidly escaped American control, and the situation reverted to that of the worst periods of Duvalierism, leading Haiti into a permanent crisis. The Americans thus felt obliged to get rid of these men who were becoming a danger to their interests.

When Fr. Aristide first put himself forward as a candidate on October 18, 1990, the CIA thought of getting rid of him at once. But the Embassy rapidly understood that Aristide enjoyed immense popular support and that any attempt to oppose him by force would set the country ablaze.

The US have now decided to try to turn the situation created by Aristide's election to their advantage. They know that they have many instruments to hand, starting with the army, while Aristide, as

Voters beat electoral fraud

THE US embassy wanted to prevent the victory of Fr. Aristide in the first round. On December 16, 1990, the day of the vote, everything was indeed done to hinder voting in the popular quarters, both in the capital Port-au-Prince and the provinces.

In some voting stations in the capital nobody was able to vote before 4 in the afternoon. The electoral material was incomplete. In one station, the foreign observer had to construct the voting box himself. A member of the Electoral Council entrusted with organizing the voting declared in the middle of the day that the situation was very difficult, that voting slips had been stolen and that, in the countryside, the army were following the peasants into the voting booths to see how they were voting.

But the people were determined to vote. Sometimes they waited up to ten hours in line. They intercepted the cars containing the stolen ballots. They demonstrated against "trickery" in the streets of Port-au-Prince. Under popular pressure, and against the wishes of the political parties opposed to Aristide, voting was prolonged for several hours into the night. ★

president, has few powers, and the network of popular organizations is weak. It will be very hard for him to implement significant reforms, so there is a risk of popular disillusionment.

Furthermore, during the election campaign the most enlightened sectors of the bourgeoisie understood that it was in their interests to support Aristide to stabilize the situation with a view to neutralizing him at a later date. Rather than directly confronting Aristide, the USA is trying to control him, and, if this proves impossible, to wait for the population to be demoralized before acting. But none of these calculations take into account the "avalasse" (creole word for an "avalanche" of mud), the popular tidal wave, brought about by Aristide's campaign. It is this which defeated the attempts at electoral fraud (see box) orchestrated on election day by the American embassy, aimed at ensuring at the very least that Aristide would not be elected on the first round.

Majority of army remains Duvalierist

It was the popular "avalasse" also which was the key to the failure of Lafontant's coup, since it dissuaded the army, the majority of which is still Duvalierist, from rallying behind the putsch. As soon as the news of Lafontant's action was out, people poured into the streets of Port-au-Prince and the provincial towns and self-defence began to be organized. It is also possible that, by blocking the road to the airport, the popular mobilization prevented the army from allowing Lafontant to leave the country.

The mass media have been emphasizing the role of the "loyalist" army in resolving the crisis. But they are forgetting that this very army has been protecting Lafontant since his return to the country in July 1990, refusing to arrest him, as ordered by the Justice Minister. At that time the head of the army, General Abraham, talked of a "judicial imbroglio". And the army has allowed Lafontant to construct a stronghold in Port-au-Prince where he was able to assemble heavy arms and prepare his putsch. It was this bunker that the population took with their bare hands on January 7.

Lafontant's attempt is a serious warning. It has once more been shown that all that is needed to seize the National Palace is a small group of armed men. What might happen when Fr. Aristide is resident there? Clearly, he cannot entrust his safety to the army. Elected by the popular majority, he must be defended by them. Thus the key task is the construction of an armed popular militia.

As president elect Aristide has made several declarations that will sow illusions, notably in the army, which is now trying to polish up its image to allow it to play a new political role in the future. On the other hand, the new president has also

sounded a militant note. In his victory address he pointed the way: "form strong committees in the districts, strong vigilance brigades and strong clean-up brigades. Link up the organizations in the

towns with the rest of the country. In this way there will be an avalanche of organizations, the flesh, blood, and bones of Haiti. Without this the country will be an empty bag." ★

Gorbachev threatens military crackdown

AS WE GO TO PRESS, a Kremlin rape of Lithuania seems to be a growing possibility. The implicit threat by the chief of the Stalinist bureaucracy, Gorbachev, to impose presidential rule if the Lithuanian government fails to repeal laws he considers to conflict with the Soviet constitution directly, contradicts the principles on which the Soviet Union was founded.

An open military attack aimed at crushing the democratic rights and aspirations of the Lithuanian and other peoples subjected to national oppression by the Stalinist bureaucratic state could mark a paroxysm of the crisis of bureaucratic rule. The apparently real threat of such an eventuality is a reminder that at some point, perhaps very soon, the breakdown of bureaucratic rule has either to go forward to a democratic revolution or backward to terror.

GERRY FOLEY

BY SENDING military forces into the Baltic and other independence-minded republics, the Kremlin has returned to confrontationist tactics against the mass movements opposing the authority of the bureaucratic state.

After a promise from General Moiseev that the already large military garrisons in the Baltic, especially in Latvia (where servicemen account for 15% of the population), would not be increased, the Gorbachev regime sent in troops, ostensibly to round up youths failing to report for military service. In fact, Moiseev himself (see below) joined with a group of notorious reactionaries to call for a general crackdown.

This resort to press gangs was sweetened with a promise by deputy Soviet defense minister Vladislav Achalov that draft evaders and deserters would not be prosecuted and that they "will be able to do the rest of their military service on the territory of the republic." The USSR defense minister, Dmitri Yazov, claimed that the roundups of youths refusing to serve in the armed forces would not involve bringing in extra troops, except

in Lithuania.

Reportedly, Moiseev explicitly promised the Estonian premier, Edgar Savisaar, that he would not send paratroop reinforcements into Estonia. But the Kremlin has already gone back on a promise not to send more troops into any of the Baltic countries. Since its declaration of independence in March, Lithuania has remained in the forefront of the confrontation, and the Soviet operations there are likely to be the test.

Soviet military forces surrounded the Lithuanian parliament on January 9, although they withdrew the following day. At the same time, there was a mobilization by local Unionists demanding the imposition of direct rule by Gorbachev.

This scenario, similar to one staged in Estonia last spring, has created fears of a coup d'état. Already on December 21, the official Soviet news agency TASS had reported that Soviet troops were patrolling the streets of Klaipeda, Lithuania's major Baltic sea port, checking the papers of passers-by and arresting those who refused to cooperate.

Such Soviet military activity in Klaipeda is especially ominous. Since this city

was taken from Germany and incorporated into Lithuania by the USSR, Kremlin officials have threatened that it would be taken away from Lithuania, if that country insists on independence.

Like the Estonian leadership at the time, Lithuanian president Landsbergis issued appeals to the population to defend the government. In this context, a governmental crisis developed in Lithuania, leading to the resignation of the premier, Kazimiera Prunskiene and her cabinet.

Formally, the government fell over the question of raising the prices of consumer goods. The rejection of this measure by the radical nationalists was presented in the international press as a concession to Communist party "hardliners" (whatever that might mean).

It is true that *Pravda* regularly criticizes the national-democratic governments for such measures, although the Soviet central authorities propose exactly the same thing, if not worse. But the aspect the capitalist press has missed, perhaps because it shares their attitudes, is that Prunskiene is the heroine of all the opportunists and capitulationists in Lithuania, as well as of the false friends of "freedom" in the West.

Failure of "moderate" strategy

She is the incarnation of "moderation," as opposed to the radicalism of Landsbergis and the intransigent wing of the Lithuanian nationalist movement, Sajudis. It was she who pressed for a moratorium on the Lithuanian declaration of independence to favor negotiations with Gorbachev. And she got a clear rebuff from the Soviet chief just before the fall of her government. Prunskiene was a Communist Party leader until quite recently, and so compromised by this association that her political future was threatened by poor electoral results.

She is presented as a realist by the independent Lithuanian CP and the free-enterpriser daily *Respublika*, while Landsbergis is portrayed as a romantic. A similar picture has been given by the Western capitalist press. Thus, the suggestion in the capitalist press that it was nationalists of the likes of Landsbergis who threw poor Prunskiene to the Stalinist wolves is pretty peculiar.

Libération's correspondent Pierre Briancon seemed to express more honestly what the concern of ruling circles in the West actually is: "of course, the pro-independence authorities seem to be giving the Kremlin every pretext. The political inexperience, the verbal bluffs and sometimes confusion displayed by the president and parliament in Vilnius many times, over nearly a year, have found a new illustration with the fall of the government of Kazimiera Prunskiene, guilty in the deputies' eyes of trying to refloat the economy with big price rises.

"The camp of the realistic pro-independence forces has thus suffered a stinging defeat that could presage a serious worsening of the situation, if the 'ultras,' who look rather to Landsbergis, triumph completely."

There is in fact a major contradiction between the aspirations of the national-democratic forces and their adherence to Gorbachev's market program. Any uncontrolled operation of the market, either the international market or the market in the territories of the Soviet Union, would subject small nations to the domination of forces beyond their control.

Moreover, the "privatization of the nomenklatura" that has been underway for some time shows that the bureaucracy is quite able to use direct capitalist methods to preserve its position. In Lithuania itself, the independent Communist Party, which operates de facto as a stalking horse for the Kremlin, projects the idea that with a market nobody needs to worry any more about bureaucrats. (See "How to Fight the Nomenklatura," in *International Viewpoint*, No. 195, November 26, 1990).

In Estonia, the national democratic milieu has already become divided over the *perestroika* economic program being applied by the government of the economist Edgar Savisaar. (See "Multiplying contradictions reflected in Soviet Press," in *IV* No 192, October 15, 1990).

Buildup of neo-Stalinist offensive

The most ominous thing about the present Kremlin crackdown is that there has been a long buildup to it. The Fourth Session of the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies was marked by a neo-Stalinist Unionist offensive and by an open shift of Gorbachev in that direction. In its meeting on December 15 to assess its position on the upcoming Congress session, the Unionist caucus, Soyuz, took a notably friendlier attitude to Gorbachev, in view of his offensive against the "separatists."

Fifty three-Soviet officials and USSR Congress deputies called on Gorbachev to declare a state of emergency and rule by decree in areas where there were "big conflicts." They included the chief of the Soviet General Staff, Mikhail Moiseev; the Leningrad party chief, Boris Gidasov; the laureate of neo-Stalinism, Jurii Bondarev; and the prince of the church, Aleksei II, patriarch of All the Russias.

The statement said: "We are being threatened by a fatal dictatorship of personalities, merciless in their aim of ruling over the territory, resources, intellectual wealth and labor force of the country



whose name is the USSR. We propose carrying out immediate measures against separatism, subversive anti-government activity, provocation, inter-ethnic conflict, using the laws, the powers accorded to you and the determination of the government structures to carry out the will of the people and your will as president... You will be supported by the leaders of world politics, who do not fear the USSR as a totalitarian superstate but do fear the splitting up of a colossus whose collapse will destabilize the world."

This warning against dictatorship issued by a sinister gang of generals and neo-Stalinist mandarins, including the "patriarch of all the Russias," corresponds to the breathtakingly hypocritical line of the bureaucracy (including the so-called independent republican CPs) that under *perestroika* the threat of dictatorship and even totalitarianism comes from the mass movements, in particular the national democratic ones.

Shevardnadze warns of dictatorship

In his unexpected speech of resignation as foreign minister during the Congress, Eduard Shevardnadze said: "A dictatorship is coming, I say this in all openness. No one knows what sort of a dictatorship it will be and who will be the dictator, and what sort of order there will be."

Most of his evocations dealt with neo-Stalinists growing more aggressive. The leader of the Soyuz caucus, Colonel Viktor Alksnis (who, for all his "Bolshevik" phrases sounds like a typical Ulster

Anglo-Irish military officer), publicly expressed joy at Shevardnadze's resignation.

As the same time as the Congress of People's Deputies, the Latvian public prosecutor threatened to press charges against the Popular Front for evoking the possibility of civil disobedience if demands for removal of Soviet troops were not met. On December 17, small bombs went off near the offices of the Latvian (pro-Moscow) CP, the military prosecutor's office and a monument to Lenin.

A Latvian army officer said on TV that the bombings had been carried out by nationalists trying to provoke the army into "interfering in Latvia's internal affairs."

But Popular Front and Latvian government representatives said that the bombings had all the hallmarks of a campaign by "enemies of the Latvian people" designed to prepare the climate for a Soviet military crackdown.

On December 18, General Petr Chaus, commander of the Baltic military district, warned the local authorities against pushing the army "to extreme measures." In November, the Latvian Supreme Soviet ordered the municipalities to stop providing supplies and social services to the Soviet armed forces.

Armed force against elected governments

On the following day, the Latvian premier, Ivars Godmanis, warned publicly that Gorbachev might soon use the armed forces to depose the elected Baltic parliaments and governments. Godmanis said he expected no support from the US or West Europe if the USSR used military force against the Baltic peoples.

The Soviet military is also unpopular in Latvia because its bases are highly polluting. In December the state arbitration authority heavily fined the army forces for polluting the Baltic Sea with phosphorus. Moscow, moreover, has refused to allow the Latvians to close the Skoka Cellulose and Pulp plant, which is notorious for polluting the Daugava, the river that flows through Riga.

The confrontation in Lithuania was preceded by one in Latvia, where the Soviet military seized the main printing plant, on the grounds that it belonged to the pro-Moscow faction of the splintered Latvian CP. It is striking that in all these confrontations the flashpoints are the same as those in the crisis that followed the Lithuanian declaration of independence — control of so-called Communist Party property (in reality state property to which the discredited and splintered CPs no longer have the slightest legitimate claim) and the question of forcing local young people to serve in the Soviet army.

6 It is estimated, for example, that last spring in Armenia only between 7% and

8% of draftees actually turned up to serve. On December 18, the deputy chief of the Soviet general staff, Grigori Krivosheev, said that the draft was being "practically ignored in Armenia", and that only 25% of those eligible for the draft had been conscripted.

The Latvian parliament made another appeal on January 9 to draftees to reject forced conscription into the Soviet army. At the same time, it called on the world and on the USSR supreme Soviet to "stop the aggression of the Soviet minister of defense." The Latvian Popular Front had already discussed the possibility of going underground in the event of a Soviet military crackdown.

Estonian call for civil disobedience

On December 18, by a vote of 51 to 15 with seven abstentions, the Estonian Supreme Soviet passed a resolution calling for civil disobedience if the Kremlin used military force to suppress the democratic rights of the Estonian people. It said that if "the USSR...tries to obstruct the application of the Republic of Estonia's laws and state authority with the use of force, the first priority is the preservation of the Estonian people. This excludes the use of force as a means of resistance."

Radio Riga reported on December 17, that 1,002,829 people in Latvia had signed a petition opposing signature of Gorbachev's new treaty of Union. The total population of Latvia is about 2,681,000, of whom 53.7% per cent are ethnically Latvian.

On December 21, 500 military officers met in Riga to form the Union of Servicemen in the Baltic. One of its leaders, Major Leonid Alyoshin, said that presidential rule should be instituted not only in Latvia. "It should be introduced all over the Soviet Union."

The appeal issued by this meeting said that if presidential rule proved ineffective, a state of emergency should be introduced throughout the USSR. It also declared that if the USSR Congress of People's Deputies failed to act to assure political stability, the army would have to adopt "all measures, including extraordinary ones, in order to protect the soldiers' rights and human dignity."

There is an extremely heavy concentration of military in Riga, the Latvian capital. This city is a major port, and it is also a favorite retirement haven for Soviet officers. Soviet military personnel have considerable weight in the population in both Latvia and Estonia, where the original nationalities have precarious majorities (In Estonia, Estonians make up 64.7% of the population). About a fourth of the pro-Moscow Latvian Communist Party is estimated to be Soviet military officers.

The increase of pressure by the Soviet



authorities in the Baltic follows a bureaucratic counteroffensive in Ukraine, marked in particular by the jailing of the Ukrainian national democratic leader Stepan Khmara. The Soviet threats in the Baltic have obliged Western governments at least to raise some formal protests about the violation of the rights of the Baltic peoples. But very little has yet been said about Khmara. Nonetheless, it is the labor and left movement from which the least has been heard about these violations of human rights.

In the past, important campaigns have been mounted by left forces in the West to defend victims of political repression in the Soviet Union. It is ironic that there are so few now when the Gorbachev government is extremely vulnerable to international pressure.

Statements and policies that seem anti-Communist should be less off-putting now than similar statements by victims of Stalinist repression before. The politics of the mass national democratic movements are very confused, but a restoration of capitalism is in contradiction to their objective interests. This has already been shown in a number of ways (the speech by the Ukrainian leader Ivan Drach published in abridged form in *International Viewpoint*, No. 196, December 10, 1990, is a recent example.)

