international viewpoint

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After the fall

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Kabul falls: what next?

THE *Northern Alliance* took over Kabul on 13th November without much resistance. The much threatened so-called *Jihad* of the *Taliban* was nowhere to be seen when the *Northern Alliance* forces arrived. Kabul was taken over without any serious fight from the *Taliban*. The myth created by the *Taliban* and their supporters internationally that no one can defeat them will be shattered within days across the globe after this shameful surrender. It was not as some media persons have posed a tactical retreat but it shows the total collapse of morale among the *Taliban*.

The US sponsored *Northern Alliance* has taken over Kabul only a day after Bush made a public plea to them not to do so.

Bush wanted to please the visiting Pakistan military ruler General Musharaf. The Pakistan government is now pleading for a UN peacekeeping force to help form a broad-based government. This is just to say something after its President is publicly humiliated by this take over.

The US desperately wanted a win after another plane was crashed in New York on 12th November. They needed a big victory immediately. That is why the public plea of President Bush to the NA not to enter Kabul was put aside to go for this much-waited event.

FAROOQ TARIQ*

THE surrender of Kabul shows the absolute dictatorial nature of the *Taliban* and its fast disappearing social base. The ordinary citizens of Kabul seemed quite delighted over this victory. The *Northern Alliance* issued the first order that women can go back to jobs. It is just to please its masters in the imperialist countries. The majority of the *Northern Alliance* has no different policy on women than that of the *Taliban*. Once the *Northern Alliance* strengthens its power base, the real face of these fundamentalists will come out in the open.

US imperialism has used once again the same tactic of "the enemy of my enemy is my friend". They have paid a heavy price in the past for supporting and promoting the religious fundamentalists against the former Soviet Union. They are repeating the same tactic and if they continue to support the NA, it is like bringing up another monster that could go out of their control in a very short time.

No victory

The defeat in Kabul for the *Taliban* is no victory for US imperialism. It had to take the support of another religious fundamentalist group. The group might make some changes in its outlook in the initial phase but it will not change its real aim of Islamic revolution in Afghanistan.

The *Taliban* will now lose its power at Kandahar as well. Its will to fight a guerilla war after retreating to the mountains will not have much weight and the *Taliban* will be rooted out of Afghanistan for the time being. Osama may lose his life alongside with many other *Taliban* leaders. But religious fundamentalism will not be dead with the death of its most known leaders. The strategy of the *Taliban* to move in the tribal areas linked to the Pakistani border will not meet with much success. The *Taliban* chapter of history has ended. There is not much time left before they will formally be out of power from all parts of Afghanistan. Now religious fundamentalism will have to wait a long time to take over a state power, as was the case in Afghanistan and Iran. But religious fundamentalism will not die down and the extreme face of these forces will carry on by suicidal attacks, guerilla activities and so on.

The taking over of Kabul by the NA has brought more difficulties for the Pakistan Musharaf military regime. This action of the NA has been carried out contrary to the strategy of General Musharaf. It seems that US imperialism has played a double game. On one side, it has been assuring the military regime that it will not do anything against its interests. On the other hand, it armed the NA to take on the *Taliban*. US imperialism was very worried that its own soldiers should not be killed in this war. So the strategy was to arm the NA to do the job instead of them. It gave them full air cover to move forward to Kabul. Now the reaction of Tony Blair and Bush also indicate that the taking of Kabul is no surprise for them and they had planned like this already.

Speed

The Pakistan military regime has been taken aback by the speed of the events and the way the *Taliban* has left without a fight. Only Pakistanis and Arab *Jihadies* were left behind in Kabul to be massacred by the NA forces. Their bodies lying in the streets of Kabul shows the methods and tactics that will be used in future as well by the NA. The *Taliban* ditched these foreign *Mujahidin* and left on their own, a night before Kabul fell.

General Musharaf's strategy to carry on its policy of supporting the *Mujahidin* in Kashmir and opposition to *Taliban* was accepted for the time being by US imperialism. General Musharaf will have no other choice apart from retreating from its Kashmir policy. It can not have two policies on the same issue of terrorism. It has to choose one. But if general Musharaf does not listen to US imperialism on Kashmir, he may lose his power as well as his life. The Bush administration has been praising general Musharaf's regime for its brave and timely stand to support them. But the Kabul fall has changed many things. It will have a decisive effect on US imperialism's strategy towards Pakistan. Now the focus of so-called world attention will be Kabul and not Islamabad. Islamabad has to tell again and again to US imperialism of the promises it has made all the time with them. Most of these promises will be forgot-

ten. The fall of Kabul, and in few days Afghanistan, to the NA and US allied forces will change the psychology of US imperialism.

The Kabul fall was not a surprise for us here in Pakistan. Religious fundamentalism was fighting a war they ought to lose. The Pakistan regime has left them and you can not fight a war with religious feelings alone. We said again and again that the *Taliban* would lose the war in a short space of time. The *Taliban* was the most hated regime that the Afghan masses had ever seen in their whole history. It wanted to carry on medieval policies by force. The people of Afghanistan were forced to adopt some of these policies. But they never had any mass social base in Afghanistan. The religious fundamentalist forces were a tiny very committed minority who were able to hold on together with all the support of the international religious fundamentalist forces.

No stable regime

Kabul's fall will not bring any stable regime in Afghanistan. It will further polarize the situation and a civil war like situation will remain as before. But the difference will be that now the religious divide will go in the background and the national divide will come in the forefront. Afghanistan is a mess of history in all forms. It is a jungle of different nationalities with its own tribal identity.

This mess can not be solved on the basis of capitalism. It can only further enhance the national divide. There is not going to be a massive pumping in of US dollars to stabilise the situation. They will be given some peanuts and then left to fight on themselves.

Afghan history has once again seen the change of power in Afghanistan after five years of brutal rule of the *Taliban*. But this change once again will not bring any change in the poverty of the masses of Afghanistan.

There could be a little so-called liberal time in Afghanistan if a broad-based government is established under the influence of US imperialism. The *Northern Alliance* is in a very powerful position. It can dictate its terms but it is unable to unite the different fighting nationalities. US Imperialism's strategy will be to establish a broad-based government loyal to the ageing Zahir Shah [the former king — ed.]. But this government can be very short lived, as it will not be able to control the situation. A new phase of civil war can be seen in Afghanistan in future. The Pakistan government has been establishing the *Taliban* for seven years. Suddenly it has to oppose it. Now, they have no friendly forces in Afghanistan. If a government in Afghanistan is established against the total wishes of the Pakistani military regime, it can open up a new phase of hostility with Pakistan. A war between Pakistan and Afghanistan can not be ruled out in these circumstances.

The *Labour Party Pakistan* will help the tiny forces of the Left in Afghanistan to take the benefit of the limited time it can have to build itself inside Afghanistan. The *Weekly Mazdoor Jeddojuhd* is planning to print a monthly edition of the paper in Pushtu with the close collaboration of the *Afghanistan Revolutionary Labour Organization*. The Left internationally should carry on to oppose the strategy of US imperialism of war and bringing a new puppet regime in Afghanistan. The war has not ended. It has entered a new phase. The anti-globalization campaign linked to the peace movement must carry on. One fundamentalist group is gone, the other, with the help of the US, has come to power. We have no choice but to oppose this new change in Kabul for a better democratic socialist change. ★

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international viewpoint

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"We are fighting a dual war"

ADEL is the central leader of the *Afghan Revolutionary Labour Organization*. Shoaib Bhatti, editor of *Weekly Mazdoor Jeddojuhd* (*Workers Struggle*) interviewed him on 11th November in Lahore, before the fall of Kabul.

■ WHY were Osama and the *Taliban* held responsible immediately after the September 11th terrorist attacks?

Osama bin Laden was wanted by America for his involvement in the Tanzanian killings [the bombing of the US embassy — ed]. While he was already considered responsible for terrorist attacks in America. Under the same allegations America and the UN had imposed economic sanctions to pressurize the Taliban to arrest Osama. And to put pressure on Pakistan's government economic aid was linked with the arrest of Osama and creation of a broad based government in Afghanistan. Because of this economic sanction and with the efforts of the Pakistani government there were three distinct groups among the *Taliban*. But due to the superiority in numbers of armed men belonging to *Al-Qaida* and AQ economic support for the *Taliban*, they were reluctant to kick Osama out of Afghanistan. The killing of Ahmad Shah Masood on September 9th by two Arab militants was also linked to AQ. Ahmad Shah Masood was the only war lord who could have helped the Americans very effectively in their attack on the *Taliban* after the September 11th attacks.

■ Is it possible to arrest Osama and the main leaders of the *Taliban*?

Look, it is not difficult to arrest a man like Osama who weighs only 55 kilograms. It's also not difficult to capture Kabul and Mazar Sharif. America has a long planning in the area. America also wants to teach a lesson to the *Northern Alliance* that without American support the NA can neither conquer Afghanistan nor maintain it. America also wants a strong base in Afghanistan to keep a check on China and Russia. The differences can also be seen among the *Taliban*. A moderate group under the leadership of Foreign Minister Wakeel Ahmad Mutwakl also exists. He was not seen publicly for some time. Because of bombing and the fear of killing the people are asking AQ to leave the area or migrating themselves. It shows the reservation among the masses and there are

differences among the *Taliban*. Because of losing mass support the retreat of the *Taliban* is a real possibility.

■ Would the new set up after the *Taliban* defeat be a strong one?

Even if the *Taliban* are not fully defeated, a faction of them under foreign pressure can join the new set up. While another faction with the support of AQ can join the guerilla war. In future, a broad base government comprising moderate *Taliban* and Pashtoons is quite possible. In the next few days the meeting is going to be held in Turkey to settle the features and representations of the next government. A large number of tribal elders are participating in this meeting. Ex governor Jalal Abad is also participating in this meeting. However there is no question of stable and long lasting government. The enforced set up with or without Zahir Shah will look after the interests of America not the interests of Afghan people. This proposed set up is also not acceptable to the countries of the area.

Pakistan has its own interests and wants to defend them. However we are of the view that Pakistan's rulers and Intelligence agencies will not be able to provide the same monetary or military aid for *Taliban* guerilla war as provided in the past. However Pakistan will make sure that its interests are secured. In Iran, the supporters of Raza Shah are considering the return of Zahir Shah as the return of the monarchy and due to this reason the Iranian Government consider the new set up under Zahir Shah as a threat for it and are supporting the *Taliban* setting aside all past differences.

So the future government will not be able to solve any single problem of the Afghan masses nor will it be a representative government. It will generate contradictions inside and outside. This will be a dependent government, which will not be strong or able to maintain peace. This government will only defend the American interest and these interests are profit from the export of oil. The oil pipeline will not pass through Iran because this route is very expensive, the most possibility is that this will pass through Pakistan but the profit will go in the pockets of Americans. There will be very little benefit to Pakistan and Afghanistan. So Pakistan wants to become a gate way to central Asia and this objective will not be fulfilled. Pakistan can change its present strategy.

Similarly in Afghanistan if the expectations of the tribes are not fulfilled they can opt for civil war. Poppy production can also become a focal point of contradiction between America and local tribal leaders.

It is also clear that America does not trust Pakistan. The Pakistan intelligence agencies are also not able to provide concrete information which could lead to massive successes in short span of time. After the fall of the Najib-Ullah government in 1992 America gave a Pakistan a free hand. In return Pakistan promoted terrorism. This time America will not give Pakistan a free hand. On this point there could be tension between Pakistan and America.

■ What is your party's point of view in the new set up?

Our party does not support any imposed set up in Afghanistan. This new set up will defend the American interests. The problem of the Afghan people will not be solved by them neither it is their agenda. Former King Zahir Shah's talk of elections and transitional government is a deception. Because of ignorance and mass murder, the Afghan may consider Zahir Shah as an alternative but they will come out of this deception very soon The grand son of Zahir Shah, Mustafa Zahir and grand daughter Humera Wali are active for the restoration of kingdom. It is possible that Zahir Shah and the new set up with so-called election process are "elected". But this will be a sheer deception. Through these elections it will not be the genuine people's representatives but the American stooges who will be elected. American will not tolerate an opposition to come into power.

Since 1964, our party is opposing Zahir Shah. His and other governments have killed hundreds of our party comrades. We cannot set aside or forget our party martyrs. We will do our best to expose this fraud and we will strengthen the class movement to establish a genuine government of the Afghan masses. Although, several groups are supporting Zahir Shah, considering him the lesser evil. This will be a big mistake. Our party cannot afford that.

We are fighting a dual war and we are hopeful that the victory will be of the poor Afghan masses. ★

Translation from ***Worker Struggle Weekly***, Lahore, Pakistan. By Tariq Iqbal Bhutta

Movement against war grows

Italy

THE strength of the Italian movement against capitalist globalization was shown once again on November 10, 2001 when the supporters of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi tried to show that Italian society supported the war.

The date for a demonstration in opposition to the WTO meeting in Qatar had been set in August. But when *Forza Italia* and its allies announced of a big demonstration of solidarity with the US for the same date, a debate opened in the movement: was it necessary to choose other forms or other dates? The hesitations were legitimate: the risk of a mobilization smaller than Berlusconi's and a confrontation was real. Finally the most radical and most directly involved sectors determined the choice to stick with a demonstration in Rome.

From the morning, Rome witnessed an impressive deployment of the "forces of order", the city centre being practically paralysed. From 3 pm the troops of the centre right gathered in the *Piazza del Popolo* while the participants in the other demonstration (against the war and the government) filled the *Place de l'Esedra*. It was a huge, pluralistic march with the enthusiastic participation of numerous contingents linked to the Social Forum, a whole range of social movements, important trade union sectors, political formations including *Rifondazione comunista*, the Greens and representatives of the left and youth from the Left Democrats (DS, the party of Cossutta, voted against the war but did not join the demonstration). Everybody was glued to the radio: how strong were our adversaries?

The verdict came in quickly; Berlusconi was beaten! According to police estimates, which minimized the size of our demonstration, there were 70,000 for the "global no" gathering and 40,000 for Berlusconi. Berlusconi's supporters were a disparate mix, stretching from members of the Roman aristocracy and the big bourgeoisie to representatives of the middle layers and intellectuals aligned with the new régime, the suburban electors of the National Alliance being very few in number. As to age, the *Corriere della sera* said that nearly all the young were with the "global no" movement and that Italian society appeared clearly divided: on the one hand those who defended the existing "model" of life, on the other, those between 20 and 30 who did not accept this model. The centre left, who had just voted for the war, were simply absent.

The polls are no consolation for Berlusconi either: 44% of people want to stop the war against 36% who support its continuation (20% had no opinion). The antiglobalization movement has again shown how profoundly rooted it is in

Afghan Workers Solidarity Campaign launched

THE *Labour Party Pakistan*, in close association with the *Afghan Labour Revolutionary Organization*, has decided to launch the *Afghan Workers Solidarity Campaign*. The idea to start this campaign was discussed during the recent visit of Alan McCombes of the *Scottish Socialist Party*. The SSP has already decided to actively support this campaign.

The LPP and ALRO are appealing to all the international left organisations and trade union movements to support this campaign.

The main aim of this campaign is to help the Afghan workers in their struggle to survive. It will bring material help for the Afghan workers which will be distributed inside Afghanistan and also in refugee camps in Pakistan. It will help to strengthen the progressive organizations of the Afghan workers. It will collect and bring the necessities of everyday life to the Afghan workers on an emergency basis.

The suppression by the religious fundamentalists of all the democratic and human rights in Afghanistan over the years has left the organization of the left forces in an absolutely weak position. Many had lost lives for the cause of socialism in Afghanistan. The rest of them are spending their lives underground even in exile. Their families have been tortured and sentenced to death by the religious fundamentalists. But the so-called victory of the imperialist forces leaves no better situation for the Afghan left forces. They still have to make a very difficult life to spread the ideas of socialism.

To help the Afghan left forces in their struggle to survive and promote their organizations needs active international support. The LPP has been active in promoting the Afghan left for some years. It now has a plan to produce a monthly paper in the Pushtu language to help the Afghan left in the promotion of their ideas and strategy.

The LPP has already started collecting clothes, medicine, blankets, shoes and other everyday food items to be distributed among Afghan refugees in the camps through the ALRO and other Afghan left groups.

The LPP plans to send its first truckload of these items on 24th of November.

What you can do?

Sponsor the AWSC formally by paying the initial amount of US$300 for organizations and $100 for individuals.

Please help to build this campaign.

1. Collection of goods: Collect every day items in your country and send the shipment to: Education Foundation 40 Abbot Road, Lahore, Pakistan.

Most of the second hand items like blankets and clothes are available cheaply in Pakistan. If you like, send us the money and we can buy these items for you.

2. Volunteers: If you have time and money to travel, please come to Pakistan to help build this campaign. We need volunteers from abroad to help this campaign. Please contact us immediately for this.

3. Donations: Please send your donations to the following bank account: Education Foundation Donation Account number 01 7967128 Standard Charted Grindlays Bank, Gulberg Branch Main Boulevard, Gulberg Lahore Pakistan (This is a US dollars account.)

Comradely,

Shoaib Bhatti Organizer, Afghan Workers Solidarity Campaign, (Central Chairman Labour Party Pakistan) Email: labourparty@gmx.net Website: www.labourpakistan.org Tel: 92 42 6315162, 6301685 Fax: 92 42 6303808

Sponsors so far: Labour Party Pakistan Scottish Socialist Party Women Workers Help Line Lahore Pakistan Afghan Labour Revolutionary Organization All Pakistan Para Madical Staff Federation Pakistan Printing and Graphic Workers Union All Pakistan Bhatta Mazdoor Federation Pakistan Railway Workers Union (democratic group) Itehad Workers Union Carpet Industries Pakistan Democratic Socialist Party (Australia)

Note: The Education Foundation is a registered non-government organization set up by the supporters of the Labour Party Pakistan in 1993.

Italian society. ★ **(Livio Maitan)**

Pakistan

THOUSANDS of peace activists protested at Rawalpindi on November 6th. They demanded an immediate end to American bombing of Afghanistan and demanded, "stop the war!". They also denounced the terror of religious fundamentalism. The *Alliance of Peace and Justice* organized the rally. This is an aggregate of hundreds of civil society organizations and left wing political parties including the Labour Party of Pakistan.

The protesters gathered at Rawalpindi Press Club and later marched along the main Muree Road. The rally was over a kilometer long with hundreds of banners. Police estimated over 5,000 in attendance but according to the organizers of the rally, the number who participated was more than 8,000. They came from all over Pakistan including far off places like Baluchistan and Sind. The bulk of the participants came from the North West Frontier Province and Punjab.

The *Labour Party Pakistan* from Rawalpindi mobilized over 12 coaches with over 500 workers from a working class district where the majority is from the railways.

The demonstration started with slogans of: "US imperialism, stop bombing Afghanistan; Bush, Stop bombing; No to religious terrorism, No to war; Struggle is our path, those with US imperialism are not friends of the people; Stop religious fanaticism; No to military government of Musharaf; We want peace and not war; and War is no solution."

There were many women at the rally who actively participated in this historic peace rally.

Speaking at the end of the rally, the spokesman for the *Alliance*, Irfan Mufti told that this is the start and we demand an immediate end of US bombing of Afghanistan. He said we have no sympathy with the religious fundamentalists. We are totally opposed to the terror of religious fanatics but we can not side with US imperialism who are bombing indiscriminately Afghan cities. Many innocent citizens have died.

