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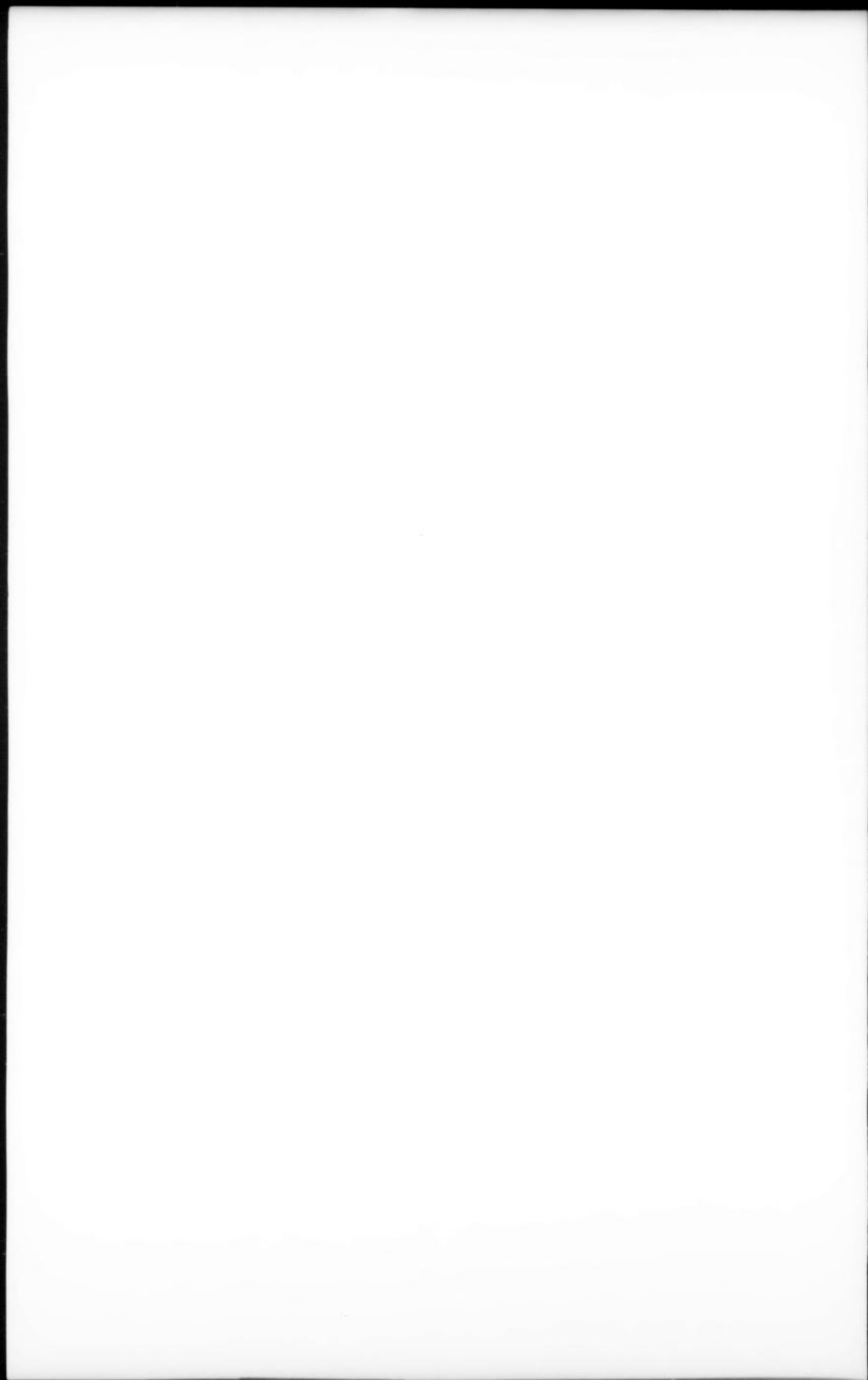
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The 70th Anniversary of the October Revolution

The First Breakthrough Towards Eliminating Wars

Werner Eberlein — SUPG Political
Bureau member, First Secretary,
Magdeburg District Committee of the
SUPG

It is now 70 years since those glorious events that led to the triumph of the first-ever proletarian revolution, which took place in Russia. John Reed called them "days that shook the world".

In terms of history 70 years are a brief span of time. Yet during these unforgettable years much was accomplished and there were momentous transformations and signal victories (as well as reverses and setbacks, of course).

The cardinal point is, indisputably, that the historic October Revolution and the decades following it had fundamentally changed the world. Socialism is now a reality and the creative practice of many peoples. Socio-political processes, that have today become irreversible, unfolded in all parts of the world. As for the working class of Russia, it had to move along unexplored paths and, from the outset, fight bitterly for socialism's right to exist, for the destiny of humankind's social progress. In this battle it asserted the ideas and principles of a world free from exploitation, oppression, violence, and wars.

More than one-third of the world's population has now shaken off the fetters of capitalism. The socialist world continues to develop and gather

Werner Eberlein (b. 1919) started out in life as an electrician, becoming a journalist, scholar, and party leader. A member of the SUPG since 1948 and a member of the party's CC since 1981, he was elected First Secretary of the Magdeburg District Committee of the SUPG in 1983, a Political Bureau alternate member in 1985, and a full member of the Political Bureau since April 1986.

strength. Take the German Democratic Republic, the first socialist state on German soil. It is celebrating its 38th anniversary. Liberation struggles have extricated many peoples from imperialism's colonial system and these have proclaimed new sovereign states. The strength of the world proletariat, whose interests are most comprehensively championed by communist and workers' parties, has multiplied without count. Anti-imperialist, democratic mass movements have broadened, and a vigorous struggle for peace, against the nuclear threat posed by imperialism's reactionary forces is spreading inexorably throughout the world. Capitalism's general crisis has deepened. All this is the outcome of the events that occurred in Russia in October 1917, the result of the herculean efforts and immense sacrifices of the Soviet working people. Lenin called them the advanced socialist contingent that had to assert and defend revolutionary achievements single-handedly until socialist revolutions matured in other countries.¹

For all oppressed and exploited peoples the Great October Socialist Revolution is an inspiring example giving them strength, courage, experience, and confidence in victory.

One of the most powerful factors setting the peoples in motion was the aspiration of Russia's revolutionary masses for peace, for withdrawal from the imperialist carnage. Long before the Soviet state was created Lenin formulated this objective of the working class in the following words: "An end to wars, peace among the nations, the cessation of pillage and violence . . ."² It was hence not accidental that this was the first challenge that the Soviet government put to public opinion.

The first legislative act of the victorious working class of Russia, Lenin's Decree on Peace, had wide repercussions in the working class movement and among progressives. It called upon the peoples and governments of the belligerent powers to sit down without delay to negotiations on a just and democratic peace. The Decree proclaimed war "the greatest of crimes against humanity".³ This epochal document thereby broke with the then current tenets of international law that qualified war as a legitimate means of settling outstanding problems. It stigmatised any annexation of small or weak nations by a big, powerful state and, consequently, the forcible retention of any nation within the frontiers of another state. It affirmed the right of all peoples to independence and indicated the road to democratic cooperation between them. It contrasted the socialist policy of peaceful coexistence of states with different social systems to the imperialist policy of conquests and wars.

The Soviet government thus proclaimed as its programme the indivisible unity of socialism and peace. The socio-economic roots of war were extirpated in a society for the first time in history: under socialism no social stratum or class amasses wealth out of war and is hence interested in expansion and annexations. The call by the State of Soviets for the renunciation of wars thus clearly brought into focus the Leninist strategy of building the new, socialist system that wants peace, needs peace, and creates peace. This condition, fundamental for the life of all nations, is the only one under which socialism can reveal all its potentialities for promoting the welfare of people.

Lenin characterised the October Revolution as the first breakthrough towards eliminating wars.⁴ This was, of course, not a definite breakthrough. Lenin had no illusions on this score. "Now the struggle for peace is on," he wrote. "It is a difficult struggle. It is highly naive to think that peace can be easily attained and that the bourgeoisie will hand it to us on a platter as soon as we mention it."⁵

Seven decades of struggle have borne out Lenin's words time and again. Socialism and progress were not strong enough to exclude imperialist wars of conquest from the life of the world community. There were designs to strangle the Soviet state itself in its cradle by armed aggression. The hardest test for it was the clash with the fascist barbarians, who, as the mailed fist of international reaction, had the assignment of destroying socialism once and for all. In fact, in the course of half of the 70 years of its existence the Soviet power had to defend itself in battle and then surmount the ravages of aggression.

US imperialism's furious race for the atom's mighty energy and its prompt military use were likewise aimed at uprooting the new system. There seemingly was no sense in the American bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the wanton killing of hundreds of thousands of Japanese at the close of the war whose outcome was no longer doubted by anybody. However, as Washington saw it, the sense was to intimidate the Soviet Union and the peoples that had risen against imperialist colonial oppression. But this proved to be futile. The Soviet Union broke the US monopoly over nuclear weapons, thereby protecting itself and all the forces of liberation and progress. But world imperialism persevered: wars, aggression, interference, and nuclear blackmail continued.

However, the Soviet Union was no longer alone. Other socialist countries and many new nation-states took their place alongside it. The imperialists were given a powerful rebuff, although this cost many peoples considerable sacrifice. But this sacrifice was not in vain — the situation changed radically, becoming far more favourable for the struggle of the working masses to eliminate wars from the life of humanity, for their fight for democracy, national independence, and socialism. The ideals of peace, which the October Revolution raised to the level of state policy, today have a much more solid and broader foundation than before.

Are these changes due to 'intrigues of the Communists' as some people in the West allege? Certainly not. Those who make such charges do not see or refuse to see that these changes have sprung from the ideals proclaimed by the October Revolution, ideals that have spread across the world and influenced all social strata and classes. For the first time ever the capitalists felt that their predominance was not everlasting and sought to prevent the sparks of the fire in Russia from "falling on their roof".⁶ They therefore did and are still doing all they can to reverse the wheel of history, to take their social revenge for the victorious, world-reshaping October Revolution.

In order to overpower socialism and portray it as an 'aberration of history', the imperialists constantly spur and escalate the arms race, notably the nuclear arms race, and pursue confrontational policies. An epochal achievement of the Soviet people, an achievement crucial to all humankind, has been the establishment of military-strategic parity

between socialism and imperialism as the paramount condition for the preservation of peace. "World socialism", Mikhail Gorbachov said at the 27th CPSU Congress, "is a powerful international entity with a highly developed economy, substantial scientific resources, and a dependable politico-military potential."⁷

Imperialism's drive for military superiority and for the means to attack the socialist countries with impunity has pushed humanity to the brink of self-destruction. It is now in a dramatic situation from which there is only one way out — a total, world-wide renunciation of the manufacture, testing, and use of all types of nuclear weapons, an end to the arms race which is depriving the peoples of the material and financial resources for addressing vital socio-economic problems, and the prevention of an arms race spilling into outer space.

In abiding by the peace policy inaugurated by the October Revolution, the socialist countries are guided by the consideration that today, more than at any time previously, it is crucial to avert war before it breaks out. For that reason, while taking the actual international situation into account, they are steadfastly putting forward realistic, weighed peace proposals. This is not to be wondered at because socialism's ideal is a world free of nuclear weapons, violence, and wars.

In the year of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution, the world's first socialist state is again proving its profoundly humane essence, its sense of responsibility for the life and future of humankind. This is shown by the bold initiatives of the Soviet Union, which has proposed singling out the problem of intermediate nuclear forces in Europe from the package of issues considered at the talks with the USA at Reykjavik and signing a separate agreement on them; coming to an agreement on freeing the European continent of battlefield missiles as well; eliminating these types of armaments also in Asia (the global double-zero option). The implementation of these measures would be a breakthrough in disarmament. The ball is now in the court of the USA.

Some Western political leaders argue that Soviet superiority in conventional weapons is hindering a cutback of nuclear armaments. But this is an untenable argument in the face of the Soviet Union's concrete proposals for a reduction of such weapons as well as in view of the principle of equal security.

Just as the Communists and other progressives in Germany have firmly and unswervingly supported the Soviet government's peace efforts ever since the October Revolution, the GDR is wholeheartedly backing the Soviet Union's present foreign policy which expresses the vital interests of the overwhelming majority of the world's population and is spelled out in its Peace Programme.

Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the SUPG Central Committee and Chairman of the GDR State Council, said at the 27th Congress of the CPSU: "It is profoundly inspiring people throughout the planet as evidence of the Soviet Union's peaceableness, constructive will, and new approach to the solution of the most urgent global concerns of the day — the prevention of a nuclear catastrophe both in outer space and on the Earth and the implementation of concrete disarmament measures. This

broad programme for freeing the world from all nuclear armaments by the year 2000 gives an historic opportunity that should not be missed. Ever since the proclamation of Lenin's Decree on Peace the international impact of socialism's peace policy has never been as strong as today thanks to this large-scale initiative."⁸

In the Soviet Peace Programme and in the proposals of the Warsaw Treaty states every person can see how justified is the assertion that today there is a real opportunity for entering the third millenium without nuclear weapons. They not only proclaim the common commitment to peace but also chart the ways to disarmament and name a specific timetable for the adoption of the relevant measures.

At its fourth plenary meeting the SUPG Central Committee noted that along with the other Warsaw Treaty countries the GDR was persevering in its advocacy of an end to the military-political confrontation between East and West and support for whatever constructive step was suggested by the other side. We feel that it is of utmost importance not to relax the quest for agreements on a substantial cutback and ultimate elimination of strategic weapons and the efforts to prevent the deployment of armaments in outer space.

In putting forward their own initiatives on disarmament, our party and government are helping to implement the joint peace policy. As an active and dependable partner, we are cooperating with all forces whose attitude to the settlement of international problems is one of realism and goodwill. In taking steps for a dialogue with them the SUPG and the GDR government want a major contribution to be made towards the strengthening of peace and confidence between nations precisely in the heartland of Europe, where the boundary passes between the two opposing social systems.

We attach special significance to contacts with representatives of diverse political parties of the FRG. This stems from the historic commitment made by the GDR to do all in its power to prevent war from ever again breaking out from German soil.

Bearing in mind the proletariat's responsibility for the preservation of peace and taking into account the historical experience of the German working class movement, which explicitly bears out the need for united actions by the Communists and Social Democrats, we give high priority to dialogue between the SUPG and the SDPG. Meaningful talks led the two parties to a joint initiative on the creation of a zone free of nuclear and chemical weapons in Central Europe. Note must also be made of Erich Honecker's proposal to the FRG Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl to support the Soviet Union's new initiatives on intermediate nuclear missiles, taking into account the special interest that the citizens of the two German states have in this issue.

With the motto 'My workplace is my place in the struggle for peace', the people of the GDR are contributing to the implementation of the peace policy of the SUPG and the GDR government. This motto expresses the dialectical link between the strengthening of socialism and the struggle for peace.

In their foreign policy the socialist countries proceed from the premise

that declarations of readiness for talks do not signify that the ongoing confrontation has been terminated. It is imperative to take practical steps to reduce and, if possible, totally eliminate the destructive potential of the opposing military blocs, chiefly in Central Europe.

Peaceful coexistence has become a visible form of relations between states with different social systems and a pressing necessity. Today the issue is not only of peace characterised by an absence of wars but of peace founded on disarmament and cooperation. This objective is in keeping with the decisions adopted by the Warsaw Treaty Political Consultative Committee in Berlin in May 1987. That meeting formulated a new military doctrine that distinctly expresses the alliance's defensive character. This doctrine's central objective is to maintain a military equilibrium at the lowest possible level and reduce armed forces to the dimensions required and adequate for defence.

Let me point out that the documents adopted at that meeting contain the following proposals:

- the conclusion forthwith of an accord on the abolition of all US and Soviet intermediate nuclear forces in Europe and the withdrawal of Soviet missiles from the GDR and Czechoslovakia by agreement with the governments of these countries (where they were deployed in response to the deployment of the same class of US missiles in Western Europe);

- the simultaneous elimination of Soviet and US shorter-range missiles on the continent and the holding of negotiations on such missiles deployed in the east of the Soviet Union and in the USA;

- the settlement of the question of tactical nuclear weapons in Europe;

- the attainment of an agreement on a drastic, 50 per cent reduction of Soviet and US strategic offensive armaments within five years with the simultaneous reinforcement of the ABM Treaty regime;

- a total ban on nuclear tests as a first step towards halting the development, production, and perfection of nuclear weapons.

In Berlin, the Warsaw Treaty nations called for the speedy elimination of chemical weapons. Relative to conventional armaments and armed forces they proposed that these should be reduced by 25 per cent together with tactical nuclear weapons by the beginning of the 1990s and that there should be more significant cutbacks in armaments, armed forces, and military spending by the end of this century.

Let every person wanting peace and actively contributing to its preservation compare the military doctrine of the socialist states and their proposal for a drastic reduction of armaments with the posture of the imperialist powers, and draw conclusions on how socialism and imperialism are approaching the settlement of the key issue of our time.

The socialist countries are once more extending to all nuclear and non-nuclear nations, big and small, members of military blocs and non-aligned, their hand of cooperation in ensuring security and insistently calling upon them to join in putting an end to the policy of intimidation and balancing on the brink of catastrophe. There will be no victors, only vanquished, in a nuclear war. Hence the need for a new approach to the present-day problems of human development, an approach based on new political thinking; for a vigorous, constructive peace policy and interaction

with all who advocate realism in international relations which are in want of fundamental modifications. In short, it is necessary to form a global coalition of peace, reason, and goodwill.

It is increasingly clear to the peoples that there can only be joint security and progress. The nuclear threat, the global economic problems, hunger, the poverty of a large section of the world's population, epidemics of formerly unknown diseases, environmental pollution, and the exhaustion of natural resources lucidly show that the destinies of nations are indivisible. The creation, by common effort, of a flourishing world free of violence and nuclear weapons is the guarantee of civilisation's survival and the continuance of the human race.