Solidarity of the oppressed nationalities

The Baltic fronts have shown an interest in support from all quarters, including the Western left and revolutionary nationalist movements. Under the pressure of the Kremlin threats, the national liberation movements in the USSR took a turn toward a perspective of solidarity among oppressed peoples during the crisis following the Lithuanian declaration of independence.

It is obvious that their perspectives will be affected by the sort of sympathy and support that they get. Now is the time for their true friends to make themselves known. ★

State monopoly capitalism

AT THE END of 1990, Dick Forslund, a leader of the Socialist Party, the Swedish section of the Fourth International, visited Leningrad and talked to personalities in the antibureaucratic movement. The following account of one such discussion was published in the December 20 Issue of *Internationalen*, the Socialist Party's weekly newspaper.

DICK FORSLUND

A J. SHERBAKOV is one of the social democrat leaders in the Leningrad soviet. The Social Democratic Party is a new formation, and has seven out of the 385 seats.

"In the city of Saratov, the local government decided to privatize all trade. But this aroused little interest among the population. The people do not want to take risks, or else lack the money to buy any enterprise. So, after a while representatives of the mafia turn up, who have tentacles in the political apparatuses. 'We can buy tomorrow anything you have to sell,' they offer."

Sherbakov thinks that the same thing is now happening in Lithuania, where the mafia is extremely strong.

"The top levels of the nomenklatura also want to get in on the act. Managers, administrators, people in leading posts in the Communist Party collaborate. The development here in Leningrad is striking.

"A separate complex of 26 big industrial plants has been formed. This enterprise employs half a million workers. If we include their families, 1.4 million people are affected by this operation. A gigantic monopoly has been formed that is to compete with similar monopolies in other regions.

"This is a huge concentration of power. Right now, workers are being laid off from this industrial complex. On November 1, we had 60,000 jobless in Leningrad. At the new year, we are going to have



300,000 unemployed. Some 80% of industrial production in Leningrad is military. This is shrinking now, without being replaced by other kinds of production.

"The other source of growing unemployment is people being laid off from institutes. Of the 300,000 expected to be without work at the turn of the year, 160,000 will be technicians, engineers and administrators; 140,000 are industrial workers. The 26 enterprises are going to have full control over building materials, the lumber industry, fuel, food, everything. This is no 'free market'!

"I can give an example of how unemployment is being created just now," said Viktor Komarov from the Socialist Party in the Soviet Union, who also took part in the discussion.

"I am a data technician at a plant in Moscow with a workforce of 5,000. The management has formed six subsidiaries, which are formally state property. They have transferred to them the most skilled workers from the mother enterprise. These new companies are going to use the old contacts in the nomenklatura to get their own customers. Also, producers' goods have been transferred from the mother enterprise.

"The great mass of employees have nothing to say in this process. We are finally just employees in an abandoned big enterprise, which cannot produce anything, which is condemned to death.

"It is not our fault that the bureaucrats under the command economy hired as many people as possible in order to get the biggest possible share of resources. We are trying now to form an independent union to try to stop this process, to try to consolidate the situation, get a breathing space."

■ Is this the so-called 500-day plan?

"The '500-day plan' is only the best known of any number of plans," both said. But the most important thing is all that is going on without any kind of control.

"The nomenklatura is reshaping the system and giving itself a new role," answered Viktor Komarov.

"The local bureaucracy is striking out independently of the central power, and continuing in a new form," Sherbakov added. "In the industrial complex I described, the top manager is the former head of the local tax bureau and a former secretary in the Leningrad local party committee."

The third force leading the privatizations is the Communist Party in the full sense, Sherbakov continued. The regional party committees create the network for the 'new enterprises.' The managers of these enterprises are also leading cadres in the party. The party is investing directly in enterprises.

"An example is the Russian bank that was set up in Leningrad in August. The bank was established to serve the new industrial giant. In three months it became the biggest commercial bank in the Soviet Union. The Central Committee in Moscow invested 15 million rubles in it from its treasury."

Then Sherbakov and Komarov started to talk indignantly about the phenomenon called joint ventures.

"People who have had leading positions in the apparatus go, say to Britain, and register a company for 120 British pounds. Then they come back and say, 'Hello, I am a representative of a British company.' They make contact with bureaucrats they know in some big enterprise, which provides them an office. The state enterprise puts in a few million rubles, and the 'foreign representative' forks out 20 pounds. Then juridically, this becomes a 50-50 relationship!

The new enterprise produces nothing, employs no one, but it makes its director

and his accomplices rich. The tax laws are different for joint ventures, and so other big enterprises hide their assets there. And this new "enterprise" is supplied with sought-after things, such as metals.

"They just steal. When there is a delivery of 10 tons of prime aluminum, a ton is simply classed as scrap. The little "joint venture" gets it. It is then taken abroad by various routes, exchanged for computers or Mercedes, which are brought into the country and sold to bureaucrats.

"We voted out the Communist Party in March. Democrats of various sorts got the majority. We thought that the nomenklatura should go off to pasture. But they are only restructuring their power," Sherba-

kov said ironically.

"A party leader told me: 'Before we were the party of the working class. We can now become the party of big capital.' The old bureaucrats have the international links. The regional party committee here in Leningrad invited a delegation of seven persons from the Catalan CP. In reality only two of them were party members.

"The other five were businessmen who want to start, or make contact with, joint ventures. We are trying to hold back the process. We have lost time. Here in Leningrad, serious political life only began in March 1990." ★

Shades of Green

Interview with Soviet ecological activist

DISASTERS like Chernobyl and the drying up of the Aral Lake have become symbols of the devastating ecological consequences of sixty years of bureaucratic planning, the results of which are felt every day by tens of millions of people suffering from the pollution of air, ground and water.

The following interview with Vadim Damier, a co-founder of the Soviet Green Party, describes how the ecology movement in the Soviet Union has evolved as a response to this. The interview gives a historical account, while at the same time offering an insight into the ideas of the eco-socialist current on the Soviet left today. Vadim Damier is a specialist on the green and left movements in Western Europe, and a leader of the eco-socialist "Green Alternative" inside the Green Party. He has been active in attempts to unite the different left forces in Moscow, for example in connexion with the open letter on "People's Self-management" published in *IV* 194. The interview was given to Poul Funder Larsen in Moscow at the end of November.

WOULD you describe the development of ecological movements in the Soviet Union as wholly due to the advent of *perestroika* or were there any embryonic ecological groups before the mid-80s?

The ecology movement was one of the first informal movements in the Soviet Union. It came into being in different forms even before *perestroika*. There were some official ecological organizations such as the All-Russian Society for the Protection of the Environment (VOOP), which had very close links with

the authorities and industry, and therefore could not participate actively in solving ecological problems. As a result of this a lot of grass-roots initiatives for environmental protection developed at the local level. In the pre-*perestroika* period, for example, there were the Groups for Environmental Protection (Druzhina Okhrana Priroda) dominated by students. These were often founded by local branches of the Komsomol [Communist Party youth], but still could be seen as initiatives from below. Also a number of illegal or semi-legal ecological organizations existed in connection

with the human rights movement and philosophical clubs in different cities, but in the period before *perestroika* they were very severely repressed. We can only talk of an ecological mass movement from 1986-87 onwards.

The development of this broad movement has many features in common with what happened in the West. First came initiatives in the local communities — movements concerning a specific issue, for example, the inhabitants of a neighbourhood demanding an end to the building of a polluting factory. In the beginning only legal methods, like collecting signatures or appealing to the authorities, were used. This was a bit of a waste of time since the local authorities were in a "dual position": On the one hand they themselves lived in the area, but on the other they were a part of the centralistic system, and had to follow the orders from above. So, even if the authorities wanted to do something, they were not able to.

This resulted in actions of protest: one of the first actions of this type was in the holiday-resort of Svertoschina, near Kiev, where a lake was to be replaced by a system of canals. There was strong resistance against this, and as the ordinary forms of protest didn't succeed the inhabitants occupied the construction site and did not leave until the matter was settled.

This first phase of growth for the ecology movement was linked to the fact that at the beginning of *perestroika* the ecological struggle was almost the only legal outlet for protest. Therefore many people began as activists in the ecology movement. Later perhaps they broke off relations with it, as they politicized and joined different parties. The "Chernobyl-factor" of course also played a role.

■ **How did the differences between the political situation in Russia and the non-Russian republics influence the development of the ecology movement?**

In the non-Russian republics these questions were of course closely intertwined with the national struggle. They opened up the first opportunity for some of the national demands to be put forward. One example was in Latvia, where a club for environmental protection, VAK, was formed as a "purely" ecological organization, but quickly developed into a national-ecological one, and later participated in the founding of the People's Front.

The organizations which emerged in Russia were "non-political" coordinating unions on an inter-regional or all-union level. Now there are 25 or 30 of these organizations. Among the biggest are the Social-Ecological Union, the Green Movement, the Ecological Union and the Association for the Demanding of Ecological Initiatives. Some of these, for example the Ecological Union, are only

composed of experts, and generally there is a strong, and unpleasant, tendency towards the rule of experts in our ecology movement.

The strongest organizations, such as the Social-Ecological Union and the Green Movement, are federations of the regional and local citizens initiatives. They run candidates for the elections, and many members of these organizations are deputies on the local, regional or republic level. They also raise some social and political demands in their programmes. But they are "non-political" in the sense that they don't pursue any alternative concept for society as a whole. They are only demanding partial improvements and calling for action from above.

One of their demands for example is that the State Committee for Environmental Protection (the Ministry of Ecology) should be transferred from the Council of Ministers to the Supreme Soviet, as a Committee, in order to give it some legislative and supervisory powers.

The "non-political" outlook of these organizations means that they are drawing supporters from the most different political organizations and currents. For example during the second congress of the Social-Ecological Union in December 1989 representatives of the organization Pamiat in Novosibirsk were accepted, even though this is an eco-fascist organization. The majority argued that "since this is an organization which works in the ecological field it should be accepted".

■ What is the impact of the eco-fascist current inside the ecology movement in general?

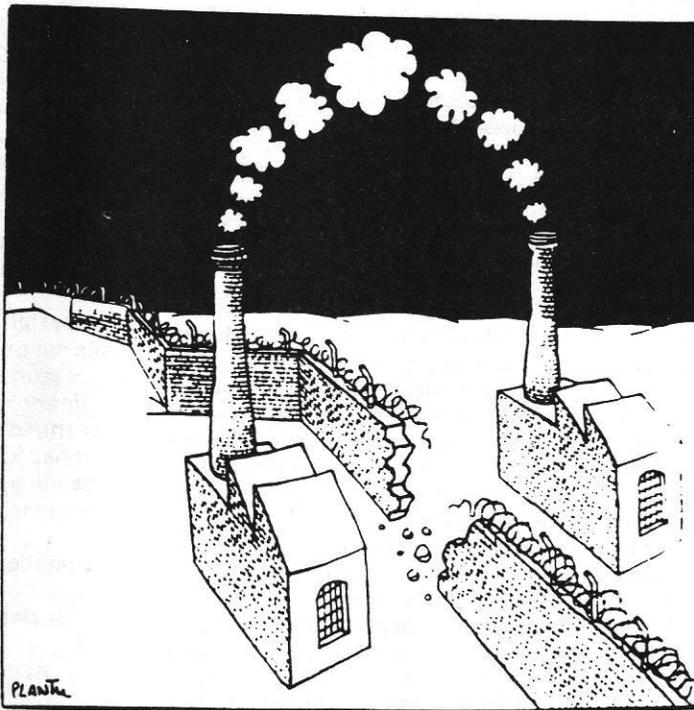
It is a rather strong tendency. I know that there are such tendencies in the ecology movement in the West as well, but I guess it is stronger here, particularly in the provinces. These organizations are indeed very active in the ecological field such as in Novosibirsk, where they organize experts from Akademgorodok ["academic town"]. These are able to develop programmes on matters such as alternative energy, and they link this to nationalist slogans and nationalism as a system of values.

Several prominent Russian writers, who are oriented towards chauvinist and ecological positions, such as for example Valentin Rasputin, who is also active in the struggle for the protection of Lake Baikal, Valerii Belov and to an extent

Viktor Astafiev, are part of this nationalist trend. So these positions are not only being advanced by Pamiat — a purely eco-fascist organization — in Novosibirsk, but also elsewhere, in the Committee for the Rescue of the Baikal or in the Committee for the Protection of the Volga.

Unfortunately these tendencies were also active in the formation of the Green Party. In Chelyabinsk [a main industrial center in the Urals] an organization called Fatherland set up a local branch of the Green Party, and they have been able to play a significant role on the "moderate" wing of our party.

■ How did the currents that formed the Green Party at the beginning of



this year develop from the broad ecology movement?

At the first congress of the Social-Ecological Union in December 1988 a group of radical greens proposed a resolution, which called for a stop to the building of nuclear power stations. This was rejected by the congress, and because of that representatives of the "radicals" from different cities united behind the scenes of the congress to form an organizing committee of the Green Party. There were representatives from the Green Union in Samara [Kuibyshev], Kazan, groups from the Ukraine and some other places — at this time groups from Moscow and Leningrad did not yet participate.

Then in the spring of 1989, during the first congress of the Green Movement this organizing committee called on all ecological groups to participate in the preparation of the new party. I was at this congress, as a representative of the Mos-

cow Ecological Federation, and started working together with them.

From May 1989 onwards the organizing committee was called The movement for the formation of a Green Party. But still it was more a network of groups than a real political organization. The editorial board of the journal *Tretii Put* (Third Road) published in Samara, played a kind of coordinating role. We tried to establish contacts with other green and left groups, we had a first discussion on the programme and statutes of the new organization, but we also tried to organize campaigns. Together with other democratic forces we took the initiative for a blockade in the city of Chapayevsk on the Volga, where a factory for the reworking of chemical weapons was being built.

This project was very damaging for the environment and as usual no one had consulted the local people.

The blockade had a symbolic significance and became an example for later ecological campaigns. We utilized different types of actions, making tent camps, pickets, blockades, maintaining close contacts with the local people, founding strike committees in the factories and so on. After 35 days of struggle the government decided not to build a factory in this spot, but only an exercise camp.

In March 1990 we held the first congress of the movement for a Green Party and proclaimed the formation of our party. It was an open congress in the sense that not only the groups which were on the organizing committee, but also groups from the broad ecology movement could participate. The 80-85

participants in the congress represented approximately 20 cities from four republics (Russia, Ukraine, Belorussia and Kazakhstan). The delegates from the Ukraine however wanted to set up a Green Party in their own republic. The congress carried a resolution against the socio-economic programme of the government, because already at that time the news agency "Interfax" was reporting plans of price hikes.

Another resolution was defeated by the majority, but accepted as a "resolution of the minority" due to the rules of basic democracy. It protested against the new presidency as a very undemocratic institution. So already during this first congress two main tendencies appeared inside the party.

■ What are the political differences of these two currents concerning the development of society?

The tendencies could be termed "radi-

icals" and "moderates". The radicals are primarily the people who prepared the formation of the party. We have a clearer knowledge of the green movements in the West, alternatives in the sphere of social organization, the ideas of direct action, eco-socialism and so on. We do not see the Greens as a movement for environmental protection, but as a Green alternative for society as a whole. Our aim is a new society without repression, alienation, hierarchical structures, authorities and power. A linkage between eco-anarchist and eco-socialist ideas so to say. Our ideal is a federation of self-managing units, that is mainly self-reliant communities.

We see the parliament only as a stage from where you can propagate your ideas and criticize the rulers. We emphasize extra-parliamentary actions. In the economic sphere we are against the market economy and support socialism, not in the way we had it here, but a just and non-authoritarian socialism.

The moderate wing in the party is composed of two different, but somewhat amorphous, currents. There are people who want a kind of association for environmental protection. They do not see the difference between this and a Green Party. The other group of "moderates" want a party of the usual, parliamentary type in order to create changes from above. But we on the "radical" wing think that a new model of society can only be created from below, through the development of self-management in the factories and the local areas.

At the congress in March the "radicals" were a minority, but the "moderates" knew they couldn't run the party without us, and consequently wanted to avoid a split. After the congress we began creating local branches of the Green Party. In May fifteen people founded the Moscow branch, which has a deputy in the city's soviet.

In early June 56 delegates from 25 cities, representing 800-1000 members, attended the first "real" congress of the Green Party in Samara. The aim of the congress was to adopt the programme and statutes of the Green Party, but because of disagreements between the tendencies it did not decide anything. There were two absolutely different concepts of the party, its activities, its tasks and aims — in short "moderate" and "radical".