LPP Punjab Council member Bashir Butter from Rawalpindi described the rally as an historic event and the birth of a new peace movement in Pakistan. He called on all the trade unionists to join the *Alliance for Peace and Justice* to have a broader alliance of progressive forces of Pakistan.

After the rally, speaking to a public meeting at Rawalpindi press Club, LPP general secretary Farooq Tariq said that we have broken the monopoly of the religious fundamentalists who are in the streets against the bombing of US on Afghanistan. "These fundamentalists are a by-product of US imperialism and are not in the street for peace, they are in the streets for more war and terror against innocent citizens. Their rallies are not peace rallies but rallies for more bloodshed. This is the first major peace rally in Pakistan. We condemn them both. We want to defeat US imperialism but we can not do that siding with the religious fundamentalists. We must build an independent peace movement," Farooq Tariq told the rally participants. He said we will organize more rallies across Pakistan. Only a peace movement in Pakistan and internationally can stop the onslaught of US imperialism, he said. Farooq Tariq said that US imperialism is the world's number one terrorist power and has been promoting the terrorists across the world. We, the working class of Pakistan, will build an international solidarity movement to defeat the religious fanatics and US imperialism, he said.

The rally ended peacefully. It has given a lot of encouragement to all those who participated in the rally that something can be done and we have to get united. ★ **(Amir Suhail, LPP Lahore information secretary)**

Portugal

ON October 30, 2001 a unitary demonstration against US bombing of Afghanistan took place in Lisbon, gathering 5,000 people. It was called by a group of personalities from the Portuguese Left wing, mainly from the *Communist Party* and *Left Bloc* (for more information see www.bloco.org). An alternative information anti-war web page has been set up by the *Left Bloc* at www.guernika.org. ★

United States

WHEN George W. Bush and other world leaders arrived at the United Nations on Saturday November 10 for the meeting of the UN General Assembly, New York's *War Is Not the Answer* coalition greeted them with demands for an end to the bombing of Afghanistan and the resumption of humanitarian aid.

Thousands of New Yorkers have participated in rallies and marches since the tragic terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, to demand that the US government not twist anger at the attacks into revenge. *War Is Not the Answer* is a coalition of New Yorkers that first met less than two days after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. It is united in seeking peaceful solutions to the problems of the Middle East and the conditions that give rise of terrorism — and in opposing responses to the Sep 11 attacks that lead only to more deaths.

San Francisco has been the site of several large anti-war demonstrations. One had about 10,000 people and one about 5,000 and there have been numerous smaller vigils, rallies and teach-ins. The demands that most of the actions have supported have been: "Stop the War, Stop the Bombing of Afghanistan; No racist scapegoating of Muslims and Arabs and other immigrants; and Defend Civil Liberties." ★

Catalonia

OVER 20,000 people attended an anti-war demonstration in Barcelona on 28 October, 2001. The main slogan was "For peace, stop the war".

Britain

ON November 18, 2001 a major anti-war demonstration took place in London. Organisers claimed that 100,000 people had joined the march. The demonstrators were addressed at the end of the march by veteran left leader Tony Benn and two Labour MPs, Paul Marsden and George Galloway as well as writers Tariq Ali, George Monbiot and John Pilger.

On November 3, 2001, there was a large demonstration in Manchester against the war organised by the *Greater Manchester Coalition to Stop the War*. Over 2,500 people marched from Whitworth Park to Castlefield Arena. About a quarter of the demonstration was made up of members of Manchester's Pakistani community. The march was videoed and can be seen at: http://la.indymedia.org. ★

NEW YORK CITY LABOR AGAINST THE WAR

September 27, 2001— 655 Signers as of November 12, 2001

At this critical time, we at "Ground Zero/NYC" appeal to trade unionists of all cities and countries to endorse the statement below. (The current list of signers can be downloaded from http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LaborAgainstWar/files/)

To add your name or organization, please reply to: letwin@alaa.org or LaborAgainstWar@yahoogroups.com

September 11 has brought indescribable suffering to New York City's working people. We have lost friends, family members and coworkers of all colors, nationalities and religions — a thousand of them union members. An estimated one hundred thousand New Yorkers will lose their jobs.

We condemn this crime against humanity and mourn those who perished. We are proud of the rescuers and the outpouring of labor support for victims' families. We want justice for the dead and safety for the living.

And we believe that George Bush's war is not the answer.

No one should suffer what we experienced on September 11. Yet war will inevitably harm countless innocent civilians, strengthen American alliances with brutal dictatorships and deepen global poverty — just as the United States and its allies have already inflicted widespread suffering on innocent people in such places as Iraq, Sudan, Israel and the Occupied Territories, the former Yugoslavia and Latin America.

War will also take a heavy toll on us. For Americans in uniform — the overwhelming number of whom are workers and people of color — it will be another Vietnam. It will generate further terror in this country against Arabs, Muslims, South Asians, people of color and immigrants, and erode our civil liberties.

It will redirect billions to the military and corporate executives, while draining such essential domestic programs as education, health care and the social security trust. In New York City and elsewhere, it will be a pretext for imposing "austerity" on labor and poor people under the guise of "national unity."

War will play into the hands of religious fanatics — from Osama bin Laden to Jerry Falwell — and provoke further terrorism in major urban centers like New York.

Therefore, the undersigned New York City metro-area trade unionists believe a just and effective response to September 11 demands:

***NO WAR.** It is wrong to punish any nation or people for the crimes of individuals — peace requires global social and economic justice.

***JUSTICE, NOT VENGEANCE.** An independent international tribunal to impartially investigate, apprehend and try those responsible for the September 11 attack.

***OPPOSITION TO RACISM— DEFENSE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES.** Stop terror, racial profiling and legal restrictions against people of color and immigrants, and defend democratic rights.

***AID FOR THE NEEDY, NOT THE GREEDY.** Government aid for the victims' families and displaced workers — not the wealthy. Rebuild New York City with union labor, union pay, and with special concern for new threats to worker health and safety.

***NO LABOR "AUSTERITY."** The cost of September 11 must not be borne by working and poor New Yorkers. No surrender of workers' living standards, programs or other rights.

SIGNERS

ALL INDIVIDUAL AFFILIATIONS AND TITLES LISTED FOR IDENTIFICATION ONLY (UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

NYC METRO AREA

UNION BODIES (Official Union Endorsements)(2)

***AFSCME DC 1707**

***AFSCME L.215, DC 1707**

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS (13):

***Larry Adams, Pres., National Postal Mail Handlers Union L.300**

***Barbara Bowen, Pres., Professional Staff Congress-CUNY/AFT L.2334**

***Arthur Cheliotes, Pres., CWA L.1180**

***Glenn Huff Jr., Pres., AFSCME L.205, DC 1707**

***Michael Letwin, Pres., Ass'n. of Legal Aid Attorneys/UAW L.2325**

***Jill Levy, Pres., Council of Supervisors and Administrators, NYSFSA, AFSA L.1**

***Kim V. Medina, Pres., AFSCME L.253; Pres., DC 1707**

***Victoria Mitchell, Pres., AFSCME L.107; VP, DC 1707.**

***Maida Rosenstein, Pres., UAW L.2110**

***Joel Schwartz, Pres., AFSCME, Civil Service Employees Ass'n. L.446**

***Judy Sheridan-Gonzalez, RN, Chairperson, State Delegate Assembly, NY State Nurses Ass'n.**

***Brenda Stokely, Pres., AFSCME L.215, DC 1707**

***Jonathan Tasini, Pres., National Writers Union/UAW L.1981**

OTHER (361)

An act of vengeance against a whole people

RESOLUTION on the September 11th attacks and the aggression against Afghanistan (adopted by the International Executive Committee of the Fourth International on October 29th, 2001)

1) THE imperialist aggression launched by the United States as a supposed retaliation for the attacks of 11 September 2001 — which struck the very heart of their territory for the first time — is not an act of legitimate self-defense. It is an act of military vengeance against a whole people, that is being subjected to bombardment on the pretext of punishing their rulers — like the Serb people yesterday and the Iraqi people from 1991 up to the present. Nor is this aggression a means of eradicating 'terrorism'.

On the contrary, in responding to terrorism with imperialist state terrorism, it is increasing feelings of resentment and hatred among oppressed peoples. It is feeding the terrorist blindness of those who share with the oppressors the same contempt for any human life that does not belong to their own camp.

This third aggression is taking place at a time when US military spending has once more been on the rise since 1999, after having stabilized for a few years at a level equivalent to the average level of the so-called 'Cold War' period. For the third time in eleven years, the US has thrown itself into a new, large-scale imperialist aggression, thus confirming its choice of a hegemonic and interventionist course in the post-Cold War period. A major new step has been taken, after the step taken with the Kosovo war, in transforming NATO into an interventionist military alliance without any geographical limitation.

2) However vile and abominable the dealings of the oppressor powers may be, they in no way justify massacring non-combatant civilians, and still less a mass murder as horrible as the one that took place on 11 September 2001.

What is in question here is not only revolutionary humanism, the basis of the moral superiority of the socialist and internationalist struggle against all oppressions. It is also an awareness of the nature of the struggle and its strategic preconditions.

Imperialist domination can only be defeated on two preconditions: mass mobilization of oppressed people in the dominated countries, and the pressure of a mass movement within the dominant countries themselves against the imperialist war their governments are waging.

From this point of view, vile attacks like those that took place on 11 September 2001 are doubly nefarious. 1) Carried out by conspiratorial networks, they reduce the people they claim to champion to the status of powerless observers of the confrontation between two logics of terror. 2) Killing indiscriminately people of the countries against which they are fighting, they rally these people to their governments and thus allow these governments to accentuate their warlike and repressive course.

These attacks have nothing to do with anti-imperialism, not even a twisted anti-imperialism. The use of mass terror is an expression of reactionary politics and movements that oppose the fundamental rights of peoples. Fundamentalists of the Bin Laden type support capitalism and defend it. They are or have been linked to bourgeois fractions and to sectors of several reactionary state apparatuses, like the Saudi monarchy and the Pakistani and Sudanese dictatorships. These groups want to impose a discourse on Muslim populations that is fanatically religious, anti-Western rather than anti-imperialist, and anti-Semitic rather than anti-Zionist. They want to impose ultra-reactionary theocratic political regimes like the Taliban regime, and they use the Palestinian cause to disguise these reactionary objectives.

3) Symmetrically, the terrorist practices of imperialist governments and of the bourgeois dictatorships in dependent countries, in the name of 'eradicating terrorism' and defending the civilian population in their own countries, only expose civilians to more and more serious risks. Violence in the service of political and social injustice engenders violence. The more crushing the means put to work by the oppressors, the more individuals will rise up among oppressed peoples who are ready to go to the worst extremes in order to inflict the most pain on the 'other side', necessarily targeting those who are most vulnerable, that is, the civilian population.

The true eradication of terrorism has as its indispensable precondition the eradication of all forms of terrorism, government terrorism as well as that of terrorist groups and networks. It can only be achieved on the condition that the political and social injustice perpetuated by physical violence be eliminated.

Conditions must be created everywhere that give their full meaning to peoples' right to self-determination: civil liberties and political democracy in every country, every people's right to self-determination, and reorganization of international relations on the basis of law and peace.

Respect for human life cannot be selective:

- The embargo against Iraq, which has caused the death of almost a million civilians in the last ten years, and continues to kill almost 100,000 people each year according to UN figures, half of them young children, must be lifted.
- The debt imposed by the banks and rich countries' governments on the dominated countries, which perpetuates famine and poverty and block development, must be cancelled.
- We must impose the massive production and distribution of medicine that can wipe out epidemics like AIDS, which are devastating entire populations in the world's poorest regions, particularly in Africa.

4) The terrorist fanaticism that struck the US on 11 September has its specific source in tendencies fostered and favoured by the US government. It and its oil bastion, the Saudi monarchy — the world's most obscurantist and reactionary state — have propagated and used Islamic fundamentalism in their struggle against progressive nationalism and 'communism'. This use reached its

apogee in their common support for fundamentalist factions in Afghanistan for more than two decades. Acting as the sorcerer's apprentice, they contributed in this way to train those who today are turning against them the methods that they themselves inculcated.

The Western imperialist powers are constantly revealing their boundless cynicism and hypocrisy. Sworn enemies of Islamic fundamentalism in the name of democracy and women's rights when this fundamentalism puts on an anti-Western face, as in Iran, they do not have a word to say against the most total absolutism and the most vile oppression of women when Islamic fundamentalism wears the face of the Saudi monarchy, imperialism's privileged tool in exploiting the resources of the Arabian peninsula, the world's main reservoir of oil.

5) Oil — central sinew of the capitalist system and major cause of ecological disequilibria — has always been an essential moving force of imperialist policy in this part of the world. This fact is all the more prominent when administrations take office that are as directly representative of oil interests as the administrations of George Bush senior and junior.

This is how the 'fight against terrorism' has become the pretext for projects that have nothing to do with this pretension. The US has unilaterally appropriated the function of planetary judge, jury and executioner, seeking to impose its fiat on the rest of the world while placing itself above the law and outside any form of international jurisdiction. At the beginning it presented its aggression against Afghanistan as a military police operation aimed at the destruction of a network of a few thousand 'terrorists'.

The operation's real objective emerged very quickly: to install another assortment of fundamentalists and reactionaries of all sorts in power in Kabul, docilely subject to the US government. In short, the operation's real goal today is to bring to its culmination the constant effort made by the US for over a quarter- century to strengthen its domination of the whole region and establish its domination of Afghanistan, as a platform for its geopolitical designs complementing the one it has next door in Pakistan. At first its main goal was to destabilize the USSR. After the USSR's collapse, the objective of US oil companies and their government is to secure the fossil fuel resources of Central Asia in their own hands.

Only these economic and political designs explain why not only the bases of the *Al-Qaida* network are being bombed. In order to take control of Afghanistan, cities and other civilian concentrations are being bombed by the US and British air forces, under the pretext of an 'anti-terrorist struggle'. Besides the many deaths already resulting directly from the bombing, it is creating the conditions for a true humanitarian disaster, which is likely to cause hundreds of thousands of victims. Besides, the nebulous character of imperialist objectives in the current 'war on terrorism' is such that it can lead to escalations of violence with incalculable consequences, notably through the use of nuclear weapons, which has already been discussed in US ruling circles. The Western powers' aggression is setting the match to several Muslim countries, of which Pakistan is the weakest link, thus creating conditions that could bring religious fanatics to power in this country, which has a nuclear capability.

6) The international radical left is facing today the urgent task of struggling on several fronts:

■ to put an immediate stop to the barbarous bombardment of Afghanistan; to defend the rights of Afghan women and the Afghan people's right to self-determination;

■ to urgently put an end to the murderous escalation of the permanent aggression and state terrorism carried out by the Israeli government against the Palestinian people; to defend the Palestinian people's legitimate rights;

■ to lift the deadly embargo of Iraq;

■ to impose on Putin's government in Russia the end of its murderous aggression against the Chechen people;

■ to denounce the pressure exerted by the imperialist powers on the negotiations now under way over Palestine, Colombia and Ireland, by threatening to consider these countries as military objectives of the worldwide 'antiterrorist struggle';

■ to fight against racism and defend the right of asylum, while condemning fundamentalist terror and struggling without concessions against all forms of fanaticism; to denounce discourses about so-called 'Western superiority' and the upsurge of racism that immigrant communities are bearing the brunt of in Western countries;

■ to organize a fightback against the frontal attack on civil liberties and democratic rights in Western countries. It is no longer just immigrant communities that are targeted by the extension of police surveillance, but rather all social movements.

The repressive escalation aimed at breaking the powerful upsurge of the movement against neoliberal capitalist globalization, from Seattle to Genoa by way of Prague and Göteborg, is thus being confirmed and reinforced;

■ to fight against the massive layoffs, which the economic crisis is being used as a pretext for at the very moment that governments are increasingly spending public funds to make up for the falling revenues of certain capitalist sectors;

■ to fight for nuclear disarmament and a radical reduction of military spending, replacing it with social spending and massive development aid;

■ to fight against plans to open a new round of negotiations in the framework of the WTO, which are aimed at expanding the neoliberal offensive to agriculture and services, at great cost to the poorest inhabitants of the planet; and

■ to demand the elimination of tax havens and money-laundering networks, along with control and taxation of capital flows.

While respecting the diversity of the mobilizations and motivations of those in struggle, the international radical left has a duty to push forward all the mass struggles against these different aspects of capital's global offensive. ★

VOICES AGAINST WAR

THE war in Afghanistan has produced the most impassioned outburst of anti-war writing in the English-speaking countries since Vietnam. Unfortunately, while this finds an echo in the mainstream press in Britain, it is virtually excluded from the press in the United States, gripped as it is by an unparalleled reactionary mobilisation.

PHIL HEARSE

Key Socio-Economic Indicators in Afghanistan	
GDP per capita	$178
Life expectancy, female	43.5 years
Life expectancy, male	43 years
Malnourished	70 percent
Child mortality (before age 5)	257 per 1000
Maternal mortality	17 per 1000
Low-weight births	20 percent
Literacy, female	21 percent
Literacy, male	51 percent

Sources: UN, World Health Organization, UNICEF, World Food Program

A first sign that the pro-war faction would not have it all its own way came just two days after the attacks in New York and Washington, in a courageous article by the London *Guardian*'s opinion and comment editor Seamus Milne. Milne declared that "Americans just don't get it". Is it too much too hope, he asked, that people might make a connection between the attacks and what America has done to other people around the world? He added:

"It is this record of unabashed national egotism and arrogance that drives anti-Americanism among swaths of the world's population, for whom there is little democracy in the current distribution of global wealth and power. If it turns out that Tuesday's attacks were the work of Osama bin Laden's supporters, the sense that the Americans are once again reaping a dragons' teeth harvest they themselves sowed will be overwhelming... Already, the Bush administration is assembling an international coalition for an Israeli-style war against terrorism, as if such counter-productive acts of outrage had an existence separate from the social conditions out of which they arise. But for every 'terror network' that is rooted out, another will emerge — until the injustices and inequalities that produce them are addressed."

Milne's article produced 2000 emails to him and a storm of letters to his paper. He has returned to the attack several times since, especially to refute the call for a new 'benevolent' imperialism, implicit in Tony Blair's Labour conference speech, explicit in an article published by Oxford history professor Niall Ferguson.

Ferguson, with amazing candour wrote: "Political globalisation is a fancy word for imperialism, imposing your values and institutions on others. However you may dress it up, whatever rhetoric you may use, it is not very different in practice to what Great Britain did in the 18th and 19th centuries. We already have precedents: the new imperialism is already in operation in Bosnia, Kosovo, East Timor. Essentially it is the imperialism that evolved in the 1920s when League of Nations mandates were the polite word for what were the post-Versailles treaty colonies." (*Guardian*, October 30). Ferguson called for the US to move from an informal to a formal empire. Milne retorted that we should never forget the bloodshed and exploitation which were at the heart of the 'old' — especially British — imperialism, and are at the heart of the new one too.

Game over

Naomi Klein, a leading figure in the global justice movement, had an article syndicated in North America just three days after September 11 declaring "Game Over". What she meant by that was; "It's true: war is most emphatically not a game. And perhaps after Tuesday, it will never again be treated as one. Perhaps September 11, 2001 will mark the end of the shameful era of the video game war.... Since the Gulf War, American foreign policy has been based on a single brutal fiction: that the U.S. military can intervene in conflicts around the world — in Iraq, Kosovo, Israel — without suffering any U.S. casualties. This is a country that has come to believe in the ultimate oxymoron: a safe war.