When Lenin said that peace required a hard and persevering struggle, he noted with historical optimism that however large the forces of international imperialism, our chances are quite good.⁹ Today these chances have been fortified by the closer interaction of the leading revolutionary currents of our time: world socialism, the internationalist communist and workers' parties, the peoples of the new nation-states, and the mass democratic movements; by the unfolding global peace movement which is a real revolution of the conscience of our nuclear-threatened planet; and by the extension of the potentialities for building a coalition of peace, reason, and goodwill advocated energetically by the GDR together with the Soviet Union and the other nations of the socialist community.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 292-293.

² Ibid., Vol. 21, p. 293.

³ Ibid., Vol. 26, p. 250.

⁴ Ibid., Vol. 33, p. 56.

⁵ Ibid., Vol. 26, p. 345.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. 26, p. 513.

⁷ Mikhail Gorbachov, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Novosti Press Agency, Moscow, 1986, p. 8.

⁸ Erich Honecker, *Grussansprache an den XXVII. Parteitag der KPdSU*, Berlin, 1986, pp. 10-11.

⁹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 316.

On The Factor Of Consciousness In Class Battles

Ruben Dario Souza — General
Secretary, Central Committee, People's
Party of Panama

PROGRESSIVE mankind is preparing to join the Soviet people and its communist party in celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Great October

Ruben Dario Souza Batista (b. 1923), a prominent leader of the Latin American communist movement and a journalist by profession, became involved in revolutionary activity as a young man and was a leader of Panama's democratic youth. He joined the PPP in 1946, and from 1948 was a member of the CC Secretariat and Political Bureau. He was elected General Secretary in 1951. He has been repeatedly arrested and deported by the authorities. Ruben Dario Souza is an author of several works on theory.

Socialist Revolution, which has been of historic significance both for Russia and the ethnic minorities subjugated by the tsarist empire, and for mankind as a whole. It broke with all the utopias and made it perfectly clear that injustice could be ended once and for all in a society based on radically new principles ruling out exploitation of man by man and paving the way for a universal peace. That was demonstrated by the establishment in the Soviet Union of the brotherhood of peoples differing in culture and economic development, but united in a single will to create a classless antagonism-free society for human well-being which is the Soviet Union.

In the post-war period, the general laws of socialist development have been borne out by fresh experience not only in Europe, but on other continents too. Socialist ideas became the fountainhead in every part of a world in revolution, exerting a powerful influence on the struggle for democracy and national liberation, a fact which best refutes the claims of those who tried hard to prove that the October Revolution had been an 'accidental' or 'purely Russian' phenomenon and denied that it was an expression of laws valid for the globe as a whole.

It is most important in this context to analyse the connection between the development of social processes in Latin America and the world-wide historic role of the revolution in Russia. It reverberated across our continent at a time when it was the task of the progressive forces to fight for genuine independence and against US expansionism, the policy of terrorism, and the nationalistic narrowness of the local bourgeoisie. *The Great October Revolution helped the democratic anti-imperialist movement to shed its instinctive approach to revolution, and its social utopianism, and gave it a coherent Marxist-Leninist theory* and a clear understanding that 'Latin America's second independence'¹ could not result from guerrilla skirmishes, but only from a highly organised popular struggle with the working class in the vanguard. It was, therefore, no accident at all that the emergence of most of the communist parties on the Latin American continent provided eloquent evidence of the impact of the October Revolution.

That was of great significance for the whole of Latin America, including our own country, naturally in the light of its national specifics. The United States had already managed to turn the recently established Panamanian state² into a virtual protectorate. In response to these imperialist pretensions, the people of Panama began to fight in defence of their national identity, against the plunder of our resources by US imperialism, and against its local agents. Small groups of revolutionaries began to germinate here and there within the society, seeking new ways and ideas that could unite and concentrate the main forces of the liberation process.

Within a few years of the October Revolution, these groups were able to organise a mass movement of tenants in the proletarian townships, the first in Panama's history, which was an expression of developments in the country after the building of the Canal. Made jobless by the end of the Canal construction, thousands of working people in the towns of Panama and Colon found themselves unable to pay the rent for the hovels in which they lived. That produced a powerful social explosion against the exploitation and the landowner-usurers and against the dependent

capitalism US imperialism was implanting in the country.

The tenants' movement was violently suppressed in October 1925 by the US army at the request of the reactionary circles who ruled Panama for the benefit of their US masters. However, the experience gained in the course of the popular action helped the revolutionaries to understand this simple truth: the Panamanian *society could not be transformed with reliance only on occasional successes, to say nothing of spontaneous outbursts by the oppressed*. The Bolsheviks had set the example by reckoning with the working people's will to change their way of life, brought a revolutionary theory into their ranks, taught the proletariat to carry on an organised struggle, and so prepared the conditions for the takeover of power. Their example was an inspiration for the forward-looking members of the revolutionary groups. On April 4, 1930, they founded a Marxist-Leninist party of the Panamanian working class.³

That was a milestone in our country's history. Since then, the PPP has travelled a long and hard way. Marxism-Leninism gave us the scientific method for analysing the reality, and it has continued to inform our social thinking and national culture to this day. We have been studying, disseminating and applying in practice the invaluable experience of existing socialism, so helping to perfect the strategy and tactics of the national liberation democratic revolution, contributing to the successes of the anti-imperialist movement in Panama, and helping to solve the problems before us, as formulated by the Eighth Congress of the PPP in 1986.

The measures recently taken by the fraternal parties of the socialist-community countries to renew every aspect of life are a continuation of the course of historical development inaugurated by the Great October Socialist Revolution. They have been using its boundless potentialities to accelerate economic development and enhance human well-being. For us Latin Americans existing socialism has become a major factor helping the people of the continent to resist the new and brutal onslaught of imperialism. It helps us in the following ways:

First, the economic might and perfection of social relations under the new system are having a marked influence on progressive patriotic movements in Central America, opening before them the prospect of turning the national liberation democratic revolutions into the prelude to the struggle for socialism. *Second*, the socialist community's policy of world peace, disarmament and international stability has a crucial role in keeping in check the aggressive circles, which have been trying to solve the problems of our zone by means of armed intervention and terrorism. *Third*, the strength of socialism helps to fortify international solidarity and to multiply its potential in favour of the just aspirations of the peoples, including the Central American nations, carrying on an unequal fight against imperialism.

In Panama's case, the forces of reaction within it have to retreat. The system of their domination has misfired and is in a state of grave crisis. That, too, is the result of long popular struggle. Under the Torrijos-Carter Treaties⁴, the republic has made such concrete gains as the ending of perpetual US exploitation of its national resources and the equally perpetual US presence in the colonial enclave, which the so-called Canal

Zone once was. When the United States finally goes, the Canal could be nationalised and the territory occupied by the Pentagon to this day demilitarised.

That is an historic victory for our people and it opens up new horizons for the country's development. But it also has some other consequences involving the imperialist view of 'its interests' in Latin America. Washington's foreign policy has been frankly moving to the right. Under the Reagan administration, this trend has complicated the implementation of progressive transformations in Panama. The object of imperialism is to hurl us back to the state we were in before 1968.⁵ Such plans are being effected by mobilising and regrouping the oligarchy, which has kept trying to hamper and weaken the social reforms of General Torrijos.

With reliance on the local reactionaries, imperialism is now trying to find a political alternative to the Panamanian people's demands that the process of change started by the patriotically-minded military should be made more profound. The United States has supported the rightists and has also made use of more moderate circles of the Panamanian oligarchy as a conduit for contacting the opportunistic elements of torrijismo and get them to open the door to government for its agents. Indeed, it got its way, and a National Democratic Union (UNADE) was formed as a Trojan horse to enable these forces to infiltrate the government and from there to influence the torrijist process for the benefit of US imperialism.

Still, the imperialists have found the deviations from the Torrijos line carried out by the UNADE government to be inadequate. The progressive officers within the National Defence Forces have maintained their influence in running the country and, despite some weaknesses, have in the main continued to pursue the strategic tasks of democratising and decolonising Panama, as formulated by General Torrijos. That is why, following the rupture between Colonel Roberto Diaz Herrero, one-time chief of the General Staff, and these officers, the imperialists lost no time in trying to get rid of the torrijists and their leader, General Noriega, in the first place. Imperialism has played up the popular discontent with official policy and has provoked the right-wing opposition into taking action, first to demand the removal of the man they did not like, and then to bring down the government as a whole. The idea was to set up a junta consisting mainly of financial capitalists, the most reliable pillar of neocolonialist domination.

External pressure was applied simultaneously with the internal conspiracy, and here one must make special mention of the interventionist resolution of the US Senate, which accused the Panamanian authorities of being anti-democratic and corrupt, the threats of the US State Department and the Pentagon, and the economic sanctions.

The imperialist plans have failed, but that does not signify their final defeat, or a once-and-for-all triumph for our policy of national liberation. The United States has no intention of giving up its immediate goal of changing our political regime and putting in a pliant government. In this way, when the Canal is returned to Panama under the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, Washington hopes to have it transnationalised and to impose on us a military pact that would make it possible to maintain the US presence

in the country for another 25 to 30 years.

In accordance with such schemes, US imperialism has started to regroup the internal and external forces, and there is no doubt in anyone's mind about the true US role in destabilising the political situation in Panama and doing everything to turn it to its favour by any means that come to hand.

The developments which determine the future of our society show that *the on-going social battles are being filled with ever greater democratic, anti-imperialist content*. Hence, the new regrouping of the contending sides and new combinations within their ranks. The big bourgeoisie has rallied round the pre-1968 oligarchic slogans, although a handful of vacillating industrialists remain in nationalistic, democratic positions. On the other side are the masses: workers, peasants, and the middle strata (mainly the intellectuals and the small businessmen), whose struggle tends to turn purely nationalistic action into national liberation action for more profound social changes.

The torrijist officers have a most important place within the context of renewing the political panorama. All armies in capitalist Latin America are involved in politics, mainly on the side of the reactionary circles. But under the leadership of General Torrijos the National Defence Forces in Panama *sided with the working people*, so doing much to undermine the domination of imperialism. In the struggle for the anti-colonialist treaties and the weakening of the oligarchy, the Panamanian military have, on the whole, played a progressive role. But the progressive process was slowed down after the death of General Torrijos, and there was no one to replace him adequately or at once. His successors were not firm enough and gradually began to give up their positions in the face of external and internal pressures, to lose touch with the masses, and to go over to a policy of manoeuvring and concessions. That, they believed, helped them to gain time and build up their forces so as to resume the torrijist policy.

But that has proved to be the wrong course. Subsequent events have shown that it was wrong for those who wanted to set up UNADE to make a deal with the parties of the oligarchy, and to help elect a government in 1984, which is helping in the 'de-torrijisation' of the country, as we in Panama call it.

Despite these serious tactical errors, General Noriega has come from the midst of patriotic officers as the man prepared to carry on the Torrijos legacy: the nationalisation of the Canal and the strengthening of our independent, sovereign state, with territory free from US military occupation.

General Noriega's proposal is that *the Canal and the country should have a status of neutrality*, so that, instead of serving military purposes in the hands of the United States, the Canal will become an instrument of peace and cooperation of all the nations without any political or ideological discrimination. A comparison of this approach with the aggressive schemes of imperialism shows very well that these are two antagonistic positions.

The situation is being further complicated by the following: the United States, in the grip of a crisis, is coming to see in Latin America a potential of hostility threatening its imperialist backyard. General Noriega has serious differences with those who support President Reagan's policy with

respect to Central America, and especially with the opponents of the Contadora Group's initiatives and the enemies of Sandinist Nicaragua; he does not agree with the Pentagon's intention to turn the Latin American armies into instruments of the US national security doctrine.

General Noriega's views have made him a target of the Reagan administration's propaganda and psychological warfare against all its enemies, including blackmail designed to change the political face of Panama and enable the imperialists to restore their lost positions. The general is being personally vilified in an effort to deprive the democratic and anti-imperialist movement of its leader. That is why in the last few months, US imperialism has accused Noriega of some crimes which caused an international scandal.

What has also worried the imperialists is that Panama's armed forces displayed much tolerance over the popular action against the inordinate demands of the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank). In that way, the army prevented the accommodating governments — both of Barletta and of Del Valla — from accepting without demur the tough terms of these financial agencies in the service of imperialism.

All of that helps to strengthen the democratic, anti-imperialist will of the Panamanian society, which is consonant with the present phase of the process of our country's national liberation. While this is an objective historical trend, the changes will not take place unless the popular forces carry on a conscious and active struggle.

It is this factor of conscious participation in ensuring our country's advance that demands the establishment of a *Democratic National Liberation Front* (DNLF). We do not propose it as the starting point, but as the outcome of numerous joint actions — within the framework of coalitions on the basis of political pluralism — for solving the problems facing the country. That is why the DNLF must be as broad as it can be made, with a national, popular-democratic, agrarian and anti-imperialist character.

This strategic political task cannot be carried out without a *revolutionary, proletarian vanguard* relying on the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and a Leninist-type party organisation, and capable of forming a front that could really mobilise the masses. That means, said our Eighth Congress, "passing from a small, backward and occult party to a party that is numerous, modern and public . . . If that is to be done, three problems need to be solved in the ideological and practical fields: there is a need to overcome primitivism in party development, subjectivism in leadership, and spontaneity in the style of work."⁶

In order to bring about a change in PPP activity, the Congress formulated the question of cadre policy actually meeting the needs of present-day demands. We believe that a national party school must be set up, the level of organisational work raised and leadership methods improved on the principle of democratic centralism, and an 'open' style of activities worked out, all of which will call for high moral qualities and revolutionary will, whatever the subjective ups and downs of mood may be.

The political, social and revolutionary situation shows that the Central American zone has been developing into *the weakest link of the imperialist chain fettering Latin America*, to paraphrase an idea of Lenin's. There is no other way to explain the extreme tensions now characteristic of the region. It is here that the whole system of US domination on our continent is under threat, and that is something, of course, that Washington cannot accept. Indeed, it has resorted to violence along every line in a vain attempt to change the course of history.

In Panama's case, we expect the situation to be further aggravated. As the Panamanian people rise ever more resolutely in defence of their national gains, those written into the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, it is confronted with a growing urge on the part of imperialism to re-establish its political diktat over all the republics of Central America and to make them serve its policy of war and aggression. The task just now is to check the US imperialist policy of force, which is antagonistic to the interests not only of our own country, but also of all the other countries of Latin America.

The struggle carried on by smaller peoples, like the Panamanian people, is of strategic importance because it proceeds in the hinterland of imperialism, saps the sources of the material might and the economic empire of the United States from inside, weakens the forces of war on a world scale, and reduces their potentialities for mounting aggression against socialism.

¹ Meaning independence from the dollar empire, as distinct from the 'first' independence which most Latin American countries won in struggle against the European colonialists in the nineteenth century. — *Ed.*

² The state of Panama (previously a part of Colombia) was founded on November 3, 1903 with the direct participation of the United States, which wanted to take over the territory for building a canal between the Atlantic and the Pacific. — *Ed.*

³ It was originally called the Communist Party of Panama; renamed the People's Party of Panama in 1943. — *Ed.*

⁴ Signed in 1977 by the leaders of the United States and Panama and providing for the neutrality of the Canal and a phased transfer (by December 31, 1999) of all the administrative functions to the Panamanian state. For all practical purposes, these Treaties signify the juridical liquidation of the colonial enclave on Panama's territory. — *Ed.*

⁵ That was when power in Panama was taken by a group of young officers led by Omar Torrijos (1929-1981). Progressive economic and social changes were started under his leadership, and the process is named after him ('torrijismo'). — *Ed.*

⁶ *VIII Congreso del Partido del Pueblo. Informe Central.* Panama, 1986, pp. 64, 66.

The Communists and the Battle of Ideas

Anti-Communism Hit By Perestroika

Horst Schmitt — Chairman, Socialist
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IF the socialist countries were to gather up all their weapons and throw them into the sea tomorrow, some brilliant strategic minds, like those of Caspar Weinberger at the Pentagon, and Manfred Wörner, the FRG Defence Minister, would claim that that was nothing but yet another Communist ruse to dupe the West. That ironic supposition, which was recently suggested in the Western press, goes to the heart of the class pig-headedness of the fanatics of anti-communism, for whom everything that comes from the socialist world is evil, and everything that the Communists stand for is heresy that has to be extirpated.

Nor is that a new situation. For almost 140 years, since the appearance of the *Communist Manifesto*, which heralded the proletariat's historical mission as the liberator of the peoples from capitalist exploitation and oppression, the forces of bourgeois reaction have been trying to block the spread and assertion of the ideas of communism. Once a spectre haunting Europe, it has developed into a worldwide movement of millions upon millions of people for a society of people's power and social justice, which has already triumphed over a third of the globe in the socialist countries.

The fact that bourgeois reaction is incapable of halting the march of history does not at all mean that its fight against the working people's urge to be free of the fetters of capitalism has been relaxed. Anti-communism has been and continues to be imperialism's main political and ideological weapon against existing socialism, the world communist, working class and national liberation movements, and against all the other democratic and peace-loving forces. It is ultimately the content of the bourgeoisie's class strategy under the deepening general crisis of capitalism.

There are many species of anti-communism and forms in which it operates. But *anti-communism enshrined as state policy in the capitalist countries* is the most important one, for it determines what is being done on the international scene. The aggressiveness of imperialism, US imperialism in the first place, has markedly grown in the last few years, with the installation in power of neoconservative forces in some leading Western countries. They have announced a new 'crusade' against Marxism-

Horst Schmitt was born in 1925 into the family of a white-collar worker, and has professionally worked in commerce. In the fascist period, he was hounded and made to do forced labour. He was a member of the SUPG from 1946 to 1962, and since then has been a member of the SUPWB. In the 1950s, he was a member of the Board, secretary, and chairman of the Board of the Tempelhof district party organisation and a member of the SUPWB Secretariat. From 1966 on, he was a member of the SUPWB Board and Secretariat, and from 1970 on, a member of its Board Bureau. In 1977 and 1978, he was deputy Chairman, and since July 1978, he has been Chairman of the SUPWB.