We wanted a federative party organized along the lines of basic democracy, but also with a leadership capable of reacting to political developments. The "moderates" on the other hand wanted a confederation with no central coordination whatsoever.

After the failure of this joint congress the two currents have developed separately. In June the opposition from Moscow, Samara, Nizhni Novgorod and the Ukraine met in the city of Balakova on the Volga, where we participated in a

blockade against a nuclear power station. Here we worked out the principles of a new political organization, the Green Alternative, based on the ideas of the left wing of the world ecology movement.

■ **What are the relations between the activists of the Green Alternativ" and the other currents inside the socialist left-wing?**

What initiatives do you think could create unity among the many groups on the left?

Some of the groups connected to the Green Party participated in the conference of the bloc Democratic Russia, whereas the Moscow branch decided to boycott it, because this bloc supports the "500 days" market reform plan.

In Moscow we are trying to build a bloc of the left. This is complicated as there exist a multitude of left groups, including the Socialist Party, Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists, Union of Anarchists, the Democratic Platform and the Marxist Platform in the CPSU, Marxist Workers Party, the Green Party and the Communards, which is an alliance of people with different anarchist and Trotskyist views. During the summer we held some sessions of "a round table of the left" with the perspective of creating a united left front in Moscow. The character of this bloc is somewhat difficult to predict — it must be decided in practice. It could be a more flexible bloc without a common programme and oriented towards campaigns — or perhaps with a common programme only on some particular questions.

However differences of opinion occurred. Some wanted solely an exchange of information, some wanted a bloc of far left forces and others a bloc of broader left forces. In the end a document involving representatives from a number of the left-currents was drawn up. This document rejects both the Ryzhkov and the Yeltsin plans for a market-reform. After the failure of an attempt to establish a bloc of the far left forces I also participated in this initiative. I am against the

isolation of the far left and therefore tried to get some of these forces to join, but this was impossible due to the resistance of the Confederation of Anarcho-Syndicalists.

So far there have been few common activities of the left forces, but for example during the demonstration on November 7 we formed a united left column inside the official demonstration. Here members of the Marxist Platform, the Marxist Workers Party, the Communards and others demonstrated for the slogans of self-management and self-government. ★

Support East European socialists!

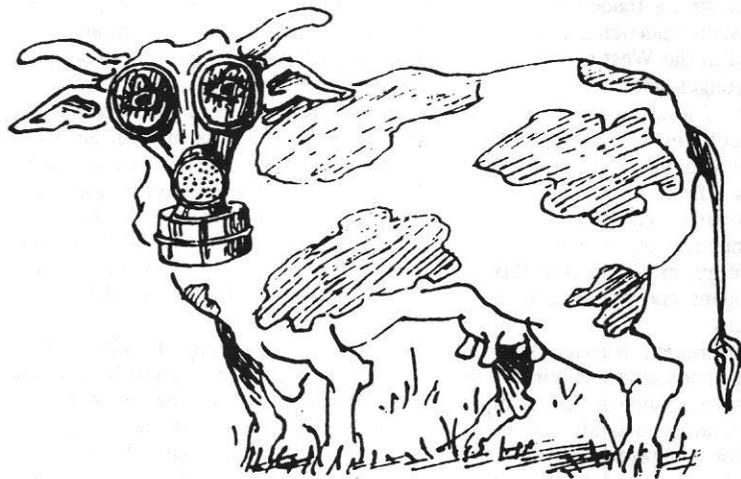
AS is clear from the articles on these pages, the bureaucratic capitalism being concocted by imperialism and the neo-Stalinist bureaucrats offers no resolution of the crisis of the Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. On the contrary it heaps new miseries on the old. A third way, a real socialist alternative is needed.

For this reason the United Secretariat of the Fourth International is launching an international financial appeal to gather the means to respond to this need, to make known its opinions and analyses, and to help its supporters in these countries to organize themselves.

Donations should be addressed to:

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Self-management versus nomenklatura capitalism

Interview with Alexander Buzgalin

ALEXANDER BUZGALIN is a founding member of the Marxist Platform in the CPSU, and was elected onto the Central Committee of the CPSU at last year's 28th congress. He was interviewed in Paris by Colin Meade and Cecilia Garmendia on December 18, 1990.

CAN you explain how you came to be on the Central Committee of the Communist Party, and how you see your role on that body?

Before 1989 it would have been impossible for a person such as myself to become a member of the Central Committee. I became a member of the CPSU only in 1988, and I became a political figure only in the Spring of 1989. I was a political scientist who had written some articles on political problems, but I was not a political leader. But it became impossible for me to continue to stand outside political activity. It was "if not I, then who?"! It was a time of choice for everybody, to really be a communist or not — like Hamlet. So I decided to be and with ten of my friends decided to write a document containing some ideas on the future political and economic system as the programme of the CPSU. This document was the Marxist Platform¹.

It was published in *Moskovskaya pravda*, and we got a lot of calls from people throughout the Soviet Union who supported our ideas. In the middle of April we organized a conference of supporters of the document, and that was the beginning of my political career, because I became one of the members of the Consultative Committee of the Marxist Platform.

I was only a guest at the 28th Congress of the CPSU, but I did some very interesting work in the corridors of the congress and tried to explain our ideas and the purpose of our movement. Some people decided to support our attempt to have a speech at the congress. After some arguments it was made possible. I had ten minutes — I was applauded four times.

After the speech hundreds of delegates approached myself and my friends to discuss the Marxist Platform

and the democratic movements in the CPSU. Two lists were proposed for the elections to the CC: one with official leaders from the regional party delegations and the second proposed by Gorbachev. During the election discussion many people, including me, made short speeches to propose additions to this list, of people without official positions. It was decided to make such additions and I

received the backing of the absolute majority of the delegates for a place on the CC.

I am not the only member of the Marxist Platform on the CC — there are two others. But I am a "white crow" in that company — in a minority of one on all questions. Obviously I have become well known because of this. It is not the most important thing for me to be a member of the CC or even of the CPSU. I want to be a real communist and a supporter of the democratic movement. Being on the CC puts me in a very contradictory position. On the one hand it is very positive because I can make a speech in a large auditorium at every meeting, I can write an article, and have contacts with different people on a high level and can take real practical steps in support of our ideas.

But on the other hand, I am responsible for all the decisions of the CC, most of

which I don't agree with. I am not sure how to resolve this.

Furthermore, it is difficult to be a member of an organization that bears the responsibility for the Stalinist repressions and the present crisis. I am rather hoping to be thrown out, which would resolve the problem. I have not accepted any of the privileges of membership of that body.

■ What are the positions and debates inside the Marxist Platform?

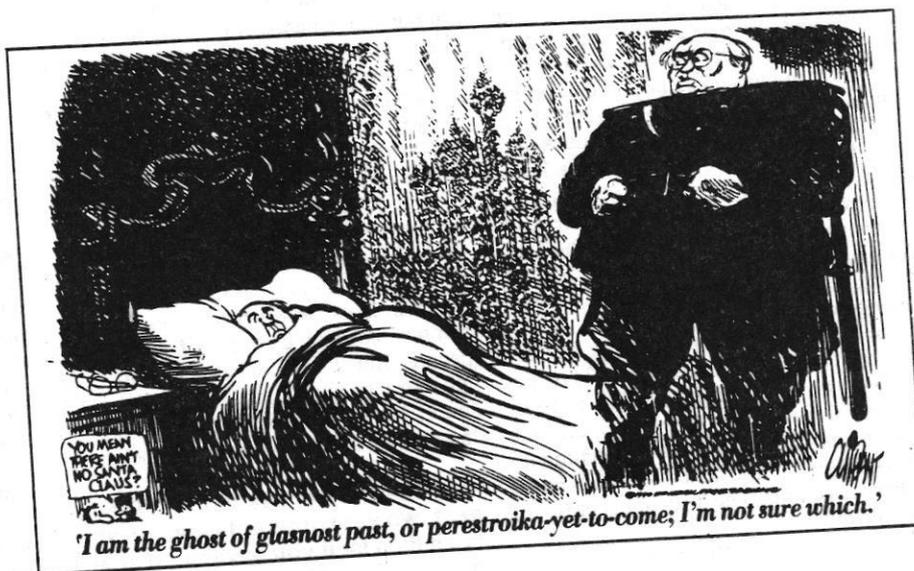
There are perhaps three main ideas. First is that the way to socialism is through the full realization of all democratic relations in all spheres — social, political, economic and ideological. This also opens up the perspective of communism.

We believe that democracy is about more than elections and a multiparty system. There must also be basic democracy at the level of the enterprises, regions and towns. There is a need for democratic consumers' organizations — something that is very important in the Soviet Union at the moment — and in the sphere of distribution and social relations and so on. We are for a real self-management democracy at all levels.

We are for social ownership of the economy in two forms: the first would be collective ownership and the second would be a variant of state ownership, with strong self-management at the enterprise and national level. We say yes to the market, but we see it as a way to go from the present crisis situation to a future socialist economy. This market must be under the control of mass democratic organizations in different spheres, rather than under the control of what we call the *bandokratia*, that is, a union between organized criminals and corrupt officials.

Now, in the Soviet Union, we have a sit-

1. Extracts from the Marxist Platform can be found in *IV* 187, June 18, 1990
2. Extracts from the Democratic Platform can be found in *IV* 188, July 2, 1990.



uation where the old leaders are changing their political power over the economy into money and property. Bureaucratic leaders are becoming heads of joint enterprises with Western countries and private enterprises. There is the development of what we call "nomenklatura capitalism". Perhaps this would be accompanied by a political dictatorship on Pinochet's lines. We have said we are totally against such a variant of the market.

We accept some forms of private ownership in existing circumstances. It is necessary to legalize shadow forms of private ownership and exercise some control. We would envisage something like the NEP of Lenin's time.

In the ideological sphere we are Marxists, but we understand that Marxism is not just the small number of ideas and figures we had in the official Soviet primers. There are also many others who were Marxists and made contributions. Marxism must be self-critical and must be developed. Lenin was a critic of Marxism. Marx wrote that capitalism was a society of free competition. Lenin emphasized the contradiction between free competition and monopoly in capitalism. This was a criticism and a development.

Something similar is needed now given the changes both in West and East. So we are for critical, developing Marxism and not the Stalinist version.

There are some difficulties in the Marxist Platform, which I want to explain. To do this it is necessary to look at the history of the democratic movements in the CPSU. This arose in January 1990 with the formation of the Democratic Platform². The absolute majority of this organization supports right social democratic ideas. A minority of the DP decided to support a socialist perspective and the ideas of real democracy. This was a component of the future Marxist Platform.

A week before and a week after the 28th Congress of the CPSU there were two meetings of supporters of the DP. A split took place. A part has formed a Republican Party with ideas like the American Republicans — not even social democrats. Another part has remained inside the CPSU and has taken part in the formation of the Democratic Movement of Communists (DMC). This includes not only the DP people, but also some horizontal structures existing in Leningrad, Moscow and other cities. There are also some small groups of delegates to the 28th Congress, for example a group called Young Communists/Left Initiative from Leningrad.

The DMC was organized at a conference on November 17/18, 1990. There are two wings in this movement. The right is left social democrat. They support the main ideas of the Second International, but its programmatic announcements rather than its actions. The leftwing is close to my position.

There are also differences inside the

Marxist Platform. About a half of its supporters are moving to a position very close to that of the United Front of Toilers (UFT)³. Prigorin, for example, said that the most important struggle in our country is the struggle against capitalist restoration. The most important task is that of defence of socialism. I asked: was there a socialism to defend? He answered maybe yes, maybe no, but it is necessary to save all socialist measures.

In some cases he is right, but only in some. In fact the main problem for us is the same as before. We still have the bureaucratic dictatorship, but in a new form. Our capitalism is growing from our bureaucracy and will be a bureaucratic capitalism. Thus the way now to struggle to destroy a future bureaucratic capitalism in our country is to struggle against its precondition: bureaucratic control over society and the economy.

Then there are different positions on questions of tactics. We think that one of our most important tasks is work within the mass democratic movements. The majority of these movements say that they are anti-socialist, anti-Marxist and anti-CPSU. But if you ask them if they would support real self-management for the workers they reply: yes. If you ask them: do you support bureaucratic capitalism or social ownership, they will support social ownership. In my view our most important task is to work inside such movements. But for many in the MP it is impossible to work in a movement that says "no to socialism".

The third difference is over relations with other socialist parties and groups in the Soviet Union. We have good contacts with the Confederation of Anarcho-syndicalists (CAS), Kagarlitsky's Socialist Party, with left social democrats. On the whole social democrats in the USSR are rather like the Democratic Party in the USA. A typical bourgeois party. But the left wing are real supporters of socialism and self-management, and play a very positive role in the mass democratic and labour movements. So we want to organize some kind of bloc of real socialist forces in the USSR.

However it is hard for the majority of the MP to support this idea. The Anarcho-syndicalists say that the CPSU is an organization of criminals and the majority of the Marxist Platform say that this makes it impossible to work together. I try to explain that in some respects the CAS is right. Leaders of the CPSU have been real criminals, organizers of repressions, responsible for the deaths of millions of people. But the majority of the MP find this hard to take. They say, if the CAS think that the CPSU is full of criminals then they support the ideas of Pinochet.

■ **These differences in the MP suggest two very different ideas of what socialism is: if you say that to attack the CPSU equals anti-socialism then**

the underlying idea is that the dictatorship of the CPSU and socialism are the same thing. Thus these differences are actually very profound.

For me, defence of socialism and criticism of the dictatorship of the CPSU are two sides of the same coin. If you are to have socialist relations, we must destroy the dictatorship of the so-called Communist Party. Our CPSU is not a real Communist Party. It is a bureaucratic construction. Its membership consists in its absolute majority of conformists, without ideas. They are in it for career reasons. It was impossible to be a scientist or an engineer if you were not a party member.

The leaders are typical bureaucrats — state capitalists, but not communists. The struggle against this model of the party was the first idea of the MP. We wanted to destroy the bureaucratic command party and organize a real communist movement.

■ **Has the national question been an issue inside the Marxist Platform?**

It is one of the most difficult questions, because a majority of the Platform supports the idea of defence of unity of the USSR by any means, even if this means a strongarm policy. My friends and myself reject this. But we have only two forces, and two types of organization. One the one hand there are the bureaucrats who are trying to save the Soviet Union through the policy of the strong hand. The Communist Party bureaucrats in the Baltic Republics and some other republics — though not in Georgia and Armenia — think that the only way to save the socialist choice is to preserve all-Union laws through the policy of the strong hand. They don't say "use armed force", but this is thought possible.

The second force is the nationalists. This is no longer a democratic force. At one time it was, when they stood up for defence of the national rights of the small republics. But now the leaders of the nationalists in the Baltic have become semi-fascist in some aspects.

■ **In what way?**

Because now they are trying to organize pressure on all people who support socialist ideas and on all communists and on people who are not of their nationality, be they Russian, Jewish, Ukrainian, Polish or whatever. Pressure is applied through all means: through the mass media; through employment. It is very difficult to get a job if you are not a native. Pressure is applied through the system of card distribution. Formally, rights are equal but really unequal, since informal relations play a major part in our social life.

All this makes it difficult to be a supporter of national democratic movements in the Soviet Union. When I said at the last plenum of the CC that I support the national struggles for independence most of the CC members said: "you support fas-



cist regimes in these republics"; "you support the repression of communists".

At the December 1990 CC plenum I insisted throughout that it was necessary to give a clear and unambiguous answer on the central question: who is responsible for the crisis of the Union over the national question. I said that it was the party that until now had enjoyed full control over all the republics that was responsible. Obviously it is necessary to criticize nationalist and chauvinist positions and anti-democratic measures in every republic, but it is the CPSU that bears the main responsibility. Furthermore, even if independence brings forth reactionary regimes, bureaucratic repression against these movements can only be counter-productive and lead to civil wars.

I put forward different variants of Union, which could only be voluntary.

■ Does the MP have any supporters in the non-Russian republics?

Yes, but we have some difficulties. A supporter of the MP has become a second secretary of the CP in Minsk, the capital of Byelorussia. But in the Baltic Republics the majority of our supporters have contacts with the so-called Internationalist Fronts. These latter demand a strong hand policy from Gorbachev. Some members of our platform support such ideas.