"... The United States has become expert in the art of sanitizing and dehumanising acts of war committed elsewhere. Domestically, war is no longer a national obsession, it's a business that is now largely out-sourced to experts. This is one of the country's many paradoxes: though the engine of globalisation around the world, the nation has never been more inward looking, less worldly...

"The era of the video game war in which the U.S. is always at the controls has produced a blinding rage in many parts of the world, a rage at the persistent asymmetry of suffering. This is the context in which twisted revenge seekers make no other demand than that American citizens share their pain.... A blinking message is up on our collective video game console: Game Over."

Since writing this Klein has produced another widely syndicated piece arguing that the global justice movement must redefine its strategy after September 11, and concentrate less on attacking the symbols of global capitalism — the big corporations and their designer labels — and concentrate more on the underlying issues. It has to be said that the exact meaning of Klein's article, and the alternative strategy she is proposing, is difficult to work out.

Testimony

In the UK *Guardian* a series of anti-war articles have been published by, among others, John Pilger, Paul Foot and global justice campaigner George Monbiot. The publishing of these articles is testimony to the fact that the *Guardian* — broadly sympathetic to the Blair government — wants to cater for that large part of its readership which is to its left.

Perhaps the most enraged critic of the US/British war has been Robert Fisk, the author of a wonderful book on Lebanon (*Pity the Nation*, Oxford University Press 1991), who writes for the London *Independent* on the Middle East. On November 8 Fisk published a stinging attack not just on the war, but

on the lies peddled by the mainstream press: "How much longer must we go on enduring these lies?" he asked. He went on, "What, after all are we supposed to make of the so-called 'liberal' American television journalist Geraldo Rivera who is just moving to Fox TV, a Murdoch channel. 'I'm feeling more patriotic than at any time in my life, itching for justice, or maybe just revenge'." Fisk described these words as "truly chilling". He continued "Infinitely more shameful — and unethical — were the disgraceful words of Walter Isaacson, the chairman of CNN, to his staff. Showing the misery of Afghanistan ran the risk of promoting enemy propaganda he said. 'It seems perverse to focus too much on the casualties or hardship in Afghanistan...we must talk about how the Taliban are using civilian shields and how the Taliban have harboured the terrorists...'. Mr Isaacson was an unimaginative boss of Time magazine but these latest words will do more to damage the supposed impartiality of CNN than anything on air in recent years."

Bitter exchange

Much of the best anti-war writing in the US has been in *The Nation*, the foremost US liberal-radical magazine, which could be broadly said to reflect the left in and around the Democratic Party, but includes articles from its left. *The Nation* has hosted a bitter exchange between Noam Chomsky and British-born journalist Christopher Hitchens. Hitchens, based in New York, enjoys a reputation as an independent radical writer who made it a personal crusade to hound the Clinton administration and debunk its 'progressive' pretensions. But war always sorts people out, as it did during the Gulf war when there were spectacular defections from the left, notably Fred Halliday and a pro-war position from the Marxist writer Norman Geras.

Hitchens has furiously attacked the US and international left for being soft on 'Islamic fascism'. Hitchens seems to be headed in the same direction as his brother Peter, once a particularly hackish member of the British *Socialist Workers Party*, now one of the most reactionary journalists in Britain. Christopher Hitchens has now revealed — surprise, surprise — that "he is no longer a socialist".

The subsequent correspondence in *The Nation* however showed that American radicals and, especially, liberals were split over the debate. About 50% supported Hitchens, revealing the effect of the propaganda barrage in the US, particularly now that the immensely powerful US media has at last 'discovered' the appalling policies of the Taliban towards women and human rights in general.

Paranoid Muslims

On much the same tack as Hitchens, Salman Rushdie weighed in to declared that "paranoid Muslims are the problem" (*Guardian*, November 3). Rushdie's call to counterpose secularist-humanist principles to Islamic fundamentalism is if course quite correct. But exactly how the bombing of Afghanistan, and the installation of the Islamic Northern Alliance as the new government, is supposed to achieve this he did not explain.

Such was the balance of comment in Britain that on October 29 the Blair government accused newspapers of 'wobbling' in their support for the war. This came on the very day that John Pilger was given the front page and two inside pages of the *Daily Mirror* (circulation 3.7 million) to declare "This war is a fraud". Opinion polls showed at the same time that a majority favoured a pause in the bombing so that humanitarian aid to the starving could get through. Pilger wrote: "The irresponsibility of this conflict is breathtaking. It is not about terrorism. As Blair and Bush stoop to the level of the criminal outrage in New York, British soldiers are little more than mercenaries for the hidden agenda of US imperial ambitions...In the days of gunboats, our imperial leaders liked to cover their violence is the 'morality' of their actions. Blair is no different. Like the, his selective moralising covers the most basic truth. Nothing justified the killing of innocent people on September 11, and nothing justifies the killing of innocent people anywhere else."

No one has been more eloquent against the war as George Monbiot, author of the acclaimed book on privatisation in Britain *Captive State*. In his first piece after the attacks on the US he warned that the right would try to seize the offensive: "If Osama bin Laden did not exist, it would be necessary to invent him. For the past four years, his name has been invoked whenever a US president has ought to increase the defence budget or wriggle out of arms control treaties. He has been used to justify even President Bush's missile defence programme, though neither he nor his associates are known to possess anything approaching ballistic missile technology. Now he has become the personification of evil required to launch a crusade for good; the face behind the faceless terror... "Now Tuesday's horror is being used by corporations to establish the preconditions for an even deadlier brand of terror... radical opposition has seldom been more necessary. But it has seldom been more vulnerable. The right is seizing the political space which has opened up where the twin towers of the World Trade Centre once stood... The radical left is able to state categorically that Tuesday's terrorism was a dreadful act, irrespective of provenance. But the right can't bring itself to make the same statement about Israel's new invasions of Palestine, or the sanctions in Iraq, or the US-backed terror in East Timor, or the carpet bombing of Cambodia. Its critical faculties have long been suspended and now, it demands, we must suspend ours too."

Eloquent

One of the single most eloquent pieces of anti-war writing has been by Arundhati Roy, a piece widely syndicated. Roy declared: "When he announced the air strikes, President George Bush said, 'We're a peaceful nation.'

"America's favourite ambassador, Tony Blair, (who also holds the portfolio of Prime Minister of the UK), echoed him: 'We're a peaceful people.' So now we know. Pigs are horses. Girls are boys. War is Peace. Speaking at the FBI headquarters a few days later, President Bush said:

'This is our calling. This is the calling of the United States of America. The most free nation in the world. A nation built on fundamental values that reject hate, reject violence, rejects murderers and rejects evil. We will not tire.' Here is a list of the countries that America has been at war with — and bombed — since World War II: China (1945-46, 1950-53); Korea (1950-53); Guatemala (1954, 1967-69); Indonesia (1958); Cuba (1959-60); the Belgian Congo (1964); Peru (1965); Laos (1964-73); Vietnam (1961-73); Cambodia (1969-70); Grenada (1983); Libya (1986); El Salvador (1980s); Nicaragua (1980s); Panama (1989), Iraq (1991-99), Bosnia (1995), Sudan (1998); Yugoslavia (1999). And now Afghanistan. Certainly it does not tire — this, the Most Free nation in the world. What freedoms does it uphold? Within its borders, the freedoms of speech, religion, thought; of artistic expression, food habits, sexual

preferences (well, to some extent) and many other exemplary, wonderful things. Outside its borders, the freedom to dominate, humiliate and subjugate — usually in the service of America's real religion, the 'free market'. So when the US government christens a war 'Operation Infinite Justice', or 'Operation Enduring Freedom', we in the Third World feel more than a tremor of fear.

Because we know that Infinite Justice for some means Infinite Injustice for others. And Enduring Freedom for some means Enduring Subjugation for others. "With all due respect to President Bush, the people of the world do not have to choose between the Taliban and the US government. All the beauty of human civilization — our art, our music, our literature — lies beyond these two fundamentalist, ideological poles."

Finally it will surprise few readers that Edward Saïd has contributed some of the most eloquent denunciations of the war, and war hysteria. In the London *Observer* he wrote: "What is most depressing, however, is how little time is spent trying to understand America's role in the world, and its direct involvement in the complex reality beyond the two coasts that have for so long kept the rest of the world extremely distant and virtually out of the average American's mind.

"You'd think that 'America' was a sleeping giant rather than a superpower almost constantly at war, or in some sort of conflict, all over the Islamic domains. Osama bin Laden's name and face have become so numbingly familiar to Americans as in effect to obliterate any history he and his shadowy followers might have had before they became stock symbols of everything loathsome and hateful to the collective imagination. Inevitably, then, collective passions are being funnelled into a drive for war that uncannily resembles Captain Ahab in pursuit of Moby Dick, rather than what is going on, an imperial power injured at home for the first time, pursuing its interests systematically in what has become a suddenly reconfigured geography of conflict, without clear borders, or visible actors.

"Manichean symbols and apocalyptic scenarios are bandied about with future consequences and rhetorical restraint thrown to the winds." ★

A large collection of anti-war writings can be found at the Znet site, www.zmag.org.

Another world is indispensable!

AFTER the attacks in Manhattan and in the context of a war which promises to be long, hard and terrifying, can the movement against capitalist globalization continue as before? Can its identity, perspectives, and priorities remain unchanged or should they undergo a profound transformation?

SALVATORE CANNAVÒ*

A BASTION of the free market, the British daily newspaper the *Financial Times*, has tried to respond to these questions. Its edition of October 10 devoted an entire page to the subject. The article, written by James Harding, was direct: "A month ago the anti-globalization movement was preparing its biggest protest ever [the demonstration against the IMF/World Bank summit in Washington]. Robbed of momentum on September 11, it must now reinvent itself".

Harding interviewed US activists who confirmed that the spirit which had motivated the protests had weakened, that the brunt of efforts were now being orientated towards the anti-war movement, but that this latter mobilized much less people than the WTO and IMF contestations. "The movement is shifting into educational mode. The activists in New York are going to change their entire tactical approach. There are not going to be militant street protests. There are going to be teach-ins and candlelit vigils." The movement has to change. What, for example, is the impact of opposition to the multinationals and their profits in a period where "reopening the New York Stock Exchange has been seen as an act of national defiance and buying shares an act of patriotism?". It seems that "with America on the offensive, the counter-capitalist movement is in retreat."

There is also the fear of an amalgam with terrorism. "In public, activists say this is just a respectful pause. In private, however, some campaigners are asking whether the anti-globalization movement itself will prove to be a victim of the attacks on America." This, for example, reduces street action, one of the distinctive traits of the mobilizations, and without a public profile and contestation the movement cannot exist.

According to a US Green, "There will be some of the same people who were into anti-globalization and are now involved in anti-war. But labor will be nowhere to be seen. Labor will be rallying around the flag."

However, US activist Kevin Danaher concludes; "We were damaged, but not irreparably. The movement is getting back on its feet. For a while, we were drowned out, but we are finding our voice."

The difficulties described here are visible and appear in part everywhere, even in the preparations for the Perugia-Assisi peace march in Italy.[1] To a great extent these difficulties present problems for the simple "growing over" of the movement against capitalist globalization into an unambiguous struggle against the war, without ifs and buts, with the same mass characteristics which marked Genoa, Seattle, and Gothenburg.

The return of geopolitics

One of the most widespread suggestions — above all in the economic press, starting with the *Financial Times* itself — is that the process of globalization, as seen in the 1990s, has ended or entered into deep crisis. Many economists try to demonstrate this thesis, confirmed also by the recessionary phase affecting the whole planet: the contraction of trade, the limitation of financial exchanges, and the very cautious projections of growth. Also the ultra-liberal madness has given way to a new public interventionism, a return of "Keynesianism" which, although debased by an irrational mixture of deficit spending and reduction of the welfare state constitutes a revenge of

the state on the private.

At the same time in the midst of war and terrorist alarm — well summed up in Bush's warning: 'for us or against us" — international relations and hierarchies are being redefined. Some examples: inside the WTO the US has seized the initiative in seeking the support of some of the Third World countries — from India to Pakistan and the Arab countries — who had contributed to the debacle of Seattle. Washington can count on a new "round", which will open (perhaps) starting from the November 9 at Qatar and which will be very advantageous for its own trade interests, The same deficitary politics followed by the Federal Reserve — which, remember, has intervened twice since September 11 to change interest rates — has given a solid base of support to the dollar which, after the torments of Wall Street, can still present itself as currency of reference on a world scale. On the European side of the Atlantic however, as Adriana Cerretelli has noted in *Il sole 24 Ore* of October 12, "the special relationship between London and Washington currently represents for European construction a shock analogous to that brought about by German unification: the sole real European potential outside of the Euro — the Europe of defence — "is breaking up". Note also that the European states have all faced the crisis on the basis of their own interests, which has certainly been noted on the other side of the Atlantic.

All told, after the years where the centre of attention was monopolized by the dynamic of the global economy, the mergers and integrations of multinationals which seemed to take over the role and function of the state, building a kind of completely integrated and undifferentiated monolith (the Empire), geopolitics becomes relevant again and along with that national and macro regional foreign policy. Does that mean that globalization is dead and that geopolitics is once more the only key to the interpretation of world processes? Certainly not.

In reality, throughout the last 20 years there has been a phenomenon of superposition between on the one hand the structural growth of global capitalism and on the other the role and function of national states, whereby the first has bent the second to its own needs, without however succeeding in eradicating entirely their function of servicing the accumulation of capital. As Daniel Bensaïd writes, "the order of capital rests then still on a multiplicity of states

whose cooperation in the framework of "global governance" does not replace their functions. On the contrary the role of these states is transformed to the extent that they are no longer solely the guarantors of their internal markets, but increasingly strengthen their means of ensuring social reproduction and guaranteeing property beyond their frontiers.[2]

Politics has remained the amiable and necessary servant of the economy. Undoubtedly, the former has been in the shadow of the latter, also because of the phase of expansion, favored by the remarkable development of technology, of gigantic rationalizations of production, of insistent "policies" of liberalization and of privatization. With the coming of the recession, the phase of expansion has given way to a falling back on internal demand, the role of spending and state aid and thus on "politics". Today all this obscure work turns around the discovery of the centrality — even in a physical sense — of the White House, the Pentagon, Downing Street or Islamabad and the relative marginality of Wall Street.

To use an expression of Andrea Fumagalli, globalization has ultimately represented "a mirror hiding the continued redefinition of the hierarchy of economic and military powers".[3] The destruction of the Twin Towers and the unfolding of operation "Enduring Freedom" has shattered the distorting "mirror", revealing a more complex and more contradictory relationship between geopolitics and globalization.

Imperial globalization

But the fact that globalization is in crisis and that this crisis rests on its main contradiction — its inability to fulfill the promise of providing global well being — should not lead us to consider it as a finished phenomenon. It is difficult to believe that the international vocation of capital is an exhausted tendency; it remains rather to see what will be the form of its affirmation, even if the current war indicates that this vocation will follow the route traced by US bombs and strategic lines drawn up by the Pentagon.

After years of seeming decline, the US is again trying to impose its primacy. They do so in both traditional and novel terms, with an unchanged imperial logic, which nonetheless cannot ignore the internal modifications which have taken place in international relations, precisely because of economic processes. Globalization, with its spider's web of global interlacing, renders this imperial domination more uncertain and dependent on interlocking alliances and supranational integrations. However, if on the economic level the situation is uncertain and confused, on the political and military level there is no state or even group of states capable of competing with the US. Never in recent history has so much power been concentrated in a single state and, symbolically, in the hands of a single man — the US president. The US offensive is aimed essentially at maintaining this primacy; thus, we are in the presence of a new phase of globalization, an imperial globalization where the tendency to integration is superimposed again on the murderous reality of inter-capitalist competition and the unequal development of contradictions — the strengthening of the US state, for example, is associated with the weakening of the Third World states, the Arab states in particular.

This evolution demands a sharpening of analyses, in particular in the movement against capitalist globalization. And if it is true that until now the objectives, identity, action and shape of the mobilizations have been calibrated on an adversary — economic globalization — which has represented uniquely the mirror of a more complex and multiform reality, the unveiling of this reality (imperial politics) demands a "leap" forward politically. The movement against capitalist globalization, in becoming an anti-war movement, must pass brusquely to an adult phase, and hence give itself a new project and identity.

Reinventing the movement

This passage will not be easy or painless. Certainly, it cannot be simplified. For example, reference to the traditional anti-imperialist struggle will not help at all, for at least three motives.

First, the traditional anti-imperialism

which informed the post WW2 struggles whether in the West or in the ex-colonial countries, will not be what it was — with certain slogans, dynamics, objectives — without the existence of the USSR. The presence of an alternative bloc — leaving aside its errors and horrors — constituted a rearguard, a point of support which gave anti-imperialist struggles a credibility and a real, if erroneous, perspective.

Secondly, the interlacing between the absolute power of the free market and political domination leads perforce to a greater "politicization" of objectives: to attack the IMF, WTO without posing the problem of what lies behind these is to miss the point. Initiatives against "one's own" state — and thus social initiatives, for example around the question of the budget — will acquire a new centrality. Thus, it is necessary to redesignate objectives.

Third, for the first time in the history of the US (references to the Civil War are inappropriate given the distance in time) at the height of its political — but not economic — power, the country has been struck at the heart; instead of being aggressors, they find themselves victims. It is this contradiction, moreover, which gives force and substance to the polemic on anti-Americanism that attempts to isolate the movement against capitalist globalization. There is the prospect of a climate of "world civil war" where peoples, movements and workers are set against each other. In an era of globalization, nationalism could yet have the upper hand.

The antidote to barbarism

These difficulties require the movement to call on its natural defences, its "antibodies", to react.

Most important of these is the ethical dimension; the capacity for indignation and moral revolt which stirs among thousands, indeed millions, of youth constitutes a formidable force in the new phase which is opening up. There is a great similarity between the capacity to be angered by the poverty in the world — which has generated the activity of a myriad of groups of youth in the US — and indignation at the new barbarism, war as terrorism. This facilitates discussion, debate, confrontations, which can allow the movement to make a qualitative leap.

The second antibody is internationalism. Against the two wrongs, we must oppose another rationality. Internationalism, which motivated the struggles in Seattle, Bangkok, Amsterdam, Nice and Genoa represents an unequalled rationality. The world forum at Porto Alegre constitutes in itself an immediate response to the war. Dialogue and common struggles of the movements of the whole world, including the Arab-Muslim world, are the only real antidote to barbarism, the only possible response to war.

Faced to the nationalist threat (whether western or Islamic), "the globalization of struggles and hope" — to use the slogan of *Via Campesina* — represents the only viable alternative.