Leninism and the reckless intention of 'leaving communism on the ash-heap of history', despite the fact that in this nuclear age of ours such schemes hold the threat of digging a common grave for the whole of mankind. Anti-communism is frankly formulated as the policy and ideology of class clawback, for the sake of which the ultra-reactionary and aggressive circles are prepared to push the world to the brink of a nuclear inferno.

The clash of opposite class forces has assumed *especially acute forms* on German soil, with the emergence of two German states — the socialist GDR and the capitalist FRG — and also the special entity of West Berlin. For over two decades, West German imperialism refused — with the sympathy and support of US imperialism — to recognise the historical changes on German soil and stubbornly strove to swallow up the GDR under the nationalistic slogan of 're-uniting Germany'. West Berlin was turned into a 'front-line city' whose political life was geared to organising an endless chain of provocations against the GDR and the USSR.

In those hard times, the West Berlin Communists advocated a different role for West Berlin in the light of the interests of its population, and of the need to lower tensions and strengthen peace in the heart of Europe. We believed that our city should be a centre of East-West cooperation, instead of 'a thorn in the flesh of socialism', as it was then known.

The state of relations between the city and the GDR has always been of especial significance, for it is a capitalist island in the socialist sea. We have always proceeded from the principle that those who live on this island should not turn the sea into an enemy. It took much time for that truth to be recognised. And if there has been the right movement in West Berlin's ties with the surrounding GDR, it has taken place as a result of the policy of the pioneer socialist state on German soil, and also of our party's struggle, a fact we note with due modesty.

The four-power agreement on West Berlin dealt a heavy blow at anti-communism in a troubled spot of world politics. Relations with the GDR were put on a contractual basis. The agreement has proved to be significant over the past period, because it has helped to normalise the situation round West Berlin and to lower the temperature of the anti-communist hysteria, which was being fanned from here.

But the past period likewise shows that influential circles in the NATO countries, the FRG in the first place, have continued to pin on West Berlin high hopes for *using it as a source of unrest and tension*. That has been the purpose of the ceaseless attempts to spread to the city — in violation of the provisions of the four-power agreement — the jurisdiction and activities of the agencies of the West German state, and to alter the political status of West Berlin, which does not belong to the FRG and cannot be administered by it.

The events held this year by the West Berlin Senate to mark Berlin's 750th anniversary have been made deliberately provocative. The sponsors of the festivities and the visitors from the FRG, led by Chancellor Helmut Kohl, resorted to the entire range of nationalistic slogans concerning a 'united Berlin' and an 'open German question', and vied with each other in gross attacks on the GDR. That was a full and frank manifestation of the

bourgeois politicians' anti-communist syndrome, which makes them reject the historical changes in Europe since the rout of fascism. It is a syndrome which also determined the stand of the President of France, the Queen of England, and the US President, who claimed in their speeches on their visit to West Berlin last summer that it was some kind of symbol in a struggle against the 'partition of Europe'.

Our party believes that such anti-communist rhetoric is *aimed to undermine the foundations of the European continent's security*, and that it cuts across the desire of the West Berlin population to live in peace and quiet. Our city can have a constructive role to play in international relations and in strengthening mutual understanding among the peoples only if there is scrupulous and complete observance of the four-power agreement, and a repudiation of any attempts to change the balance of interests within it in one's favour.

Anti-Sovietism became the core of anti-communism with the triumph of the Great October Revolution seventy years ago, and the emergence of the first socialist state. Imperialist reaction failed to destroy the Soviet Union, impede the formation of the world socialist system, and reverse the tide of history. It has tried very hard to slow down and limit the spread of communist ideas and to prevent other countries and peoples from advancing towards socialism. Bourgeois propaganda efforts are aimed *to discredit existing socialism*, so as to divert the working class in their own countries from the socialist orientation and to halt the working people's emancipation from capitalist oppression, the process begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution.

Struggle against the anti-Soviet line of anti-communism is not just a matter of *the Communists' internationalist solidarity with victorious socialism, but also of determining the historical perspectives for the development of the working class movement*. Our party has been doing its internationalist duty, while serving the vital interests of the working people, by relentlessly fighting anti-Sovietism.

Throughout the Soviet Union's history, bourgeois propaganda has tried to cross out its experience of socialist construction. It claimed that the early Soviet five-year plans were a 'fantasy', and 'an attempt to pull the wool over other people's eyes', but it is the five-year plans that turned Russia into a powerful outpost of socialism and enabled it to defeat Hitler Germany, which had the resources of almost the whole of Europe at its disposal. It is a stock technique of bourgeois 'Sovietology' to keep discovering all sorts of 'crises' in the socialist, notably the Soviet, economic system. These are speculations on the actual and imaginary difficulties, miscalculations, mistakes and stagnation phenomena, which are presented as evidence that socialism is ineffective or unviable. It is perfectly clear, however, that the building of a new society moving along untrodden paths involves challenging problems and objective contradictions, for which correct solutions are not always to be readily found. Besides, the situation is being complicated by external resistance from imperialism which has tried every trick and dodge to impede the development of socialism. Suffice it to recall the arms race, which is being imposed on it, and one of whose purposes is to debilitate the Soviet Union.

Perestroika in the USSR threw the reactionary circles of capitalism into confusion, for it exploded the old notions of a 'model' of the Soviet society allegedly petrified in its development and incapable of effecting the changes that are dictated by life. The truth about how the Soviet Union managed to achieve the historical success of attaining strategic parity with the United States is being glossed over, because that does not fit into the scheme of its 'lag' behind the West. There are many such contradictions in the anti-communists' logic, but that does not worry them. Indeed, their continued claims about some 'crisis' in the Soviet Union have gone hand in hand with efforts to stoke up the fear of its 'growing military might'.

The radical restructuring of every aspect of life in the Soviet Union does not in any way negate what has been achieved by its people since the Great October Revolution; indeed, perestroika had been made possible precisely by what has been created over the past seventy years. What is now being done is aimed to raise the development of socialism to a new economic and social stage, and that requires efforts to overcome everything that is an obstacle to its advance. The mechanism by which the economy is being administered and managed is being improved, so as to impart to it the necessary acceleration through scientific and technical progress. The Soviet Communists have started an uncompromising struggle against such phenomena, which are alien to socialism, as bureaucracy, corruption and abuse of power. The broadest strata of the population have been joining in perestroika in an atmosphere of democratic glasnost, and they have the main role to play in it. Glasnost undoubtedly goes to benefit socialism, because it helps to identify the painful problems which call for solution.

Anti-communist propaganda has, of course, made its own use of the atmosphere of open discussion in the Soviet society, concentrating mainly on the negative aspects of its development, which are frankly pointed out by Soviet leaders and reported in the Soviet press. That sets before us Communists working in the West the task of *duly countering the slanderous presentation of the processes under way in the USSR*. The atmosphere of glasnost, which has been established in the USSR, helps us to give people the right picture about perestroika, whose aim and motto are: 'More socialism, not less'. Perestroika is a heavy blow at anti-communism, which it deprives of its many habitual anti-Soviet stereotypes and clichés.

There are two main lines of emphasis in the reaction to perestroika on the part of the forces hostile to socialism: a denial of the cardinal changes, and a playing-up of a new 'Soviet threat'. Both have been drummed in various ways by the bourgeois media. Henry Kissinger, no less, once an advocate of détente and now a hawk, has assured readers of *Time* that the Soviet Union "will be a totalitarian state even after the reforms are completed."¹ A columnist in the *Wall Street Journal*, a mouthpiece of Big Business, flatly maintains that Soviet ideology "makes genuine reform a practical impossibility".²

There is no point in arguing with those who refuse to face the facts, but it is well worth while to ponder why they insist on doing so.

The interests of the professional anti-Sovietes are evidently so closely bound up with the distorted image of the Soviet society they themselves have created that they refuse to give it up. A US Sovietologist, Professor

Stephen Cohen of Princeton University, who, in contrast to his numerous colleagues, takes a sober view of his subject-matter, explained this bias with some expertise. He says that a big part in spreading mistrust over perestroika in the USSR belongs to institutions and groups in the United States that "for years have zealously promoted and thrived on the popular image of an unchanged and unchangeable Soviet Union." They include the military-industrial complex, legions of professional cold warriors and self-described national security intellectuals, and other special interests. An acknowledged improvement in the Soviet system threatens their political, economic and ideological well-being. In fact, for many such groups and individuals the necessity of external Cold War is theological rather than analytical and therefore can never be diminished. If one reason is removed . . . they will always find others . . . Collectively these Cold War forces exercise enormous influence on American perceptions and politics, and there are virtually no anti-Cold War lobbies strong enough to offset them."³

In spite of his pessimistic conclusions, Cohen urges his compatriots not to turn a blind eye to the realities, and he addresses this ironic call to them: "Listen, skeptics, even an 'Evil Empire' can change." Indeed, the number of such sceptics has markedly dwindled since the latest CPSU CC Plenary Meeting in June 1987, which formulated concrete measures for restructuring the Soviet economy.

There are also many in the West who are terrified by the changes in the USSR, and who want to present them as sources of a growing 'Soviet threat'. The Conservative *Daily Telegraph* says that "whether Mr. Gorbachov's liberalisation succeeds or fails, the West will have dangers to face. Success will translate into greater Soviet self-confidence, perhaps a stronger economy and military structure . . .".⁴

One could say that anti-communist propaganda is now labouring to produce a new *anti-Soviet myth and smear perestroika*. Without discounting its possible influence on the minds of men, one can still hope that many will take the right view of the impact of perestroika in the USSR on the prospects for extending international cooperation. The sober view is reflected, for instance, in Klaus Leidtke's article in the *Stern* illustrated magazine. He says: "A reckless attempt is now being made to defame the reforms in the USSR. It is being claimed that everything in fact serves only to strengthen communism, and that Gorbachov wants only one thing: to make the system more efficient . . . Paradoxically, his success would also meet our own national interests . . . Let us take the historic chance offered to us by Gorbachov's new policy. Large-scale economic cooperation helps not only the leaders in the Kremlin in their efforts to modernise and liberalise every sphere in their country, which is so immensely rich in resources; it could also bring economic growth and jobs to the Federal Republic."⁵

There is nothing either new or unexpected in the attempts to present perestroika in the Soviet Union as posing a danger to the West. After all, the myths of 'aggressive communism' and 'Soviet expansionism' have long been a *justification for the arms race and the policy of attaining military superiority over the socialist world*. Anti-communist propaganda has

deliberately and purposely built up the 'image of the enemy', and the tune there is set by the official circles.

For the US President, it is the USSR that is to blame for all the problems of the United States, which keep cropping up throughout the world and at home. The advocates of the arms race are more in need of a Soviet Union setting off nuclear blasts, perfecting its nuclear weapons, and even more of one building up a space-based anti-missile defence system, than a Soviet Union proposing the abandonment of all that. Without the 'image of the enemy', it is impossible to demand more and more billions for new types of weapons of mass destruction or to insist on NATO's 'flexible response' strategy, which does, indeed, threaten to turn Europe into a battleground. That is why one anti-Soviet campaign succeeds another.

Still, the professional liars have failed to dupe all of the people for long, because their propaganda tricks are at odds with reality. The peace offensive by the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries has made the strident claims about the 'aggressiveness of communism' less credible. More and more people in the West are convinced that the 'double-zero option' in Europe on medium-range and shorter-range missiles, on the halving of strategic offensive weapons, a ban on the militarisation of space, a reduction of NATO and Warsaw Treaty troops and armaments by a quarter, and a one- or two-year freeze on military expenditures indicate an urge for peace on the part of those who have made such proposals. Public opinion polls show that there is a three-to-one view in Western Europe that the USSR has been doing more than the United States to halt the arms race.

One should also take into account that the anti-communism front is not solid. Along with ultra-rightist groups of the monopoly bourgeoisie, who out of their class hatred are prepared to push the world to the brink of a nuclear inferno, there are many within the ruling circles who do not share the suicidal ambitions and prefer peaceful forms of cooperation with socialism. Agreements on arms cuts and economic cooperation are quite possible with such leaders. They see perestroika in the USSR as offering fresh opportunities for expanding such cooperation. Even compulsive anti-communists are influenced by the socialist countries' initiatives and by pressure from the powerful peace movement all over the world. It has been officially recognised in Washington, London and Bonn that a nuclear war must never be fought and cannot be won.

The changes in the international climate and human attitudes have thrown the cold warriors into confusion. The US General Bernard Rogers, until recently NATO Supreme Commander in Europe, sounded the alarm when he said: "We have not convinced the people that there is a threat to them — the threat of coercion and intimidation and accommodation and blackmail. We just can't get that message across."⁶ It is safe to say that General John Galvin, who has taken over from Rogers, will find it even harder to command understanding of a continued arms build-up in NATO, and that applies to all those who want to go on scaring people with the spectre of 'aggressive communism'.

At the latest meeting of the Warsaw Treaty's Political Consultative Committee in Berlin, the socialist countries formulated, as their official

military doctrine, something they had repeatedly declared in the past: "The Warsaw Treaty member-states will never, under any circumstances whatsoever, start military operations against any state or alliance of states whatsoever, unless they themselves become the object of armed attack. They will never be the first to use nuclear weapons." These propositions are a reflection of the new mode of thinking in the nuclear age, insisting that the military way is inadmissible for settling any controversial issue, let alone with the use of nuclear weapons.

Broad public circles throughout the world and the numerous peace movements have welcomed the new and telling manifestation of peacebleness by the socialist states. Our party has also given it a high appreciation. We have seen clearly once again the organic link between socialism's foreign and domestic policies. The need to accelerate economic development, make social policy sounder, and raise the well-being of the masses require peaceful conditions, lower international tensions, and reductions in armaments and military expenditures, and that is precisely what the socialist states have proposed to the capitalist states. But the latter's unwillingness to take radical measures is likewise a reflection of the internal conditions in countries where foreign policy is dictated by the interests of the military-industrial complex and the right wing of the bourgeoisie.

West Berlin Communists believe that their task is to carry on an ideological and political struggle against anti-communism everywhere and at all times. We have made some headway, as will be seen from our policy of alliances and joint actions with other left-wing forces. It is increasingly obvious that the anti-communist and anti-Soviet attacks hit not only at the Communists (even if to a lesser extent than was hoped), but are also directed against the Social Democrats, the Greens, Liberals, non-party people and trade unionists. The SUPWB's main line is that its members should act as Communists and clearly present the party's profile in all conflicts and within all alliances. That is why the SUPWB has advanced in its political work. But anti-communism is a many-headed dragon, which grows a new head when one is cut off. And it is the activities of the working class movement that has made our class enemies rack their brains.

Anti-communism, which determines the ideology and policy of the imperialist powers, does not confine itself to fighting existing socialism, although its main blows are aimed at it. A key feature of anti-communism is *the approach to any political and social changes in the world and regional conflicts, whatever origins, from the standpoint of the global fight against 'international communism'*. The very urge to reduce to 'communist machinations' all the diverse national liberation movements, and working people's actions against violence and oppression, and for their elementary rights, shows just how limited the ideological arsenal of bourgeois reaction is. Nonetheless, that approach to development is the basis on which Washington has spun out its 'doctrine of neoglobalism', which is designed to legalise the wilful actions by US ruling circles on the international scene.

In fact, this doctrine does not contain any new elements, for it merely tries to adapt the old imperialist Big Stick policy to the changing conditions in the world. Spurious resistance to 'international terrorism' is used to

justify real terrorism, which Washington has enshrined as state policy. The aggression against defenceless Grenada, the piratical raids on Libya, and the undeclared wars against Afghanistan, Nicaragua, and Angola — such is the 'doctrine of neoglobalism' in practice. It has run up against resistance from all the freedom-loving peoples.

The anti-communist obsession has led the incumbent US administration to a major political scandal, the Iran-contrasgate. The sale of arms to Iran, and the diversion of the proceeds to fund the Nicaraguan contras, have exposed the cynicism of Washington politicians. For the sake of their illusionary fight against a 'Marxist-Leninist' regime in Nicaragua — but, in fact, against the Sandinist Revolution — they have broken US laws and deliberately deceived their own people, the Congress and their allies. Commentator Anthony Lewis of *The New York Times* said it was yet "another result of anti-Communist zealotry carried beyond rationality". He posed some legitimate questions which show the true causes of the fear of communist ideas, which the masters of the bourgeois society have: "Why do Americans have this hysterical strain [in the society] about Communism? Why are they so lacking in confidence that their free system can hold its own?"¹ Without entering into a debate about the 'free system', one could say that it is *the uncertainty about the outcome of the historical competition between capitalism and socialism that has pushed the leaders of the old world into reckless adventurism in safeguarding its interests.*

The 'crusade' started in the early 1980s by imperialist reaction against all the forces of progress under the banner of anti-communism confronts the international communist movement with the question of closing its ranks. Our party is convinced that *the importance of proletarian internationalism and of the working people's class solidarity is now greater than ever before.* There is a need for united action to solve such a global problem as the prevention of a nuclear war and the rescue of human civilisation. We also need to coordinate our efforts to give effective rebuffs to anti-communism, whose leaders have been concerting their actions on an international scale. We share the view expressed by Mikhail Gorbachov in his interview with the Italian *l'Unita* that there is a need to approach this question without bias, to shed outdated fears and stereotypes, and to take a fresh look at the new situation. For their part, the West Berlin Communists are prepared to make a contribution to uniting our movement.