We have formed an organized minority in the MP, called "Marxism 21st Century". This was set up on November 17/18 in the Academy of Social Sciences. On the second day we held a joint meeting with elements in the DP and issued a joint document. So now Marxism 21st Century is both a member of the Marxist Platform and of the Democratic Movement of Communists. We are a bridge between the two. If part of the MP goes to the UFT and part of the DP to the social democrats, that leaves us to form a real democratic communist movement.

■ You have outlined your economic programme. Do you see points of support for this programme in reality? Or is it just an idea?

First of all, a short history of our programme. A small group of young scientists was organized at the end of the 1970s when I was a post-graduate student. We discussed the problems of the bureaucratization of our economy, of self-management, of the humanist essence of socialism and so on. We were aware even then of the real contradictions in our economy. We tried to arrive at some conclusions. At the end of the 1980s we looked for ways to realize these ideas. We sought contacts with self-management organs in the Soviet Union and with the mass movements and in 1987-89 we organized schools for leaders of producers' self-management in our country. This school exists now in Moscow University. It aims to educate people in how to be a real democratic master in their enterprises.

Now, we have some positive results. There was a meeting in Tolyatti at the end of August, which brought together representatives of the workers collectives in the state enterprises, and they decided to organize a congress which took place in early December 1990.

Our group of scientists acted as consultants for this congress. We prepared a packet of documents for the delegates setting out a model of a so-called people's enterprise. We proposed two variants. Firstly, joint ownership by two subjects, a state body, such as a city soviet and the labour collective of the enterprise. The labour collective would decide on the organization of responsibilities, production and distribution, in the context of a plan of production agreed with the state.

We also proposed a simple model of self-management relations. Self-

management is more than just the power of the workers collectives. It operates in all spheres and at all times. We tried to describe this idea according to experience both in our country and elsewhere. This model also took up the question of the relations between the labour collectives and the administration where the former is the master and the latter "the worker".

The second variant was for smaller enterprises, where state involvement is not essential.

These ideas have been put into practise in some enterprises. Also, a colleague has written on the problems of social self-management in spheres other than production. For example he tried to find a model for self-management in distribution. Now he is Vice-President of the All-Union Council of Consumers of the Soviet Union. We are also trying to

put our ideas into practise in the ecological movement. These are first steps, but real steps. We are able to use our ideas in the independent movements, which are opposed to all variants of dictatorship, whether neo-Stalinist or Pinochet-style.

My wife has been working on the question of self-management in the cultural sphere, and has written some documents for the congress of Soviet film-makers. These documents were adopted and attempts are being made to put them into practise. This is another practical result.

■ How were the delegates to the Congress of Labour Collectives elected?

There were about 600 delegates plus 300 guests. They could claim to represent some seven to nine million workers. Virtually all republics and all major cities were represented. The difference between the delegates and guests was not very important, because the delegates were formal leaders of workers' collectives with the right accreditation. The guests didn't have the piece of paper. Most of these people were chairpersons of councils of labour collectives, and had been selected as official representatives of the collectives.

About 30% of these people were workers, 60% engineers and so on, while there were a small number of scientists, representing scientific organizations. There were also some officials. Lukyanov, the leader of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR made a speech, when he claimed that he had always been a supporter of self-management. Two days before this conference there was a conference of directors of state enterprises, where it was said that force would be used if the directors' orders were not obeyed. At the end of his

3. A neo-Stalinist organization.

4. For an account of this Congress see article by Poul-Funder Larsen in IV 187. Nikolai Travkin is leader of the Russian People's Party.

speech Lukyanov said that it would be a very positive step if the congress of labour collectives were to support the conclusions of the directors' congress.

It was the very big enterprises that were represented at this congress. The meeting decided to organize a union of labour collectives, to struggle for new laws on the economy, for defence of the interests of self-management for social ownership.

There are two models of privatization on offer. One sees the way as from bureaucratic to private ownership, the other from bureaucratic to common ownership. This council of labour collectives will struggle for the second option.

■ What are your relations with the Confederation of Labour?

This is complicated. Myself and leaders of the Socialist Party, and some other Marxist organizations, for example the Marxist Workers Party-Party of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat, which has real links with the workers movement and envisages the absolute realization of all Marxist ideas, including anti-bureaucratic ideas, have links with strike committees. We worked on the first congress of strike committees which took place in Novokuznetsk in May this year⁴. There was a very contradictory situation in this congress.

For example Travkin made a speech at this congress, which a lot of the delegates found wonderful. I made a speech and got the same response. The Confederation does not really exist; what there is is a council of the leaders, who have moved from a democratic position to support for Yeltsin. These leaders have close relations with government officials and have become junior bureaucrats. But this is a problem for any mass movement in its initial stages.

I think that there will soon be a second congress of the Confederation at which there will be some changes, perhaps a split. I think the majority will line up behind Yeltsin and a move towards capitalism, with defence of the workers inside this context. A minority, however, will support the idea of enterprise self-management. The majority of the miners, for example, or the steelworkers in the Urals will support the idea of social ownership. The important thing for them is the struggle against the administration, not against social ownership. However, in the Union of Workers Collectives, there is probably a majority for our ideas. These latter can see that what we will get is bureaucratic capitalism, in which power will stay in the same hands in new forms.

■ Has there been any discussion of the conversion of the defence industries at the conference of workers collectives?

Yes, but it was not a major discussion. There were a large number of representatives of the defence industry there, but they mainly discussed forms of self-

management and the union. Also a lot of time was wasted on procedural questions. I can only give my own opinion on the question of the defence industries.

We have a big problem. It has been decided to transform defence industries into civilian industries through simple bureaucratic means. These enterprises have very sophisticated equipment and the capacity for experimental production. There are large institutes. Thus the proposal that they should produce simple goods is very wasteful. They should engage in scientific production. We could use this for export. The people who work in this sector can see this problem.

The people at the congress were often highly educated, with both technical and broader economic knowledge. Often they know more than the directors in the sense that the latter know how to manipulate the bureaucratic system, but not how to organize social relations in the enterprise and throughout the economy. The workers' collective leaders would exercise competent management. They can also teach others about self-management.

■ What are the differences between the economic programmes of Shatalin/Yeltsin and Gorbachev? And what is the plan?

Shatalin does not really support his own programme. He is responsible for two programmes: the one that bears his name and one issued by an Economics Institute. The latter is not well known. But it concludes that it is not possible to organize a market in 500 days. This is what it is like in the Soviet Union! The Supreme Soviet has adopted both Gorbachev's and Shatalin's programme, but without the 500 day deadline.

The question of what road to the market remains open. Yeltsin's programme represents the interests of new business people, Gorbachev's that of the bureaucracy. Some bureaucrats are moving into business, but others cannot or do not want to. Thus Gorbachev and Yeltsin represent two wings of the new "bandokratia".

But both plans are in any case impossible to carry out. The Yeltsin programme cannot work because we have very large disproportions between different spheres of production.

In some spheres, such as the defence industry, we have the level of the West; in others, such as agriculture we are back in feudal times. Some 60% of our agricultural workers work manually. The situation in the goods and services markets is very contradictory. The price of a hotel room for foreigners can run into hundreds of dollars a day. For Soviet people it is only ten roubles. Thus one rouble equals 20 dollars.

For tape recorders things are the other way round. In these circumstances, speculation is very profitable. We may recall that in the Marxist account, capitalism begins in the sphere of trade — mercan-

tile capitalism, through speculation in the sphere of distribution. Our market can only be of this primitive kind. There will be a reduction of production in all spheres — as can be seen in Poland. Most of our people have no prospect of becoming a real subject of market relations. We have a collectivist psychology. When we discuss the market with the miners, they say: the market is absolutely necessary for us. I say, so then you will be in competition with all other enterprises producing coal. They reply: no, we will be friends — we will be in competition with Japan perhaps.

There will be a growth of contradictions between different social groups. Some people will see their incomes growing very rapidly, while others will experience a sharp decline. We will not get the Swedish system. Our capitalism will be like something from the start of the 19th century.

What is possible in our country is some kind of hybrid, such as we saw in Poland during the 1980s, overseen, as in Poland, by a military regime. But this will be a weak regime, confronted by many small democratic organizations and anarchy in the social and economic spheres. There will be a real struggle between different social and political forces. What will not happen is the realization of either Gorbachev's or Yeltsin's programme.

■ What do you think about the food crisis?

Over past years there has been nothing in the shops, but people have had food in their freezers. Now there is not so much food in the freezers. It is not that production has dropped dramatically. There is enough food and many other goods — in our country — not too much, but enough. The problem is where has the food gone. The fact is that the whole distribution system has crumbled. It is like when a bridge has not been repaired for long enough. One day it just crumbles — there is no sudden action, no subject. The bridge is just too tired. The bureaucratic system in our country is just too tired and has collapsed without anyone actively blowing it up.

The whole system of transport, management and distribution does not work. In Magnitogorsk there were a hundred tons of sugar at the railway station, but no sugar in the shops.

Over the years the economy has been adjusted by the endless addition of new rules. Now, centralized management is impossible; people ignore the centre's decisions. Thus it is no use issuing new regulations. Western attempts to send aid will not help, since most of the aid will end up stacked at the station. On the other hand if direct contact were made with relevant organizations rather than the government this would be helpful. But this aid is a political game between Gorbachev and the Western governments. ★

The king without a throne

THE POLISH presidential election has laid bare and aggravated the intensity of the crisis of the process of peaceful transition to capitalism opened by the round table accords of April 1989. Although Lech Walesa has ultimately emerged victorious from the electoral battle, his margins of manoeuvre and his legitimacy have been reduced.

CYRIL SMUGA

THE PRINCIPAL features of this ballot are the poor electoral score achieved by the candidates historically linked to the Solidarnosc movement, in the first round as much as in the second, and the appearance of an important section of the electorate which today rejects not only the outgoing government, but Solidarnosc as an institution. Lech Walesa, despite taking care over the past months to distance himself from Mazowiecki's policy, has suffered from the rejection inspired by the latter, identified by large sectors of society with Solidarnosc.

The policy of the government of Tadeusz Mazowiecki has represented a frontal assault against the two fundamental aspirations which were at the origin of the first independent trade union in Eastern Europe in 1980 — the aspiration to decent living conditions and to democracy.

The first year of the Mazowiecki government was marked by the appearance of massive unemployment (more than a million unemployed estimated), a drastic lowering of the standard of living (the real average salary has been reduced by a third) and a proportional fall in household consumption (27% at least in the second quarter of 1990, in relation to the same period in 1989). It is estimated that 44% of workers' households and 51% of households of the retired live below the poverty line¹.

The increase in rents, which took place at the end of the first electoral round, was the straw that broke the camel's back. If a year ago the population was ready to pay the price for economic restructuring, the bill presented by the government has proved to be intolerable.

The version of "actually existing" democracy in Poland has also been a disappointment over the past year. In voting for the candidates of Solidarnosc in the partially free elections of June 1989, the Poles had voted against the dictatorship and for democracy as seen through the only concrete experience which the immense majority amongst them had known — the internal democracy inside Solidarnosc in 1980-81. Built from below, based on the election and recall of representatives, organized around workplace collectives sovereign over the higher bodies, offering alternatives developed through collective discussion, this democracy allowed everybody to influence decisions.

On the contrary, the parliamentary democracy emanating from the round table compromise has left decisions in the hands of a small political elite (which, moreover, was 65% the result of cooption) all the more authoritarian in that it considered itself invested with a historic mission. The chasm between this reality and the blurred and idealized memory of the democracy which existed in 1980-81 inside Solidarnosc, was a deep one.

In taking the road of capitalist restoration, the Solidarnosc leadership inevitably came up against its own social base, which is to be sacrificed on the altar of the creation *ex nihilo* of a new bourgeoisie. A recent sociological survey² revealed that 62% of workers considered that nobody in the country represented their interests. A year before, the identification between the workers and what they perceived as "their government" was total.

One of the authors of this study, explains thus the current state of working class opinion: "Asked who influenced the policy of the government, the workers cited most frequently the Church (60%) and then the Jews (43%). (...) However, the workers are not religious in the sense of an identification with the hierarchical institution of the Church, although 97% declare themselves to be believers. A distrust of the Church's political involvement is developing. On the other hand (...), contrary to what certain politicians think, anti-communist

resentments are not essential factors of working class consciousness. They remain live, but are elements only on the second, or indeed third level. (...) What shocks the workers the most today is above all the pauperization of their own social group and the appearance of a situation where the communists, the old nomenklatura, appear less and less as enemies. This place is taken by the new middle class. (...) If there is a strong apprehension about the return of the old authorities (...) these opinions are geographically differentiated. In Warsaw, around 70% [of those questioned] said they rejected the old regime, whereas in the provinces it was only 50-58%".

Only 20% of workers said they supported the government's policy. After a year of intensive propaganda confusing private property with "nature", 60% of workers declared that they wished to remain in a state enterprise and only 12% pronounced themselves in favour of privatization.

Note that, if the workers attach value to small merchant property (artisans and small traders) they reject the "new middle class" assimilated in their eyes "to the speculators and grafters who enrich themselves unduly and who end up by reducing the workers to the state of an inferior class". Thus, after a year's experience of the transition towards capitalism, a considerable part of the working class is becoming conscious that the place occupied until now by their class inside society



1. Estimated, in the second quarter of 1990, at 400,000 zlotys a month per person. See the article by Janusz Rowicki in *Słowo Powszechne*, November 27, 1990.

2. The information on the results of this survey, carried out in October by a team under Professor Leszek Gilejko, is taken from an interview given by one of his collaborators, Dr. Juliusz Gardawski, in the daily newspaper *Zycie Warszawy*, on November 27, 1990. A similar survey was carried out in 1987 by the same team and thus valid comparisons can be made.

3. Thus, for example, on November 22, *Gazeta Wyborcza* made public the contents of a letter from Bush to Mazowiecki, announcing his intention to support the partial annulling of the Polish foreign debt and reaffirming his admiration for the reforms undertaken by the Polish government. "It is obvious that their continuation is the essential condition for the reduction of the debt" commented the daily of Adam Michnik.

is menaced. This new awareness augurs badly for the future of the capitalist restoration in Poland.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki had centered his electoral campaign on the defence of his policy and on stressing the value of the support which he and his team had amongst the world bourgeoisie³. The campaign of Lech Walesa, on the other hand, took account of the distancing of large sectors of society from government policy. He repeated in all his meetings that his programme would be whatever his electors wanted.

Faced with the breadth of discontent, the Walesa leadership had also launched a campaign against the "anonymous nomenklaturist companies", established on a massive scale by the enterprise managements, which play a role of monopoly intermediaries between the state sector and the market.

These private companies live as parasites on the state sector and constitute an important source of primitive capitalist accumulation — exhibiting great dynamism, they have been tolerated by the Mazowiecki government. Lech Walesa has promised to liquidate them, but can he do it without putting in danger the stabilization of the "new middle class" and the advances made towards capitalist restoration in Poland?

Convinced that he would win the elections, the Solidarnosc president applied himself to building bridges with the Prime Minister's entourage. This duality of position has finally rebounded against him — his status as symbolic trade union leader did not assure him the massive support of the workers that he counted on. And, above all, he had to face in the second round the anti-Solidarnosc candidate, Stanislas Tyminski, an entrepreneur returned from Peru and Canada, all the more free to devote himself to demagoguery in that he did not have at his disposal even the embryo of a political movement.

Tyminski attacks International Monetary Fund

This latter highlighted his own social success to flatter the aspirations of all those who, in Poland, do not understand why the advances made towards capitalism do not bring them opulence. He harshly attacked the International Monetary Fund (IMF), describing its effects in Latin America. He attacked Jeffrey Sachs, adviser to the Polish government and a devotee of the neo-liberal Chicago economic school, recounting his Bolivian exploits and, in particular, his role in the installation of the state of emergency in that country. He presented himself as the defender of a Polish and national road towards capitalism, unlike Tadeusz Mazowiecki who, Tyminski claimed, had sold himself to imperialism.

Finally he declared that he supported all the strikes underway, the only means,

according to him, of stopping the national wealth being devoured by the imperialist vultures. He finished by accusing Lech Walesa of having betrayed the ideals of Solidarnosc and declared himself to be in contact with Marian Jurczyk, a historic trade union leader from Szczecin, today at the head of a small union resulting from a split in Solidarnosc — "Solidarnosc 80".

If Tyminski has thus come to occupy the vacuum which has appeared in Poland after the adoption of a pro-capitalist orientation by the leaders of Solidarnosc, it is highly improbable that he could (or indeed wishes to) structure the electorate that supported him as a movement⁴.