The third resource is democracy. War is the negation of democracy. To fight for a better, more advanced and more mature democracy represents a final antidote to barbarism. The practice of democracy — in the movement as in the construction of exemplary experiences — also constitutes the response for a correct reaffirmation of the public sector, at a time when too many neoliberals are rediscovering Keynesianism under its military form. Democratization of public intervention is precisely the sole guarantee that it responds to social needs and not the logic of profit. There again Porto Alegre, with its practice of the participatory budget, shows the way. This year, more than ever, Porto Alegre will mean peace. ★

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1. The march for peace between the towns of Perugia and Assisi in Umbria (central Italy) has taken place every year since 1960, in October. This year an unprecedented 200-300,000 people participated. The event was marked by tensions among the organizers, between the centre-left, especially the Left Democrats (DS), who supported the "war against terrorism" and activists in the movement against capitalist globalization fiercely opposed to military action against Afghanistan. At the end of the day, the leaders of the DS, heckled by demonstrators, had to depart precipitately.

2. Daniel Bensaïd, "Le nouveau désordre imperial", in *ContreTemps* number 2, 2001.

3.See *La sfida al G8*, various, Manifestolibri, 2001.

The grand chessboard

DO Osama Ben Laden's "Al-Quaida" network and their Taliban supporters in Afghanistan represent the central target of the US military campaign? Certainly, the proclaimed target is wider: "international terrorism". Inside the vast "coalition" which has been set up, understanding on this theme will not be reached easily and in any case will not last. Unanimously, US and British spokespersons say that this kind of "anti-terrorist struggle" will be long and complex. That offers the advantage of being able to concretize plans which had been mere scenarios and above all to realize imperialist objectives in a context where Bush enjoys a level of support which would previously have been barely credible. If the priority objective is to "smoke out" Ben Laden and overthrow the Taliban, while perhaps co-opting a faction among them, the military and diplomatic efforts being made by the US seem a little disproportionate. In this hypothesis, which narrows the field of intervention to Afghanistan, the US would carry out a reprisal action and, having attained certain declared goals, would partially withdraw.

CHARLES-ANDRÉ UDRY*

WITHOUT being contradictory with this immediate option, the US military command's field of maneuver could be much wider. The implosion of the USSR has given the central Asian republics (Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kirghiztan) a very much more important position. Zbigniew Brzezinski[1] devoted a whole chapter of a recent book to the importance of ensuring that Russia and China did not enjoy sole control of the oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia. The literature on this theme — with its occasional overtones of political fiction — runs to thousands of pages. Since September 11, in various articles devoted to the support received in the mid 1990s by the Taliban — from the US, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia — reference is made to the plans of the US oil consortium UNOCAL to build a gas and oil pipeline, starting from Turkmenistan, crossing Afghanistan and running into the Indian Ocean.[2] The project foundered, among other reasons because of the very unstable situation in Afghanistan.

A recognized specialist on Middle East oil affairs, Fareed Mohamedi, in an article for *Middle East Report*,[3] dealt with the importance in the medium term of the oil and gas resources of this region of central Asia, pointing out that Saudi families held investments in hydrocarbons in some of the new independent republics.

An Israeli specialist on the oil economy, Paul Rivlin, [4] made the following recommendation in October 2000: "All assistance which can be given to the countries in the region [central Asia] so as to develop their economies and develop paths of cooperation where there will be mutual gains will facilitate the establishment of pipelines and the export of gas and oil". An Israeli company — the Merhav Group — possesses significant interests in Turkmenistan. In recent months a reading of the serious weekly *Oil & Gas Journal* (OGJ) is enough to show the interest — in the various senses of the term — which surrounds the resources in gas (and oil) of this region.

Patrick Cockburn, Moscow correspondent of the British daily *The Independent*, summed up the situation thus on September 19: "Last week Sergei Ivanov, the Russian Defence Minister, stated categorically that even in the most hypothetical of cases Russia did not want America to use bases in central Asia in its campaign against Afghanistan. He may have been assuming too much. Abdul Kamilov, Uzbekistan's Foreign Minister, later appeared to say that his country would let America use its territory. A short segment of Uzbekistan shares a common frontier with Afghanistan.

This presents Moscow with a dilemma. It could make air corridors available to the US without reducing its influence. But what if central Asian states started making unilateral agreements with America that in effect cut out Russia? Moscow recalls that the Gulf War against Iraq left America as the dominant power in the Gulf. Russia's agreement not to stand in Washington's way during the war with Iraq won it no benefits and was seen by the rest of the world simply as a demonstration of weakness.

For the first time since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the views of the states of central Asia have some importance. Moscow is a little unnerved to find such international interest in its own back yard."

Putin has opted for collaboration with the US. Not only can Russia thus pursue the war in Chechnya — with the blessing or silence of all — but through being present on the ground (or by co-participating), its task of surveillance of the situation in central Asia could be facilitated. The ruling cliques in a number of states are already playing the card of a rapprochement with the US. For Uzbekistan, this option is framed by a policy of opening up to foreign investments in oil which has been accentuated since the decrees of April 2000.[5] President Islam Karimov can, moreover, be assured of support for his ferocious repression of "Islamists".

In an article entitled "The New Geography of Conflict" in the May-June 2001 issue of *Foreign Affairs*, Michael T. Klare wrote; "In October 1999, in a rare alteration of U.S. military geography, the Department of Defense reassigned senior command authority over American forces in Central Asia from the Pacific Command to the Central Command. This decision produced no

headlines or other signs of interest in the United States but nevertheless represented a significant shift in American strategic thinking. Central Asia had once been viewed as a peripheral concern, a remote edge of the Pacific Command's main areas of responsibility (China, Japan, and the Korean Peninsula). But the region, which stretches from the Ural Mountains to China's western border, has now become a major strategic prize, because of the vast reserves of oil and natural gas thought to lie under and around the Caspian Sea. Since the Central Command already controls the U.S. forces in the Persian Gulf region, its assumption of control over Central Asia means that this area will now receive close attention from the people whose primary task is to protect the flow of oil to the United States and its allies.

The new prominence of Central Asia and its potential oil riches is but one sign of a larger transformation of U.S. strategic thinking. During the Cold War, the areas of greatest concern to military planners were those of confrontation between the U.S. and the Soviet blocs: central and southeastern Europe and the Far East. Since the end of the Cold War, however, these areas have lost much strategic significance for the United States (except, perhaps, for the demilitarized zone between North and South Korea), while other regions — the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea basin, and the South China Sea — are receiving increased attention from the Pentagon.

Behind this shift in strategic geography is a new emphasis on the protection of supplies of vital resources, especially oil and natural gas."

Afghanistan is today at the centre of large-scale military manouevres. Once more the Afghan people — for a long time victims of conflicts in which the regional states and international powers have used proxy "freedom fighters" — will pay a heavy price. However, the in the medium term the "anti-terrorist" armada will serve many other goals. ★

* This article is an extract from a series analyzing the international situation after September 11, which appeared in the Swiss revue *A l'encontre*.

1. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives", Basic Books, 1997.

2. See Institute for Afghan Studies, study by Fahrad Adad, "What Benefits would Pipelines provide for Afghanistan? A Business Case Study", July 28, 2001 (on the internet), and *Libération*, September 17, 2001.

3. *Middle East Report*, July-September, 1997.

4. Paul Rivlin, "World Oil and Energy Trends : Strategic Implications for the Middle East", Tel-Aviv University, October 2000, p. 85.

5. See "Uzbekistan proposes attractive conditions for direct foreign investments oil and gas sector of economy" (www.oaric.com/ouzpetrole.htm).

PRC opens congress debate

WE publish below extracts from the first draft resolution under discussion for the next congress of Italy's *Party of Communist Refoundation*, which will take place in spring 2002. This text was adopted by a large majority by the National Political Committee (CPN) on September 16, but it was written before the events of September 11, 2001.

It is the subject of a broad discussion, which is developing even outside of the party. A second session of the CPN, taking account of the contributions of members, sympathizers and all those who have discussed the text, will draw up a second draft, whose final version, after a new round of discussions, will be debated at a third session of the CPN and thereafter subjected to debate in all party branches.

To understand certain allusions in the draft, it is necessary to be aware that there exists in the party a current which it would be abusive to define as Stalinist or neo-Stalinist, but which is, so to speak, more "continuist" in relation to the past and which, in the review it publishes, gives a good deal of space to texts originating from the former Communist movement, including the Russian party of Gennady Ziuganov. Some of the members of this current believe that Fausto Bertinotti has "movementist inclinations" and, more generally, that the party has excessively diluted its identity in the anti-globalization movement. Up to now this current has always avoided differentiating itself explicitly when voting on resolutions on the leadership bodies, limiting the expression of its dissent to organizational questions.

We publish also extracts from Fausto Bertinotti's report to the CPN of September 15-16 concerning the new situation after September 11.

Opening and innovation: changing ourselves to transform society (extracts)

THE balance sheet of our refoundation can help us in our future political engagement. We have made some steps forward and made some courageous breaks. That enabled us to defend the very existence of our party and thus maintain an antagonistic political project.

It is not negligible. But our survival has led us to a rendezvous with the movement which requires a qualitative leap, which requires that innovation itself is not achieved only through splits, but becomes systematic, by an open struggle against the defects and conservatism which constitute a barrier to those who are, under other angles, interested in our point of view. The rupture with the centre-left and the exit of the majority who supported the Prodi government was one of these acts of refoundation, a rupture also with the prevalent culture of the leaders of the *Italian Communist Party* (PCI) and with the heritage of Togliatti,[1] still strong and respectable.

Through this act we questioned the priority of governmental action in the political battle and moved our attention from the political-parliamentary terrain to the political-social level. We thus rejected the idea that there would be a double terrain, the "realistic" terrain of the immediate facts, in particular in the governmental field, and the utopian terrain of a future socialism. The problem which has been posed, and not resolved,

is that of the link between daily political practice (governmental action included) and the transformation of capitalist society.

The problem is the displacement of the centre of politics from the level of the state and its institutions to the dynamic of social forces and mass struggles (which is, in a certain sense, a return to the origins of the communist movement).

The analysis of neoliberal globalization has reinforced this innovation and carried with it another: no longer to privilege relationships with parties and even with states, an ideological affinity, but to privilege the experiences and the critical elaborations of capitalist globalization, while placing within this framework also the effort to build an alternative left subjectivity at the European level. These are the problems of the rights of the person and democracy which caused the radical rupture with Stalinism in the Italian workers' movement. Our radical rupture with Stalinism integrates these reasons and develops them in the name of the socialism of the liberation of wage labour, the critique of alienation, of the separation between the citizen and the State, of the revolution as indivisible world phenomenon. This rupture was not only a historical necessity; it was also an effort aiming to better understand from where it was necessary to restart and with what baggage.

The definitive separation with Stalinism is today the necessary condition to be able to propose the theme of Communism and also a permanent warning to release oneself from any residue of Stalinism in daily practice. This was the meaning of our meeting in Livorno.[2]

The [anti-globalization] movement offers us a difficult work of reconstruction, on both the practical and theoretical level, of the subject of the transformation and at the same time makes this work possible and again relevant. We can learn from the errors of our history that liberation of labour does not come from its expansion and its ubiquity; that the conquest of power does not guarantee a new society, on the other hand, it can generate new oppressions; that productivism does not ensure a new quality of life. We have even learned that, for the proletariat itself, the challenge of the future does not have a certain outcome.

However, we maintain the fundamental conquest from where we were born, i.e. the history, the past, the present, the organization of society are not objectively given and that to understand and

change them we need a science of the society in which we live. Which is a capitalist society and therefore dialectical: the labour force cannot be reduced to a subject of capital and can thus always generate class conflict and antagonism.

This subjectivity, i.e. what "remains outside", is the object of our research on the new proletariat as a subject of transformation. Thus one understands better why it is possible and necessary to seek connections, social and cultural links between the traditional working class and new critical subjectivities which are being formed.

Today, under neoliberal globalization, labour dependent on capital grows in absolute terms on a world scale, but this growth, which relates also to its relative weight in society, goes hand in hand with a fragmentation and a dispersion in social composition, with an individualization and an apparent autonomisation of a number of its components and with a reorganization of relations between the classes and the company and the worker. Globalization exploits the uncertainty and precariousness which constitute the prevailing features of the new social condition.

In addition, the centrality of the workers always lay not in their quantity, but in their capacity for unification. It was always given not by their strength at the distributive level, but by their opposition to the tendency quite simply to reduce the labour force to variable capital, by its affirmation as living labour, capable of opening a prospect of liberation. This is why the reflexion which reconsiders the years 1968-69 is not a nostalgic reaction.

It is a tiger's leap which makes it possible to grasp the essence to propose it again: the radical and irreducible contestation of the centrality of labour as centre of capitalist accumulation, the contestation of the centrality of labour as human activity subjected to capital to affirm, on the other hand, the centrality of critical practice and the social subject which produces it, within the framework of the labour process and outside of it.

The ambiguous and dual nature of labour in capitalist society means, following globalization, a new step ahead. It does not disappear in a society marked by the "end of work" and does not unify the masses under a sociologically homogeneous condition of work. It assumes, on the contrary, multiple forms of a prolongation of working time for some and its absence in unemployment for others. Work becomes dependent and autonomous, but in all cases, it becomes more and more organically precarious and it does not automatically determine well-defined social memberships. There are then new class frontiers. The process of unification of the alienated and exploited social subjects is not registered in reality in itself; it can be built in subjectivity, in politics, but no organized force can bring it from the outside. The challenge of a first innovation resides, for us, in the fact of "being in the movement", by stimulating this new research, which is possible and necessary, but at the same time so difficult and novel.

After Genoa

The organization of the political force of the [anti-globalization] movement and the reorganization of the political force of an alternative left in Italy and Europe are distinct problems, but from now on they are structurally and closely dependent. After Genoa, the second cannot be resolved in an effective way without approaching the first and their reciprocal relationship. Any durable movement tends to give itself forms of self-organization, rooting itself in territories and reciprocal relationships. Thus emerges again the topic of direct democracy. The crisis of representative democracy and the nature of the movement critical of globalization, which constitutes the principal cause of it, proposes a radical critique of the delegation of power and the search for a tissue of social experiences capable of producing forms of direct democracy. It is, in addition, very significant that when the metal-workers' union [the FIOM, which belongs to the CGIL] breaks the social truce negotiated by the confederations and call a national strike, there emerges immediately, for the development of their struggle, a problem of democracy.

The organization of a program built

on the autonomy of objectives which arises from the relationship between needs and the critique of neoliberal globalization; the social practice of a diffuse, prolonged, multiple conflict and the construction, in this conflict, of a fabric of positive relations and elements of unification; all this outlines the first elements of a project, which moreover considers that its first political outlet lies in the quantitative and qualitative growth of the movement itself. The axis of this course is the construction of another possible world.

It is within the framework of such a growth that the constitution of an alternative left can make a qualitative leap. Genoa represents a line of cleavage and an enormous potentiality. Our own proposals for an alternative left and a plural left must be radically reconsidered.

The question of the party

(...) The party is for us a decisive, fundamental, point, with regard to which we must practice opening and innovation. We have defended the role of the party in contemporary society faced with the devastating effects of the crisis of the First Republic, in Italy, with a crisis of the politics arising from the restorationist capitalist revolution and the corrosion of the society of the media with its process of spectacularisation, leaderism, individualism, reduction of everything, including politics, to an instantaneous consumption. We have defended the role of the party in the representative institutions faced with the irruption of the culture of the majority system, of alternation and of the primacy of coalitions We also defended the existence of a Communist Party after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, at the time of the "single thought" and through a profound reflexion, in the anticapitalist camp also, on the 20th century. We defended the reasons for and the future of a Communist Party including against the claims of a center-left which was in the ascendancy at the time. We refused to throw the baby out with the bathwater. To conclude this fight, a fight for our survival, once again, at the time of the last legislative elections, we paid, for our part, a price for a conservative attitude which went further than that which might have been considered, to a certain extent, as inevitable. There were experiences of innovation, but we were not able to transform them into a process of self-reform of the party.

Thus, we did not manage a real process of opening to society which is the keystone of reform. Thus, whereas significant elements of refoundation have been introduced into theoretical research, into the political line and in our relationship with the movement, the party's operation remains imprisoned in the impoverished form of tradition, within the framework of a society disrupted by capitalist modernization, in the area of work as well as in the area of social reproduction, in culture as well as in the assertion of a sense of belonging, in the places of socialization and communication as well as in the cities. Consequently the reality of the party is marked by a split between, on the one hand, the richness of the contributions of the women and men of the party at the time of the festivals of our newspaper, the mass demonstrations, both general political and specific mobilizations, including on the newest topics, which reveals a party largely present in the Italy of struggle and participation, and, on the other hand, there is the darker side, contained in a self-reproduction refractory to the reality in which it is plunged. The appearance is given of a verticalist party, closed to experimentation, leading to the paradox of bureaucratic propensities in a party almost deprived of bureaucracy or to stimulate very strong tendencies to institutionalization in a party which often even tends to deny any value to a presence in the institutions.

If all that was harmful, but politically bearable, until now, that is no longer the case today, as we enter a new phase of movement where openness and innovation become a strict necessity.

(...) We believe that in this phase also the party, as permanent organization of women and men who choose to constitute themselves as a political community in the goal of carrying out a project of society, is essential to express a unitary project of struggle which is present in society, in the economy, in the state, national and supranational organizations. It not only continues to represent a body of participation, but also a possibility of input from the masses into the arena of politics. It is above all an international dimension that the party must reconquer at a time of globalization.

(...) We can now see better that we have not opposed to the innovation of the centre-left the conservation of the history of the workers' movement, but an innovation of an opposite kind, that of the Communism of liberation

(...) We must be able to carry out an opening to the movements, the experiences of struggle, the different critical cultures in the sense both of introducing a reciprocity of relationships and allowing ourselves, through this, to transcend definitively any vanguardist party attitude. It is necessary to continue to root it in the workplaces, in cultural production, in society, based on exchange and agreement on a project or, at least, a fertile approximation, likely to generate the first elements of another possible world.

This opening to society, to its movements, its experiences and critical knowledge must be related to a definitive opening up of the party. It is not enough that dissent is accepted and recognized, as it is already the case.

It is necessary to advance our capacity to organize a really free discussion. Those who look at us from outside with interest must be able to intervene meaningfully.

That goes still more for the members of the party, women and men who must be in condition to take part in its developments and decisions. Nobody should fear anything if they defend a minority position, but at the same time it is necessary to resolutely dismantle the old mechanism of self-protection of "yes, but", seeking to conceal a disagreement which one considers dangerous. Openness implies a complete transparency of political debate, the clear expression of positions. It is not only a question of political ethics, although it is decisive for the democracy of the party. It concerns the idea of the society that we propose and still more some comprehension of the new political phase and the problems that it poses. The current movements do not develop in continuity with the big solid ideological constructions and the big, sometimes terrible, ideas of the primacy of a party-guide over the movements: they develop elsewhere. Such an awakening has led the PRC to choose to live its own autonomy and to be present at the same time in the movement as one of its components and which is at the origin of our success.

1. The PRC supported the Prodi government without being part of it from the elections of spring 1996. The break with Prodi came in October 1998.
2. On January 21, 2001, on the anniversary of the foundation of the Communist Party of Italy, Bertinotti made a speech in which an essential theme was an unreserved critique of Stalinism.