We Communists are constantly faced with new tasks. There are completely new questions of alliances, for instance, with the anti-nuclear and ecological movements, and with a part of the bourgeoisie in defence of peace. We must be more flexible in thinking and action. We must learn to give up certain stereotypes, accept other forms of cooperation, and ponder the broader interconnections. We must, of course, be more active in overcoming the resistance of anti-communism and anti-Sovietism, if there is to be a worthwhile future before us.

¹ Quoted from *International Herald Tribune*, May 29, 1987.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, January 29, 1987.

⁵ *Stern*, No. 8, 1987.

⁶ *Newsweek*, April 27, 1987.

⁷ *The New York Times*, February 21-22, 1987.

Taking Reality Into Account

Jose Maria Lanao — CC member,
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Editorial Board member

HUMANITY is now living in a period that holds out much promise and is, at the same time, the most disquieting in history. There are powerful technological means for upgrading people's lives. But there also are stockpiles of advanced weaponry that make civilisation's survival questionable. It would be hard to name a century in which social progress has been as swift as it is in our own, which is coming to a close. However, the economic and political mainsprings of wars, oppression, and exploitation are still strong enough to cloud the future of people and cause them infinite suffering. New social problems are arising and old problems are acquiring a new dimension under the impact of these contradictions. The ways and prospects of this development now look different from what they were yesterday, and man's perception of the world acquires new dimensions.

The imperatives of our time have immeasurably enhanced the *responsibility resting with the communist parties* for assessing the processes taking place in individual countries and in the world as a whole, and for framing correct policy. Life has demonstrated beyond any doubt that the Communists play an immense role in the drive for peace and social progress. However, this assessment is not always applicable. At various periods the Communists have not everywhere been equal to their potentialities and to the tasks that they had set themselves and tackled; nor have they measured up to the imperatives of the day in everything. The logical outcome of this has been the difficulties experienced by some socialist countries, and the resultant damage to socialism's influence and attractiveness, while in a number of capitalist countries these consequences were inertia or even a weakening in our movement and of the left forces in general.

The universal attention focused on the changes taking place in the Soviet Union is thus not surprising. These changes have only been started and, naturally, quite a few complications are emerging. Nonetheless, there is a visibly mounting interest in and support for socialism.

In keeping with the resolutions of their 16th Congress (November 1986), the Argentine Communists are radically reshaping their work under conditions entirely different from those of the Soviet comrades.

Facing Reality

Changes are taking place in some other fraternal parties and, it may be assumed, express the long-felt need for renewal in the international communist movement. The time has come for discontinuing the practice of citing unfavourable objective conditions as the justification for deficiencies, for neglecting the subjective factor, i.e., the party's ability to make a correct evaluation of the actual situation, including the 'objective conditions', and correspondingly build and implement tactics and strategy.

Socialism paved the way for itself and became a reality after it had surmounted enormous difficulties. Revolutionary changes always and everywhere encounter resistance from the counter-revolution. Armed aggressions are launched, cordons sanitaires are established, economic blockades are imposed, covert wars are fought, and the internal and external reaction embarks upon intervention in order to strangle any liberation movement in its cradle. Many difficulties are created by the material and cultural backwardness inherited by the new nation-states. The communists are fighting under grim conditions in the capitalist world, where they are brutally persecuted or operate semi-legally. McCarthyism and anti-communism and anti-Soviet 'crusades' are orchestrated through the media.

We should not, of course, underrate or, much less, ignore these and other objective difficulties encountered by the communist movement. But when we critically analyse our work it is highly important that, having identified the contradictions generated by reality, we should concentrate on those that stem from our own errors and shortcomings and cannot be blamed exclusively on unfavourable conditions.

At their meeting in March 1987, the leaders of the CPSU and the CPA — Mikhail Gorbachov and Athos Fava — rightly noted that there may be serious consequences when new processes and phenomena are assessed belatedly and we trail behind developments. This induces us to be constantly equal to new challenges and, in keeping with the imperatives of the moment, work out the political line and the criteria helping to root out errors of the past.

This is precisely how the Argentine Communists acted at their congress. In acknowledging the errors made in the preceding years, the congress noted that they were due to our belated analysis of the changes in society's basis and superstructure. Among other things, this caused a muddle in questions of tactics and strategy when the party line was elaborated and hurt the party's policy of alliances. We lost sight of strategic aims and gave priority to agreements of a general democratic character. The role and ability of the reformist bourgeoisie in protecting democracy from the threat of a military take-over were overrated. The forces to the left were underrated.

Further, it was noted at the 16th Congress that a phenomenon such as the appearance and consolidation of local monopoly groups, particularly in the period of dictatorial rule, was studied belatedly. Alongside the traditional oligarchy and the transnationals, these groups have become the

ruling bloc wielding real power and this situation is in fact accepted by the Alfonsin government.

In view of the changes in various spheres of the nation's life, the party has defined dependent capitalism and the character of the revolution and the front that has to be formed in order to move on to socialism after the democratic, anti-oligarchic and anti-imperialist reforms have been implemented. The right-opportunist deviation was profoundly and self-critically analysed. The CPA declared that, naturally, it had no monopoly over the truth and that other revolutionary forces were contributing to the treasure-store of the theory and practice of the struggle for national liberation and social emancipation.

As I have pointed out, similar processes are to be observed in some fraternal parties. In the context of the entire communist movement, the most significant process is, in our view, the steep turn inaugurated in the work of the Soviet Communists by the plenary meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in April 1985. Perestroika — this word has entered international usage — linked to this turn is attracting keen interest among the most diverse circles of society. But it is best understood by the Communists, of course.

This unusual phenomenon is giving us well-founded hopes and expectations. At the meeting with Mikhail Gorbachov Athos Fava spoke of the global significance of the epic development begun by the Soviet people and their leadership, a development that is comparable with only two or three events in Soviet history.¹

Everything taking place in the socialist world is echoed in the capitalist countries and in the international revolutionary movement. The impact of the developments in socialist society may be positive or negative. Already today it may be noted that the peace initiatives and the radical internal reforms stemming from the CPSU's post-April course have enhanced the Soviet Union's prestige, augmented confidence in socialism, and thereby contributed to improving the conditions of the struggle being waged by the Communists in all countries.

Another new factor is the profound, critical analysis made by the Party of Lenin of its policies, theoretical work, and practice over the preceding period. It set the course towards ending social passiveness, bureaucratic practices, and dogmatism, invigorating socio-political life and creative quests, and bringing about a revolutionary renewal of all aspects of Soviet society's life. There has been a wide response in the international communist movement to these objectives and to the energetic measures that have been instituted to attain them. Why? A major reason is the traditional solidarity with the Soviet Communists, the profound interest in the outcome of their activities. But this is not the whole story. *We are convinced that in one way or another, in one form or another stagnation had begun to fetter the efforts of the Communists on an international scale as well.* Another reason why many fraternal parties respond so sensitively to the CPSU's bold self-criticism is that it reveals common ailments.

While in no way belittling the significance of the struggles and achievements of the Communists, we have to admit that the state of affairs in our movement leaves much to be desired. Lenin's rule that we should

not hoodwink ourselves but "have the courage openly to admit the existence of what exists"² should become the norm.

What Have We to Be Apprehensive About?

Problems related to the international communist movement were discussed by the leaders of the CPSU and the CPA in precisely this context, from the standpoint of dialectics and historical concreteness. It was noted that in the opinion of the two parties the movement had to eradicate the stereotypes generated at the previous stage by shortcomings and weaknesses in some of its links. We have time and again called for broader relations between all communist parties, exchanges of views on matters acquiring an increasingly international character, and for solidarity and cooperation. The growing inter-dependence in the world, the complexity of global problems, and the imperative need to prevent a nuclear war are making broader international relations between the Communists indispensable.

To forestall reservations belittling or negating the significance of this need it must be said that cooperation, multilateral meetings, and united actions do not signify the revival of a leading 'centre' of the movement. On the contrary, this would help each party to determine its policies and forms of activity, and consolidate its autonomy — the values nobody is encroaching upon. Nor should we give up the practice of collectively exchanging views on the basis of full respect for the independence of the participants in such exchanges. This is one of the most productive ways of developing adequate solutions to the contradictory problems of our time.

While we are discussing what internationalism should be like and thereby, in effect, widening the divergences between communist parties, *all other political forces* — Social Democrats, Liberals, Christian Democrats, neofascists, and others — are regularly holding international meetings, adopting agreed documents, and *coordinating their policies on the world scene*.

In fact, why should we be apprehensive of international intercourse? You will agree that in the past few years when we gathered at our regional meetings, for instance, the regular conferences of the communist parties of South America, in which the CPA takes an active part, or the theoretical symposiums and the conferences to discuss the journal *World Marxist Review*, the results have been positive and many of the targets were attained. If there are apprehensions that the refusal of this or that party to attend an international conference of Communists or that the course of the conference itself may only accentuate an absence of unity, we can well ask: Does the inability to gather at such a meeting not give the impression that the existing differences are insuperable?

A reality of the modern world is that there are communist parties in almost 100 countries and that they function under the most diverse conditions and employ various forms of struggle. Some already have long-standing traditions and extensive experience of revolutionary battles. Others have appeared only recently and are making their first steps in social life. Some have brought their peoples to victory and are carrying out their mission under conditions of revolutionary rule. Others are fighting against heavy odds, are harassed, and have to contend with difficulties.

In view of this diversity it is not surprising that there are *distinctions* in the approach to the challenges facing us. But a disparity of views on some issues should not prevent the common striving for solidarity and political cooperation for the sake of what is most essential: peace and socialism. Besides, all objections to expanding relations between communist parties fade in the face of the urgent need for discussing actions aimed at preventing a nuclear war.

Coordinated actions by Communists are encouraging rather than preventing the efforts to act together with other progressive forces also on a broader basis. It is not accidental that such hopes and affirmative responses made Mikhail Gorbachov speak in his interview with the newspaper *l'Unita* of the possibility of using the presence of delegations of various parties and movements — not only communist parties — at the Moscow celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution for informal meetings at which the most important world problems could be discussed.

Socialism Without Embellishment

For a long time the Argentine Communists had identified the solidarity with the USSR and the CPSU and the need for making a principled assessment of and profoundly studying their extensive experience with idealisation of the first socialist state's achievements. This vision, which we passed on to the people, could not have a durable positive influence, contributed nothing to existing socialism, and ultimately prejudiced our prestige and the people's confidence in us.

The working people's hearts and minds cannot be won by embellishing socialism. Besides, socialism does not need this. Its achievements are immense and indisputable. Within a short span of time it turned the USSR into a mighty power with a colossal economic, scientific, and technological potential, into a country with an advanced culture. The new system elevated the working person and gave him a higher living standard, social protection, and a secure future. It is thus not surprising that for 70 years socialism has been an attractive example for the working people as humanity's greatest attainment.

A renewal of our notions about socialism leads to comprehension of its actual problems, to the understanding that the building of the new world is a grandiose task which the people are working on, surmounting the serious contradictions and enormous difficulties caused not only by hostile actions but also by mistakes made by some ruling fraternal parties, as was stated courageously and uncompromisingly by the CPSU.

For example, glaring imbalances and even contrasts have come to light in the Soviet economy. The Soviet Union's huge output of steel, raw materials, fuel, and energy, an output that has long known no equal and the shortage of these resources is the result of waste and inefficiency. Soviet scientific achievements are universally acknowledged; Soviet rockets find Halley's comet with incredible accuracy and are on their way to a rendezvous with Venus, but alongside this triumph of scientific and technological thought there is a lag in the practical implementation of these

achievements. These examples indicate, among other things, that purely quantitative criteria are useless for a comparison between socialism and capitalism. It is evidently important to take the *criterion of quality* into account more fully and extend the analysis to the entire spectrum of social relations.

Today, with new expanses opening up for the development of democracy in the socialist world, with the new society's humanism growing ever more pronounced, and with *the priority of universal human values* becoming indisputable in the policy of the Communists, growing significance is being acquired by the social, political, and cultural areas of contest between the two systems. These are particularly the areas — especially in view of whether life is to be or not to be on our planet — where socialism is obviously superior.

Let me make one more point in this context. Will the scathing analysis now being made by the Soviet Communists of not only socialism's bright sides but also of contradictions and deviations not undermine the influence of the example set by the new system? Will this not lead to a growth of difficulties for the communist movement? In the final analysis socialism owes its attractiveness *not to words but to deeds*. I believe that an honest admission of negligence and mistakes and the determination to redress them will only reinforce the new society's prestige.

Relying on Creative Leninism

The fact that truth has to be faced squarely when socialism is assessed extends also to our vision of capitalism. We often paint an apocalyptic picture of bourgeois society, seeing only its incurable antagonisms, ulcers, and vices. Consequently, the bourgeois system must collapse — now here, now there — long before the working class comes to power. But the reality should not be portrayed simplistically. It is important to see the world with all its complexities, to avoid painting the processes of its development in no colours other than black and white.

At every step we find proof that even in its general crisis situation capitalism has the potential for developing its productive forces. Despite the existence of armies of unemployed it is in a position to keep a large section of working people in spiritual bondage, particularly in industrialised countries, giving them a relatively high income and social security level. A broad approach to an examination of bourgeois society in no way debilitates the revolutionary consciousness. On the contrary, it reinforces this consciousness because it helps people to understand phenomena that are socio-politically unfavourable to the revolutionary movement and cannot be explained from the angle that 'everything is bad in the enemy's camp and good in our camp'.

As a world system capitalism has not lost its ability to manoeuvre, to adapt to new conditions. But this does not rule out antagonisms that erode its existence. Socialism's consolidation in vast expanses of the planet, the victories of the national liberation movements, and the successes of the working people's class struggle — even if these successes are partial — are evidence that the world counter-revolution is losing ground. However, this

historical tendency does not give us the right to fit all the facts of life into a single pattern. It is only by analysing all the facts in their development that we can draw right conclusions permitting us to act correctly in a given situation. We sometimes forget the value of theory is in whether it accurately portrays contradictions.

Marxist theory has never been at a standstill. In various countries it has been developing productively in this or that direction. But it would be self-deceit to fail to see that it is not measuring up to the imperatives of the epoch. In assessing some new phenomena and problems our theoretical thought has in some cases fallen decades behind.

Also, trends have appeared that are alien to scientific socialism. We have observed theoretical innovations that lead away from Leninism. In our view, *history and present-day reality show that nothing of benefit to a communist party can be achieved in circumvention, let alone in defiance, of Leninism.*

On the other hand, under the guise of 'protecting the purity' of theory there was a slide into dogmatism, into a way of thinking that fitted the facts into an accepted pattern, made empty shells of ideals and principles, and coerced reality.

In influencing the policies of the Communists — each in their own way — both these trends have often given rise to situation-motivated practices and led to pragmatic quests yielding transient successes.

I believe that the qualitative changes in the work of the CPSU and other fraternal parties represent a return to a genuinely Leninist attitude and a further affirmation of Leninism's colossal creative potential. The way of thought and action taking shape on this basis express a *revolutionary continuity*. Epitomised in policy, it signifies not merely pursuing the former course but also mustering the potential for progress, objectively analysing new realities, and rejecting fossilised, stereotyped notions. Let us again refer to Lenin: "It is essential to grasp the uncontestable truth that a Marxist must take cognisance of *reality*, and not cling to a theory of yesterday."³

Socialism and the communist movement are entering a new phase, looking for answers to the pressing issues of our epoch, jettisoning all that has grown obsolete, and finding new potentials for progress. Their impact on humanity's destiny and their contribution to the struggles of the forces of peace and progress throughout the world depend on how successfully the process of renewal proceeds.

¹ See *Qué pasa*, Buenos Aires, March 11, 1987.

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 1, p. 391.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 45.

The Motto: Security And Prosperity

Gro Harlem Brundtland — Prime Minister of Norway, Chairperson of the Norwegian Labour Party, head of the World Commission on Environment and Development, and member of the Palme Commission

What do you think is essential for a change for the better in world and, specifically, European affairs? What could enhance common security and trust in Europe, including its northern part?

A CHANGE for the better in world affairs presupposes, in my view, not only that the international community addresses the urgent issues of our day. It also presupposes that the mechanisms for international cooperation are strengthened and better coordinated so that appropriate actions can be taken. Today, the effects of national policy decisions transcend national boundaries to a greater extent than ever before. The challenges we are facing in various fields must be resolved in a global context and across traditional political and economic affiliations.

Efforts to improve relations between East and West, our desire to see the nuclear arsenals reduced and eventually eliminated, the need to correct imbalances in the world economy that are now widening the gap between rich and poor, the important issues of environment and development and human rights — all these issues require a global approach and international cooperation. We believe that our national interests are best served by taking an active part in the endeavours of the United Nations and other international organisations to promote the global cooperation that the challenges we face call for.

This global commitment of the Norwegian government is in keeping with the finest traditions of the Social Democratic Party of Norway and it also guides the work of the Socialist International to which the party belongs.

With regard to peace and security in the global and the regional European context, the two superpowers — the USA and the Soviet Union — have, of course, a special responsibility. An agreement providing for the elimination of intermediate-range nuclear forces seems now to be within reach and would truly be an historic achievement. For the first time operational nuclear arms would be dismantled by mutual agreement. An INF agreement would, in my opinion, have a positive effect not only in the field of arms control, but also on the East-West relationship in general.

It is my firm opinion that the medium-size and small nations of Europe likewise have an important role to play in the field of disarmament and arms control. Let me underline the importance that the Norwegian government attaches to the following:

- a comprehensive nuclear test ban;
- the elimination of all longer- and shorter-range INF missiles in Europe;

- reduction of strategic nuclear weapons with the future aim of eliminating this category of weapons;
- measures to prevent the development, testing, and deployment of weapons systems which may lead to an arms race in space;
- implementation of the proposal of the Palme Commission to establish a nuclear-free corridor in Europe as an element in a broader system of European security;
- the establishment of a nuclear-free zone in the Nordic area as an element of the same system;
- negotiations aiming at a global ban on chemical weapons;
- negotiations on conventional disarmament in Europe.