In the shadow of the Tyminski phenomenon, the 1.5 million votes that Wlodzimirz Cimoszewicz succeeded in attracting pales somewhat. Nonetheless, the candidate presented by the Social Democracy of the Republic of Poland (SDRP), an organization descended from the Polish United Workers Party (the old ruling Communist Party), did better than expected.

In disappearing from the political scene in January 1990, the party of which General Jaruzelski had been first secretary had bequeathed its apparatus to the SDRP, as well as its political and moral bankruptcy. The SDRP has had to face the revolt of the Social Democratic Union led by Tadeusz Fiszbach, which quickly returned to the bosom of Lech Walesa. Meanwhile, the trade union organization OPZZ, founded under the cover of the emergency laws in 1984, attempted to steer its own course, appealing for a vote in favour of Mazowiecki or of Cimoszewicz.

The electoral programme of Cimoszewicz was marked by his fear of being marginalized.

Pronouncing himself in favour of an "indispensable privatization of a large part of productive capital"⁵ and of the necessity of "pursuing the market transformation of the economy", he stipulated "it is necessary to maintain the natural riches, heavy industry, the defence industry and also a portion of the other enterprises in the state sector". Significantly, the workers appeared in his programme only as future shareholders in the enterprises, and all reference to workers self-management was absent.

By beating Roman Bartoszczke, Cimoszewicz has also provoked a crisis inside the Polish Peasant Party (PSL), which originates in the fusion between a sector of the Agrarian Party, issued from Rural Solidarnosc, and the apparatus of the former Stalinist satellite agrarian party, the ZSL. The latter began to challenge the choice made and the place accorded to its allies originating from Solidarnosc.

Evidence of the social malaise whose breadth was revealed by the elections, nationwide strike movements paralyzed

the coalmines and urban transport on the eve of the first round. These strikes, generally launched spontaneously and benefitting from the support of the Solidarnosc enterprise commissions as well as the structures of OPZZ, advanced material demands but affirmed also — and in a growing fashion — the workers' dignity, ridiculed by the governmental policy. In three coal mines, teams of workers have undertaken hunger strikes. These movements were only halted between the two rounds, after the workers had obtained a partial satisfaction of their wage demands.

The national coordinations of Solidarnosc in urban transport and mining supported the strikes against the wishes of the national leadership of the union⁶. The presidium of the National Commission demanded on November 20 that the leadership of the trade union strike these two branch structures off the register, dismiss their full timers, suspend their financing, and demand the cessation of all strikes and wage negotiations undertaken without its written mandate.

Rebellion against Solidarnosc leadership

The day after, during the meeting of the national commission of the coalmines of Solidarnosc at Katowice, the climate was rebellious. The idea of separating from Solidarnosc and founding a new trade union — "Solidarnosc 88" — was advanced. The leader of the Solidarnosc miners, Andrzej Lipko, interviewed by *Gazeta Wyborcza*, did not mince his words: "There is some question of sending busloads of miners to Warsaw and organizing pickets there. In my opinion there is an error of address. (...) The bus should go to Gdansk, to the national commission (of Solidarnosc) for it is this which should concern itself with (the fate) of its militants. For six months, the government has not satisfied our demands and the national commission has done nothing since to help us"⁷.

It is not the first attempt at "normalization" of Solidarnosc undertaken by its leadership. The national commission also declared that the national agreement of the enterprise commissions, better known

4. According to the German polling institute INFAS, 30% of young people under 24 and 26.5% of workers who took part in the second round of the presidential election gave their support to Tyminski, who achieved his best scores in the regions most affected by the crisis.

5. All citations from the programme of Cimoszewicz are drawn from his text "Democracy and Justice", which appeared in the daily paper of the SDRP, *Trybuna*, on November 19, 1990.

6. It should be noted that a similar situation existed inside the rival federation OPZZ, whose president, Alfred Miodowicz, had denounced the movement, in contrast to the branch leaderships who adopted an attitude of understanding towards the strikers and have attempted to take initiatives — notably in organizing a demonstration of miners in Warsaw.

7. *Gazeta Wyborcza*, November 22, 1990.

under the name of Network⁸, had "gone beyond the statutory accords of the agreements of the enterprise commissions in creating its own national electoral bureau and in attempting to create its own parliamentary representation".

The resolution adopted by the national leadership of the trade union rejected also the Network's demand to "constitute a social council of the property transformations" to oversee governmental activities in this field⁹. Subsequently the holding of a national meeting of the Network at Poznan was forbidden.

Rejection of pro-capitalist orientation

The shock of the elections can only aggravate the crisis inside Solidarnosc. For it is both the lack of independence of the first free trade union in Eastern Europe towards the government and the pro-capitalist orientation of its leadership which are being rejected.

The question of a parliamentary representation of the workers' base structures is being considered by very many enterprise structures and coordinations. At the same time, the question of an alternative economic programme to that imposed by the IMF is beginning to be discussed. For Josef Piniór, spokesperson of the Committee of Inter-Enterprise Coordination (MKK)¹⁰: "The result of the elections constitutes the last warning which has been addressed to us; if in the parliamentary elections a workers' platform of Solidarnosc does not appear, this will be the end of the trade union born in August 1980".

Lech Walesa and the trade union leadership which he has forged cannot continue to tolerate the democratic status of Solidarnosc, born out of the tradition of self-organization. Placed "at the service of the Republic" after the constitution of the Mazowiecki government, he is going to throw his immense authority into the balance when the social movements threatened to destabilise the regime — as he has already done several times.

Elected president and thus placed in the front line, he will no longer be able to rely on the support of a trade union leader enjoying an authority comparable to his own. If, as he has announced, he pursues the economic policy embarked upon by Mazowiecki, he will have to bring Solidarnosc to heel, at the risk of seeing it torn apart by splits¹¹. ★

8. On the creation of the Network, see IV 191, October 1, 1990.

9. *Tygodnik Solidarnosc*, no. 45, November 16, 1990.

10. See IV 195, November 26, 1990, for the positions of this trade union minority tendency.

11. All the more so when it seems that certain leaders of ROAD — the party created by the allies of Adam Michnik and Jacek Kuron — are contemplating the constitution of a corporatist trade union movement which would recruit amongst the thin layer of relatively highly paid workers. The danger of a split does not then come only from the rebellious sectors of Solidarnosc.

New Left Current at the crossroads

THE NEW LEFT CURRENT (Neo Aristero Revma — NAR¹) held its second conference in Athens on December 8/9, 1990. Almost 300 delegates gathered to discuss the merits of two counterposed reports. The majority report reiterated and elaborated themes introduced in the pre-conference document ("Socialism in our epoch"). The minority did not submit a detailed alternative draft document prior to the conference, other than a series of articles in *Prin* (the NAR's weekly paper) critical of the majority document. However a minority report appeared at conference itself signed by three out of the 22 members of the outgoing National Coordinating Committee, including Kappos, ex-CC member of the KKE (Greek Communist Party).

STAVROS ORFANOIANNIS

ONE indication of the political direction of the majority tendency in NAR can be gauged from the slogan adorning the stage curtain, taken directly from the title of the written report:

"Left radical front against the social war of capital;

"Anti-capitalist democratic revolution;
"For the new world of our epoch."

The minority document was headed simply:

"11 points for the regroupments of the militants of NAR."

Before looking at the points of friction in the conference debate it is worth summarizing the political character of the two competing tendencies within NAR. Given its origins, the majority tendency has made remarkable progress in the direction of revolutionary Marxism. Their pre-conference document represents an undeniable and qualitative break with the Stalinist traditions of this current.

Its authors go to great pains to develop an alternative analysis of modern capitalism coupled with a tempered critique of their past, in an attempt to develop a programme and tactics linked to a revolutionary strategy based on a class struggle approach.

The document of course suffers from a series of major contradictions in analysis as well as omissions. The document claims that world capitalism has entered a new phase since the mid 1970s. This phase is characterized by the dominance of "Multinational Conglomerate Monopolies" but still within the overall framework of "State Monopoly Capitalism (SMC)". Although it sticks with the old Stalinist SMC formula, the document

attempts to supersede its previous content by arguing that this qualified version of SMC does not imply a strategic adaptation to the non-monopoly sections of the bourgeoisie.

This new phase of capitalism is supposed to represent a "new epoch": "the development of the productive forces in previous periods...cannot be compared with that...being realized today."

Backwardness of Greek capitalism

This "explosive growth" in productive forces, worldwide and in Greece, doesn't seem to have affected the economic and political backwardness and dependence of the Greek bourgeoisie on foreign capital. This "dependency theory" is used in part to explain why a struggle needs to be waged to get Greece out of the EEC, and why "the labour movement must not downgrade the anti-monopoly... side of their struggle."

Again they attempt to go beyond the limitations of this analysis explaining that both the fight for withdrawal from the EEC and the anti-monopoly struggle "have to emphasize the anti-capitalist content" of these goals.

The above contradictions are compounded by major omissions. Neither the document nor the submitted report make any attempt to draw any balance sheet of NAR's political work since its last confer-

1. NAR came into existence following the mass expulsions from the KKE and its youth organization, KNE, because of their opposition to the class collaborationist trajectory of the KKE leadership which led it into a governmental alliance with the bourgeois New Democracy party in 1989.

ence despite a loss of membership² and a poor electoral showing. Another major weakness is the almost conscious reluctance to analyze in depth the crisis of the countries of "really existing socialism".

Of course the majority document does criticize the bureaucratic and authoritarian nature of these regimes but does not quite reach the conclusion that the dramatic changes reflect the depth of the crisis of Stalinism.

In an attempt to safeguard the delicate balance with the neo-Stalinist minority faction and its supporters, the majority tends to gloss over the past and concentrate on the counter-revolutionary role of Gorbachev. The authors of the majority document admit that a deeper and clearer analysis of their past is necessary — but say that this is an ongoing task that could not, nor should, be resolved at this conference.

Another glaring weakness of the majority (and minority) document as well as of the conference debate itself is the total absence of any discussion on women's issues. Not even passing reference is made to feminism and this clearly reflects the male domination of the leadership bodies of NAR, not to mention the tradition of distaste for feminist politics in the old KKE.

Towards revolutionary Marxism

However, despite these not insignificant flaws the dynamic of the majority tendency is clearly towards revolutionary Marxism — a term they use constantly to describe their politics. These comrades:

1. Reject the stages theory of revolution;
2. Accept the societies in E. Europe and the USSR as transitional societies;
3. Accept that all revolutions in the capitalist countries or our epoch will be "labour, anti-capitalist, socialist" in content;
4. See the construction of socialism as only being ultimately possible on a world scale;
5. Believe in the need for a revolutionary workers' party, the need to smash the bourgeois state apparatus and to establish a regime of workers power;
6. Advocate a transitional method;
7. Wish to "develop institutions that will counter the tendency towards counter-revolutionary degeneration, (and) bureaucratic centralism" and "to return to the Leninist principles to see how internal party democracy functioned then (tendencies, platforms, public differences of opinion and so on)";
8. Seek joint action against the neo-conservative offensive with social and political forces with whom they may not share the same strategic outlook;
9. Declare that an "honest position on the collapse of the bureaucratic regimes is a precondition for us to overcome our

own opportunistic, bureaucratic training and corresponding mentalities and practices."

The minority tendency on the other hand, claim to stand on "Marxist-Leninist" orthodoxy. Their report stressed the need to go back to the classics and to reject all flirtations with "neo-Marxists like Mandel, who tail-end social democracy."³

Inventing new epochs

They view what has happened in Eastern Europe and the USSR as a "tragedy" and reject any attempts to analyze recent trends in modern capitalism, which they see in terms of the pure and untrammelled SMC of Lenin's *Imperialism*, accusing the majority of wanting to rewrite *Das Kapital* and of inventing new epochs outside that of imperialism. Both of these accusations are of course patently untrue, but do exploit the majority's rather confused attempts to apply Marxism to recent developments.

The minority, basically, has nothing to say, so it relies on knocking down straw men, embellishing this with heated "anti-capitalist" Marxist rhetoric. They then accuse the majority of denying the need for a revolutionary party, of rejecting the need to smash the capitalist state and of failing to defend "scientific socialism."

As for Eastern Europe, the minority sees no crisis of Stalinism (a word not mentioned once in either document) but simply a restoration of capitalism made possible because the regimes of these countries have been "abandoned by their traditional support — the USSR." It is not Stalinism which is counter-revolutionary but *perestroika*. However the crisis of Stalinism has been so profound that even this dogmatic tendency have been forced to off-load some of their Stalinist luggage, as is shown by their limited criticisms of bureaucratic rule, their support for limited party democracy and so on.

There is no denying the positive direction in which the majority of the NAR is moving, even in assessing their own history. The speaker giving the majority report went so far as to admit that in the debate on the character of the Greek revolution in the late 1920s, "Pouliopoulos was right...but the Trotskyists were wrong"⁴ — and not only on questions of history. From the very outset the NAR as a whole opposed military intervention in the Gulf and called for the withdrawal of all imperialist troops including Greece's.

Furthermore, the NAR majority raised the question in its report to conference of whether "a possibility exists to bring together the revolutionary vanguard in Greece, linked to... and as a consequence of, a corresponding international formation?" Later on in their report they seem to offer an answer to their own question, announcing that they "will try to contrib-

ute to the realization of an international meeting of left forces and revolutionary Marxists in Athens during 1991, on the theme of the recent changes and contradictions in the modern world." The conference ended with a vote on the documents (about 170 to 50 in favour of the majority texts) and the election of a 33 member National Coordinating Committee.

A great opportunity exists in Greece for a real regroupment of revolutionary Marxists. Whether this happens will to a large extent depend on whether the NAR manages to break completely free of the constraining mould of its political traditions.

In a country witnessing a massive radicalization of youth⁵, revolutionary socialist ideas can gain ground only if they are truly revolutionary, if they address the real aspirations of the emerging new generations of resistance, and if they can articulate a clear orientation and alternative way out of the social, economic and political impasse free of the language, practice and ideological cobwebs of Stalinism.

Irreconcilable clash with neo-Stalinists

Overcoming the handicaps of this past, developing the programmatic basis for the building of an internationalist, revolutionary socialist organization in Greece will inevitably lead to an irreconcilable clash with "radical" neo-Stalinists of the Kappos type. But without such a clarification and refinement of program, NAR will find itself completely marginalized by events.

The responsibility for success or failure in such a project rests entirely with the comrades of the NAR majority and of revolutionary Marxists outside NAR. ★

2. Indicative of this is the decrease in delegate numbers at this conference compared with the 400 odd delegates at the February conference. NAR seems to have around 1,500 to 2,000 members and a similar number in their youth section (KNE). *Prin*, the NAR's weekly paper, sells around 4,000 copies.

3. This phrase was used by Batikas, a co-signatory of the minority document, when introducing their report to conference. It was clearly aimed at the majority who, amongst their other sins, organized a big rally on the crisis in Eastern Europe, with Ernest Mandel and Josef Piniior among the main speakers.

4. Pouliopoulos, who served as the KKE's General Secretary, broke from the party in the 1920s and was a leading member of the Left Opposition in Greece. At the time the Archeio-Marxists were the Left Opposition's official section. It is not exactly clear what the reporter meant by "...but the Trotskyists were wrong" but in any event it is a major step forward to admit that Pouliopoulos, a Trotskyist, was right.

5. Since early December a massive explosion has occurred in the student movement in response to government edicts and a new education bill. Well over 2,000 high schools (nearly 50% of all secondary schools in the country) have been occupied by students and most technical colleges and university faculties are following suit. Massive demonstrations have been held and May '68 slogans are appearing on banners. Interestingly this wave began in the country regions and gradually spread to the cities.

British "justice" in the dock

THE Birmingham Six — John Walker, Richard McIlkenny, Billy Power, Gerry Hunter, Paddy Hill, and Hugh O'Callaghan — have spent the last 17 years in British jails, falsely accused and convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings in November 1974. Over 20 civilians were killed in these explosions, an action carried out by the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

For many years, the plight of these men was ignored. The campaign waged on their behalf was small, and the governments in Dublin and London felt able to ignore the issue or maintain the lie that they were guilty.

However all that has changed dramatically, especially in Ireland, in the last few years. Nowadays the British administration is severely embarrassed by the case, and the Dublin government begs them to sort it out.

The following article —written in mid-December 1990 — looks at how this change has come about, and the nature of the campaign waged on the men's behalf. On December 17, 1990 the British Court of Appeal decided that the appeal of the six men against conviction will be heard in February of this year.

JOHN MEEHAN

THE turnaround in public perceptions of the Birmingham 6 frame-up is due largely to a "Miscarriages of Justice" campaign organized in Ireland over the last few years.