Against terrorism and the war which threatens us: extracts from the report by Fausto Bertinotti to the PRC National Political Committee

WE had said that after Genoa nothing would be as it was before. Now, after the terrible deeds in New York and Washington, we must again affirm, but in an opposite sense, that nothing will be as it was before. It is a new, dramatic difficulty that strikes the protagonists of the movement. Genoa and New York send opposite signals to us, which mark a new cycle. From Genoa we received the message that another world was possible, since new protagonists exist and a new generation is on the ground. From New York we receive a reactionary message, a terrible warning that the night of barbarism could be falling. The scene is the same: capitalist globalization, but the two events go in opposite directions. In addition, not only the directions but also the exits are opposites. Globalization is a modernization against modernity. Genoa opposed modernization in the name of a modernity freed from the primacy of capitalist forces (...)

Tragic

On the other hand, the tragic events of New York are against modernization and modernity. Terrorism is the work of an extreme obscure minority, a minority that expresses itself uniquely through destruction. These two opposite events speak to us about two possible and different evolutions. This is precisely why we cannot let ourselves be enclosed in the distressing perspective of war. We absolutely cannot underestimate the tragic character of this event owing to the fact that it was aimed at the United States: this offence is directed against the whole of humanity. Indifference to life goes as far as neglecting one's own life: any technology, including the most sophisticated, can be put at the service of old cultures and be used as reaction against those who produced it.

Nothing could justify terrorism. No

cause, however true in itself, could be advanced as a justification for it. Our aversion to terrorism must be irreducible. No fight for social justice, however vigorous, can be carried out by this means. In fact, we are witnessing an outcome of the process of globalization that is to be feared: the confrontation of two fundamentalisms. The fundamentalism of the market and religious fundamentalism, according to which the Occident is the Demon.

It is difficult to break out of this pincer, but it is absolutely necessary to do so, if we want to take again the path that led from Seattle to Genoa. Terrorism operates in the sphere of autonomy from politics and finally denies politics itself. It thus operates on the ground of metapolitics, i.e. the conflict of civilizations.

Grasp

It is necessary to grasp its causes, by which I mean its social causes. However, that should not prevent us from understanding that terrorism is a political phenomenon. It is necessary to take account of these two aspects, if not our politics will be dumb (...)

Is this act of terrorism directed against a particular civilization? Many people raise the question, but it is precisely this question and its affirmative answer that nourish a spirit of war: because, behind this question, there is the idea of a hierarchy of civilizations.

This cultural skid has its roots in the hegemony of the capitalist point of view, according to which what exists in the United States represents the highest condition for the development of the capitalist revolution: alone, it constitutes the salvation of humanity. A variant of this way of thinking is religious. We have to reject the idea according to which Islam as such represents a reactionary conception as a whole, on the political and social levels. At the same time we must openly fight the idea according to which it is necessary to safeguard a Christian capitalist Occident. In opposition to any hierarchical appreciation in connection with civilizations we must fight for tolerance, multiculturalism and the reciprocal contamination of cultures and traditions. That is our cultural battle.

Relations

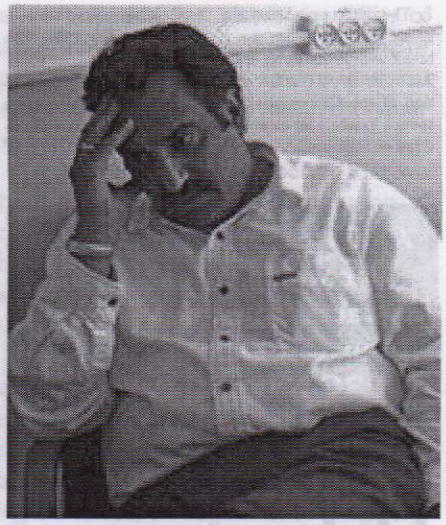
We must establish relations with the non-fundamentalist forces, with those who fight for peace, everywhere. We must go beyond the criticism of the US not to deny it, but to combat at the same time the idea that it is possible to carry out a conflict and a war of civilization. We should unite — not only in Italy — with those who consider war and violence as enemies. I think even to forces, which, while conservative, reflect critically on the recourse to war as much for the risks it carries as for its inefficacy.

(...) In this difficult battle the fundamental recourse should be the movement of movements. Them and us, we could together be crushed. It is precisely this movement which constitutes the main, though not the only, lever against the war of which it could be the first victim. It is obviously necessary to enlarge the movement, which is today more difficult than before, but not impossible. To the reactionary aggression we must reply with a battle we cannot wage alone. The old alternative between socialism and barbarism becomes again acute and relevant. ★

An end to immunity

THE Israeli Knesset has voted to strip Palestinian Member of Knesset Azmi Bishara of his parliamentary immunity from prosecution. This article by our Jerusalem correspondent was first published in *News from Within*, vol. XVII, July 2001, prior to the Knesset's decision of to lift Dr. Bishara's immunity.

MICHEL WARSCHAWSKI



Azmi Bishara

THE decision of the Israeli police to recommend the indictment of MK Azmi Bishara is doubly outrageous: it is a severe attack against freedom of opinion, and the beginning of the end for parliamentarian immunity. This offensive must be stopped.

The police decision followed an investigation and an interrogation of MK Bishara about a speech delivered in June in Syria, at the commemoration of the death of President Hafez el-Asad. According to the police interrogators, Azmi Bishara is suspected of treason (sic) and assistance to the enemy (sic), contact with foreign agent (sic) and sedition. Some of these alleged crimes are based on the infamous *Prevention of Terrorism Act*.

Originally, the accusations against the leader of the *National Democratic Assembly* (NDA, known among the Jewish public by the name of *Balad*) were limited to sedition. The incriminating statement made in the framework of a public speech says: "The Israeli government is trying to narrow the space (of resistance): it is offering (the Arabs) the choice between accepting the Israeli dictates and an overall war. This is why it is impossible to continue in a third way — the way of resistance — without expanding it in a way which will allow the people to struggle and to resist. As well, it is impossible to expand it without a united Arab political position, and without an action on the international level. Now is the time..."

These words do not reflect only a perfectly legitimate analytical framework. They are clear common sense: in order to avoid either capitulation or war, the Arabs need a new strategy of resistance to break the Israeli choice: such a strategy cannot be confined to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It has a regional dimension and needs international involvement. Thousands of Israelis — Arab or Jews — have been developing the same analysis, without being suspected of sedition. Few hundreds of Israeli citizens signed a petition to the General Attorney in which they expressed their agreement with Bishara's statement.

Incitement

Thereafter, under the incitement of several right wing Knesset members, the very fact of travelling to Syria and participating in a public meeting, together with Arab heads of states and Arab liberation movement leaders, became the core of the accusations. Azmi Bishara's many trips to Damascus and his public appearances there, which were widely publicised in the Israeli media and are well known to the Israeli authorities, became irrelevant in current war atmosphere. The Israeli law, in particular the 1945 *Emergency Regulations* and the *Prevention of Terrorism Act*, allows to charge a person with treason or contact with a foreign agent, independent of any intention (*mens rea*) of committing such crimes. One can be charged even if no harm was resulted and even if the persons contacted were not agents (but could have been). No intention of treason, no foreign agent, no assistance to the enemy — simply expressing a political opinion. This is what it is all about.

This should be absolutely unacceptable concerning any citizen. It is a hundred times more unacceptable concerning a parliamentarian whom is presumably protected by parliamentarian immunity. But here too Israeli democracy has its specificity: if a Knesset member is suspected of corruption or stealing money, he may have a good chance to be protected by his parliamentarian immunity. If he is suspected of a political offence, like MK Bishara, the majority of the Knesset may well suspend his immunity! In all other countries with democratic pretensions, immunity is for criminal offence and not for offences directly linked to the very role of the parliamentarian.

The issue at stake, however, is not parliamentarian immunity, or even MK Bishara's indictment for expressing his political opinion. What is at stake is the beginning of an overall offensive against civil liberties in Israel, and more specifically against the Palestinian citizens.

Following the October 2000 uprising, and the murder by the police of 13 Palestinians in the Galilee and in the Arab Triangle in Israel, public opinion has dramatically changed. The right wing today is convinced that the modest liberalisation of the eighties and nineties was counterproductive, and gave the Palestinian minority in Israel too much power and too much self-confidence. The more liberal feel the need to justify the massacre of October by delegitimising the Palestinian protests and expressions of solidarity with the residents of the Occupied Territories while presenting them as deliberately attempting to destroy the State of Israel from within. Otherwise, they are led to draw the conclusion that the Jewish State is not a democratic state.

Knowing they will not be confronted by a liberal opposition, right wing Knesset members, assisted by most of the media, raised a series of suggestions aimed to limit the rights of the Palestinian citizens and their representatives in the parliament. Among many

other suggestions by MK Michael Kleiner, and ministers in the National Unity government Tsahi Hanegbi and Avigdor Liberman: to demand a special oath from Arab Knesset members, to take back citizenship from certain categories of residents and to limit the right to vote on certain issues.

These legislative initiatives are but one aspect of the offensive: a new wave of expropriation is underway. Hundreds of demolition orders have been delivered for 'illegal construction.' The General Attorney has decided to put to trial elder Palestinians who have 'travelled to an enemy country' to visit, often for the first time in their life, their close relatives who have been refugees in Syria since 1948. Azmi Bishara, who initiated these visits to Syria — with the full knowledge of the Israeli authorities — may also be indicted for this humanitarian initiative.

State of war

The decision of the Israeli government and of a majority of the Israeli public, to place itself in a state of war with the Arabs is contrary to the process of liberalisation Israel has been in since the beginning of the eighties. The Palestinian minority will be, as usual, the first victim but the Jewish dissidents will follow. An overall 'moral and national revolution' will prevail and demolish more civil liberties won during the last two decades: women will be subjected to old-new religious laws, artists, writers and journalists will be confronted again with censorship, homosexuals will lose the few achievements they got through their struggle and so on. The Israeli liberals, who are participating today in the witch-hunt against MK Bishara, are paving the way to measures of which, later, they will be the victims. By then it will be too late.

Azmi Bishara, the NDA, the Palestinian population of Israel and the few Israeli Jews who are not ready to surrender to the anti-Arab war atmosphere are fighting back. In their isolation, they need the support of the international democratic movement. With its new course, Israel cannot anymore be treated as a democratic state, and it should be confronted by a simple decision: to stop immediately the new offensive against civil liberties and to respect the international convention on the protection of the rights of minorities, or to be ejected from the community of civilised nations, together with all the other dictatorships. ★

THE ANGRY VOTE

OCTOBER'S mid-term elections in Argentina marked a significant turn in one of the deepest crises the country has ever faced. After more than three years of recession, savage cuts in wages and public services, a growing wave of increasingly militant social struggles, and with the prospect of total financial meltdown lurking just around the corner, everyone expected the ruling Alliance parties to take a beating at the polls.

What wasn't expected – in a country where voting is compulsory – was the huge number of people who refused to cast a positive vote at all. Even more surprising, alongside this 'angry vote' (*voto bronca*), was the spectacular increase in the scores of several currents on the socialist and Marxist left.

The British socialist newspaper *Socialist Outlook* asked Ernesto Herrera, leader of the *Fourth International's* work in Latin America and a member of the International Commission of the *Frente Amplio* (*Broad Front*) in Uruguay, to comment on the results.

"THE so-called 'voto bronca' or spoiled votes, which reached about 30%, show that a large part of the population is fed up with and no longer believes in the whole political system. That includes some layers of the popular movement who have been involved in struggles and who in the last presidential elections voted for the centre-left *Alliance* government. In these elections the governing *Alliance* lost 5 million votes. The Peronists lost votes too, even if they won more than the *Alliance*.

The progress of the left, on the other hand, is the first sign of a real change in popular awareness. The left began to channel the dissatisfaction of the workers, the unemployed, the students, and the impoverished sections of the middle class. So a part of these broke with the *Alliance* and the Peronists, but refused to vote, while another part voted for the left.

In total the left won 1.3 million votes, which is very significant. At a national level that represents almost 12% of the vote. Within that, *Autonomy and Freedom*, led by the former

Trotskyist MP Luis Zamora, with positions opposed to corruption and to payment of the foreign debt, but with no very clear programme, capitalised on much of the discontent.

The *United Left* (IU), which is an alliance between the *Communist Party* and the Trotskyist *Socialist Workers Movement* (MST), also made gains, as did the PO and the MAS, two other Trotskyist currents, and the *Humanist Party*, which got more than 300,000 votes. In Buenos Aires these parties of the left won 4 or 5 members of parliament. In some other provinces they did the same. So this is a real change in Argentina, because previously the left has not done well in elections, even though the country has seen some of the most intense levels of popular struggle and radicalisation anywhere.

The problem is that these 1.3 million votes don't translate into a unified proposal from the left. They are the sum of different projects, currents, organisations, which don't even have an agreement for joint work in parliament or in the town halls.

Nonetheless this is the biggest vote the left has ever won in Argentina, and means that an important part of the population is rapidly becoming more political. In the past it was the main opposition party that always capitalised on the crisis – the *Alliance* when the Peronists were in government, and vice versa.

■ On the basis of these electoral gains, do you see any chance of overcoming the divisions which have characterised the left in Argentina for so long?

Not in the short term. At the moment there's no sign of a political agreement between the different currents to work together, either inside or outside parliament. What's more the biggest left vote went to Zamora's *Autonomy and Freedom*, which expresses somewhat 'anti-party' positions, not only against the parties of the right, but against the forms of organisation and engaging in politics adopted by the radical, Marxist left.

So for the time being there doesn't seem to be any possibility of bringing people together in a political front, like the *Broad Front* in Uruguay or even the *Workers Party* (PT) in Brazil. This is one of the most dramatic problems now in the Argentinian situation.

In the various mobilisations of Argentinian society all the left currents do play a part. But this fragmentation of the left does aggravate the divisions that already exist in the trade unions. And it has some negative effects in the different social movements, especially when some of the left use these very impressive mobilisations principally as recruiting grounds for their own organisation, rather than concentrating on building united movements.

This has implications for important sectors like the 'picket movement', which brings together the unemployed, trade unionists, neighbourhood committees, human rights activists, regional movements of different ethnic groups, and which has been at the forefront of many of the recent struggles in Argentina.

They are putting forward the idea of a united social movement, with political demands and even a political programme, but not a party-type organisation. It's a bit like what has happened in other parts of Latin America with the Landless Movement in Brazil, with the indigenous movement CONAIE in Ecuador, with the Zapatistas in Mexico, which are social-political movements, but which deeply distrust the political parties.

It's probable that many of the members and supporters of the *piqueteros* voted for the left organisations. But they don't feel a part of those political movements, and they don't join the organisations, because they see the fragmentation of the left, with no proposals for unity. The most hopeful development was that of the *United Left* (IU), but the idea was rejected by the other organisations.

■ Do you see any way out of this impasse?

No, I think the crisis is likely to continue for some time. The neoliberal project has lost any legitimacy. The ruling classes are not in a position to reassert their hegemony through a coup d'état or anything like that.

But there's simply no credible left alternative like that represented by the PT in Brazil, maybe the *Broad Front* in Uruguay, or similar alternatives elsewhere. That's the main problem in Argentina today. ★

Autonomy, war, globalization

A WAR is raging in Colombia and many of those caught in the crossfire have been made invisible. Many readers have heard the statistics: a unionist is assassinated every three days; over the last ten years an average of one Indigenous leader has been murdered per week; 2 million of the 40 million (mainly Afro-Colombian and Indigenous) peoples have been violently displaced, living now as internal refugees. And all this before the recent launch of the U.S.'s "Plan Colombia," which will increase violent repression to dismantle resistance and improve multinational access to resources both in Colombia and, ultimately, in the region as a whole. While the Colombian State continues the peace talks of the last few years with the main guerrilla groups (the FARC and ELN) and the paramilitary, unarmed leftists in Indigenous, union, Afro-Colombian, women's and other social movements are excluded.

In response to this, the Social and Political Front (FSP) was launched in 2000 to make visible these struggles through building a unified, broad-based forum for popular struggle. It opposes Plan Colombia and neoliberalism and defends self-determination of peoples, and wants a seat at the negotiating table. One of the groups in the FSP is Presentes por el socialismo (PPS). What follows is a translated and interpreted excerpt from a PPS document of this year entitled "Autonomy of Social Organizations [in Colombia] in Times of War and Globalization." *

Autonomy, Independence and Sovereignty in the Age of Globalization

IN the age of intensified globalization of the economy, winning ideological and cultural hegemony or dominance is key. Part of this is making individualism the fundamental dogma of neoliberal ideology in an environment in which the market is all, and basic needs and human rights become internationally regulated goods and services. Neoliberal autonomy is individual, fragmented and not a collective act.

Today, in the name of IMF-style (International Monetary Fund) autonomy, companies can negotiate directly with Colombian mayors, governors or Indigenous communities. And if Indigenous communities are fortunate enough to autonomously arrive at agreements for mineral and oil exploitation, the fragility of their social force and political and economic power in the face of transnational power is undeniable. As such, this kind of decentralization, fragmentation and autonomy are part of a strategic plan to put an end to the little sovereign control over the exploitation of natural resources that still exists.

For those Communist parties and revolutionary forces that managed to survive and later reflect on the political defeats of the last 10 years, the problem of autonomy has been difficult to understand theoretically and then resolve. The political and social *autonomy* of the working class and popular movements continues to be veiled by a kind of pseudo class *independence* that is supposedly only guaranteed by following the directives of a political or political-military organization.

The Parties in the Armed Conflict

The armed struggle in Colombia arose linked to *campesino* struggles and in solidarity with workers. While for many years its role was to be a rural complement to urban struggles, this function reached its limit and, in the last decade, their objectives became more urbanized. Rebel groups responded differently to this challenge. While the FARC (*Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia*) moved their main focus to jungle and colonization zones that later became important in drug-trafficking, the ELN (*National Liberation Army*) concentrated around the pipeline and in the oil production regions. Clearly, with this change in politico-military strategy, they came to exercise control in areas that ended up becoming strategically important. Their strong presence in areas that had little other institutional presence meant that the insurgent movements gradually replaced the political, economic and legal functions of the state.

When the hegemony of a leftist force is established through armed action and territorial control, the relationship that develops with social movements in these rural areas is the key to extending or limiting this hegemony in the urban and social, national and international stages. Its degree of revolutionary legitimacy is determined by the degree of direct or indirect support of social movements and general national sympathy.

On the other hand, right-wing paramilitary groups affirm their hegemony through the fascist terror of massacres and forced displacements as they prepare for the return or insertion of military institutions. The state opted for the paramilitary strategy when both the growth of the insurgency and international pressure over the Colombian armed forces' human rights violations started to worry the international and domestic ruling classes. The development of paramilitary activities through involvement in the brutal drug cartel confrontations de-legitimized the paramilitary groups from the start due to the deployment of a new level of murderous brutality that was before unknown in the wars of the continent.

A violent and anti-democratic state must have a similar paramilitary, whose activities the state denies any connection with. Its job is to do the state's dirty work so the state can be free of charges of human rights violations. It also allows the cattle ranchers, landowners and drug-traffickers that support it to maintain their political and economic power in the region. What land it accumulates today through violence, tomorrow it will

sell at a high price to multinationals, along with a guarantee of no social conflict in the region. Concentrating land implies disrupting the collective resistance in rural communities, and therefore the political autonomy and independence of those who live in rural communities.

Relations Between the Insurgency and the Organized Popular Movement

The clear anti-democratic attitude of the military and paramilitary does not have such a clear counter-position in the leftist insurgency.