Defence measures, on the one hand, and efforts to obtain results in the field of arms control and disarmament, on the other, are integral components of Norwegian security policy. This also reflects the dual objective of the NATO alliance: defence and détente. Let me underline the great importance of sustained efforts to accomplish both of these fundamental tasks.

What, do you think, could be done in practical terms to ensure common security, specifically in expanding cooperation between the Social Democrats and the Communists?

The concept of common security, introduced by the Palme Commission, is in our opinion an important step towards the transition to a new stage of the policy of détente. We would like to see all political parties in Europe — social democratic, non-socialist, and communist parties alike — contribute to this end.

You are active on two international commissions of considerable prestige — the World Commission on Environment and Development (the Brundtland Commission) and the Commission on Disarmament and Security (the Palme Commission). The motto of the former is a prosperous and just world for all and of the latter, security for all. Would you agree that the two commissions are quite close to each other in their motives and that the concepts that inspire them are indivisible?

The Brandt Commission, the Palme Commission¹ and the World Commission on Environment and Development, which I have led, are dealing with three interrelated pressing global problems, and the one followed from the other. In keeping with their global thinking the Brandt Commission, which looked into the North-South issues, drew the conclusion that on the basis of their analysis and recommendations it was necessary also to study the issue of security and environment as two other central themes.

The first of these tasks was entrusted to an international commission headed by Olof Palme, who was also a member of the Brandt Commission. When the UN Secretary-General requested me to lead the Commission on Environment and Development I already had useful experience as a

member of the Palme Commission. This made my new mission much easier. The UN took up the issues of environment and development through the General Assembly and UNEP.² Unlike the two preceding commissions, the WCED had mandate directly from the UN. Our report will be considered by the UN at its General Assembly this autumn. Consequently, there are a successiveness and close logical link between the three commissions.

Our commission is not overlooking the security issue either. We are looking not only into the human and material resources going into the arms race but also into the other aspects adding to tension in the world: environmental degradation, poverty, refugees, conflicts between developing nations, and so on. Clearly, the removal of these negative factors is of critical significance for humanity's progress, for building a more just, developed, and secure world for everybody.

What do you think about the changes that are occurring in Soviet domestic and foreign policy and about the Soviet Union's new way of thinking?

My impression from my talks with General Secretary Gorbachov in December 1986 is that he is determined in wanting to carry out domestic reforms and revitalise Soviet society, and sincere in pursuing arms control agreements and more cooperative relations with the West.

Like many observers, I follow the debate on, and introduction of, reforms in the Soviet Union with expectation. Naturally, the aspects of the emerging Soviet reform process of greatest interest to Norway are those that directly concern our relations with the Soviet Union and East-West relations in general. I would argue that the new openness and the increasingly frank and honest treatment of the problems of development in Soviet society are a key to increased trust and cooperation with the West. The continuation and expansion of this tendency should make our dialogue and our contacts in all areas more meaningful, thereby greatly enhancing our understanding of Soviet society and Soviet policies.

I am also encouraged by the signs in the domestic reform process in the Soviet Union of a more lenient official attitude towards dissidents, including prisoners of conscience. The continuation of this more tolerant approach is vital to our overall trust in Soviet goals and intentions. Here I would like to take issue with two frequently voiced Soviet concerns. First, we are not out to score polemical points on the issue of human rights. Our concern goes far deeper than that. We would like to make use of the ongoing positive changes to expand our dialogue with the Soviet Union on the issue of human rights as a matter of principle. Second, I would like to lay to rest the concern that these improvements are seen as a sign of Moscow's weakness. Very much to the contrary.

As for new tendencies in Soviet foreign policy I would like to single out a few areas that seem to be of particular importance. In the field of security, arms control, and disarmament I generally agree with the increased Soviet emphasis on political means in working out solutions acceptable to all parties concerned. Of course, the crucial test of any arms control initiative

comes during the process of hammering out agreements at the negotiating table. In this context I welcome the less rigid Soviet positions on the vital issue of verification and the signs of re-examination in Soviet thinking about security issues in general.

I also take a positive view of the signs of Soviet interest in greater interaction with the international economic system. Unquestionably, it would be a welcome development for the Soviet Union to take on greater responsibilities in this field and play a constructive role commensurate with the size of its economy.

As a neighbour of the Soviet Union, Norway views the conflict of Afghanistan with particular concern. While we are encouraged by the signs of Soviet re-examination of this issue and the increased emphasis on finding a political solution, deeds must follow words and it remains for the Soviet Union to face up to the core issue of agreeing to a timetable for a speedy withdrawal of its forces.

I find promising the signs of change under the new leadership in Soviet thinking about the nature of global issues such as environmental protection. There seems to be a trend to view a number of areas in less rigidly ideological terms. This would accord with my own view that global challenges such as preserving peace and security, solving the problems of underdevelopment, protecting the environment, and managing scarce resources increasingly transcend the relevance of national boundaries and ideological divisions.

Generally, developments in the Soviet Union under the new leadership have created new opportunities for dialogue, cooperation, and progress over a broad range of East-West issues. The Norwegian government is ready to respond actively and constructively to these opportunities on the bilateral level as well as in the wider international context.

¹ The Brandt Commission completed its work in 1979. The Palme Commission is considered in detail in *WMR* No 5, 1987 — *Ed.*

² The United Nations Environment Programme. — *Ed.*

exchange of views, discussion

The Communists' View Of The World Today

International Symposium in Prague to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the October Revolution

We have already reported that the *WMR*-sponsored international theoretical symposium 'The October Revolution and the Main Problems of Our Age' to mark the 70th anniversary of the Great October Socialist Revolution was held in Prague. It was attended by delegates from 60 communist countries and workers' parties and international democratic organisations (see *WMR* No. 7, 1987).

The key issues that dominated the exchanges at the symposium were the Communists' view of the world today and their efforts to find solutions to the world's numerous contradictions and problems in the interest of social development and in the spirit of the ideas of the October Revolution.

Below is the first part of the *WMR* review of reports and exchanges at the symposium.

Crucial Time

The ideas of the Great October Socialist Revolution are relevant and workable today primarily because mankind is living precisely in *the same historical age*, in terms of its socio-economic conditions, that was ushered in by that revolution. *The transition from capitalism to socialism, peaceful coexistence of the two social systems, the struggle waged by the peoples against imperialism and its policy of aggression and oppression and for peace, democracy and social progress* remain the key issues on today's agenda.

The strong impetus imparted by the October Revolution to the struggle for peace, social justice and progress retains its momentum all over the world. The more fully and consistently the ideas of that revolution are embodied in the achievements of socialism and in the Communist's policy, the greater influence they have on the consciousness and revolutionary creative activity of the masses.

In the 70 years since the October Revolution history has yielded abundant proof that *the tendency for the renewal of the world along socialist lines is inexorable*. The general crisis of capitalism is aggravating. Socialism is developing as a world system, pointing the way for human progress. Today, at the close of the twentieth century, however, many prospects for

world development look different from how they were perceived by Marxists even as recently as the middle of this century.

Socialism has not yet attained its main historical task, that of achieving the world's highest labour productivity. But it has made impressive progress on that road: the progressive social system has a well-developed economy, a modern scientific infrastructure and a dependable military-political potential. At the same time the historical need to accelerate the socio-economic progress of socialist countries has been making itself felt more and more intensively in the past few years because of radical changes in the international conditions of confrontation between the two systems and because contradictions in the socialist development of some countries have kept piling up. Such acceleration calls for a transition to a higher and more efficient form of economic organisation with comprehensively developed productive forces, mature socialist relations of production and a streamlined economic mechanism.

The factors contributing to the consolidation of socialism's positions in the world are doubtless growing stronger, **Janusz Kolczynski** (Poland) observed. However, the dynamics of the process somewhat slowed down in the 1970s and early 1980s and fell behind the needs of socialism's competition with capitalism, and not just in the economy. The progressive fulfilment of social tasks and the solution of the problems of political democracy, too, began to tarry in some countries, mostly because of subjective reasons. Confrontation imposed by imperialism continues adversely to affect the development of socialism, **Jan Debrouwere** (Belgium) noted. According to him, the phenomena of stagnation and even serious deformities, which today are being boldly laid bare and eliminated, particularly in the Soviet Union, were to some extent caused by that confrontation. Some people feared — and others hoped — that the spirit of the October Revolution would wane, but it has resurged, helping rekindle interest in socialism among the working people and other sections of the population in the capitalist world.

The influence of the left has declined considerably in most of *the developed capitalist countries* in the past 40 years, the speaker continued. The left forces, including the organised working class movement, have been more than once forced onto the defensive, and have for a long time failed to recognise structural changes caused in capitalist society by new technologies and the resultant problems of class struggle. At the same time, **Georgy Shakhnazarov** (the Soviet Union) pointed out, it seems that capitalism has turned out to be far more viable and better equipped to cope with change than it was thought to be and may have a chance to last into the twenty-first century.

As for the Third World, the neocolonialist expansion of capitalism has *badly aggravated the antagonism between the 'poor' and the 'rich' countries*, said **Antonio Diaz Ruiz** (Cuba), **Mohsen Abdallah** (Saudi Arabia) and **Orlando Millas** (Chile). The gap between them keeps widening and no perceptible progress has been made in mitigating hunger and eradicating poverty, illiteracy and unemployment in the periphery of imperialism. The people in those parts of the world, a sizeable proportion of the world population, are bearing the brunt of the economic crisis which has been

gripping capitalism in the 1980s. The Third World economy is in a dismal plight. The huge *foreign indebtedness*, which totalled one trillion dollars in 1986, has dramatically complicated the task of overcoming economic backwardness. Imperialism has *intensified its exploitation* of developing countries under conditions of the scientific and technological revolution. Their economic dependence is compounded by technological dependence. The burden of militarism keeps growing heavier. The outdated and unfair economic order is an impediment to development. The problem of underdevelopment and neocolonialist exploitation is growing more *explosive* from one year to the next. This situation must be changed urgently and drastically.

The point, however, is not merely the piling up of problems in the way of the revolutionary transformation of the world. Social progress continues despite the growing resistance of imperialism and reaction. The principal factor, which has added a new dimension to the Communists' political orientation, is the unprecedented world situation in which *humankind is for the first time ever confronted with the problems of survival and has entered a crucial period of its history*, speakers observed.

The impact of the new dangers generated by imperialism, primarily the danger of nuclear war, on the course of events is so substantial and all-pervading that the present-day realities should be seriously examined and the objective dialectics of our controversial and interdependent world thoroughly analysed. The most urgent need today, speakers stressed, is to identify and use to the fullest possible extent opportunities for relations of peace and cooperation among the states with different social systems. The dialectical complexity of present-day development manifests itself in the interface of competition between the two systems and the growing interdependence of various states.

The Imperative of Joint Action

The Communists' contribution to the development of *a new mode of political thinking as a means of building a world free from the nuclear threat is a major area of their theoretical work*. Such thinking, Ladislav Novotny (Czechoslovakia) said, does not mean for the Marxist any deviation from the class-based approach. Neither is it some philosophy of enlightenment, according to which it is ideas that are the mainspring of political change. A new mode of thinking is called for by the realities, which undergo changes not of their own accord but as a result of the activities of people, classes and states. In accordance with the Marxist-Leninist doctrine and the experience of the October Revolution, it is the development of the world socialist system, the various initiatives of the socialist states and the Communists' international solidarity that constitute a substantial factor, crucial to the efficacy of the new mode of thinking. The Communists are called upon to set a graphic example of *translating this thinking into practical politics*.

Speaking of the relationship between new political thinking and the revolutionary theory of social change, Janusz Kolczynski cited the ancient quotation: Justice must be done even if the world should perish (*Pereat*

mundus, fiat justitia). But the Marxist will take exception to this precept in the context of historical justice. Justice makes sense only to those who live. Standing up for a future for humanity, Marxist philosophy, true to its humanistic nature, has formulated as *an unconditional demand* the need to do everything possible to ensure that social progress takes forms which do not carry the price of nuclear annihilation.

We guide ourselves by an optimistic concept, the speaker continued. It rests on the realistic presumption that contention between socialism and capitalism is objectively preconditioned and therefore cannot be done away with by agreement. But it should take the forms of exclusively *peaceful competition and rivalry*, not confrontation that would be fatal to civilisation. When all is said and done, it is the global alignment of forces that will decide if this concept becomes practice in world relations. Moreover, the socio-psychological factor is essential here. The energetic, audacious and constructive approach of the socialist community to international problems, speakers noted, is perceptibly shifting world public opinion in favour of peaceful coexistence and contributing to the growth of the peace movement.

Carrying on a discussion of the dialectics of the imperative and the essential in the efforts to meet the common human interest in continued peace, an interest which is a new historical factor of our nuclear and space age, **Wolfgang Kliem** (GDR) drew attention *to the imperative of joint action*. To avert global perils, he said, all the peoples and states *should cooperate* for the sake of their own continued existence and a future regardless of their political and ideological stands or their belonging to one social system or another. It is that imperative, which is making itself felt more and more effectively, that gives a chance to avert these perils.

To ward off nuclear catastrophe and survive, all of us, Communists and non-Communists, fighters against imperialism and its proponents, believers and atheists, will have to think and act in a new way, **José Lava** (the Philippines) said.

Common ground for the constructive joint action of the opposite class forces, speakers noted, is provided by the numerous global problems. Generating assorted dangers, including the threat of the annihilation of the human race, *they compel the peoples, states and social systems to cooperate* because no nation can resolve them singlehandedly. The global problems have grown so important in the life and activity of human society as to rank among the key problems of our age. Moreover, new political thinking has arisen from awareness of the immutable fact that the paramount global problem of continued peace and human survival has become *the most urgent priority*.

If we get this fact clear, **Konstantin Florea** (Romania) said, we shall be able to consider all problems of war and peace in a new way, get rid of outdated concepts and start a search for *constructive solutions* offering a realistic chance to remove the nuclear threat. The relationship between war and the state, national and class interests has drastically changed. Nuclear war must not be a tool of politics or an act of will on the part of the state because it cannot be won. There is a need for a new approach to the relationship between security and the arms build-up, and the fallacious

concepts that nuclear weapons add to defence capabilities and security and help safeguard peace must be renounced.

Both the continued existence of humanity and a healthier economic and social development of all countries, big and small alike, depend on ending the arms race and on a transition to universal disarmament, primarily nuclear disarmament, the speaker continued. The sphere in which social and political forces capable of influencing developments can cooperate keeps extending beyond the bounds of the interaction of socialist states, communist parties and other revolutionary movements. Hence the need for a broader and more comprehensive interpretation of the concept of international solidarity, which should take into consideration the unprecedented scope and diversity of the forces with an objective interest in efforts for a world of peace and cooperation, and for disarmament, freedom and social progress.

The participants in the symposium noted difficulties involved in making the opposite class forces join efforts in saving civilisation. **Rafic Samhoun** (Lebanon) observed that many people in the developing countries had a one-sided and unrealistic view of efforts to prevent nuclear war. Some attach priority to peace efforts, actually divorcing them from the struggle against imperialism with its intrigues against national interests, while others argue that opposition to imperialism is paramount and believe that the peoples of the nuclear powers alone should strive for the removal of the nuclear threat.

There is no direct relationship between actions for nuclear disarmament and the movements of solidarity with the anti-imperialist struggles of the peoples, **Jan Debrouwere** observed. In Belgium, many of those who oppose missile deployments are not yet willing, for example, to express solidarity with the people of Nicaragua. Meanwhile, the rightist ruling forces of the capitalist countries, among them the extremists committed to runaway arms build-ups and confrontation and the realists advocating mutually beneficial international cooperation, have clashed over the Soviet proposals for nuclear disarmament.

Reconciliation of struggle and joint action is not just an academic concept: the Communists use it in practice. **Vasudevan Nair** (India) related his party's experience of mobilising the mass of people *in support* of national consensus on India's anti-war foreign policy and, simultaneously, *against* the infiltration of transnationals into the country and the government's economic policy. We have to be very cautious in our policy of alliances, he noted, because a segment of the bourgeois opposition is against the foreign policy of the ruling Indian National Congress (I). But the Communists cannot ally themselves with that party due to its anti-people economic policy, although they seek a common ground with it in foreign policy.

The problem of alliances, which is fundamental to Marxist strategy and tactics, has been given a new dimension by the imperative of safeguarding peace, speakers pointed out. Compromises which have to be made to preserve peace do not amount to the perpetuation of the social status quo or to a retreat in class battles. The Communists reconcile dialogue, cooperation, broad coalition with diverse political and ideological forces

and joint and parallel actions for peace with the promotion of the working people's actions for their rights. That struggle is setting the stage for even broader coalitions, which subvert the preponderance of the enemies of peace and social progress in capitalist society. The Communists give priority to studies of these processes on the basis of general conclusions from most diverse experiences.

Other global problems, such as ecology, food, energy, health and education, are growing more important in political struggles as well. That is a long-term and stable tendency, and the demand for solutions to these problems is part and parcel of the Communists' programme demands. However, the practical ways of reconciling the class struggle of the working people with the tackling of such tasks as, say, environmental protection have raised quite a few questions, **Antonio Ribeiro Granja** (Brazil) observed.

As the relationships between the key problems of our age were discussed, **Francisco Gamboa** (Costa Rica) raised the point of their 'hierarchy', specifically, of the place, after the issue of peace, of peoples' anti-imperialist struggle for liberation and independent development among them.