"Miscarriages of Justice" began as a coordinating group on several cases — the Birmingham 6, The Guildford 4, and the Maguire Family (see *IV 173* for details of these cases). In time, other cases have been taken up — most notably the Winchester 3 (framed in 1987, released having won their appeal in 1990) and Danny MacNamee, whose appeal hearing started on December 17, 1990.

A very important link in this campaign has been the Irish Commission for Prisoners Overseas (ICPO), a sub-committee of the Irish Catholic Hierarchy's Commission on emigration. Gradually "Miscarriages of Justice" gathered together different organizations and individuals, and organized several effective public protests.

Nationalists isolated

This has happened at a time when the revolutionary nationalist organization, Sinn Féin, has found itself increasingly marginalized, and other campaigns on

related issues —above all extradition — have made very little headway.

The first sign of significant public discontent in the 26 Counties came in early 1989 when the British Court of Appeal upheld the men's convictions. Continuous pressure had forced the British Home Secretary to refer the case back to the courts. In fact, the state could quash the convictions any time it liked, but is reluctant to take this course because it would imply lack of confidence in its own judiciary. Chief Justice Lord Lane and his cronies failed to take a heavy hint, in spite of damning new evidence to add to the mountain already in place.

For example, 2 former police officers testified at the Appeal that the men were savagely beaten by members of the West Midlands Serious Crimes Squad. This independently confirmed what the men had been saying for years.

Defence witness threatened

One of them, Joyce Lynas, at first said she had seen nothing. Then over a weekend she contacted defence solicitors, indicating she wished to take the stand for a second time. Joyce Lynas explained that she had received threatening phone calls to her home — her private number

could only have been known to police officers. However, she had seen a TV documentary about brutality in a British Army regiment. In this case also people who had witnessed thuggery stayed silent —but eventually there were tragic consequences.

In the circumstances Lynas again took the stand, changing her evidence. Essentially she confirmed the men's own version of events.

Lane and the other two judges dismissed all this as "lying". Naturally there was no instruction to the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to investigate Lynas' allegations of attempted intimidation of witnesses — after all the people responsible would almost certainly prove to be employees of the British state.

Other evidence shocked most observers of the Appeal — for example the dubious nature of the forensic evidence, and the unearthing of a document (called the "Reade schedule" after its author, George Reade, police coordinator of the "interrogations") which showed how police lies were coordinated at the original trials.

State protects its agents

Shortly after Lane delivered his judgement — declaring that as the Appeal went on he had become "more convinced" of the men's guilt — British Attorney General Patrick Mayhew announced there would be no prosecutions of police officers involved in "Shoot to kill" operations investigated by John Stalker. Mayhew actually admitted there had been a conspiracy to "pervert the course of justice" but said there would be no prosecutions for "security" reasons.

The intended effect was to make people feel that protest was hopeless. Instead it provoked widespread disgust. A huge demonstration took place in Dublin, calling for the release of the Birmingham 6 and an end to extradition.

A few months afterwards, the British government also referred the Guildford 4 case to the Court of Appeal. Several Irish trade unions passed resolutions on all the miscarriages of justice. Preparations began for a major demonstration in Dublin at the end of 1989.

In October campaigners got a major boost with the freeing of the Guildford 4, by direction of the DPP. The Crown knew it could not trust Lord Lane and his pals after the scandal of the Birmingham 6 referral.

The British state obviously hoped that this decision would restore some credibility to their system of "justice". They were sadly mistaken. Great credit is due here to the way that Paul Hill and Gerry Conlon of the Guildford 4 relentlessly campaigned on their own case and that of the Birmingham 6. Dublin politicians said their faith was "restored" in British Justice, but they were continually contradicted by Hill and Conlon.

The British again hoped they could sit tight. But a force had been unleashed that they could not control. The campaign in the 26 Counties spread to areas where it never had before.

A good example is the involvement of a group of artists, musicians and actors called "Parade".

The artists organized a show in the streets of Dublin to dramatize the plight of the Birmingham 6. The parade was led off by a ghoulish "judge" sitting on top of a throne of decomposed rubbish, broken bicycle parts, umbrella sticks and all sorts of garbage.

A massive model of a rat's head stuck out from under this 8 foot high platform. It was pushed along by a contingent of actors dressed as British barristers. Other features of this parade were actors taking the part of well-known Irish radical figures from the past — for example Oscar Wilde, Constance Markievicz, Jim Larkin — even the current Irish football team manager Jack Charlton, who is English, was in his turn "arrested" for being Irish.

All these characters would appear in the middle of the onlooking crowd, only to be arrested by a squad of "police" who dragged them off to a huge circus cage. There they joined actors playing the parts of the Birmingham 6 with grim realism. The legend on the cage was "innocent until proved Irish".

The build-up to this parade sparked off a very significant debate in the Dublin Council of Trade Unions. Throughout 1990 the leadership of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) built up a campaign to oppose the IRA's bombing campaign against the Dublin-Belfast train link. Even Sinn Féin members kept their heads down whenever this issue was raised.

Union bureaucrats organize diversion

The bad faith behind the ICTU leadership campaign became apparent when they organized a "peace train" protest action over the railway line bombings to coincide exactly with the date of the December "Parade of Innocence" organized by the Miscarriages of Justice group in Dublin.

When the Dublin Council of Trade Unions debated the issue it decided to support the Miscarriages of Justice parade. The supporters of the "peace train" denounced the parade as pro-IRA!

On the day the ICTU's protest was very poorly attended, while over 10,000 people marched through Dublin in the parade.

The Miscarriages of Justice group also took up the case of the Winchester 3 — Martina Shanahan, Finbar Cullen, and John McCann. In the climate created by the release of the Guildford 4, there was much more pressure on the British government. The Winchester 3 won their

appeal; their campaign forced several Irish politicians to come out in support of their case.

In August 1990 the then British Home Secretary David Waddington referred the Birmingham 6 case to the Court of Appeal for a second time. A dirty game of leaks started up. Hints were dropped that the Birmingham 6 would be

released, then these rumours were denied by the DPP's office. The intended effect appears to be to make people believe release is inevitable, and create a false sense of security. In this atmosphere they have tried to get the men to ask for parole — since this would mean admitting guilt in the first place, they have refused. To their shame, Irish diplomats have aided these British government efforts. ★

Teachers movement wins concessions

LAST YEAR francophone Belgian teachers overcame their sectoral divisions, state-inspired "decentralization" and the resistance of the union bureaucracies to launch a powerful movement for better pay and conditions. And their struggle has brought results.

ERIC TOUSSAINT

THE movement to totally paralyze all schools ended on November 29, 1990 after the government made new concessions. The agreement was reached in a climate of intense political interest. The Socialist party had to postpone its congress on the Future of Socialism that was planned for November 24/25. This decision was taken out of the PS' leadership's fear that thousands of teachers — a majority of them PS supporters — would turn up to demonstrate. Furthermore, in order to reassure the teachers, the presidents of the PS and the Christian Socialist Party signed the agreement with the union leaders in front of TV cameras, something quite unprecedented in Belgium.

The latest government proposals had been rejected by a majority of the union members affiliated to the two socialist centrals, the liberal centrals and one of the four Christian centrals. Nonetheless it was these very proposals that formed the basis of the collective agreement signed in mid-December by the Christian and Socialist centrals.

The Socialist leaders have defended this action with the argument that it was necessary to maintain union unity. The militants have replied that the refusal to

sign the agreement would not have been an obstacle to rapidly establishing a union front of action for new improvements. They add that, in any case, the concessions made by the government will be implemented since they would be applicable even if signed by only two of the Christian centrals.

Nonetheless, even the militants recognize that a partial victory has been won by the 100,000 teachers that have been taking action over the past six months — and on strike for six weeks. This is the first time for ten years that a teachers' struggle has not ended in failure.

A comparison between what the Education Ministries were proposing in March 1990 and the December agreement shows the results of the struggle.

In March, the 2% increase in salaries to come into effect in November was to be financed by staff reductions in September 1990. In December the 2% was paid and staff levels maintained until September 1992. Furthermore there is to be a salary increase of 3.5% in March 1991 for the most poorly paid. In October 1992, each teacher will get an increase of 4% on their salary of February 1991. Nursery school teachers will get a raise of over 10% at the start of their career and 6% at the end.

Improvements for students

The government has also undertaken to lower the enrollment fees for universities and higher education and increase grants. Finally it has also agreed to improve the security of employment of young teachers at the start of their careers (in Belgium, following government spending cuts which led to the loss of 47,000 teaching jobs in the 1980s, a "young" teacher can be from 25 to 38 years of age!).

It should also be noted that the indexation of wages was re-established in Belgium in 1988. Thus cost of living adjustments should be added to the salary increases mentioned above.

If, despite everything, there is still much dissatisfaction among the teachers, this is because expectations increased as the movement broadened. The demand for an increase of more than 10% won much sympathy. But there is above all a feeling that a substantial improvement in the quality of the job has not been won. It is thus possible that the struggle will begin again in the coming months, despite the attitude of the union leaderships. ★

AROUND
THE
WORLD

RWANDA

Political trials

ON January 3, 1991 Rwandan radio announced the trials of 13 political detainees. The 13, young peasants from the north east of the country, were among 1566 detainees who are to be tried this month. They received no legal assistance and their trials took place in the absence of any independent observer. For 12 of them, the prosecution demanded the death penalty; for the other, a prison sentence of 20 years.

The treatment of these 13 detainees indicates the kind of fate which can be expected by the thousands of people arrested in the course of massive round-ups aimed at alleged sympathizers of the Rwandan Patriotic Front-Inkotanyi, which has been in struggle since October 1990 against government forces.

The main accusations against the 1566 political detainees, and against some thousands of others (9256 at the end of October), concern such crimes as having expressed an opinion contrary to the official line of the single party, having made a recent visit to Uganda, or having followed a course in martial arts.

The International Commission of Jurists as well as the Union of Central African Lawyers have denounced these trials. Messages of protest can be sent to: General Major J. Habyarimana, President of the Republic, Kigali, Rwanda. ★

TURKEY

"No to war"

ON October 19, 1990 a 16 year old school student was arrested in Turkey for writing "no to war" on the walls of her school. At the time, the Public Prosecutor demanded a jail sentence of 24 years for this peaceful act.

While awaiting trial, the young woman was held in the prison of Bayrampasa in Istanbul.

After being denounced by the director of the school, she was held by the police for nine days. Her father and sister, who visited her in prison, stated that she had been beaten up in the offices of the Political Department, while in police custody. According to the most recent information, she faces a prison sentence of between five and 15 years — *Info Türk*. ★

GREECE

Sinister campaign against Pablo

MICHEL RAPTIS — better known as Michel Pablo — formerly secretary of the Fourth International and now leader of the International Revolutionary Marxist Association is currently the target of a very disturbing slander campaign.

A former deputy of PASOK (Socialists), Dimou M. Botsaris, who has gone over to the right, recently published a book entitled *17-N, the chief*. The book presents Pablo, who lives in Greece, as the "conductor of the secret orchestra" of November 17, a Greek terrorist organization responsible for the assassination of

judges, politicians and American military personnel in Greece.

The claim is made that Pablo, owing to his "Trotskyist ideas" and his "organizational experience" was the brains behind this organization. This accusation is grotesque, since anyone who has followed Raptis' political development from the Greek left opposition in the 1930s until today will know of his criticisms of authoritarianism in the name of socialist democracy and self-management. He is a Marxist militant who has always struggled openly for his ideas and who believes that it is only mass revolutionary action that can change the world. It is clear, however, that his positions, including opposition to the imperialist mobilization in the Gulf — have not endeared him to the Greek right and far right.

These slanders are dangerous, since they can give fascists and secret police agents the pretext for murder, as was the case with Henri Curiel in France. The latter was killed by a death squad shortly after the publication of slanderous articles presenting him as the "brains behind terrorism in the Third World".

Statements of solidarity with Pablo and further information can be obtained from *Sous le drapeau du Socialisme*, 42 rue d'Avron, 75020, Paris. ★

Obituary — Tran Van Sam

(Extracts from the speech by Ha Cuong Nghi at the funeral of Tran Van Sam in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris on December 18, 1990)

"BORN on September 10, 1919 in the central region of Vietnam, you arrived in 1940 with 15,000 other Vietnamese workers requisitioned by the French government for the war...

In August 1944, at the time of the liberation of France from the German occupation, you threw yourself into the mobilization for the creation of the Struggle Committees of Vietnamese Workers in French Camps. This mobilization led to a broad political movement which led in December 1944 to the formation of the General Delegation of Indochinese in France, representing 20,000 Vietnamese in France...

In January 1945, you joined the *La Lutte* group, which was led by Trotskyists.... In December 19, 1946 you formed the first Trotskyist group in the Mazargues camp. In this period you were elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Central Committee of Vietnamese Workers in France.

After the dissolution of this organization, due to the repatriation of the majority of the workers to Vietnam, you took part in August 1951 in the creation of the Association of Vietnamese Workers in France....

You were always in the front rank in the struggle for an open defence of Trotskyism and the Fourth International. Many times you criticized us for not openly asserting our identity, when for tactical reasons we had to circulate our press without this identification, in order that it might make its way into Vietnam....

Your final political acts were the signing of the "Appeal for the rehabilitation of Ta Thu Thau", which appeared in *Le Monde* on May 26, 1989, and our "Appeal Vietnam 1990" for democracy, pluralism and multipartyism in Vietnam, which appeared in *Le Monde* on March 6, 1990, and in *Libération* on May 1, 1990.

My dear Sam, with all your strength and tenacity you fought with us against Stalinism, which you considered the "curse of the international workers movement." You have died at the moment when this curse is being lifted in a number of countries. But the outlook for the world remains uncertain. You will not be with us to continue the common fight, for the fight for the future has only just begun.

I salute you and bid you farewell in the name of the Trotskyist Group and the Fourth International." ★

On the capitalist reunification of Germany

SINCE October 3, 1990, the absorption of East Germany by West Germany is an accomplished fact. This involves the restoration of capitalism on the territory of East Germany, the West German bourgeoisie taking political power over the ruins of the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship — which collapsed as a result of a formidable democratic and popular movement in the fall of 1989 — and the reinforcement of the German imperialist state.

1) A political defeat

This outcome of the evolution unleashed in the fall of 1989 is the most negative of the possible perspectives advanced by the United Secretariat resolution of March 5, 1990: "The restoration of capitalism under the rule of a bourgeois state and by the submission of the economy to the hold of big capital..." There has not been a political revolution in the sense of a seizure of power by the working class, the establishment of socialist democracy and democratic planning. Nor has there been a "process of convergence by stages" of the two Germanies enabling the working class and the popular masses to develop liberating political perspectives, rejecting bureaucratic and big capitalist regimentation.

We have pointed up the gravely negative effects of the "Anschluss," both in Germany and internationally, for the working class and all the oppressed. The facts confirm the correctness of our determined opposition to German capitalist reunification and our warnings to the German and international working class:

● **Economic effects:** The dismantling of the bureaucratic planning structures in favor of the "free market" has so far only led to the destructive effects of capitalism. There is no basis for any optimism about the economic outlook on the territory of the ex-GDR. The "costs of reunification" are rising every month. The West German government to this day has been careful to give no exact figures. The Fiduciary Company run by West German directors, managing 8,000 enterprises employing 6 million wage earners, has done nothing but wipe out jobs and transform the leftovers into appendices of the big capitalist trusts. The West German capitalists' investments have remained meager, while they control the market for immediate consumer goods. Among other things, they have created a grave crisis in agriculture for the rural producers organized in cooperatives, who can no longer sell their products. The future fac-

The following resolution was adopted by a meeting of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International held in November 1990.

DOCUMENT

ing the ex-GDR is one of becoming an "underdeveloped" region inhabited by second-class citizens.

● **Social effects:** While the prices of goods payable in marks are the same as in the West, the wage earners of the ex-GDR earn only half of what those in West Germany do. The blackmail of threatening to shut down enterprises, the lack of a credible alternative to the "hope" of attracting capitalist investments, and a feeling of insecurity limit the ability of the working class in the East to create a favorable relationship of forces for immediate demands. Mass unemployment, affecting more than 1.5 million, compounded by "partial unemployment" of more than a million people (at zero time in 90% of the cases), is already a fact in the ex-GDR. All the established political forces, including the social democracy, declare that mass unemployment is inevitable for an indefinite "transitional" period leading to a chimerical state of "accelerated economic growth." What remained of the social gains — full employment, low rents, social security, day-care centers, subsidized prices for necessities — are being destroyed step by step. Women are being driven to rediscover their "natural destiny" as housewives and mothers. They are the first victims of layoffs. The growth of unemployment in the framework of the united state is degrading the relationship of forces between the classes in the country as a whole.