In the case of the two main insurgent forces of the dozen or so that exist, the FARC and the ELN, their respective 40 and 30 years of struggle for the popular and socialist cause, their own birth (in the case of the FARC) as a popular *campesino* self-defense force, is starting to be clouded by an ongoing sequence of errors with respect to the social movements. If these were just human errors, they would not be so serious. But when they become the main weapon of the enemy and the principal obstacle for inserting the FARC in the mass movement, the issue must be looked into thoroughly, in spite of the difficulties and resentment that may be generated.

More than once, social movements, *campesinos*, Indigenous peoples and even NGOs have kept quiet about their differences with, or criticisms of, the insurgents out of respect for the strategic cause that many of their members share. Today the insurgents' continuing incomprehension of the particular rights of autonomy of Indigenous, Afro-Colombian and other social movements in the areas of insurgent activity is troubling. Their militarist conception imposes the importance of territorial control above all other social opinions and progressive or leftist politics. They have a notorious inability to consider that political positions that are better than their own can arise from social movements. To this is added the mistaken and complicated relationship that has been developed with the powerful in the zones of influence. While the insurgents charge the drug cartels a tax for their drug harvests, the cartels will in turn ask for the curbing or sidetracking of social struggles that affect them — something that has been done for the cartels not just a few times.

The grave error committed in the summary execution of three US Native and environmental rights activists in

1999 was a serious blow to the international image of the FARC. If the FARC had just respected the rights of the Native Uwa people (that the activists had come to support) who, in a virtually lone confrontation with multinational oil companies, had enough authority to demand their independence from the state, such a foolish move would never have taken place.

As well, when any of the insurgents carry out summary executions of paramilitary collaborators, public opinion sees no difference between this and that which the state carries out against the civilian population. Rarely is popular opinion sought or does the insurgency attempt to show the reasons why its military project is ethically superior.

This situation in relation to social movements showed itself clearly earlier this year when the union movement was in day 21 of a general strike, facing repressive forces in the street as never before. Yet, while both the FARC and the ELN were right then in the peace dialogue process, they ignored or hardly mentioned in their speeches this heroic popular struggle. This was not because the insurgents did not think they were valid; it was because for many years now they have underestimated the capacity of the union movement to put up such a struggle and, at the same time, because they felt that such struggles were secondary to, or competing with, the peace stage that the insurgents had been able to erect. And all this when separating the social conflict and the armed one was the central political objective of the government.

This happens on the left when it is decided from above to defer the unions' and popular struggles' urgent demands in favour of a position more in line with the peace agenda. The result though can be demobilization and disillusion. It only works when the will of the mass struggle directs the process and the making of such decisions — not when agreements are made by those at the top in the interests of a specific group who, by itself, cannot guarantee victory.

The PPS has also confronted the labour movement for first harshly criticizing the guerrillas for their lack of public support for union struggles, then later saying that the labour movement should not be part of the peace talks as they needed to maintain their autonomy. Class autonomy and independence in relation to peace and political processes must be expressed programmatically, rising above the limits of a set of peace negotiations, but not by isolating the social movement from fundamental political arenas. The labour officialdom still sees the solution to the armed conflict as a task external to the workers' and popular movements and one to be left to official political parties who would treat the struggles in the usual top-down way.

Even if the laws of war are not the same as those of social and political life, the problem is deeper than this. The PPS does not believe that just because arms are taken up in revolutionary struggle, authoritarian conduct has to be developed. There are other issues too. The political education of the combatants — with all the difficulties this implies in the middle of a war — could be grounded in the perspective that each daily act must reflect the condition of representatives of the working class and *campesinos*, that both the party and the popular army are specialized detachments that have arisen from the oppressed and exploited but are not to take the place of, or quash, them, and that the most central part of their action is to raise the base's consciousness so that it sees itself as a ruling class of society. If these were the basic axes of the practical political development of the combatants, half of the errors that occur would not be committed. ★

* This article has been taken from the Nov-Dec edition of the Canadian socialist journal ***New Socialist*** (available online at www.newsocialist.com). Translation by Sheila Wilmot (sheilaw@pathcom.com)

Problems of left recomposition

In *IV* 332 of June 2001 we published an article by Georges Mitralias on the establishment in Greece of "The space of left dialogue and common action".
Comrades from the leadership of the OKDE, the Greek section of the *Fourth International*, have indicated that they do not share the viewpoint put forward in this article and they present here their assessment of the problems of left and far left recomposition in Greece.

OKDE-SPARTAKOS

SOME profound changes in the workers' movement and in class-consciousness have taken place in Greek society over the last 10 years. Xenophobia and racism have developed as "natural" reflexes to big waves of immigration, while nationalism and a return to the old principles of Greek Orthodox Christianity have been dominant themes in the massive mobilizations around the question of Macedonia. Populism and religious fanaticism characterize the discourse of the popular archbishop of Athens, Christodoulos.

The ruling Greek Socialist Movement (PASOK) with its "modernizing" wing in ascendancy since the mid 1990s, has evolved to the right, applying a neoliberal programme with disastrous social consequences.

In this climate, the partial resistance of the working class, concretized in strikes and mobilizations of seafarers, teachers, peasants, bank employees and students, has been suppressed in the name of a neoliberal programme portrayed as "the only realistic way". The traditional left parties have been incapable of responding to the new problems emerging over the last decade, hence their electoral decline or stagnation.

However, this unfavorable political climate was reversed last spring in huge mobilizations of the working class in defence of the pension and social security system. The "socialist" PASOK government was forced to withdraw its proposals, which was a first since it began to apply its neoliberal programme under the leadership of Kostas Simitis. This has led to frictions and chain reactions inside the party, the trade union bureaucracy has exerted pressure and finally the left wing of the "old party" has reappeared. Moreover, the Stock Exchange has suffered particularly low rates for 2 years, creating a sentiment of disappointment in the broad sectors of the middle class who had "invested" their money and hopes in economic growth and the stock market. At the same time, all the polls on voting intentions show PASOK at its lowest ebb. In this very difficult situation, Kostas Simitis has decided to convene an extraordinary congress of PASOK for this autumn.

However, this sudden decision has provoked instability and political uncertainty. The party of the traditional right, *New Democracy* (ND), have followed an undisguised populist line and this despite the neoliberal sentiments of its members. Its opposition to the government is characterized by a moral denunciation of the "socialist" government and its incompetent administration. This line has had some success and the ND hopes to gain more votes than PASOK for the first time in 10 years.

The two traditional "official" parties of the Greek left, the KKE (*Communist Party of Greece*) and *Synaspismos* (*Coalition of the Left and Progress*, of Eurocommunist origin), have once again proved incapable of expressing the popular discontent and still more of inspiring a perspective of social resistance or a left path out of the economic and social crisis. An alternative proposed by the reformist left seems then unrealistic and without perspective.

The death of the "official left"

After the breakup of the eastern European régimes the Greek *Communist Party* (KKE) enclosed itself in an orientation of the purest Stalinist type. What characterizes it today are the rhythms of the survival of its bureaucracy and a sectarianism evident in its national orientation and systematic use of an ultra-left discourse. Thus the KKE leadership tried to organize a separate demonstration on Mayday parallel to that organized by the GSEE (*General Federation of Workers' Trade Unions*), but under the pressure of the enormous mobilizations, it was obliged to join the central demonstration organized by the GSEE.

The party leadership has developed a hostile attitude towards everything which comes from the European imperialist countries including the European workers' movement and international campaigns! In spite of that and under the pressure of its working class base, the KKE was obliged to take part in the recent mobilizations against capitalist globalization (Prague, Nice, Genoa), but it has kept its political and organizational distance from the other forces of the Greek left, organizing totally separate campaigns. Thus, it denounced the central slogan of the "Greek committee for Genoa" which was "human beings before profit" as reformist and replaced it by "human beings against profit"!

Nonetheless, the KKE concentrates the majority of politically conscious workers, continues to be the biggest workers' party of the Greek left (around 5.6% at the national elections) and continues to enjoy the support of left-inclined youth.

Thus even if a real political dialogue with the leadership of the KKE on the recomposition of the left is impossible today, any dialogue on the "unity of left forces" in Greece must take the KKE into account.

As the most important rival of the KKE, the leadership of *Synaspismos* is fighting for its survival in parliament since its electoral influence fluctuates around 3%. However, the working class roots of this party are relatively weak while it has a certain implantation among the intellectual middle classes. The ideological origin and social composition of the leadership relegates this party to reformist options, punctuated by zigzags, following a pro-European line and cultivating many illusions on the perspective of the bourgeois European institutions.

Unfortunately, the *Synaspismos* leadership was the architect and the most vigorous supporter of the right-left coalition government in 1989 (led by

Tzannetakis) in opposition to the old "socialist" leadership of PASOK. At the beginning of the 1990s, the *Synaspismos* leadership participated in the first phase of the nationalist mobilizations in favour of 'Greek Macedonia".

Later, under the pressure of its own "modernizing" wing and after "clarifications" inspired by the views of the most "enlightened' parties of the Greek ruling class, *Synaspismos* adopted a more pacifistic and less nationalistic line. That was true not only in relation to Macedonia but also the wars in ex-Yugoslavia and Greek-Turkish relations. Behind this lies the leadership's medium-term project: its participation in a governmental coalition of 'realistic modernization" with the equivalent tendencies inside PASOK.

The *Synaspismos* leadership is quite obviously open to any type of cooperation at all in order to maintain its parliamentary existence. It is in relation to these perspectives that one should understand its participation in the campaigns against capitalist globalization: they offer it the chance to remind people that *Synaspismos* once had a real left profile and to appeal to the radical youth without however taking on any serious and immediate obligation.

For all these reasons, it is relatively easy for virtually any far left group to have some form of cooperation with *Synaspismos*. However, because of its reformist nature and its parliamentary orientation, it is also impossible for any radical left group to envisage a political agreement with *Synaspismos* for the formation of a stable alliance in the perspective of the next national elections.

New perspectives for the far left?

Two of the most important far left organizations are the NAR (*New Left Current*) and AKOA (*Renewing Communist and Ecological Left*). Indeed these two currents represent a sort of projection of the division of the official left into the far left. The NAR was created by the Communist youth (KNE) in reaction to the participation of the KKE in the Tzannetakis government in 1989. The NAR proclaimed itself the true continuity of the genuine Leninist tradition and since the beginning has built around itself a little "anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist front". This "front" seeks to defend an independent class orientation and an anti-nationalist, anti-militarist practice. However, the necessary condition for participation in this "front" is to support

Synaspismos Youth poster commemorating November 17 uprising

the anti-European positions of the NAR, which rules out a good number of far left organizations. The sectarian approach of the NAR is to consider that it is always preferable to organize separate meetings and campaigns of the "front". It also rejects the unity of the trade union movement, preferring to support the construction of "combative" and "pure" red unions. Around this little "front" one finds several old Maoist organizations and a dogmatic group of "Healyite" origin. Its dynamic and electoral influence have fallen constantly for the last 10 years. However, the influence of this organization is relatively important in the student movement.

The AKOA is a smaller organization created in reaction to the "Communist refounders" current formerly inside the old Eurocommunist party (the so-called KKE interior, in the 1970s) who accentuated their drift to the right with the formation of *Synaspismos* in 1987-88. The AKOA continues to identify with the Eurocommunist tradition while strengthening its links with tendencies and individuals inside *Synaspismos*. These links were definitively reinforced when the AKOA supported *Synaspismos* at the national elections of the past year. While the attitude of the AKOA towards the other forces of the far left is relatively open it has no interest in an independent policy of an alliance of the radical left with a perspective of class independence. It is clear that the persistence of AKOA in this orientation stems essentially from its reformist origins. Moreover, the AKOA has taken the decision with other smaller groups having similar political views (like the ecologists, the KEDA and others) to build an alliance with *Synaspismos* in a common electoral goal as well as at a more general political level. Which does not stop the AKOA from continuing to participate in anti-racist, anti-fascist, or anti-capitalist globalization movements and in far left campaigns. However, the recent alliance around "The space of left dialogue and common action"[1] is an attempt to give a political and electoral horizon to the organizations and groups which are found in the slipstream of *Synaspismos: Synaspismos* seems indeed to need this type of collaboration in its competition with the KKE, presenting thus a more left wing image.

There are other radical left organizations with a more revolutionary programme, like a part of the organization *Diktyo* (*Network of movements for the defence of civic and political rights*): this group has some significant activity in defence of immigrants and has played an important role in the organization of the "antiracist Festival". In addition, the DEA (*Internationalist Workers' Left*) which has recently left the SEK (*Socialist Workers Party*, sister organization of the British SWP) has just decided to participate in the "Space".

The price to pay for this type of collaboration could be high for the risk of subordination to the reformist strategy of *Synaspismos* is undeniable. From this point of view it has been very fashionable in some circles of the Greek revolutionary left to support alliances of the "Space" type in a not very responsible manner, in order to "overcome the divisions between reformists and revolutionaries". But what can be the meaning of all this if not the abandonment of any attempt to build independent revolutionary organizations distinct from the existing reformist parties?[2]

"Initiative" and other attempts at cooperation

Unhappily the NAR and the AKOA, the two most important components of the far left, have been incapable of redefining their orientations during the

past 10 years which has prevented them from creating a real organization implanted in the working class, immigrants and radicalized youth. Their mutual hostility has made any electoral alliance impossible.

In response to this difficult situation and on the ruins of the last attempt at electoral unification of the far left, the "Initiative for the unity of the radical left" was founded immediately after the last national elections. The *Diktyo*, other groups of very different origin (Stalinist groups, the OKDE — Greek section of the *Fourth International* — and also other independent groups) have taken part in the creation of the *Initiative*, which is open to all the groups and organizations of the far left.

The *Initiative* tries to establish stable relations and a representative internal system which would give a living example of political coexistence for the other forces of the far left. The central problem of functioning of the *Initiative* right now is the priority given by most participants to local work and to work in the trade unions. However, one should not forget either their relative indifference towards international questions and campaigns.

If the general tendency for the far left in the past 10 years has been stagnation, a case apart is constituted by the SEK, which has developed in a manner completely separated from the rest of the far left, entirely enclosed in its own world and discourse.

But since some of its predictions on the imminence of revolutionary situations East and West have proved totally erroneous, internal frictions have sharpened. This led to a split this year which has given birth to a new organization, the DEA. This new organization has played a decisive role in the "Greek Committee for Genoa". Both the SEK and DEA love to discuss with *Synaspismos* but without any perspective of recomposition of the revolutionary left.

At the same time the right turn of PASOK and its subordination to the interests of the ruling class have led to the old Trotskyist organization *Xekinima* ("Beginning", linked to the British *Militant*) leaving PASOK in order to participate openly in the activities and mobilizations of the far left.

Thus the open existence of organizations with a culture different from that of the reformist parties, incarnated by the SEK, DEA or *Xekinima* and their direct participation in the campaigns of the far left creates a hope and new perspectives for the first time in many years. The far left has been encouraged by the rise of the student movement in May-June 2001 which followed the mobilizations of the working class in April-May.

This movement was expressed in mass demonstrations and occupations in numerous Greek universities and the leadership of the movement rested on an alliance of far left students (NAR, *Initiative*, independent militants). They have experienced great success in the big student assemblies, voting through motions against the advice of the traditional organizations (ND, PASOK, KKE, *Synaspismos*) and organizing street demonstrations.

Key questions

In recent months the political climate has changed, the developments inside the far left have accelerated. The need for unity of action is now understood by the majority of far left militants and it has become obvious that there exists a certain pressure on the leaders to build a common campaign with other parties and organizations of the radical left. The proposals for unity of the far left come from different directions but the real intentions and the discourse employed are not always very clear. It appears for example that unitary work between militants of Maoist or Stalinist origin and those from the tradition of the European working class is an indispensable condition to change their attitude which is strongly "anti-European" on bases which are far from being internationalist! A decisive step in this direction has thus been played by their active participation in international campaigns against capitalist globalization and their direct contacts with the organizations and militants of other European countries.

After the demonstrations at Genoa, the influence of this movement is henceforth significant in all far left currents, even those who had a more or less negative approach on this question in the past.

Thus, the discussions and publications after Genoa have been revealing. Similar experiences of recomposition of the far left in other European countries like France, Britain or Portugal have had a great impact in discussions. Even the trade union networks and the youth in the KKE are having these kind of discussions.

It would obviously be desirable if the militants of Euro-communist origin understood the urgency of constructing far left political unity on a basis of class independence!

Unhappily, the regroupment of the "Space" type under the hegemony of *Synaspismos* plunges the militants and groups participating in this schema in an abstract but profound desire to unify the left, but not in a direction favorable to the interests of the working class! Worse still, the "Space" political project excludes in the long term not only the majority of the far left but also the majority of the Greek left overall.

Direction

For us there is no doubt that the *Initiative*, even if currently less developed than the "Space", goes in the direction of the recomposition of the far left and should be supported by all the tendencies who identify with revolutionary Marxism. A more intense participation of militants from the revolutionary Marxist tradition inside the *Initiative* will enrich discussion and reinforce internal democracy.

We also consider that the campaigns of the far left like the recent and massive anti-racist festivals and the Greek Committee for Genoa should be open to the participation of the reformist organizations and parties (and of course *Synaspismos*).

This is moreover a traditionally difficult question which still provokes frictions and shouting matches on the Greek far left. To transcend all this and go forward the theoretical and practical contribution of Marxist militants and revolutionary organizations will be a decisive factor. ★

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1. See Georges Mitralias, *IV* 332, June 2001, "The space of left dialogue and common action". Some formulations contained in this article should be corrected. Thus, it is not true that "Greek comrades of the Fourth International have played a key role in the preparation of the Space" and in the publication of the revue ***Manifesto*** as the article says, even if some activists close to the OKDE have indeed participated in the 'Space" and the production of ***Manifesto***.

2. The imperialist war brought contradictions in the "Space" to the surface much more quickly than envisaged in this article, written in early September. Differences appeared inside *Synaspismos*, paralyzing it - at least initially: one of its currents wished to join the "anti-terrorist" camp, in order to be modern, while the other wished to centre the intervention of the party against the war on formulations referring to "international law" and "international institutions". Left groups, notably the DEA, Diktyo and the *Manifesto* editorial board have launched, with the OKDE, the antiwar movement, organizing the first central rally in Athens. It seems that the majority of *Synaspismos* is gradually taking its distance from the most right wing and pro-imperialist tendencies inside it, but it missed the first big demonstrations and it initially manipulated the rubric of "Space", leading to a flood of protests from the other components. After this setback, nobody knows if the "Space" will one day reappear publicly.

The strange death of Solidarnosc Poland

THE results of the Polish parliamentary elections of September 23, 2001 have profoundly restructured the country's political landscape. Polish observers are generally agreed that what has happened amounts to a genuine earthquake, albeit a limited one, in three respects.

ZBIGNIEW KOWALEWSKI*

THE first is the crushing defeat — the complete loss of parliamentary representation - of the main political forces identifying themselves with the traditions of *Solidarnosc*.[1] The second is the resounding victory of a social democracy originating from the party which had been in power under the former bureaucratic regime: the *Polish Unified Workers' Party* (PZPR). And the third is the unexpectedly high score for *Samoobrona* ("Self-defence"), a movement of social protest and direct action which was until now extra-parliamentary.