Touching upon that matter, **Georgy Shakhnazarov** said that it was pointless to construe any 'hierarchy' of problems below that of averting the nuclear threat: if nuclear war breaks out, there will be no one to tackle any problem. Moreover, there is much in store for mankind that is absolutely unexpected and it is hard to say what problem will merit priority. But if mankind does ride out all the storms and fend off all the perils to its existence, the most difficult long-term problem for a century to come is to close the gap between the developed capitalist countries and the developing ones. The historical competition between capitalism and socialism is likely to gain momentum precisely in this context.

Like many other global problems, the need to close the gap between the economic development levels *strongly motivates mankind's* advance towards socialism. If the Third World countries want effective remedies for their backwardness, they cannot help turning to some of the methods used by socialism. These are the concentration of national resources to achieve healthy and rapid economic growth, determination of national priorities, planned development, an appropriately structured political power and some others.

Undoubtedly, it is only the transition to socialism that will make it possible eventually to close the gap between the economic development levels of various countries, **Unni Krishnan** (India) said. But what practical steps can be taken towards that goal today, with the given alignment of forces and practical possibilities? In his opinion, the Communists should be more active in the struggle for a new international economic order. Even with capitalist orientation, he stressed, independent economic development is anti-imperialist development. It is necessary in this context thoroughly to examine the anti-imperialist potential of the ruling classes in the Third World countries and to identify their contradictions with imperialism. A part of these classes can make at least a temporary ally in the struggle for economic independence. The potentialities of South-South

trade and of cooperation between developing and socialist countries as a counterweight to non-equivalent exchanges should not be underestimated either.

The so-called South-South cooperation, **Antonio Diaz Ruiz** added, is just a potentially viable component of the efforts to overcome underdevelopment. *It is the reduction and eventual ultimate abolition of military spending that could become the principal generator of economic progress.* The one trillion dollars squandered on the arms race every year would make it possible to do away with hunger, poverty, and unemployment. Peace and development are therefore closely interrelated. World social problems cannot be resolved or the gap between the developed and developing countries closed unless militarism is defeated, **Rafic Samhoun** stressed. It is necessary to back the slogan 'Disarmament For Development' with concrete proposals for the utilisation of funds released as a result of disarmament to help cope with catastrophic hunger in Africa, **Vusizwe Seme** (South Africa) added.

Elean Thomas (Jamaica) drew attention to the geopolitical view of peace efforts. There are sometimes debates over where the 'focus' of these efforts is and Europe is pointed to as such a focus. That continent indeed has the largest arms stockpiles. However, in other parts of the world imperialism is not only threatening but actually waging wars. Does this reality fit into the concept that some geographic region should be the focus of all the peace efforts? Moreover, shouldn't we consider this reality in a broader context in view of the fact, for instance, that the October Revolution broke through the wall of the imperialist citadel not where it was the strongest?

Like Europe, the Korean Peninsula is a region with a very high risk of a nuclear outbreak, which can escalate into a world war, **Sin Bong Deuk** (DPRK) observed. He described the struggle waged by the Workers' Party of Korea for the establishment of a nuclear-free zone on the peninsula and stressed that that would be a major step towards a lasting peace in Asia and all over the world. It will take numerous peace initiatives at the global, regional and national levels and the vigorous actions of all peace forces to make Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Pacific, the Indian Ocean, the Middle East — all parts of the world effective zones of good-neighbourliness, speakers pointed out.

The peace movement, wherever it arises, is essentially *international*, **Henrik Bang** (Denmark) said. The arms race threatens all peoples with nuclear holocaust and squandering of national resources; besides, it generates international tensions and regional conflicts. However, it is important to take account also of the diverse *national* contexts in which peace activists do most of their work. They try first and foremost to make the government of *their own* country take steps towards international détente and corresponding agreements, drop some military plans or come up with initiatives for converting military production to civilian, establishing nuclear-free zones, settling conflicts, etc. Now that the hope of making progress towards disarmament has become realistic it is especially important to protest against the 'star wars' plans. If the United States goes through with them, another round of the arms race will open.

Since emphasis is laid on peace as the main problem, speakers pointed

out, some people tend to think that all other problems are secondary and can be put off till a more opportune time. This erroneous view leads to futile discussions. **Wolfgang Kliem** noted on that point that Marxists did not ignore or belittle other problems but, conversely, suggested practical ways of resolving them. In the present situation, however, all other tasks are *subordinate to ensuring peace and peaceful coexistence*, which calls for properly balanced practical actions.

This essentially new approach, speakers observed, is equally applicable to global problems, the problems of class and national liberation struggles and of socialist development with its priority goal of the survival of humanity, the fullest possible realisation of the human potential and social progress.

Need for a Common Stand

The ideas of the October Revolution call for a well-balanced assessment of the condition of the *international communist movement* and ways of advancing it.

The latest forums of many fraternal parties and the 27th Congress of the CPSU have prepared the ground for broader understanding between the Communists in different countries, for their stronger class solidarity and for the promotion of equal cooperation in the struggle for peace and socialism. All that has been made possible also by the parties' new, creative approach to the formulation of their policies and by the assertion in interparty relations of the principles consonant with the fundamental realities of the movement, namely, unity and diversity in the efforts to attain the Communists' common goals. There is no room for attempts to claim a monopoly of truth, for parties meddling in each other's affairs or for any hierarchy in the movement because every party is its equal member. Reflecting on the history and prospects of the Communist movement, **Jan Debrouwere** said that some day the current years would be called the movement's fresh start.

In the view of **Carlos Aboim Ingles** (Portugal), one characteristic feature of the Communist movement today is *the growth of creative aspects* in party activity and a search for ways and means of advancing towards or building socialism. Stereotype approaches and *à priori* or abstract models are of no use in such cases, he said. The party can find correct and concrete solutions to specific problems it faces by creatively applying Marxism-Leninism in practice and exchanging information, experience and views with other parties.

In the view of the speaker, the Marxists should collectively and individually consider such phenomena as the dwindling membership of some parties, the decline of their influence and loss of some or all of their parliamentary seats. These setbacks doubtless have *objective* causes which do not depend on the Communist parties, such as the strength and experience of their class enemy and difficulties rooted in capitalism's economic and social development. But they do not explain everything, the speaker noted, the *subjective* factors which could contribute to the adverse effects should be examined profoundly. These include ideological concepts, political orientation, programme goals, organisational

requirements and the forms and style of party work. A concrete analysis of these subjects could be made as a general theoretical study and therefore would not amount to intervention in the parties' affairs.

The speaker noted the growing trend for diversity in the Communist movement. In the Third World, in particular, there are revolutionary parties working alongside the Communists which are coming to share the goals, experience and ideals of the Communists. All this infuses the movement with fresh strength but at the same time poses new problems of cooperation.

Emphasis was laid on the need *to overcome dogmatism and schematism*, which fetter creative thought. The ideas of the October Revolution cannot be carried on successfully unless realities are approached without bias, **Elean Thomas** said. In the past subjective assessments led to a serious breach between Marxism-Leninism and the main forces of the anti-colonial democratic movement and in some cases even broke the continuity of the anti-imperialist struggle. The speaker criticised the erroneous assessment made of Garveyism (so called after Marcus Garvey) and Ghandism by the Comintern's Sixth Congress as a brake on the revolutionary movement.

Ali Ileri (Turkey) drew attention to the danger of dogmatism turning Marxism into a barren doctrine divorced from practice. The Marxist, he said, cannot reduce social and political problems to general laws just to prove anew that they work. It is important to use the Marxist method to explain everything that is new and specific, and to translate Marxism into the realities of one's own country and into practical actions.

Fierce attacks on revolutionary theory, far from subsiding, have kept escalating since the October Revolution, **Jose Maria Lanao** (Argentina) said. Meanwhile, it has made possible great achievements of humanity. Many rightists and leftists in Latin America, too, charge the Communists with the 'unnatural' transplantation of Marxism-Leninism onto the soil of our continent. Yet, applied creatively, it has always been for the revolutionaries in every country an efficient tool of studying and transforming reality.

To carry on the cause of the October Revolution, **Ali Malki** (Algeria) continued, means to seek to rectify deviations from its spirit. The important thing today for the Communist movement is to make up lost ground in theory and *to close the gap between theory and practice*. It is not ritual that we turn to the ideas of the October Revolution; we benefit by them in two ways, by getting proof of the viability of Marxist theory and dialectics, wedded to the struggles of the mass of people, and by learning the lessons of the 70 years, which have seen both great accomplishments and grave mistakes.

The people's struggle in Algeria has been put back at various times because of lags in revolutionary theory, disregard for its conclusions or their clumsy application, the speaker continued. A one-sided and subjective approach, in particular, among the Communists, was evident in their underestimation of the growing momentum of the national liberation movement. In a different situation it manifested itself in a schematic approach to ways by which newly-free countries could advance and be belittling difficulties and problems in the revolutionary activity involved in

the struggle for a transition to socialism by-passing capitalism. Some Marxist scholars, trying to fit realities into the theoretical formula of the non-capitalist road, ignored even the basic nature of the changes taking place in a number of countries, changes which had a generally democratic character. Theory itself veered towards voluntarism because such scholars, instead of drawing objective conclusions in their works, cited governmental statements or diplomatic verbiage from joint communiques.

Discussing the implementation of the strategy of a broad anti-imperialist alliance, the speaker noted that it could not be based on studies of socio-economic and political realities dating back a dozen years. Moreover, today any problem should be put into a global context and related to the problem of peace. However, schematic and rigid action would detract from the efficiency of that new approach, which we are yet to achieve.

The October Revolution forcefully brought home Lenin's correct idea that there can be no revolutionary movement without a revolutionary theory, **Hugo Campos** (Paraguay) said. The need to strengthen the working-class party which has mastered the Marxist theory and can apply it in practice, overcoming inertia, conservatism, sectarianism and dogmatism, has acquired a special urgency in today's struggle to save civilisation and ensure its further progress. It is particularly important for us to foster in the party exactingness, efficiency, responsibility and initiative and to educate cadres who can think and act in accordance with realities and achieve success.

The Communist movement has greatly broadened its theoretical horizons and gained much experience in the battles waged by classes and peoples in our age. But ever new problems are cropping up and the process of education must go on continuously. Marxism-Leninism can be creatively enriched only if facts are analysed rationally, if the objective logic of practice rather than dogmas and stereotypes are taken as guides, and if the diverse and controversial realities of our age are faced squarely.

Considering relations between the fraternal parties at the present stage, **Laszlo Nagy** (Hungary) said that their development called for *discussion*. It is natural for any serious socio-political movement to exchange and compare views. There is a great deal of international debate even among Catholics today. The Communist parties, too, have to compare notes. The latest major debate to which almost all the fraternal parties contributed was that on Eurocommunism. The substance of the problem is common knowledge and there is nothing here to hold back. The point at issue was that of the speediest ways to radical social renewal and, eventually, to socialism. At that time, however, the debate sometimes involved misunderstandings, intolerance and misrepresentations. The speaker said it was necessary to draw the lesson from that discussion and, more important, to realise that opportunities for mutual understanding had broadened.

In the speaker's view, there are realistic opportunities for the fraternal parties today jointly to work out *a common strategy of the movement*. At present, he noted, there is an imperative for the Communist parties to extend their joint actions into defining their concerted stand on questions

of war and peace and on the global problems that are common to the whole of humanity. As for the other struggles and activities of the fraternal parties, it is hardly possible today to lay down a common strategy like those formulated at the conferences in Moscow 30 or nearly 20 years ago.

The Hungarian scholar pointed out in expounding that view that the parties were working in very diverse conditions, which explained great differences between their strategies and tactics. Moreover, it was not the strategic goals of, for instance, the West European Communist parties in their struggle for socialism in their countries that constituted the backbone of inter-party relations (which, naturally, does not rule out class solidarity). Every party is independent and bears responsibility for its actions before its own people and the international working class. Proletarian internationalism is the basic principle which underlies the cohesion of the Communist parties in whatever conditions they work.

In the view of **Khalid Hammami** (Syria), it is politically expedient for the movement to formulate a common strategy which would amount to a policy line of opposition to the anti-people policy of imperialism. The past 20 years, he said, have seen immense changes and the aggravation of the struggle between the world revolutionary forces and international imperialism. The conflict in some new areas has taken dangerous forms because of the policy pursued by the US ruling quarters and because of the growing influence of the military-industrial complex. In charting its course independently, every party not only proceeds from the tasks posed by the specific conditions of its own work but also takes into account the general strategy of the movement.

The basic components of the Communist movement's strategy, **Santiago Alvarez** (Spain) said, include the issue of peace as an alternative to nuclear war, and struggle against imperialism and for social emancipation and socialism. The Communist Party of Spain is working out a policy line to be able to regain strength and use the opportunities available in the country. We do not mention Eurocommunism and are trying to undo any impression of our party gradually becoming a Social-Democratic party and to banish everything that may get in the way of fraternal relations with all other Communist parties.

Proper forms have to be found, of course, to promote solidarity and cooperation among parties, **Konstantin Florea** said. While criticising negative phenomena in the Communist movement and inter-party relations in the past, we think it important for parties to demonstrate and assert their positions on the world problems. An international conference also is on the agenda and the largest possible number of parties, preferably all of them, should attend.

Indeed, regional conferences are no substitute for an international meeting, **Donald Ramotar** (Guyana) said. Take global problems, such as the nuclear threat, hunger, development, ecology, and the scientific and technological revolution: they make it incumbent upon the Communists to launch international efforts as well. It would be useful to exchange views and experiences on an international level in this context.

It is an urgent matter for the Communists to arrange international meetings which would concentrate on *concrete actions* in accordance with

new political thinking, said **Henrik Bang**. Such meetings, naturally, do not rule out any other form of international dialogue with the possible participation of the broadest forces standing for peace and disarmament. Tangible results in the implementation of the alternative to nuclear war and solutions to other global problems, however, are hard to achieve without close cooperation among the Communists. They should prove on the international scene that new thinking and action are the order of the day. The responsibility of the Communist movement for the future of the world is growing since the socialist countries have come up with comprehensive new peace initiatives which have won broad support and since ways and means of countering the nuclear threat are growing more important in the general democratic struggles of the mass of people.

Exchanges of views on issues related to the assertion in the Communist movement of new approaches to the development of socialism and the class and national liberation struggles featured prominently at the symposium and the next *WMR* issue will carry a review of that discussion.

The European Left: New Incentives For Cooperation

Solving the problem of effective cooperation among different currents of the working class movement and of the Left is of considerable importance for the strengthening of peace, advancement of democracy, and the socialist perspective in Western Europe. The Communists should play a major role in the attainment of this goal by undertaking constructive efforts, advancing new bold initiatives and displaying readiness for dialogue with a wide spectrum of democratic forces. Indeed, such efforts are being made — for example, within the framework of the Euroleft concept in whose elaboration the Italian Communists have been active.

What does the Euroleft mean? On what basis and in which forms and spheres could cooperation of the forces comprising it develop? *WMR* put these questions to **Gianni Cervetti**, member of the Italian Communist Party Leadership and Chairman of the Communist faction in the European Parliament, and to representatives of several West European communist parties who took part in a round table held in Prague on communist-social democratic relations in the struggle for peace.¹ Taking part in the discussion were **Jan Debrouwere**, Political Bureau member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belgium; **Gunnar Jorgensen**, Central Committee staff member of the Communist Party of Denmark; **Kurt Schacht**, staff member of the Board of the German Communist Party; **Bert Ramelson**, representative of the Communist Party of Great Britain on *WMR*; and **Maud Sundquist**, International Secretary of the Left Party — Communists of Sweden.

This is what they told us.

There Is No Other Way

Gianni Cervetti — member of Leadership, Italian Communist Party (ICP); chairman of the Communist faction, European Parliament

There are different interpretations of the concept of the European Left. What is the ICP approach?

AS was stated at our 17th Congress in April 1986, the Italian Communist Party is an integral part of the European Left. We see the Euroleft as a composite entity comprising, first and foremost, the traditional parties of the working class and democratic movement with all their differences and in all their diversity, as well as other major movements — trade union, cooperative, peace, environmentalist and women's — together with the youth associations and cultural organisations.

This attitude shapes our efforts to promote European Left unity. Our approach is prompted by the important changes that are under way in European, particularly West European society, by actual problems and by the tasks their solution poses before individual Left currents. Besides, according to our concept, the Left is not a monolithic structure but an aggregate of autonomous components which, acting jointly, can lead the process of European renovation.

We are all aware that the West European press of different political orientation often questions the feasibility of European Left unity — usually citing the fact that even at the national level, say, in Italy, the Communists and the Socialists are not on the best terms.

Yes, we are familiar with scepticism of this sort. I would like to make several points in this connection. First, as far as the prospects of social development are concerned, the ICP sees no other way except broad European Left unity. Take a closer look and you will see that Europe (here and throughout the interview Gianni Cervetti refers to Western Europe — *Ed.*) is going through a fascinating political confrontation. It is becoming increasingly clear that although the conservative forces still hold their ground and retain their ties, they are losing their ability to respond to the fundamental demands of society, and their leading role in it is almost at an end. In these circumstances, European renovation inevitably becomes the mission of the Left. This is why we want the European Left to draw up a consistent plan of practical action to be taken both within and outside the

Giovanni (Gianni) Cervetti (b. 1933) is an economist by training. He joined the ICP in 1950, worked in the Italian Communist Youth Federation and, in 1970, became a member of the ICP Central Committee and its Economic and Social Commission and first secretary of the Milan Federation of the ICP. Gianni Cervetti was elected to the city council. He served as a member of the ICP Secretariat from 1975 to July 1979 and in October 1976 joined the ICP Leadership. He has been chairman of the Communist faction in the European Parliament since June 1984.

Europarliament on certain issues, beginning with the global problems of security, disarmament, environmental protection and economic development, and including questions of employment, government institutions and political structures, supranational structures among them.