The German bourgeoisie, which claimed until only yesterday that unity could be paid for from the state coffers, is more and more openly demanding "national sacrifice" in order to finance it at the expense of the wage earners.

● **Political effects:** After the victory of the East and West German bourgeois parties in the March 18 elections, all the democratic gains of the mass movement of the fall of 1989 have been destroyed. The East German government was only a puppet of the Kohl government, and was more and more openly insulted as incom-

petent and superfluous. The new state was created by a simple integration into West Germany and its state structures. The majority of elected representatives in East Germany were not present in the common parliament formed on October 3 in the old Reichstag building in Berlin. The united German state was formed without elections. Its constitution, with a few modifications, is that of West Germany. There is no question of a constituent assembly or a popular vote on the constitution and political system. The "round tables" in the GDR are no more than a bad memory for the bourgeoisie.

The civic movements have been weakened, as well as the conscious socialist forces. The West German repressive apparatus has been reinforced. The elections scheduled for December 2 will take place in conditions unfavorable to the left forces, such as the PDS, the Left Slate/PDS and the groups that have come out of the civic movements, and favorable to the rightist forces.

Legislation against immigrants and political refugees has become worse. The criminalization of abortion has partially been extended to the East, and the plan is to extend it fully in two years.

● **Ideological effects:** In order to get "national sacrifice" accepted, all the divisions among the oppressed have been reinforced. Racist, anti-foreign, anti-feminist, anti-Communist and even anti-semitic ideology is being advanced more strongly than ever since 1945, and sometimes backed up by violent attacks. Symbols and forms of mysticism referring to the past "Reich" are becoming commonplace. The proclamation of a "right to forget" the crimes of Nazism is more and more becoming part of accepted political discourse. Today a state premier of the Rheinland Palatinate, Wagner of the CDU, can say without touching off a wave of protest: "Never since 1933, perhaps since 1914, has the German people been able to look forward to such a brilliant future as today."

● **International effects:** The dismantling of the East German "people's army" has not brought on a similar process in West Germany or for the united Germany. The slightly reduced West German army is extending its authority over the territory of the ex-GDR. The united Germany is a member of NATO, which thus extends its operating range to the Polish frontier. The united Germany now openly aspires to share in the role of world gendarme alongside the other imperialist forces. It is starting down this road by gaining the right to use its armed forces even outside NATO territory, under UN cover, by participating

in the imperialist intervention against Iraq in the Gulf. The united Germany will play an economically and politically predominant role in the EEC of 1992, reinforcing all its reactionary tendencies against the third world, against immigrants and political refugees, reinforcing political repression and social inequalities within the Community itself. At the same time, this united Germany is well placed to play a predominant role in the capitalist conquest of the East European countries.

● **To sum up:** The working class and popular masses in Germany and in the world, aspirations for emancipation, have been dealt a grave defeat by the capitalist unification of Germany, which reinforces the power of capitalism and imperialism.

2) The obstacles proved insufficient

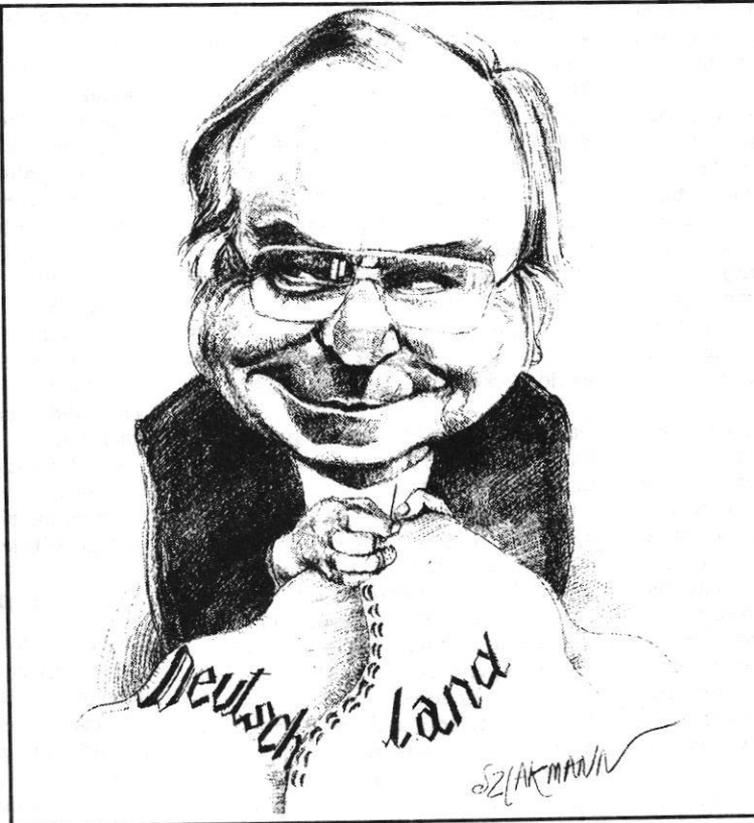
The main obstacle to this negative evolution would have been an East German working class capable of contending for power and endowed with a high level of democratic self-organization and having enough confidence in its own strength to aspire to run industry itself in accordance with the needs of the population. This would also have supposed a West German working class capable of active class solidarity not only with the masses that rose up against Honecker but also with the wage earners of the GDR against West German capital. That was the precondition for the development of a credible alternative going in the direction of socialist democracy.

The subjective conditions for such an outcome were not assembled. The workers' self-confidence had too long suffered the devastating effects of the Stalinist bureaucratic dictatorship, which had deprived them of elementary democratic and political rights, strangled their creativity, their sense of responsibility and their critical spirit. The false alternative between "totalitarian bureaucracy" (largely identified with socialism) and the "free market" (a euphemism for the dictatorship of big capital) had made too deep an impact on people's thinking. The conformism of the Western social democracy, dominant in the workers' movement, made impossible any development of class solidarity on a mass scale that would have helped generalize the aspirations for emancipation against disarray and resignation. It is because we

did not take sufficient account of such delays and deficiencies that we underestimated the tempo the offensive could take and its possibility of success.

Other obstacles that we mentioned in the March 1990 resolution proved insufficiently effective:

— The contradiction between the EEC-1992 project and rapid German reunification did not have political consequences amounting to a real "dilemma" in the short term. The other European states accepted unification because of the weight of German imperialism, thereby reinforcing the latter as a leading force in the Community. This test has obviously not yet been decided, since it involves the bourgeoisie winning out in social struggles that are probable, especially in West Germany, where the working class is highly organized and very much attached to its standard of living. But the bourgeoisie has chosen to take the risk.



— The contradiction between a rapid reunification and the interest of the other imperialist forces in détente with the Kremlin led by Gorbachev did not operate. The Kremlin even accepted the new Germany becoming an integral part of NATO. The reason for this is the gravity of the crisis in the USSR, and Gorbachev's choice to combat this crisis with the maximum aid from international big capital. He is ready to dump any principle to get that. He is acting in that way because the USSR, its economy and its state unity seem to be crumbling under his eyes.

— The problems that some capitalist

leaders in West Germany saw more clearly than the government, the dangers of destabilization arising from a rapid absorption of East Germany, were, and remain, real. But this has not been consolidated in a line of more cautious convergence, because the adventurist line of "you get involved and then you see," the tempting possibility of taking power, rapidly got the upper hand.

The social democracy did not develop an alternative to the breakneck pace of the Anschluss. It limited itself to criticizing details, and completely accepted the logic of rapid capitalist reunification, although that led to reinforcing the political dominance of the conservatives and liberals. It should not be forgotten that it was the SPD that launched the slogan of "Germany, a united fatherland" in East Germany. In particular, it was difficult for the social democrats not to be outdistanced by the bourgeois parties in leading the real process. The SPD cannot now criticize the consequences of the tempo of a capitalist unification that it itself wished for.

The need for a socialist revolution remains on the historic agenda more than ever after the annexation of East Germany by West German capital, because the capitalist reunification bears the signs of regression. The perspective of a defense of a sovereign East Germany as a framework for the aspiration for a road of development alternative to capitalism was not realized.

Nonetheless, capitalist and state unity do not mean real unity. The nationalist rhetoric poorly conceals the divisions. One of those will remain the difference between the real situation of the populations in the East and West.

The unity that we want is built from below, through solidarity, through

a common struggle for social equality and development of the creative forces of individuals freed from the material constraints of capitalist society and the political constraints of the state apparatus.

This struggle, thus, involves a special defense of the interests of the wage earners, women, youth and elderly people in East Germany in order to build real class unity.

It is important in Germany to form links among consciousness adversaries of the new capitalist and imperialist Germany, those who deplore the undemocratic way in which it was formed and those who rebel against its antisocial and reactionary

consequences.

3. The underlying causes of the defeat

East German society lost its potential for development in the 1980s and slid toward a hopeless crisis. The middle and lower strata of the bureaucracy first lost confidence in their leaders and then in the system itself. In the final phase of the death agony of East Germany, they no longer defended the state.

Parallel to this breakdown of the ruling bureaucracy, an opposition developed that was weak at first but persistent and able to act publicly. Its democratic demands and socialist references seemed to represent a political alternative for the masses.

The start of the political revolution that took form in October 1989 was a revolt of subjects without political rights, who had been tightly regimented for decades, with a level of freedom and real consumption lower than capitalist West Germany. Finally, they swept away a regime that they considered intolerable.

The "people on the top," that is the ruling SED bureaucracy were incapable of putting up armed resistance to the mass movement (the Soviet leadership forbade them to resort to this ultimate means, although such recourse was indeed envisaged by the Honecker leadership).

This weak resistance from the bureaucracy facilitated a rapid expansion of the mass movement, but did not push this movement, and in particular the workers, to form strike committees, to call unlimited strikes, to set up organs of dual power or to begin to organize self-defense.

The working class did not contend for power. The mass democratic movement did not lead to a social radicalization beginning to pose the question of the direct rule of those who went into the streets. What had appeared to be a beginning of the reconquest of the East German trade-union movement by the workers rapidly gave way to an offensive by the West German trade-union bureaucracy.

If the leadership of the SED was unable to met the mass movement with large-scale repression, it was also unable, once the enormous mass mobilizations started, to take the initiative of self-reform and of economic concessions to the masses (the large East German reserves of foreign currency were not used to buy great quantities of Western products, which would have made it possible to raise the standard of living of the masses immediately).

A vanguard that was both anti-bureaucratic and anticapitalist could have taken advantage of this. But the weakness of the nuclei that were both anti-bureaucratic and anticapitalist made them incapable of forming an alternative to the SED leadership and the West German bourgeoisie (represented by the SED's satellite parties). They were also unable to

win the leadership of the civic movements. The offensive of the main West German capitalist political force, Kohl's CDU-CSU, did the rest.

Since the West German capitalist system seemed to the masses to be manifestly superior to the Stalinist regime, both in the economic and the political fields, and since the media frenetically prettied it up, the democratic socialist alternative did not acquire any immediate political value for the workers.

The socialist forces in East Germany proved too weak, too poorly organized and too indecisive. The West German left, far from firmly supporting them, acted in a skeptical, if not outright hostile, way toward them. Only a tiny minority in West Germany offered real and active solidarity.

All this led to a result that the March 1990 USEC resolution sketched as a possibility, and even the most likely one.

If the political evolution did not quickly offer a perspective for the masses, they would come finally to accept the capitalist unification of Germany as a lesser evil. This turnaround in the consciousness of the East German masses began to take place in the third week of November 1989.

The incipient political revolution that led to major democratic changes in a short period led to a social counterrevolution in the form of the absorption of the GDR by German imperialism.

The political responsibility for the defeat of the German, European and world working class suffered as a result of the annexation of East Germany by West Germany falls in the first instance on Stalinism, the Soviet bureaucracy and its East German satraps.

By setting up a regime in East Germany in their image, one rejected and despised by the great majority of the working class — which was, however, ready to abolish capitalism and at the same time create democratic political structures, as the whole experience from 1945 to 1947 attests — by maintaining this regime through unrelenting despotic repressive measures, by disorganizing the planned economy with irresponsible economic choices and with a total absence of workers' supervision and management of the enterprises, by permitting the SED bureaucracy to block any road to credible reforms over the past decade, the Kremlin created the conditions for the lightning collapse of East Germany.

Its political narrowness, Stalinism dogmatism, its hanging on to its political monopoly, its material privileges, its growing divorce from the working class, even in its own party, its exceptional rigidity in recent years, made the bureaucracy of Ulbricht and Honecker accomplices in the Kremlin's historic crimes.

The Gorbachev leadership played the role of catalyst in the East German crisis (cf. the "pro-Gorbi" demonstrations in the

spring and over the summer of 1989), and it prevented the SED bureaucracy from resorting to a bloodbath. But since it was unable to offer a credible non-capitalist alternative to the East German masses (the economic situation in the USSR being much more dramatic than that of the GDR) and since it was up to its neck in a policy of retreat and concessions to imperialism, it, in this sense, facilitated the imperialist designs on East Germany.

The German and international social democracy also have their share of responsibility. In lining up at the head of the anti-Communist Cold War offensive, by hiding from the East German workers that the living standard of the masses in West Germany is in large part the result of a determined struggle by the workers' movement and not an automatic product of capitalism, and the participation of German capitalism in the exploitation of the so-called third world, which is itself an inevitable consequence of capitalism; by refusing to conduct any sort of common action with the workers of the GDR and never raising the perspective of a united socialist Germany, the SPD helped to undermine the class consciousness of the East German proletariat and to drive it into the political impasse of November 1989. It "worked for the king of Prussia" [for a proverbial ungrateful master], that is, for West German big capital and the CDU/FDP.

The West German bourgeoisie and international imperialism obviously worked away like beavers to do away with East Germany from the day of its birth. They did this in pursuit of clear class interests.

But this struggle could only end in success thanks to the objective help offered them by the Kremlin, the SED leadership and the SPD leadership.

4. Perspectives

After the defeat represented by the capitalist unification, the battle among the antagonistic social forces will continue. The task of revolutionaries henceforth is to work to prepare the way for the socialist revolution in the new united German state, for its destruction to make way for socialist democracy and democratic planning in accordance with the needs of the population, protecting the environment and assuming the tasks of international solidarity with the poor countries.

After the collapse of Stalinism in Germany, the rebuilding of a revolutionary socialist organization capable of winning a political majority for socialist democracy remains a difficult, complicated and long-term task.

Even to the left of the social democracy and the Greens, doubts have multiplied; the ideological pressure of the right has grown stronger.

In the short term, there is no realistic perspective for a left current with even the



many of them no longer believe that socialist revolution remains on the historic agenda, and thus they are under the pressure of reformist conceptions.

The evolution of the PDS is not finished. Debate, unity in action, electoral agreements with this party offer a possibility to gain practical experience while reinforcing the ability of socialist-oriented forces to have an impact on public political discussion.

But this can turn in a negative direction, if priority is not given to extra-parliamentary action, if cooption into bourgeois democratic consensus is not rejected, if the PDS's rejection of the Stalinist past remains superficial and leads to a pure and simple capitulation to the dominant ideology.

5. Tasks

In these conditions, clarifying, defending and propagating the revolutionary program more than ever constitute a precondition for effective political work and for building the organization. They are long-term tasks that have to be pursued in a systematic and coherent way.

This is especially true since the struggle for socialism as a social model and the need for a democratically structured revolutionary organization placed within an international organization, as well in fact as the need for the masses fighting for their own interests through mobilizations, are more than ever being denied, put in question or neglected.

All this necessarily involves a separate organization of revolutionaries regardless of the precise form of such an organization or the tactic revolutionaries chose for building it.

Moreover, without implacably eliminating all self-justifying Stalinist and post-Stalinist doctrines, without a Marxist explanation of the degeneration and collapse of the post-capitalist states of East Europe, the revolutionary movement will not regain any real credibility.

From this overall analysis flow the precise tasks for Marxists in the period opened up by the Anschluss, tasks that the USec advises the German comrades to take up.

A. Their activity should be centered on defending the masses against the effects of growing mass unemployment, the cuts in social production and reductions in real wages, above all on the territory of the old

GDR.

These tasks cannot be effectively fulfilled, even on this territory, without strong unions ready to fight, unless class-struggle trade union forces operate, playing a real and coordinating role for at least a section of the working class, and unless the masses become more and more actively involved in this struggle.