1993: The first earthquake

To avoid any misunderstanding, we should be clear that the change is relative in two aspects. First, the so-called "post-communist" Social Democrats had already returned to power in the 1993-1997 period. That too was an earthquake, bigger than the current one: to resume power barely four years after the fall of the self-styled "actually existing socialism" represented an undoubted political exploit and a very strong sign of the growing loss of legitimacy of the "gravediggers of Communism" and restorers of capitalism. The parties of the right who enjoyed the support of the *Solidarnosc* union were, for the first time, completely deprived of Parliamentary representation. The parties of the conservative, nationalist, clerical and extreme right were in general small but their strength resided in their support inside the trade union apparatus of *Solidarnosc*. Incapable of implementing any more or less unitary policy, they entered the 1993 elections in disunity, leading to their disappearance from parliament. However another force, originating from the old "democratic opposition" (*Committee for the Defence of Workers*, KOR, active from 1976-1981), the *Democratic Union* (UD), renamed the *Union of Liberty* (UW), remained in parliament.

Representing, on the side of the opposition, the main beneficiaries of the "round table" agreement with the regime in 1989 that had allowed the transfer of power, it became the party of the liberal right and the neoliberal shock therapy embodied in the so-called "Balcerowicz plan".[2]

It was the popular reaction to the disastrous social effects of this plan and to the restoration of capitalism in general which brought to power the *Alliance of the Democratic Left* (SLD) in coalition with the *Polish Popular/Peasant Party* (PSL)[3] Like the SLD, the PSL originated from a party of the old régime, but it was rooted in the tradition, specific to Poland and some other eastern European countries, of mass peasant parties.

For the right, it was the revenge of the "Communists", all the more so in that the presidential elections of 1995 saw the outgoing president, Lech Walesa, the man who loved to say that he had "defeated Communism on a world scale", defeated by Aleksander Kwasniewski, leader of the SLD. Despairing at their fall, the right, with Walesa at the helm, mounted an attempt to destabilize and overthrow the "post-Communist" government: it accused the social democratic prime minister Jozef Oleksy of having been, in the past, an agent of Soviet espionage. The affair, as it transpired finally, was a complete frame-up and a secret service provocation.

The SLD-PSL government was not, obviously, some kind of throwback to the old régime. As declared partisans of the restoration of capitalism and the Atlantic alliance they would assure the continuity of the policies of the right, including privatization and neoliberal restructuring. They attempted at best to mitigate their increasingly dangerous social effects, in particular to significantly reduce the devastating mass unemployment affecting entire regions of the country. The PSL, moderately anti-neoliberal, restrained the neoliberal tendencies of the SLD in some areas. This coalition also limited the ideological reactionary, clerical, nationalist and aggressively anti-communist pressures that had pervaded the life of Polish society since 1989.

1997: Return of the right

However, in 1997 the SLD unexpectedly lost the elections. Three factors were at the origin of this defeat. First, its electorate shrank, discouraged and disillusioned by the continuation of the neoliberal course. Secondly, the SLD, convinced it would win, did not wage an electoral campaign and thus demobilized part of its 'hard core" electorate. Third, the parties of the right unified their forces in the *Solidarnosc Electoral Alliance* (AWS). It was the *Solidarnosc* union bureaucracy who imposed this unity on them. And it was the AWS who won the elections. The feat was comparable to that of the SLD in 1993.

The AWS formed a coalition government with its fraternal enemy the UW, ceding control of economic and financial policy to the latter party in the person of its president, Leszek Balcerowicz. It represented the return in full force of an orthodox neoliberalism aimed head on at the working class, the popular layers, women, the old and the young. Accusing the previous government of having drawn back from "the most indispensable and urgent reforms", the AWS-UW coalition forced them through at high speed. Suddenly it radically changed the administrative structure of the country, reforming the health service, social security and national education along neoliberal lines. At the same time the neoliber-

al restructuring of the economy resumed its forced march with the rapid growth of social inequalities, poverty and unemployment (reduced to 8% of the active population under the SLD-PSL coalition, it rose above 16% in 2001).

The policy of the AWS-UW coalition was adventurist and politically suicidal. The AWS begin to undergo a succession of crises, splits and increasingly difficult recompositions. Entire layers of this heterogeneous bloc deserted neoliberal policies and for this reason the ruling coalition increasingly began to be defeated in parliament.

The *National Agreement of Trade Unions* (OPZZ), the largest trade union organization, linked to the SLD, formed a coordination with all the workers' and peasants' trade unions (except *Solidarnosc*) mobilizing for street demonstrations and protests against the policy of the government.

The peasant union *Samoobrona* ("Self-defence"), under the leadership of Andrzej Lepper and drawing behind it other peasant unions, organized massive coordinated actions on a national scale, blocking motorways and generating heated confrontations between peasants and police. The workers of the crisis-hit arms industry descended on Warsaw and also clashed with the police. On two occasions, Poland's nurses launched formidably organized and coordinated struggles, showing a surprising capacity to invent new forms of action. Drawing inspiration from the peasants, they also carried out spectacular blockades of motorways and border crossings. The polls revealed large majority support for both peasant and nurse struggles.

2000: Reelection of Kwasniewski

In summer 2000, faced with the deep unpopularity of the government, the UW left it, hoping thus to save its skin, while Balcerowicz was removed from the presidency of the party. The government, supported only by the AWS in decomposition, became a minority in parliament. In October 2000 the presidential elections confirmed in striking fashion that the SLD had the wind in its sails: Kwasniewski won on the first round (54%), beating a neoliberal independent, Andrzej Olechowski (18%) and the AWS leader (leader also of the *Solidarnosc* trade union) Marian Krzaklewski (15%).

On the basis of these results, the SLD began a triumphal march towards power — all the more triumphal in that the *Union of Labour* (UP), a small social democratic party originating in part (like the SLD) from the PZPR, and in part from the moderate left of *Solidarnosc*, decided to ally with it. Olechowski, together with some elements from the UW and the AWS, organized a new neoliberal force, the so-called *Citizens Platform* (PO).

The AWS broke up and reconstituted itself as *Electoral Action Solidarity* (AWSP), getting rid of Krzaklewski as leader. Thus Walesa's successor at the head of *Solidarity* followed his predecessor into political oblivion (at the presidential elections Walesa received barely 3% of the votes).

As a heavy defeat for the AWSP and UW was certain, the right proceeded to significant recompositions. In addition to the PO of Olechowski, regrouping the most hardcore neoliberals who had deserted the UW and the most moderate conservatives who had deserted the AWS, two other right wing forces were formed. The first was *Law and Justice* (PiS), led by the Jaroslaw brothers and Lech Kaczynski, former minor leaders of *Solidarnosc*, a conservative formation with a radical law and order discourse, on the lines of New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani and his "zero tolerance".

The other formation is the *League of Polish Families* (LRP), a hotch potch of groups from the radical, extreme, nationalist and clerical right, hostile to EU membership but advocating privileged links with the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA)! Its main leader is Antoni Macierewicz, one of the founders of KOR, who has gone from the left to the far right. The LPR won very precious support from Radio Mary, a powerful radio controlled by the fundamentalist current inside the Catholic Church.

2001: Second earthquake

In the weeks preceding the parliamentary elections, Polish society was shocked to learn that the economy had entered into recession and that there was an enormous hole of around 90 billion zlotys in the budget. The polls gave between 47% and 50% of votes to the SLD-UP, so the social democratic coalition was absolutely sure it would obtain an absolute majority in parliament and govern alone. But two days before the elections, two bombs exploded. The first was: the announcement by the future finance minister, Marek Belka (known as the "social democratic Balcerowicz" because of his fidelity to neoliberal dogmas) of his plan to fill the budgetary hole, which aroused deep disquiet in popular layers. The second: after polling around 3% for months, support for "Self-defence" shot up to 8-9%.

The election results constituted a great surprise for an SLD-UP which had been plunged in triumphalism: it got between 6-9% less votes than it had expected. It had only a relative majority in parliament, meaning it had to form either a minority or a coalition government. From being an extra parliamentary movement, considered by all the political elite, media and the Church hierarchy as a gang of hooligans, with a leader subject to persistent legal harassment, "Self-defence" emerged as the third biggest force in parliament, overtaking the PSL.

In the countryside the vote for the PSL was a little higher than that of "Self-defence", but in the cities it was the latter that won, garnering the "social protest vote" among unskilled workers, the unemployed and the poor.

"Self-defence" is fiercely anti-neoliberal and hostile to the "political class" in its entirety. It proclaims itself "neither right nor left, but Polish" and its profile is that of an intransigent defender of the interests of the peasants and urban poor. The leitmotiv of Lepper's discourse is: "either we

change rapidly and radically the whole of our economic and social policy, breaking with neoliberalism and favouring the popular layers, or in one year the country will experience a mass uprising".

The man is unpredictable: held in contempt as a hooligan by the SLD leaders who stigmatise him as a possible Polish incarnation of Haider (a baseless association), he announced that "Self-defence" would offer conditional support to the SLD-UP government and exerted strong pressure on the SLD-UP and the PSL to form a coalition government. Suddenly the social democrats were obliged to treat him with respect, negotiate with him and even say that he was completely capable of becoming... "a statesman".

Only the new rightwing formations — the PO, PiS and the LRP — gained representation in the new parliament. With the elimination from the parliamentary game of the AWSP and UW the so-called "Poland of August 1980" has come to an end and with it a whole historic myth has been defeated, barely 12 years after its triumph. It is the price that they have both paid for having shamefully betrayed the aspirations of the great mass uprising of 1980-1981 and the interests of the working class whose struggles against the bureaucratic regime opened up their road to power.

Politically the relationship of forces following these elections presents itself in the following fashion: the social democracy and the anti-neoliberal parties with a peasant base received in total more than 60% of the votes, whereas all the right wing formations together received less than 40%.

With hesitations and reticence, the SLD-UP chose the formation of a coalition government with the sole partner possible: the PSL. "Self-defence" declared themselves ready to support it. This "marriage of convenience" will surely be difficult to consummate: in the leanest of times, how will it be possible to reconcile the SLD's support for neoliberal globalization and the pursuit of neoliberal restructuring of the economy, society and state with the (either moderately or radically) anti-neoliberal tendencies of all its allies, near or distant — the UP, PSL and Self-defence? ★

The results of the elections to the Polish Diet

SLD (*Alliance of the Democratic Left*) - UP (*Union of Labour*) (Social democrats) 41%, 216 seats

PO (*Citizens Platform*, liberal) 12.7%, 65 seats

Samoobrona ("Self-defence", radical peasant) 10.2%, 53 seats

PiS (*Law and Justice*, conservative) 9.5%, 44 seats

PSL (*Polish Peasant/Popular party*, moderate peasant) 9%, 42 seats

LRP (*League of Polish Families*, far right) 7.9%, 38 seats

AWSP (*Electoral Action Solidarity*, conservative) 5.6 %, 0 seats

UW (*Union for Liberty*, liberal) 3.10%, 0 seats

PPS (*Polish Socialist Party*, to the left of the SLD) 0.1%, 0 seats

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1. The self-managed independent trade union Solidarity (*NSZZ Solidarnosc*) was founded in September 1980 following a national meeting of the regional strike committees elected during the strikes which spread across the country in August 1980.
Legalized in November 1980, it had 10 million members (out of 13 million employees). At its congress in September-October 1981 it adopted the programme of the "Self managed Republic", "a new socio-economic order which would link the plan, self-management and market" based on the "socialization of planning". The bureaucratic repression which followed the coup d'État of general Jaruzelski pushed this immense mass movement into clandestinity, isolating the underground leadership from its working class base. Faced with a new generalized strike movement in 1988, the Jaruzelski leadership negotiated a compromise with the underground leadership, conceding parliamentary elections.
In June 1989 the candidates of the Solidarity leadership won thus all 261 contested seats out 560 in the Diet (the others were reserved to the candidates of the bureaucracy) and 99% of the seats in the Senate - which led in September 1989 to the formation of a coalition government led by Tadeusz Mazowiecki, a *Solidarity* technocrat, which began the process of capitalist restoration.
The social effects of this policy, carried out as a forced march under the diktat of the IMF, did not allow the relegalized *Solidarity* trade union to recover its strength of 1980-81. From 1991 the OPZZ ("National Agreement of Trade Unions"), created under the dictatorship of general Jaruzelski and inside which some underground *Solidarity* activists had attempted to pursue a "legal" activity inside the bureaucratic apparatus, became the main union force in the country.

2. Leszek Balcerowicz was, in autumn 1981, one of the economic experts who negotiated the formulation of the law on self-management. After the coup d'État by general Jaruzelski (December 13, 1981) and the banning of the *Solidarnosc* union, Balcerowicz was one of the experts who, linked with the US administration, pushed the underground leadership to modify the economic project of *Solidarnosc* in a more "market" and less "self-management" direction.
He became minister of finance in September 1989 and adopted a new monetarist economic policy imposed by the IMF, known as the "Balcerowicz Plan".

2. "Peasant/popular" because the Polish word "ludowe" means two things; traditionally peasant based, this party now plays on the ambiguity of its name to present itself as a "party of the people" with a rural and urban base.

Charlie van Gelderen (1913-2001)

CHARLIE van Gelderen was the last survivor of those who attended the 1938 Founding Conference of the *Fourth International* in Paris. He attended as an observer on behalf of South African Trotskyists, though he was already living in Britain by that time. He died peacefully at home in Cambridge on October 26 after a short illness at the age of 88, still a fully paid up and until very recently an active member of the *International Socialist Group* (British section of the *Fourth International*).

Charlie was born in August 1913 in the small town of Wellington, 40 miles from Cape Town, South Africa. He became politically active as a young man, initially joining the *Fabian Society*, but in 1931 he became an enthusiastic supporter of the ideas of Leon Trotsky. Together with his twin brother, Herman, he was instrumental in setting up the first Trotskyist organisation in South Africa, the *International Marxist League*.

Charlie was also involved in setting up the *Commercial Workers Union* in the Cape and for a time became its full time secretary.

The South African Trotskyist movement split in 1932 in response to the "French turn", the position put forward by Trotsky at the time urging his French supporters to enter the French *Socialist Party*. Charlie supported Trotsky iand was instrumental in founding a new organisation, the *Communist League*, and edited its paper ***Worker's Voice***.

In 1935 Charlie followed his comrade and future wife, Millie Mathews (who was to become mother of his daughters) to London. Once he arrived in Britain, Charlie linked up with the *Marxist Group* whose best-known member was CLR James. The *Marxist Group* had been active in the *Independent Labour Party*, but was discussing going into the *Labour Party*.

Charlie himself was told to go straight into the *Labour Party* and soon became very active in the East Islington (in north London) branch of the *Labour League of Youth*, which was dominated by Trotskyists.

By the time of the founding Conference of the *Fourth International* in 1938, the *Marxist Group* had disintegrated. Charlie was a member of the *Revolutionary Socialist League* (RSL), which worked in the *Labour Party* as *Militant*, while James had gone on to found his own organisation, which he represented at the Conference. The biggest Trotskyist group in Britain at the time was the *Workers International League*, which then involved both Ted Grant and Gerry Healy.

During the Second World War Charlie joined the British Army Medical Corps and travelled first to Iraq and then to Italy. He openly organised Marxist Educational classes among the troops. He went on to help form the first Trotskyist group in Italy, together with American comrades also stationed in the area and Italian comrades, both those who already supported Trotskyism and others who were becoming interested because of the political situation.

The importance of Charlie's role in Italy was underlined by the fact that after the war, the leadership of the *Fourth International* tried to persuade him to return there and carry on that work. Charlie did not feel able to do this because he had a wife and child in England.

By the time Charlie returned to Britain, the RSL had come together with the *Workers International League* to form the *Revolutionary Communist Party*. Ted Grant was the Political Secretary and Jock Haston was the General Secretary. Charlie became a prominent member of the leadership of this organisation almost straight away.

The majority of the RCP was against entry into the Labour Party, including Ted Grant at that time, but Gerry Healy had already formed a minority tendency fighting for entry. Charlie was himself in favour of entry but against a minority split on this basis. He also deeply distrusted Healy.

The leadership of the *Fourth International*, dominated by Michel Pablo, supported Healy and urged Charlie to do likewise. Soon Healy split and founded The Club, which would later became the *Socialist Labour League* (and subsequently the *Workers' Revolutionary Party*). Charlie stayed in the RCP for a time, but then this organisation decided to dissolve and go in with Healy.

Charlie remained a member of Healy's organisation throughout the period when the *Fourth International* split in 1953 in a confused debate over Stalinism and the role of mass Communist Parties: but he broke with Healy when he refused to re-join the reunified organisation in 1963.

He then met up with Ken Coates and Pat Jordan, who by this time had launched *The Week*, and decided to join with them. Charlie was therefore a founder member of the *International Marxist Group* (IMG), which became the British section of the *Fourth International*.

His main political activity was around solidarity with South Africa. Though Charlie had left South Africa as a young man he remained deeply committed to the political struggle there. He stayed in contact with comrades on the ground, and followed events closely. He was a long time member of the *Anti-Apartheid Movement* and served on its National Committee for some time.

In the early 1980s: the IMG changed its name to the *Socialist League* and then went through some serious political convulsions and divisions that finally led to its break up over undemocratic functioning. The continuity of the organisation, the *International Group*, later fused with the *Workers' Socialist League*, which itself had come out of the WRP, to form the *International Socialist Group* in 1987.

Charlie was a member of the *Labour Party* from September 1936 until March 2001. In many bitter debates in the Trotskyist movement, he argued that this was where revolutionaries should be active in order to win others to their political ideas. However the transformation of the party by Tony Blair led Charlie (along with many others) to feel that those days were now over. Thus he welcomed the formation of the *Socialist Alliance*, became a member of its Cambridge branch and looked forward to becoming a 'born again activist'.

Charlie never lost his deep hatred of the capitalist system and the brutal misery it brings in its wake. His column for ***Socialist Outlook***, which he kept up until illness struck in the summer, pulsated with his fury against the burden of debt, the scourge of HIV and the profits of the multinationals, the hypocrisy of new Labour. Charlie is deeply missed by his wife Christine whom he married in 1989, his daughters Leonora and Tessa (both revolutionary socialists), and the rest of his family, and by the many comrades in Britain and across the world that knew him. ★ **Terry Conway and Penelope Duggan**

The future of the revolutionary left

ALAIN KRIVINE

ALAIN Krivine, a member of the European Parliament and main spokesperson of the French *Ligue Communiste Revolutionnaire* (LCR), spoke in July at the London 'Marxism' event, organised by the British *Socialist Workers Party* (SWP), on the 'future of the revolutionary left'. Here we publish his speech, together with the contribution made in the discussion by Chris Harman, an SWP leader. Readers will appreciate that the meeting took place well before the beginning of the war in Afghanistan.

"I think this debate today is very important for one main reason. For some years now we have seen a real development, sometimes even an upsurge, of new far left, anti-capitalist, and revolutionary organisations in many countries. We see also a radicalisation of the young generation. That means that after many years we can see 'the beginning of the beginning' of the exit from the 'tunnel' for the revolutionaries. That means that, confronted with this new development of far left organisations, we have very big responsibilities. It means the question is to know whether we are able to answer politically the questions posed by this new radicalisation in Europe.

The first thing is to discuss the reasons for this development, to see if it's only a temporary thing, or if it's the opposite — and I think so — a new long-term situation. I think there are four reasons which explain the new space for far left, revolutionary or anti-capitalist organisations.