At the same time, the ICP is aware of the grave difficulties the Left and progressive forces are now facing. We see the scope of the agonising developments in their midst, of the differences and divisions which are not only traditional but also connected with current realities. Still, I repeat that there is no other way.

Second, as far as we can conclude, certain changes have occurred favouring rapprochement and understanding within the Left in Europe as a whole — although not in individual countries. One should not regard this development as an attempt to anticipate events or shirk one's responsibility to one's nation. We insist that the problems arising before the Left should be tackled on the national scale too, and we do not cite the European example to justify inaction with regard to relations between, say, the ICP and the Italian Socialist Party. One must stress, however, that the emergence of opportunities for rapprochement within the Left at the European level was not accidental. They have arisen because many problems have now become supranational and can be solved only within the European, not national context. A course confined to a single country cannot help the solution of such problems.

My third point concerns the question of clearly defining the unity we are discussing. One can simply reduce it to a removal of policy differences, the way you use an eraser to wipe out the diversity of different positions. But we need a concept of unity reflecting as fully as possible the demands and structures of a society that is made up of many components. We also hope that to a certain extent, differences may encourage greater openness instead of isolation and mirror the diversity which is typical of the complex phenomenon of the European Left. What we need is unity in diversity.

You have mentioned the Europarliament as a promising venue of Left cooperation. In this connection we would appreciate some details about the work of the Communist faction you chair.

The European Parliament is a forum which not only represents various forces but also reflects their correlation and arrangement — what the ICP calls the political configuration of Europe as a community of 12 nations. Looking at the European Parliament from this angle, we see it as an essential element of practical Left cooperation.

The parliament has 518 seats, and 48 members make up the Communist faction which also includes 'fellow travellers' (those members of parliament who have joined the Communists in a political alliance). The national composition of the faction is as follows: 26 from Italy, ten from France, four from Greece (three from the Communist Party of Greece and one from the New Left), three from Portugal, three from Spain, and two from Denmark, representing the Danish Socialist People's Party.

As all other factions, ours functions on a supranational basis. But it displays certain salient features I would like to emphasise. One is that the

national groups comprising the faction enjoy autonomy and can take independent decisions on matters discussed by the Europarlament. A related distinctive feature is that before a decision is taken, the groups conduct an intensive exchange of information and views.

The working bodies of the faction — its presidium and standing secretariat — hold regular meetings at which representatives of the national components maintain contracts and exchange information. In some commissions of the Europarlament there are Communists who are in charge of coordinating joint action. The faction convenes meetings attended by all its members.

There are matters on which there are differences and even divisions within our faction — primarily, with regard to the role and status of Europe, specifically, the EEC. Aside from such differences there are, of course, areas where the views of the national components converge — above all, on concrete social, economic and international issues. For example, there is understanding on questions of peace, disarmament, security and North-South relations.

It would be appropriate to stress at this point that there are different views and attitudes and even divergent positions in every parliamentary faction. This is an offshoot of a very lengthy process in which an ability to take supranational decisions is developing.

What about the Communist faction's relations with the other Left forces represented in the Europarlament?

With due regard for all positions and for common views on individual issues, we try to promote a joint approach not only within the faction of the Communists and 'fellow travellers' but also throughout the left forces represented in the parliament — primarily, the Socialist group from various socialist, social democratic and labour parties, as well as the group of environmentalists. This means that the Left has a total of more than 230 seats. In some cases these members receive support from representatives of other progressive groups such as the Portuguese Democratic Renovation Party.

There have recently been several cases in which the Left demonstrated a common approach within the Europarlament, mainly in two areas. One covers various specific issues, both international and socio-economic. I would note the positive significance of resolutions supporting the 'zero option' with regard to the missiles in Europe and condemning the 'star wars' programme. Quite recently, our initiatives advocating better relations between the EEC and the CMEA, Eastern and Western Europe, as well as North and South have won widespread support. All these resolutions are of special significance for the Europarlament which is a democratic and representative forum.

The other area where our views converge concerns distinctive questions relating to the development of the European community and to the institutional reforms within it. Interestingly, most Left members of the Europarlament are often backed on these issues by moderate Centrists and Liberals.

I would like to conclude by stressing that our activities are invariably aimed at ensuring the broadest possible unanimity among all democratic forces — a unanimity which would represent a more impressive majority capable of securing effective results. We should therefore work to make the voice of the Europarlament really heard by all. We believe that the Europarlament is not simply a place to air one's views but a forum where political will is taking shape. This political will will exert an influence on actual developments within the European community so as to bring about a progressive turn of events.

The European Left

Jan Debrouwere. I would like to begin by recalling a negative experience we have had. The term 'Euroleft' was coined by the Italian Communists. What comes to mind in this connection is the sad case of 'Eurocommunism'. Without going into detail, let me say that this phenomenon appeared when talk began about the need for the Communists to pay greater attention to new realities. That was an attitude consonant with the needs of many parties. But then the discussion swerved in a different direction — that of keeping at a distance from the socialist countries. In other words, instead of promoting discussions that were so necessary within and among the parties, this debate created grave difficulties in several communist parties and even led to controversies and splits within their ranks. And after we sustained considerable losses by exposing our differences in the eyes of the whole world, we had to abandon the term 'Eurocommunism'.

This case warns us against plunging into any debate on terms and concepts without first defining what this or that term means. I, personally, would not want a discussion of the 'Euroleft' to follow the old pattern. The CPB believes that we should study in depth what must be done in this or that sphere, with due regard for what is happening before our very eyes.

In 1986 a meeting was held in Brussels at which several communist parties discussed the issue of the 'Euroleft'. It was an interesting discussion which, however, showed that one could lapse again into the danger of this or that term becoming a fetish. This is why I believe that we must begin by examining the gist of the problem, by trying and answering, boldly and undogmatically, the question of what we mean by the Left and why its unity is necessary.

One cannot fail to note that in recent years, there have emerged in many West European countries forces which advance various, even socialist-type alternatives for solving the pressing problems of capitalist society. These initiatives are put forth by certain quarters of environmentalist movements and by the so-called left socialist parties which have emerged in several countries. I am not referring to Trotskyist or Maoist groups, although they have had a role in Belgium, primarily in Flanders (and the Maoists are active to this day).

The plurality of the Left movement is seen particularly clearly in the Netherlands where, in addition to the socialist (Labour Party) and communist parties, there are two other Left organisations active — the Pacifist Socialist Party and the Radical Political Party. However, all attempts at establishing cooperation between them have so far ended in failure.

In Belgium, most of the anti-missile and of the organised labour movement and the numerous international solidarity groups can be described as existing outside the Left. They are influenced by the Christian quarters. Any form of political cooperation, any drive to attain this or that progressive objective should take this distinctive national feature into account.

Even this cursory analysis shows how necessary unity is. But unity for the sake of what? What can we offer to these forces? I think we could speak about the autonomy of Western Europe from the United States, about a search for new forms of cooperation between socialist and capitalist Europe, about the struggle against the crisis, about terminating the arms race, about cooperation and solidarity with the Third World countries.

Other issues also merit attention — for example, those on which Left groups, organisations and movements could reach agreement today and in future. Or consider the political changes that have to take place (not only for winning parliamentary majorities) in order to arrive at a type of society which, while reflecting the distinctive features of Western Europe, would differ from capitalism, would be more just and develop along a path leading to socialism. Many other issues could be added to these, but even on the basis of what I have outlined, one could work out ideas that would promote confidence, not sow illusions.

Bert Ramelson. It is important to remember that broad Left unity has always been the objective of the international communist movement despite occasional outbreaks of sectarian politics. But what we are dealing with is the present. I think it is perfectly legitimate to raise the question of European Left unity. It is true that at times we encounter what I would call a wrong interpretation of this concept — for example, talk about the emergence of a single European state, or about the transformation of the EEC into some sort of a federal state. If I remember correctly, that is the strategic goal of the Italian Communist Party which holds that European Left unity will make it possible to create a 'Left Europe'.

There are also other interpretations. Specifically, some maintain that today the law of uneven development no longer applies, and come to the conclusion that it is impossible to transform the social system within a single country. Hopes are pinned on the unity of the working class throughout Western Europe. One cannot agree with that. Obviously, different countries are developing at different rates, and one can hardly hope to arrive at a juncture at which the working class movement attains the same level of maturity everywhere.

We should also admit that over the past five to ten years certain changes have occurred which have enabled the Communists to take a fresh look at many issues, including the potential of the democratic forces. Without

going into detail, I will only note the changes I consider particularly important.

First, the scientific and technological revolution is leading to changes within the working class. Categories of workers engaged mostly in non-manual work, having better conditions than their fellow manual workers, have increased. Second, the double oppression has severely aggravated, certainly in Britain, the conditions of special sections of the population, such as women, youth and ethnic minorities. Third, new and distinctive movements have arisen against this background, fighting racism, for equal opportunities for women, or for youth rights, in an attempt to link their own problems with those of society as a whole. Some in these movements have remained at the level of their specific demands; while others have managed to set themselves higher goals.

We are thus dealing with objective factors which indicate that there are new opportunities for furthering Left unity and promoting alliances. I doubt that it is now feasible to devise organisational forms for European Left unity, but I accept the feasibility of understanding and cooperation around issues of peace, human rights, women's emancipation, Europe's independence of the United States and the like.

Maud Sundquist. Unless I am mistaken, the ICP now interprets the concept of the 'Euroleft' more broadly than before. At its latest congress it stated the need for contacts with Left movements in the United States, Japan and Australia as possible partners in joint action.

I think we should begin by deciding which objectives we will pursue in the course of such cooperation. Our party holds that there are many areas where we could work together — in preventing nuclear war, combating the threat to the environment or restricting the domination of the TNCs in the economics of various countries.

Gunnar Jorgensen. Indeed, we need unity among the various left movements in Western Europe. But our experience tells us that there must be a force which, after analysing all aspects of the problem, would take care of the organisational aspect of the effort. I think that this force can emerge from cooperation among the communist parties of Western Europe. I do not believe that discussion of various issues is enough. We should take joint action on the more topical problems of the day.

Jan Debrouwere. Frankly, I see this issue as one of the most important ones. It would perhaps be overambitious to speak of the Communists' contribution to European Left unity at a time when there is friction even in relations among the communist parties themselves. I would like to mention only one example to show how much we are hampered by the absence of close cooperation.

In July 1986 the Belgian branch of Michelin closed its factory, dismissing some 1,000 workers.² This move shook the country: there was debate in parliament, there were critical articles in the press, there were demonstrations, and those who were threatened with lay-offs occupied their factories. Nevertheless, the Michelin plant was closed. Our party had a small but well-organised group there, and it maintained contacts with all trade unions in the industry. Through it we learned that there had been neither economic nor financial reasons for the closure. The factory had

been regarded as economically perfectly sound. But the fateful decision was taken at the headquarters of the Michelin transnational in Clermont-Ferrand, France. Michelin had tried to penetrate the US market, lost the battle and had to close some of its branch plants — in Britain, Spain and Belgium.

In early August 1986 a party assignment took me to Paris. The French comrades took me to a meeting with the leaders of the FCP section at the Michelin factory in Clermont-Ferrand. There I learned that the plans to close the Belgian branch had been known in France long before they were communicated to the management in our country. If we had learned about this in time, we could have launched a broad political campaign in Belgium. The French comrades supported my view that the tradition of exchanging information between communist parties had disappeared, and that this adversely affected our work.

Then the CPB sponsored a working meeting in Brussels, attended by several communist parties from those European countries where Michelin had its branches — from Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Spain and the Communist faction in the European Parliament. All participants agreed that similar developments should be prevented from recurring and that communist parties should find more effective ways of exchanging information. Although some parties hold different views and even disagree on certain problems for both objective and subjective reasons, I am sure that this need not prevent them from jointly discussing problems and from cooperating in their solution.

As one of the participants in the Brussels meeting said, when the Michelin management needs to discuss something with the branches, the director general boards a plane and flies straight to Tokyo or, say, South Africa. But it took the Communists six weeks to convene a meeting of parties, separated by a distance of 1,000 kilometres or less. Improved, specific and more efficient cooperation of communist parties would no doubt yield political benefits and contribute to joint action by the European Left.

Kurt Schacht. The issue of such unity is important to our country too. Significantly, the social democratic leadership is also showing an interest in it. Peter Glotz, the SDPG's Federal Secretary, has even written a book about the European Left in which he emphasises the need for cooperation — but, obviously, on a reformist basis. Joint action with Marxist-Leninist parties is ruled out from the outset. We do not believe that this kind of concept can help in the discharge of the tasks the working class movement of Western Europe are facing. But the very fact that this question has been raised by the Social Democrats proves that it is a topical issue — for three reasons.

First, the exacerbation of the international situation. Second, the aggravation of the crisis afflicting the capitalist system and, in particular, the situation of the working people. Third, increasingly concerted action by international capital to suppress the struggle of the working class, the communist movement and all other progressive forces.

In my opinion, there is not only a need but also increased opportunities for joint action by the West European Left: witness, first and foremost, the

current upsurge in the activity of mass peace and democratic movements there (at the national level, they already demonstrate cooperation among the Left); the efforts to defend the social rights of the working people in the capitalist countries; the struggle against mass unemployment; the serious changes within the social democratic and socialist parties despite the contradictions inherent in this process; and the growing solidarity with the liberation movements.

Cooperation is also developing within the trade unions and particularly within the peace movement where distinctive forms of concerted action have arisen. For example, the large-scale demonstration held in Hasselbach, FRG, on October 11, 1986 (200,000 people) was attended by representatives from the Scandinavian countries, Britain, the United States and the Netherlands. These are the sproutings of unity which we should continue to cultivate. Left forces also show a degree of cooperation within the European Parliament. The GCP attaches considerable significance to the joint initiatives of its Left members who have repeatedly denounced the practice of bans on occupations for political reasons in the Federal Republic.

On the whole, however, the current level of joint action by the European Left still falls short of the new opportunities. We ascribe this chiefly to the inadequate ties among communist parties, and here I echo what has been said earlier. I think it is time to develop and enhance such cooperation.

West European communist parties hold many joint workshops and discussions, but that is still a far cry from what we need. I personally am irked by the fact that there is better cooperation among the Social Democrats and Socialists in Western Europe and elsewhere than among communist parties. We have nothing to rival the Socialist International, and this form of cooperation is not even on the agenda. The GCP maintains that complaints about this situation are not enough; what we need is to use every opportunity for correcting it and forging ahead.

The basis for cooperation among communist parties has been objectively expanding in recent years. First and foremost, we can fight together for stopping the stationing of the US missiles, for having those already in place dismantled, for the elimination of all medium-range missiles in Europe, and for agreements to limit conventional arsenals. Cooperation could also be aimed at promoting the ties between Europe's capitalist and socialist countries, particularly in the economic sphere, culture and environmental protection; and it should be expanded to cover the struggle for the social rights of the working people, against the conservative forces, against mass unemployment and new poverty, and for a promising future for our youth.

But cooperation can only develop if all partners have a stake in it, if differences are discussed honestly and openly, and if common goals and interests are in the limelight. I think our discussion has demonstrated the feasibility of such an approach.

Editor's Note. As one can see from the views expressed, European Left unity evokes great theoretical and, most importantly, practical interest in the West European communist movement. Remarkable approaches,

different proposals and new ideas are being put forward, and they need to be discussed and tested in practice. *WMR* hopes that comrades from other fraternal parties will take part in discussing these issues in our journal.

¹ See 'Working Together to Build a European Edifice', *WMR*, No. 5, 1987. — *Ed.*

² See *WMR*, No. 4, 1987, pp. 62-70. — *Ed.*

the party

Strategy of Revolutionary Change

Following The Road Of Change To The Socialist Perspective

Grigoris Faracos — Political Bureau
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THE Communists and the other left forces of the Western world, where the foundations of capitalism still hold in spite of its general crisis, are faced with the question of a realistic road to socialist transformations at the current stage of social development. This issue in the context of the specific conditions of Greece was examined profoundly and, we think, audaciously and in the spirit of Marxist-Leninist dialectics and a new mode of political thinking, at the 12th Congress of our party, held in May 1987. It is primarily for this reason that the Congress became a signal event on the national scene (which is admitted even by the Communists' opponents, including right-wing forces) and that its resolutions remain the focus of pointed debates.

Before the party's strategy as endorsed by the Congress is presented in detail, it should be stressed that the point in case is not some 'new' or 'third' way to socialism, for which the social reformists grope in vain and which in practice means nothing short of the modernisation of capitalism with a view to its perpetuation. No, we see a real socialist future for Greece, and we are urging it and fighting for it. In doing so, we draw fresh strength and learn sound theoretical and practical lessons from the qualitative renewal of socialist society in the USSR and some other countries, renewal which adds to the appeal of socialism for the working people the world over.

So what were the conclusions and resolutions made by our Congress in this context? What has made the Communists' strategy so emphatically combative today?

Perceptible changes are afoot in Greek society, antagonisms keep aggravating, and it has become clear that the situation cannot be allowed to continue and that the country has reached a crucial crossroads. The ever-stronger manifestations of *the economic and social effects* of the crisis are explained to a large extent by the country's multifaceted dependence on the imperialist centres and by its subservience to EEC policy. Contrary to the Government's statements, the two-year 'stabilisation' programme (1985-1987), which has actually meant tough pressure on the living standards of the working people, has, far from lessening, increased the foreign indebtedness and failed to reach its other objectives. (Meanwhile, the working people's living standards, as the government admits, have in the two years dropped by 13-14 per cent.) Foreign indebtedness grows faster than the national product and will exceed the 17 billion dollars mark in 1987. Inflation will remain around 15 per cent this year as well. The GDP grows by less than one per cent a year, investment keeps shrinking and mass unemployment, swelling like a cancerous tumour, has now reached some ten per cent of the economically active population. The gap between the working people's needs and the opportunities offered by the scientific and technological revolution and the continuous internationalisation of the economy, on the one hand, and the inability of dependent state-monopoly capitalism to resolve these intertwined problems, on the other, is growing wider and becoming more and more obvious and intolerable. At the same time the base of the forces of social protest which, in spite of their differences, all have an interest in radical changes, keeps broadening. The core of those forces is the working class, accounting for roughly one-half of the economically active population.