We are trying to direct these struggles toward action (strikes, factory-occupation strikes, active strikes in the public services) and radical organization (committees).

The most important objectives to be achieved are the following:

— Rejection of any "national sacrifice".

— A shorter workweek without any cut in pay, until full employment is achieved.

— Defense of public ownership, with the creation of self-management factory councils elected by the workers in East Germany. Opposition to the sell-out on the cheap of the enterprises in the ex-GDR for the profit of West German and foreign capitalists and East German speculators.

— Financing of the public sector by orders and subsidies from the public authorities.

— Immediate aligning of wages on the level of West German, a parity to be financed by the creation of a special fund for this purpose.

— Maintaining, generalizing and improving the social institutions of the former GDR, especially with respect to day-care centers, city hospitals and boarding houses at affordable prices.

— Financing these measures through a demilitarization of the country and taxing the capitalists, the highly paid and the rich.

B. With the disarmament measures being applied by the USSR and the announcement of a rapid departure of Soviet troops, the pretexts used by NATO in the past for justifying the arms race are vanishing.

In these conditions, the fact that Germany continues to be one of the most heavily armed and militarized regions in the world, as well as a threat to the freedom of many peoples, will more and more become the object of political controversy. Therefore, we must demand:

— The withdrawal of all foreign troops from German territory.

— A demilitarized Germany in a nuclear-free Europe.

— A fight against any imperialist intervention abroad.

C. Regardless of the failure of the political revolution in East Germany, the movement toward such a revolution that was unleashed in September 1989 continues to provide a democratic impetus that can be fostered, for example by taking our inspiration from the abolition of the Stasi and demanding the dissolution of all secret services and all forms of political police in Germany. ★

Gattastrophe for the third world

BETWEEN December 3 and 6 last year, the GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) conference met in Brussels. The meeting was meant to set the seal on the eighth revision — or round — of the treaty since 1948. The negotiations for the current round started in Punta del Este in Uruguay, hence the name "Uruguay Round".

For once the doings of this apparently remote technocratic institution attracted considerable attention in the media, chiefly around the issue of European agricultural subsidies and the US led campaign to get them removed. However another aspect to GATT was largely overlooked — its role in policing the relations between North and South in the interests of the former. Alain Tondeur interviewed two Belgian economists, Helene Herting and Bruno Carton, on this subject. The interview first appeared in the November 28 issue of *La Gauche*, fortnightly paper of the Belgian revolutionary Marxist organization, the POS.

YOU have coined the phrase "a GATTastrophe". What does this mean?

BC: We mean that, if services and investments are liberalized to the degree that the US is demanding, many developing countries will find themselves recolonized.

To liberalize services means that any American, European or Japanese service firm will have the right to set up in the Third World without the country in question being able to impose any restriction. Evidently, faced with such competition, the local service sector firms will be wiped out.

The service issue is connected to the issue of investments. There is also a dossier on intellectual property, which is aimed at copying. A number of countries have copied IBM computers changing some detail. The US wants to impose on all the countries involved in GATT legislation guaranteeing copyright payments.

HH: The intellectual property dossier also has big implications in the field of pharmaceutical products and biotechnology, and thus for people's lives. Techniques to increase crop yields, or new strains, could then not be introduced without paying the multinationals. As for medicines, intellectual property rights means that it will simply become impossible for most people in the Third World to obtain them.

up in the US. This is, in a rather full sense, investment in the future.

HH: Quite so. Then people say that the poorer countries could also select seeds. But of course, the Research and Development budget of a multinational, for just one single product, is often greater than the whole R&D budget of a Third World country.

■ Why are liberalization of services, investments and intellectual property the new themes of GATT?

HH: The rich countries have seen big

advances in the service sector, which has been radically restructured. Now these countries need to find wider markets. The Third World offers significant possibilities in this respect.

At the same time it seems as if there is a desire to centralize the big international questions under the heading of free trade. For example, there is already an international body dealing with intellectual property law based in Geneva. But the Americans want GATT to take this on.

BC: There is a consequence of this. The institutions which deal with development, such as UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development], also based in Geneva, where the Third World countries have the voting majority, are being pushed to the sidelines.

■ What is the relationship between the Uruguay Round and the strategy of structural adjustments promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in relation to the debt crisis?

HH: The question of the debt does not appear directly in the GATT negotiations. But it is there in the background. One of the aims of the Uruguay Round is to allow the buying up of service sectors in the Third World.

One way of doing this is via the debt, through "swaps". That is through the buying up of Third World debt on the secondary market, where the credits are sold below their value. Let us imagine that you buy some of a country's debts at 50% of their value. Then you go to the government of the country concerned and propose to exchange the debt titles for some service up for privatization. In this exchange you give the debt back its full value. Given, furthermore, that national enterprises are usually privatized at less than their full value, you win twice. Not a

The services goldmine

BRINGING the service sector into GATT is an important issue for the international capitalist economy. Since the beginning of the economic crisis of the 1970s, investments in services have grown colossally, in a situation where the rate of profit in industry has not been found adequate by the capitalists. As a result of this there has been an explosive growth of the share of services in trade. While trade in material products doubled between 1976 and 1987, that of so-called invisibles has increased fivefold.

An important part of these invisibles play a role in increasing productivity, such as production financing (banks and insurance), transport and sale of goods (publicity and marketing) and strategic services (telecommunications and so on).

Thus services have become a key element in competition between the multinationals. Since trade in services is not covered by any international agreement, it tends to take the place of trade in material products, which is handicapped by protectionism. However, this increases the instability of the system. The stampede into services increases stock market speculation and increases the dangers of a crash. This is one reason for bringing services into GATT.

The other reason, as Helene Herting and Bruno Carton underline, is the opening of new markets for the multinationals. ★

26 ■ Seed banks, notably of oils from the Amazon forests, have been set

bad bit of business.

BC: The demands for liberalization presented in the GATT framework reinforce the liberalization policies imposed by the World Bank. The latter is straightforward. Either the Third World opens up its markets, or lines of credit will not be available. At the GATT table, the strategy is rounded out. The rich countries there put in place the safeguards of their own position faced with liberalization.

HH: The IMF and WB furthermore support GATT. There have been proposals to turn GATT into a permanent organization, into an International Trade Organization.

■ Why is the US in the frontline of this liberalization offensive?

BC: Because of their problems of competitiveness. Europe has become the leading exporter of agricultural products. In electronics, Japan and the newly industrialized countries are making gains.

■ Can you give some examples of the opportunities opened up by service sector liberalization in the Third World?

HH: Take the case of Argentine telecoms. The Menem government, when it came to power, began to dismantle the important public sector. As soon as he mentioned the privatization of the telecoms sector, a dogfight began between the French, Spanish and Americans. The same was seen in Chile. There is a fantastic need for capital outlets in the service sector. The companies are especially partial to "captive markets".

In telecoms there are different systems. If Alcatel buys the telecom in Argentina, this is not only in order to get the profits from the use of the network, but also to impose its whole product range on this market. If Argentina wants a unified telecommunications system, it has to use Alcatel products. The captive nature of these markets also means the multinationals can impose big price rises. And these days telecoms are on sale throughout the world.

■ The main target of the liberalization offensive is thus the semi-industrialized Third World countries.

H: Yes, although the African countries are also in the sights above all in relation to agriculture. In these countries the free market system threatens the complete destruction of already weak possibilities for rural development. The big agribusinesses will be able to flood the world's markets with cheap goods.

Products from low-productivity countries will thus be completely wiped out. On the one hand, the markets will be open, while at the same time governments will not be able to support the prices of the peasantry's produce. All possibilities of food self-sufficiency will be completely destroyed. ★

What is the GATT?

GATT stands for General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. It is not an international organization like the United Nations, but an agreement made between a number of governments, known as the "contracting parties".

The GATT was concluded for the first time in 1948. At the time it was signed by only 23 countries — 12 developed countries and 11 from the Third World. In 1988 there were 96 "contracting parties" in GATT, including 67 "less developed" countries and three countries from the ex-Soviet bloc (Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia).

The stated aim of GATT is to regulate and develop world trade. In the beginning, and until the present Uruguay Round, its competence was limited to the physical exchange of raw materials and industrial goods. Agricultural products and services were excluded.

GATT's means of action are reductions in customs barriers and other obstacles to free trade, such as national standards for products — known as "non-tariff measures". GATT follows the doctrine of free exchange, expressed in four principles:

1. **Non-discrimination in trade.** Each country applies to all the GATT signatories the customs regime applied to its most favoured trade partner (thus "most favoured nation status").
2. **Reciprocity.** Any modification of tariffs by one country is compensated for by changes in the tariffs of the countries which benefit from it.
3. **The forbidding of quantitative limits on imports (quotas).**
4. **The settlement of trade disputes.**

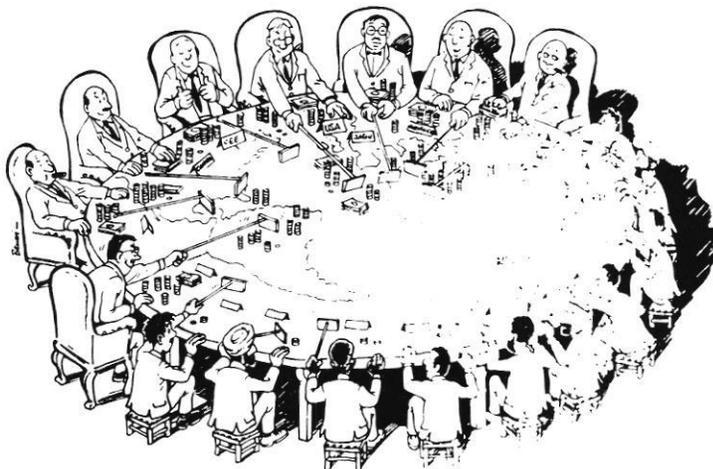
The GATT has permitted a very important reduction in customs duties — from an average of 35% to 3% between 1945 and 1987. This has facilitated an important growth of world trade — at the rate of 8% each year between 1950 and 1970. It would be a mistake however to put this figure down to the miraculous effects of free trade. In practise, GATT's principles are only applied when it suits the multinationals. In the opposite case they are got round by a number of means such as packaging instructions that exclude imports from competing countries, administrative obstacles, or bilateral agreements between countries — Japan for example restricts exports of cars and electronic microchips to the USA. Thus it is the balance of forces that decides rather than the "rules" of free trade.

The result of this situation is that, although 90% of world trade is undertaken by countries who have signed GATT, only about a third or a quarter of this trade is conducted according to GATT's principles.

The Agreement is periodically reviewed or adjusted in the course of so-called "rounds" of discussion. There have been seven of these rounds since 1948. The eighth round, called the Uruguay Round after Punta del Este in Uruguay, where it started, is currently underway.

The Uruguay Round is different from previous rounds in that it has been discussing the extension of GATT to new product areas. This extension has been demanded by the US which wants to add in;

- Services: banks, insurance, tourism, telecommunications and so on.
- Investments.
- Intellectual property.
- Agriculture. — *Alain Tondeur*



Ten reasons to oppose the war

THE following leaflet first appeared in the December 1990 newsletter of the Committee against a Vietnam in the Middle East, which is based in San Francisco.

DOCUMENT

1 WE are on the verge of war, unless enough of us say no.

- We are witnessing the biggest military build-up since the Vietnam War. Nearly 500,000 US troops are poised for war in the Middle East. This is the same troop level that was maintained during the Vietnam War!
- The daily cost of the US intervention is \$25 million, and that price will sky-rocket should a shooting war break out. \$2.5 billion was spent between Aug. 2 and Sept. 9, 1990.

2. A war in the Gulf, like Vietnam, will be prolonged and on many fronts.

- It will cost the lives of untold numbers on all sides.
- It will be no weekend affair like Grenada or Panama.
- There are 200 million, mostly poor, Arab people, dispersed in 22 different states. The great majority of them, according to former Carter administration official Zbigniew Brzezinski (*Newsweek*, Aug. 24) are "seething with hostility toward the US" and have sided with Iraq.

3. US intervention is at the expense of our needs at home.

- The government's budget deficit for 1990 is expected to top \$220 billion. As the military budget skyrockets to pay for the US intervention in the Middle East, funds for housing, education, healthcare of our elderly and other social programs are being slashed to "help balance the budget".
- The standard of living for Americans has been steadily declining over the past decade, reaching crisis proportions in many areas of the country.

4. We will be fighting for the profits of big oil.

- A top Bush adviser openly told *Time* magazine (Aug. 20) why the US is readying for war: "Even a dolt understands the principle. We need the oil. It's nice to talk about standing up for freedom, but

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are not exactly democracies."

- Gas prices shot up immediately after the Aug. 2 Iraqi move into Kuwait. A price increase of 7.1 cents per gallon on Aug. 6 reaped an immediate windfall profit of \$1 billion for the oil companies. If war breaks out, oil speculators expect the price of oil to go as high as \$60 to \$80 a barrel.
- Four of the 10 largest corporations in the US are oil companies, with a staggering \$758.9 billion in combined sales (*Los Angeles Times*, Aug. 14). Their profits are among the highest in the world.

5. US policy disregards the right of the Arab people to self-determination.

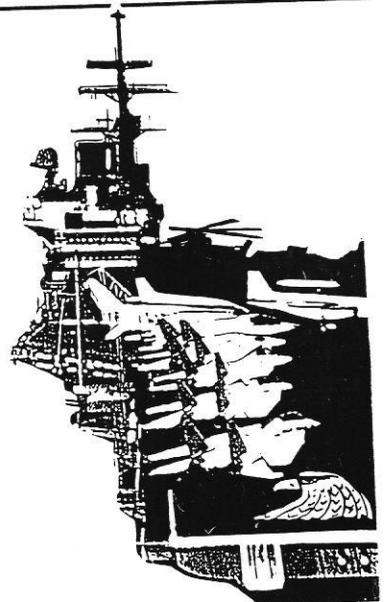
- The Western powers arbitrarily created nation states in the Middle East in the aftermath of World War 1 to serve their own interests. Iraq was denied access to the sea by the British Colonial Office, which established the territory of Kuwait as a separate entity under British control.
- In 1928, the "Red Line Agreement" divided up the oil wealth of the Arab world among the major Western powers. For close to five decades the US, through the Aramco corp., controlled the main oil fields of the region.
- The US and other Western powers have plundered the resources of the region against the will of the Arab people. They have no legal, moral, or political right to intervene in the Middle East. The borders of the region should be decided by the Arab people — not the former colonial powers.

6. The imminence of war is breeding racism against Arabs and other people of colour.

- To justify going to war, the government and the media must play upon cultural biases and promote racism. Anti-Arab jokes can already be heard on the radio stations.
- Racism surfaces in other ways: 40% of Black working age youth are unemployed. The "economic draft" has sent tens of thousands of Blacks and Latinos to the Saudi Arabian front lines. They will be the first to die if a war breaks out.

7. A war with Iraq will bring back the draft.

- Reserve forces are limited. The US could not wage a protracted war in the Middle East without resuming the draft.
- Those who will be asked to fight and die — America's youth — should not be



sacrificed to protect the super-profits of the oil corporations.

8. We will be at war to keep feudal kings and emirs in power.

- 60% of Kuwait's 1.9 million people have no citizenship rights.
- In mid-July of this year, the nominal Kuwaiti parliament was dissolved by the emir; but even prior to that only 6% of the people in Kuwait could vote.
- 90% of all Kuwaiti investments are controlled by 18 ruling billionaire families.
- In Saudi Arabia, slavery was not abolished until 1962. Today, women are not allowed to drive cars, talk to any man (except a close relative) or take a job.

9. US policies reflect a double standard and a deception.

- The US violated international law when it invaded Panama and Grenada and armed the Nicaraguan contras. These actions were condemned by a majority of the countries in the United Nations.
- The US ignored Saddam Hussein's use of poison gas against Iraqi Kurds and his long list of human rights violations when Hussein served US government interests by waging a war against Iran that cost over 1 million lives.
- Hussein was receiving millions of dollars in armaments from Western nations, including the US, right up to three months before the Iraqi move into Kuwait.

10. We should develop renewable and ecologically sound energy sources and promote conservation.

- Our environment is threatened by the transportation (eg Exxon Valdez) of, as well as the burning of, fossil fuels. The resulting climatic changes, according to many experts, could create a "greenhouse effect" endangering our very existence.
- Hard-won environmental protection laws (eg restrictions on off-shore drilling) are likely to be gutted in the wake of US intervention in the Gulf. ★