First is the fall of the Berlin wall, in other words the total collapse of Stalinism. For us that's very important because Stalinism was a real obstacle, this terrible example of so-called 'socialism'. At the same time, with the collapse of Stalinism, for millions of workers there is the comprehension of the total collapse of social democracy. Europe today is more or less totally led by social democrats. Eleven countries out of 15 in the European Union are led by social democrats. I don't say there are no more illusions in social democracy or its capacity to solve the problems of the working class. But it's clear there is a change. You have seen in Britain the mass abstention among the working class and popular milieu in the general election, because millions of people have lost a part — I say a part — of their illusions in the ability of social democracy to solve their problems.

The second reason is, I think everyone agrees, that within the context of capitalist globalisation we are confronted with a fantastic bosses' offensive against the working class, with exactly the same effects in many countries — privatisation of public services, 'flexibility', the attack against the conditions of life of the working class, even when people are working they have worse conditions of work, the development of racism and so on.

The third reason is that the mass workers' parties, the social democrats and the Communists in the countries where they were strong, are going more and more to the right — if that is possible. So today we can speak in a certain sense of the 'social liberalisation' of the social democrats and the 'social democratisation' of the Communists, in France and Italy and other places in Europe.

Institutionalisation

And even if they are not part of the workers movement, we see also today a kind of 'institutionalisation' of the Greens. It's important to notice that because I suppose here, like in France, at a certain time young people had the feeling that the Greens were very on the left, they were radical and so on. And now they are in the government in France, Germany and Belgium and concretely people see that in fact they are totally integrated, even if in some speeches they could appear more on the left sometimes.

The fourth reason is that if the traditional workers' organisations are going to the right, among the working class and especially among the youth we have a left social and political radicalisation. We have now in many countries, not all countries of course, very strong, combative strikes. For example in Greece today, where you have general strikes with very strong demonstrations in the streets. You have these kind of very radical strikes in France, especially in the private sector, which is new — in the past the private sector was not very active, for many reasons which you know.

Confronted with this new social and political radicalisation and the upsurge of a new generation among the working class, we can speak about a new development of anti-capitalist consciousness among the young generation. In this the movement against capitalist globalisation is key. I don't say that this movement, which is more and more important with mass street demonstrations — Seattle, Prague, Nice, Gothenburg and at the end of the month in Genoa — is made up in the main of revolutionaries. That would be stupid. The important thing is that this movement, made up overwhelmingly of young people, is fighting against the consequences, the dramatic consequences, of capitalism. And this slogan which appears on the walls today — "our world is not for sale" — in fact is really an anti-capitalist slogan. For all these reasons, there is a new space for extreme left and anti-capitalist organisations.

In many countries in Europe today you have new anti-capitalist organisations. And usually they are built with similar features. You know better than me the *Scottish Socialist Party*. In the same framework is the *Socialist Alliance*. If you look at countries like Portugal, Denmark, Greece, Turkey and France — maybe France is a bit different — you have in all these countries the convergence of political groups and tendencies with different traditions. People coming from Trotskyism (sometimes different wings of Trotskyism, and as you know we are very rich in this!), from Maoism, from the crisis of the old Communist parties, even people from libertarian traditions. You have the beginning of regroupment of people from these different traditions, who agree not to discuss the past. Of course discussion of the past is very

important, but I think today to build a new anti-capitalist organisation together it's not necessary to have the same opinion about the nature of the Soviet Union seventy years ago.

Of course as Trotskyists we consider these historical debates to be very important, but we have to look to the future, and today the main thing for us is to regroup people if they agree what to do today, even if they disagree about the analysis of the past. And it's not just people who have been in different organisations, but also people who have never been in a political party, but who are today activists in the trade union movement, the social movements, anti-racist and anti-fascist movements, women's movements and ecologist movements — and who are today waiting for a political answer to the problems confronting them in their daily social and political life.

Left Bloc

In Portugal you have an organisation called the *Left Bloc*, composed of the *Fourth International* organisation, a split from the Communists and the UDP, a former Maoist organisation which was very strong during the Portuguese 1974-5 revolution.

Now this organisation has decided to open membership to individuals who are not members of any of these organisations. Today they have around 2,000 people, with two parliamentary deputies. And now it's really a big organisation among the youth and in sections of the working class.

In Denmark you have the *Red-Green Alliance*, which is also the convergence of the Trotskyists of the *Fourth International*, and some people coming from the old CP, ecologists, trade unionists and so on. Here it's exactly the same process, with political organisations still existing and individuals — today some 1,000 people and even five deputies in the Danish parliament.

In Greece as you know, it's very recent, there's a convergence of different Trotskyist currents, people coming from left social democracy and so on. In Turkey you have the ODP, composed of people coming from the Communist party, extreme left organisations and many other different currents. In all this you can see concretely the emergence of new anti-capitalist organisations which is very important.

And today the Trotskyists in France, us and *Lutte Ouvriere*, are rather strong. All the time the mainstream press and

Alain Krivine

TV are forced to speak about the extreme left. During the elections we got nearly one million votes and five European deputies. In the recent municipal elections where unfortunately it was not possible to have a joint list, we got on average four percent of the vote. But in the cities we got between five and 12 percent, especially in the working class neighbourhoods. According to the opinion polls, it would be possible for the extreme left to have more votes than the *Communist Party* or the Greens.

There are four main tasks for the revolutionaries today. First, we have to "walk on two legs". That means in a perspective of building new mass anti-capitalist parties, we have to address two different constituencies. First, the traditional working class with its traditional organisations and we shouldn't neglect that. Because some young people say to us "what are you doing these things with social democrats and Communists for, they are totally finished"; but we have to say, no it's not finished, even if they are in total crisis, like the *Communist Party* in France. We have to continue to address them and to try to make united fronts with them — not in elections but in action. That's the first "leg" we have to walk on.

The second — and it's sometimes complicated to do both at the same time — is to address the new mobilisations, all the anti-globalization activists, the majority of whom are young people totally disgusted with the traditional organisations and who have built a wide range of struggle organisations. Probably these people would be the majority of the new mass anti-capitalist party we want to build.

In the anti-globalization movement we have to avoid two errors. The first is to be 'tailist', to just uncritically follow the movement. Today we have some people who say "it's fantastic, it's a new revolutionary international" — but I don't think so. This movement is not homogeneous; as I said before it's united on the basis of fighting the effects of capitalism. I was in Porto Allegre, and it was a fantastic success, thousands of people united — Brazilian peasants, Paris intellectuals, workers from Belgium — but united in a self-disciplined mood of total contestation of the effects of capitalism. But as far as the political answers to be given, then of course there is not unity. We are confronted with, and shall be in the future more and more, with reformist as well as revolutionary answers. You have in this movement people who thinks it's possible to have a better, more humane capitalism. You can see it in the debate on the Tobin tax; some people see it as a way of saving capitalism. We think a Tobin tax has to be used against capitalism.

But then I think we have to be in this movement not as "red teachers" who have the truth which everyone has to learn — that would be stupid — but also not to intervene just as uncritical followers. So we have to participate, to build this movement, but with our own ideas which we have to debate with others in a fraternal way.

Regroupment

The third thing is to continue the regroupment of the European anti-capitalist organisations, which we began two years ago in Barcelona, and then after that in Paris, including the SWP. That means to have the beginning of a Europe-wide co-ordination, not just to have debates which is important, but also to see what kind of joint mass campaigns to defend the working class we can have.

And finally, it's a slightly different thing, to meet and debate with revolutionary organisations. Of course to debate about the past, but also to exchange experiences and see what agreement exists about what to do now and in the future. That's why we're very happy to have these new contacts in the SWP and with our comrades in Scotland, the SSP. I think it's very important, it's new as you know — not only the contacts of the SWP with the ISG in England, but also the contacts of the SWP with the LCR and with our international tendency, the *Fourth International*.

We know we have divergences, but we have to be responsible. Today we are

not isolated as we were in the past. There is a new wave; there are hundreds of thousands of people, maybe millions, who have begun to dream again. To dream is revolutionary. To dream of the smashing of capitalism, to dream of a new society, to dream of a new time of socialism. It's totally new, and we mustn't deceive this new generation. We shouldn't continue our divisions, where they are, in a certain sense, artificial. We have to regroup all the people today who are ready to fight the bourgeoisie, fight reformism and fight for a socialist revolution."

CHRIS HARMAN

"IN the wake of the Russian revolution there were successive waves of revolutionary struggle which went right across Europe. It had an impact in Latin America, parts of Asia and so on. Successive waves of working class struggle. Each of these waves were characterised by two things. One, as the struggle took off the successes of some groups in struggling prompted other groups to struggle, and associated with this a generalisation, a radicalisation of people's ideas. People who had been non-political, had no political perspective whatever, got involved in the movement saw they could change society and had the power to change society.

This is the characteristic feature of these waves, brilliantly described in Rosa Luxemburg's little book ***The Mass Strike***, which described economic struggles leading to political struggles, leading back into economic struggles, they give hope to the most oppressed groups in society.

There are a couple of other things we have to say about these waves. When the waves don't break through, the ruling class use every means in their power to come back and claw back what has been gained at a previous stage. Again Susan George here described some machinations of the ruling class, the way they use the secret police, torture, counter-revolutionary troops, every means conceivable. If you read about the aftermath of the destruction of the Paris Commune, you get some idea, 20,000 people murdered. If you read about the methods used against the Russian revolution, the civil war in Germany 1918-20, if you read about the rise of Nazism, you have some idea about what counter-revolutionary violence means.

If you read about Latin America from the late 1960s to the early 1980s, after the wave of revolt has been broken, you talk about murder, torture, how many were killed? — who knows? — 5,000 or 10,000 in Chile, 20 or 30,000 killed across Latin America, the most barbarous means used to crush the wave.

Also when you talk in these terms, you talk about something else. When the wave doesn't break though it creates discontinuity in the history of the workers movement. Quite simply, if the wave is moving forward, solidarity is at a premium, people understand how individual struggles become collective struggles, personal issues become political issues. When the wave is broken, things can go the other way. When workers are advancing forward, how do you improve your lives? — collectively. Even after a strike is broken, how do you improve your position, you crawl up to the foreman, try to get more overtime than the person next to you. You begin to blame each other rather than see collective solutions. After each defeat of the workers movement the setback has taken place. After the Paris Commune it was 15 years before the revival of the workers movement in France. After the containment of Chartism in Britain, it was 30 or 35 years before you had a revival of the workers movement.

Defeat

The history we live with is the history of the defeat of the Russian revolution, the strangulation of the Russian revolution, produced by foreign intervention, counter-revolution in Russia itself, the White armies and so on. Out of the strangulation of the Russian revolution, the rise of Stalinism — and associated with the rise of Stalinism, the inability to fight Hitler in Germany, the victory of fascism, first in Italy, Nazism in Germany — probably the biggest defeat in the history of the workers movement.

After each defeat two things happen. People turn back from collective solutions to individual solution, and among whole layers of people the sense of hope disappears. When hope disappears people turn away from revolutionary solution. Sometimes they go back to the old ideas of reforming the system, often they drop out of politics completely.

There is not just a cumulative rise in the level of revolutionary understanding. It rises with the rise of the wave of struggle; if the struggle is defeated, it can collapse. Of course the rise in the wave of struggle doesn't have to be defeated. Here we have to disagree profoundly with people like Susan George. Because a rise in the wave of struggle can create situations in which the ruling class is paralysed. Mass strikes, occupations of factories, workers taking over the streets, can create a situation where armies begin to fall apart, police go on strike — something inconceivable in Britain today — police line up with workers, the whole fragmentation of society. In those situations the forces left to the ruling class to control society are very, very small indeed.

People have read John Reed's ***Ten Days that Shook the World***, or Trotsky's ***History of the Russian Revolution.*** When you have the situation of two or three battalions left defending the Winter Palace in 1917, you have the sense the revolution has overwhelmed every institution of the state. It's a question at that point of the use of force by the revolutionaries, not against the whole state machine, but the residual lump of the state machine which is there to defend capitalist property.

And therefore when we argue with Susan George about violence, it's not a question of individual bombs against the state machine today, it's a question of having a conception of a certain point, in any of the European countries, that the equivalent of the Parachute Regiment or the SAS could be defending the last bastions of bourgeois power, and we have to have the means at that point to deal with them. These means are provided by the rising workers' movement, summarised in the 1930s by Trotsky, He describes how the picket line becomes the armed workers' militia, the armed workers' militia becomes the beginning of a workers' army. How the occupation of the factories leads to the creation of workers delegates, workers delegates get together, the beginning of workers councils, a counter-state to the state of the other class. That's the perspective we have.

Nevertheless, this perspective arises at the high point of struggle — it rises in the Paris Commune, it rises in Russia in 1917, you get a glimmer of it in France and Spain in 1936. Yet get a glimmer of it, but defeat leads to demoralisation, and a moving away from this notion. It leads to the notion that, as Tony Cliff pointed out, people moved away from the idea that mass workers' struggle can change society, towards the notion of substitutionism. Something can substitute for the working class itself. It's tragic, in the 1930s, people who had identified with the Russian revolution thought "who can

stop Hitler?; Trotsky is wonderful, but how many forces has Trotsky got?, we have to put our faith in Stalin".

If you read the letters of Bertold Brecht at the time, the great German poet and playwright describes Stalin as 'a new Communist Czar', completely reactionary, and what is Brecht's conclusion — only Stalin can stop Hitler, so we have to support what Stalin does. That's the tragedy of a whole generation.

The difficulty is that the poison that arises from defeats can then contaminate the next period of uprising. The poison which resulted from the defeats of the rise of Stalinism, the defeat in Germany led to the contamination of the generation involved in the revolt of 1934-6. Led to the contamination of the people involved in the struggles France, Italy and Greece in 1943-5. This meant they threw away the possibility of victory on the mistaken idea they had to do what Stalin said.

Aftermath

We live in the aftermath of the last great period of struggle, from 1967-8 to the mid- or late 1970s. What's interesting about this period is two things; first how broken the continuity with the past was. In 1968 Alain was in an organisation of only about 400 people, I was in an organisation of just 100 people. This was the tradition of 1917 carried forward in some sort of authentic form.

As the struggle rose, those ideas were generalised and began to have an impact. But you also find the filth from the past had an impact. In 1968, right across the world, it's not true that all the people who became revolutionaries identified with the tradition of Lenin and Trotsky, many identified with the tradition of Stalin and Mao. Many looked to other alternatives.

In my opinion Che Guevara sacrificed his life needlessly by trying to fight world capitalism in the most backward part of Bolivia, with no contact with the local peasantry and trying to wage guerrilla struggle. His heroic death inspired many thousands of other people across Latin America, a few people in Europe, and across the Asian subcontinent trying to emulate him, and they often died heroic deaths needlessly.

You had the rise of struggle, but more importantly the lack of a political leadership emerging in that struggle which had some understanding of the total picture, meant that when the opportunities arose they didn't seize those opportunities which existed for a beginning of a breakthrough to socialist revolution, especially in Portugal in 1974-5. When struggles began to be defeated they had no notion of how you retreat in that situation, so you had absolute catastrophes in one part of the world after another.

The general rise of struggle does not lead automatically to clarification of ideas. The rise in the wave of struggle is absolutely important: if you don't identify with the rise in the wave of struggle, you'll never have any effect. But in the rising wave of struggle — intellectual clarity, working out the ideas, learn the traditions going right back to Marx, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg, Trotsky — the people who began to generalise and understand, is all important.

We're talking today about a revival , a new beginning, a new wave of struggle. The key question for everyone here is how to relate to it. The first thing we have to understand is that we've lived through a long period of defeats, from the mid-1970s to the beginning of the new millennium. That period of defeats has had a terrible effect on all sorts of

people in the working class movement.

You also find some of the old ideas persist through. The idea that somehow you find some substitute for direct struggle with the system. Hearing Susan George it's very interesting because she's been brilliant in building the struggles of the last two years, but she still has this belief that if somehow you can rig this bit of parliamentary legislation, a bit of pressure from this NGO on the system, somehow you will change it. These ideas persist.

What is necessary today is two things, quite simple. Everywhere people have to get involved in the rising movement. In Britain that means the anti-capitalist movement, going to Genoa, but not just going to Genoa, reporting back from Genoa in each locality. There are very large numbers of young people who we haven't been able to touch yet who want to be involved in that movement. Secondly, the *Socialist Alliance*, drawing together all those people in the labour movement who want to resist the tide of Blairism, resist the tide of privatisation. And the third thing is a new mood that's just beginning to develop in certain industries, where rank and file workers are beginning to say "we can fight back, our union leaders won't, we have to build rank and file groups."

Tide

But with this new movement, some people come to it with old ideas, and we have to say the tide coming in is in the same place as the tide going out. With tide coming in, there's a future, with the tide going out there's no future. With the people coming into the movement, we have to reach out to them, embrace them, involve them in activities.

At the same time, because we've been through a period of defeats, they bring a lot of the old ideas with them. You'll get people at *Socialist Alliance* meetings who still believe in the parliamentary road to socialism.

We have to fight within the broader movement to build a revolutionary current. And with those people left over from the 1960s who continue to adhere to those (revolutionary) ideas, we have to work together to create a revolutionary current. In the process we have to work to chuck out the bits of substitutionism, the ideas there's some substitute for the working class. Parliamentary elections can be a platform for from which socialists can win an audience. They aren't a substitute for big struggles.

We have to be involved in the wider movement, but simultaneously understand someone has to bring the different strands together, and that is the building of a revolutionary movement.

It's wonderful when you hear about the struggle against water privatisation in Bolivia. Or about the struggle where twice the indigenous population of Ecuador has forced the government to throw out an IMF package. You also have to understand the IMF will be back. The Ecuadorian ruling class will be back. The Bolivian ruling class will be back, backed by the American ruling class.

Unless at some point there's a revolutionary breakthrough, their side will regain the initiative. We have to build the wider movement, but within that build a revolutionary current that's clear on the central issue: you can't reform the system, you have to overthrow it. ★

★ CIRCULATION NOTES

Boost your donation by half!

Progress last month
Income: euro 1114
Deficit: euro 4126

An *International Viewpoint* supporter has offered to wipe out the magazine's debts by adding 50% to donations made this year.

After the quiet of August and September, IV's deficit reached record heights in November. The only people who can solve this problem is our sellers and readers.

Since we need your help, we need to be open about the problem. Our revenue last month was less than half our regular target: euro 1114 against a target of euro 2500.

If supporters resume their normal habits of paying for the magazine in full and on time, we will come back to our revenue target soon enough. However, covering our costs will not pay off the magazine's debt.

Our accumulated deficit is now euro 4,126, against a target of zero. For a capitalist enterprise this amount could easily be covered by an overdraft at the bank. *IV* cannot have an overdraft.

When our costs are greater than revenue individuals must fill the gap. Every cent of our deficit is – quite literally – money borrowed from supporters of the magazine in the countries where the magazine is produced and distributed: Greece and Britain.

An increasing deficit means less money in the pockets of a very small number of supporters: wages paid late, rows about the bills, worse food, holidays foregone and angry landlords.

Money is not the only way to help us. Anyone can sell the magazine and offer subscriptions. Volunteer labour has led to the redesign of the magazine, which is being rolled out in this issue and in the next. Supporters are paying for the magazine with increased speed. Friends are helping to win more university and college libraries as subscribers. In the next few months, however, donations are the best way to secure the magazine.

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D.C.

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