The *political sphere* also is a scene of a strong clash between the opposite factors and tendencies. As Greece gravitates towards capitalist Europe, where conservatism has reached its zenith, the government grows more authoritarian, the democratic gains are docked and the trade union movement comes under pressure. The dominant class is engaged in strenuous attempts to retain the two-party system in the belief that it helps preserve the old system today, and to subvert the very idea of transformations in the interests of the working people. Although in foreign policy the government has taken a well-known positive stand and launched initiatives for détente and peace, on the whole it remains here, too, in the straightjacket of imperialist dependence. Political realities therefore continue to dispel the illusions which a part of the working people have been entertaining. Clearly, the policy of the PASOK government does not at all involve change and the masses are prompted by reality itself, the imperative of struggle for transformations, for other forms of social organisation and for a new policy.

In contributing to the development of positive processes and to the cohesion of the broad left and progressive forces, the Communist Party of Greece does more than merely criticise the PASOK government's policy. It also exposes the policy pursued by the opposition New Democracy

Party, the chief exponent of the interests of the monopoly oligarchy, which actually offers the same old course against the working people and the interests of the country while attacking PASOK ever more stridently on minor issues.

At the same time we link the development of the working class and popular movement, the party's growing role and the increasing appeal of its ideas primarily to the formulation of *an alternative programme* of social transformations. This scientific and realistic programme, which the working people understand and care for, is aimed at switching society to qualitatively new tracks of development. The 12th Congress made a great contribution to its development by drawing general conclusions from the theoretical quests and practical experiences of the entire party: suffice it to say that about 150,000 people had participated in discussing the theses for the Congress at hundreds of meetings.

The first direction of this programme requires a foreign policy which will give Greece a new role in today's world. It will rest on non-involvement in military alliances, meaning withdrawal from NATO, primarily from its military wing, the removal of foreign military bases and nuclear weapons from our territory and an active contribution towards peace and disarmament. Dependence can be shed, furthermore, through an economic policy which will be based on national control over the developmental capacity of the country and its programmed utilisation, over the operations of foreign capital, and also on the build-up of the domestic scientific, technical and productive base. All this will provide a framework for revising the terms of repayment of the foreign debt, which is a drain on the Greek economy, for broadening the reorientation of the country's economic relations towards the socialist world, and for stepping up efforts to neutralise the effects of EEC membership and eventually to take Greece out of the Common Market, which is essential to national democratic planning.

The second direction will offer a way out of the crisis to the advantage of the people and open the road to deeper socio-economic changes. Development of a new type presupposes the implementation of a long-term reconstruction plan to revitalise the country's production potential, boost the retooling of industry, agriculture and the services, make for the establishment of new industries and the modernisation of the traditional ones, and help reshape crop patterns to meet the needs of farmers and the national economy as a whole. Once the public sector has drastically transformed its content and functions under the control and with the participation of the working people, it can and must cease to be a channel for draining profits away to be passed to big private capital, a mechanism for fusion with the monopolies and an organ for the granting of favours, and become the main lever promoting new planned development. The cooperatives of farmers and local government organisations will also make a substantial contribution to this development. Joint ventures, primarily with socialist and Third World countries, and also, on certain conditions, with capitalist states, will play a meaningful role in the economic process. All this will help increase employment, redistribute the national income in favour of the working people, improve the living

standards of the masses, expand the social security system and resolve the problems of health care, education and environmental protection.

The third direction, the all-round democratisation of the social life, is inseparable from the country's further advance on the road of independence and progress. As we see it, the chief point here is for the people to play a practical role in making and carrying out decisions both in production, especially at nationalised enterprises and in democratic planning, and at the local level. To this end effective institutions will be established to promote such participation and forms of direct democracy will be developed on the shop floor, in place of residence and schools to give substance to the activity, initiative and combative spirit of the people. Another point is the democratisation of the state machine, real democratic decentralisation, greater public accountability and openness, and a bigger role for parliament, which now takes the back seat to the executive branch. Naturally, our basic concern is respect for the rights and freedoms of the people, constitutional and democratic legality, freedom and equal opportunities for the mass of people to express their will and the introduction of the simple proportional electoral system.

The congress stressed that this course of closely interrelated and interdependent changes, naturally, did not constitute a general law of revolutionary transition to socialism. The Programme of the Communist Party of Greece says, *inter alia*: "Greece will reach socialism by means of a united revolutionary process which will include two stages of revolutionary transformations which will be closely bound together — though each one has its precisely specified characteristic features — an anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, democratic stage and a socialist one." The changes we discuss here will take the country on the road of national independence, economic and social development of a new type, democratisation and comprehensive assistance to the struggle for international peace and security. Struggle will get under way for the implementation of a programme of transformation and also for state political power. Changes therefore can mark a stage of the single revolutionary process of transition to socialism as outlined in the CPG Programme. That is why they tend to acquire strategic importance.

In Greece today, however, the road of change towards **socialism** has become *an imperative stemming from the needs of our society*. This road, offering concrete and drastic solutions to outstanding problems, is the Communists' clear-cut answer to the concerns and needs of the people. Also, it builds a strategic bridge, as it were, to the next stage of progress towards our socialist goal. It stands to reason that we cannot squeeze the projected progress into a simplistic formula. One can hardly predict at which point in the series of class battles all power will change hands and a qualitative leap will thus be made in the revolutionary process of transition to a new, socialist system. The chief point here is the dialectic dynamics of this process, of social and political shifts and of the alignment of forces.

Our party, as its congress demonstrated, considers the *establishment of an alliance of the left and progressive forces* to be the decisive condition of success in the course of change and in overcoming difficulties and the resistance of class enemies. Such an alliance is not an abstract idea or the

Communists' wish but a ripe need of Greek society. A number of left parties and movements, though yet small, are active alongside the Communist Party in the country. Moreover, some left and other progressive personalities have been attracting non-affiliated Greeks, who unite around them. Real steps towards cooperation with them and the pooling of efforts have already been taken in practice in the trade unions, at the latest parliamentary and municipal elections, in action for the simple proportional electoral system and the democratisation of the mass media, and in the peace movement. It is the imperative of our time to raise this cooperation to a new level, to make it more general and to put it on a regular basis. We consider it essential continuously to exchange views and openly to conduct dialogue on the basic issues of social development to achieve rapprochement, understanding and trust in our relations so that *a common programme of the left forces could be drawn up*.

Who will play first fiddle in an alliance united around such a programme? This question is mere speculation. Our aim is *a coalition of equal independent allies* rather than our own pre-eminence. It is those who will advance change in the social life with greater energy, consistency and effect that will be in the vanguard.

Our proposals for an alliance of all those ready to work for a policy of change towards the socialist perspective is addressed primarily not to the upper echelons of political parties but to those public forces which are seeking to open new ways before the country. It is first and foremost in their midst that an alliance should be forged and strengthened. This is not to say, of course, that we will not do what we can and make initiatives for a 'summit' link-up. A part of the people are not yet ready to rally around the Communists' proposals. Opinions differ; then let there be political debates and even clashes of ideas. We will not dilute our wine with water, as the Greek proverb has it, but will stand up for our principles and work in the mass movements, keeping in touch with the real needs of the working people and protecting their interests. Practice and the tests to which it will put various views will show what better meets the needs of society. It is only in this way that *a truly broad front of change oriented to state power* can be formed.

The question of power is known to be the key issue in revolutionary battles. The struggles waged in Greece against imperialism and the monopolies by the social and political forces advocating change, the CPG believes, should be aimed at winning government and then political power. Naturally, this calls for radical changes in society, including a greater guiding role for the working class, a closer alliance of all those who stand for change, a weakening of the positions of the monopolistic oligarchy, and a narrowing of the social base of those political circles which serve its interests.

The class character of the state in the period of transition was a subject of debates in the run-up to the Congress and at the Congress itself. We approach the issue dialectically and are yet to do more theoretical work here. We understand anyway that the rise of the left forces to power will not mean an automatic drastic change of the class nature of the state, and that it will remain bourgeois for some time to come. Change is preparing

the ground for a transitional state, for the democratisation of its institutions and for their consistent use to promote new reforms along socialist lines. Moreover, this will be done not just 'from above', but primarily through reliance on the broad-based popular movement because only pressure by the popular masses guarantees a continuous revolutionary process.

What is needed to achieve our goals — and the 12th Congress was unanimous on that point, too — is primarily *a qualitatively new level of the party* and its entire work. In the past few years our party has grown stronger, replenished its ranks, broadened its influence, developed a system of grassroot organisations and gained ground in the mass movement. It has won over to its side more friends and supporters. The CPG has been effectively countering the government's policy, which is becoming increasingly conservative. A revolutionary party, however, should take a critical view of itself: it cannot be happy with little or sit back and enjoy what it has achieved. It is therefore clear that, although we have made some progress, we have not yet achieved a qualitative improvement in our work and that the objective needs of the struggle for change are growing faster. We can no longer work solely in a traditional way, relying on old standards, but have to adopt new criteria or, as the congress noted, take exams in new, more complex problems. This holds both for the senior cadres and for all the Communists, who are to be combative, innovative and responsible fighters in our joint struggle rather than onlookers or mere executors of directives.

Especially stringent demands are being made today to *organisational, ideological and political work, which provides broad public support for advance towards change*. It is important to ask ourselves over and over again if the working class, other working people, women, youth, all the progressive forces see themselves and their interests reflected in our words, proposals, slogans and actions. It is possible to get an objective picture of social interests, which is so needed effectively to influence mass consciousness, only from a continuous analysis of socio-political developments, opinion polls and streamlined information feedback so that the 'aerials' of party organisations should be finely tuned to the pulsebeat of life and to shifts in the mood and conduct of the masses.

But our principles of giving concrete answers to the needs and requests of the working people, the congress noted, should not be understood in the sense that we take in and stand for all the demands made by them regardless of whether this contributes to progress and change and to the consolidation of the unity of the working class and the entire left front. 'Appeasement' of various groups or even social strata can only harm the education of the masses and the promotion of their political awareness while fleeting sympathies in no way add to the prestige of a revolutionary party. But even when demands which do not contribute to the movement for change are made, it is of course necessary to explain our position and reasoning in direct dialogue with the parties concerned; this also constitutes a component of the new mode of thinking and a real and democratic means of influencing public opinion.

Generally speaking, our desire to put across the needs that arise in

society does not at all mean that the Communists would like to stand above society as a supreme omniscient umpire. It is no accident that the congress made this point: in the practice of our organisations there were occasional distortions of the party's relations with the working people, which put constraints on its leading role and the growth of its prestige. What is meant is isolated manifestations of conceit and arrogance, a lack of flexibility, the hectoring style of conducting dialogue and the mistaken sense of patronage over the masses. *Practical democracy must be a rule in the life and social and political work of the Communists and the extension of public openness a law of our struggle.*

Much importance was attached in this context to inner-party democracy, including the continuous replenishment of the CPG ranks, primarily with workers, the style of leadership in the central and local bodies, the growing role, initiative and activity of the primary organisations, and a rise in the ideological maturity of the Communists. The congress noted specifically that the life of the party organisations would grow richer if they established more meaningful relations with our supporters, left fighters and all the working people with an interest in the party's positions and resolutions, and maintain these relations on a regular basis rather than occasionally, during elections and other important political campaigns. It is worthwhile, for instance, to give a try to public reports to the people both on the problems of the Communists' overall policies and on the work of our organisations in areas close to their social milieu. Let people speak their minds as to how they perceive and judge us, i.e., the party's life and concerns are directly related to the working class and the other working people, who constitute the party's mass base.

The extension of ideological work, which is still affected to some extent by a narrow utilitarian approach and abstract theorising, has a serious role to play in the system of measures promoting the CPG's course of change. To rectify these drawbacks, it is important to involve a broader segment of our cadres in the effort and to upgrade their general educational and cultural level. "We want to have activists and party intellectuals who are seeking to elevate to their level all the party members, and party members who are seeking to master our revolutionary scientific theory and elevate themselves to the level of scientific intellectuals," the Central Committee noted in its report to the congress. The party forum called upon the communist scholars boldly and creatively to enrich Marxist-Leninist theory and methods, concentrating primarily on a comprehensive study of the tendencies and prospects of the advance of Greek society in today's world, and on an analysis of problems related to a new type of development and our positions on socialism with due regard for national specific features. We are ready to cooperate with all the left and progressive intellectuals, to hold with them open scientific discussions on these problems and rise to our responsibility for the future of the country.

The strategic line of socialist-oriented change makes it incumbent upon the Communists further to close their ranks, to display the spirit of innovation and vigilantly to guard our Marxist-Leninist internationalist principles. We are full of optimism and have a strong party potential, namely, a sound policy, an efficient organisation and tested cadres. If all

this is brought into play, the resolutions of the 12th CPG Congress will doubtless be implemented and we shall have every reason to say aloud what is in our minds today: this congress will become an historic landmark for Greece and her people.

Noteworthy Statistics

The 12th CPG Congress was attended by delegations from 76 Communist, workers' and revolutionary-democratic parties and organisations.

Altogether 587 voting and 190 non-voting delegates were present at the supreme party forum; more than half were in the 30 to 40 age group.

As many as 92 delegates had participated in the National Resistance Movement during the Nazi occupation of Greece; 129 delegates had been imprisoned or exiled under reactionary regimes for a total of 1,280 years.

Leaders of 15 other political parties of the country, including the two largest — PASOK and the New Democracy Party — delivered addresses of greetings at the CPG Congress.

Work With People Is The Basis Of Party Activity

Kim Guk Thae — CC member,
Workers' Party of Korea

IN order to strengthen and develop the working class party and enable it to carry on its activity successfully, it is highly important to determine the correct basis of party work. All the problems can be tackled and political guidance of the revolution and socialist construction fully ensured only with clear-cut reference points in this area.

The WPK made a scientific analysis of the character and tasks of the working class party and the crucial role of human factor in the historical process, and summed up its own experience in the long and hard anti-Japanese revolutionary struggle to define the key principle of party development: in its political guidance of the society as a whole, it has to lay emphasis on work with people. The history of our struggle is the way travelled by the WPK.¹ It has always regarded the principle as the paramount one, and that has made its political guidance of every sphere of life a success.

WPK CC General Secretary Kim Il Sung says: "From its very first day, our party determined that work with people is the basis of party activity,

Kim Guk Thae was born in 1924 into the family of a revolutionary. He worked on a farm from an early age, but after the country's liberation in 1945 received a higher education. He was deputy and then head of a WPK CC department, went on responsible diplomatic missions as his country's ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary. He has been a member of the WPK CC since 1970. He is a deputy of the Supreme People's Assembly (parliament). He now heads the CC's Party Organisational Work Department.

and it has solved all the problems in party development by carrying on such activity."²

Our task is to strengthen the WPK's ranks, enhance its militancy and leading role, and rally the masses for the attainment of revolutionary goals.

The work of political organisation for the revolutionary education and organisational unity of our people in conscious participation in the struggle and the building of the new society is regarded by the party as the central one, for that is the way all arising problems can be solved.

Attention to people as the cornerstone principle of party development is based on the philosophical idea of *juche*, which says that man is the master of all things, and everything depends on him, an idea which is essential to the working class party.

Man is the strongest and most developed being, and is the master of the world and of his own destiny. He acts purposefully and vigorously to transform the world according to his own goals: he subdues nature and improves the society, creates material wealth and develops culture. As a social being, man, therefore, has independence, a capacity to creative effort, and consciousness, and he is the sole lord and transformer of the globe.

The popular masses are the subject of history and the motive force of social development. There can be no social movement in isolation from the masses, and there can be no historical progress without the people's active role.

Work with people is the basic method by means of which the working class party conducts its course. WPK policy is an expression of the working people's will, and its basic requirement is to stand up for the interests of the masses and their right to independent action, to educate and unite our citizens and to induce them to conscious and active participation in the revolutionary struggle.

The party is not in any sense an almighty organ of administration, but it is a political educator and organiser. The formation of the party and of the revolutionary ranks, and the raising of its militancy and its leading role as the headquarters of the revolution are successful when emphasis in party work is laid on work with people and when the tasks of political organisation are correctly fulfilled.

Accordingly, the WPK is opposed to administration by order and decree, to the pragmatic and narrow-minded approach to party work, and makes a point of consulting with the people and relying on the masses whenever it begins and carries on any important endeavour.

The party believes that its purpose is to educate the people in the communist spirit and to rally WPK cadre workers, members and other working people so as to ensure the success of the revolution and of socialist construction.

It carries on such activity among the workers of factories and plants, in agricultural and fishing cooperatives, schools and research institutions. For instance, the party committee of the Kim Chaek metallurgical association, one of the largest enterprises in the country, carries on its political work to develop socialist emulation for fuller use of capacities, and the smooth running of production, exemplary maintenance of machine-tools, and

undeviating fulfilment of daily and monthly assignments. The result has been marked growth in output and product quality.

Cadres are the backbone of the party and the command corps of the revolution. The party is formed by uniting round its core, and all its activity depends on the role its cadres have to play. One could say, therefore, that everything depends on the cadres.

High demands are made on the cadres, who must be boundlessly loyal to the party, morally pure and efficient, and such are the well-trying and well-proved men and women who make up the WPK.

Much attention is given to raising the cadres' revolutionary consciousness. Man tends to change in the course of his entire life, and as metal tends to corrode in the presence of acids, so man may lose his positive qualities and eventually move away from the revolutionary ranks without constant educational influence and under the impact of hostile ideology. That is why the WPK seeks to prevent the ideological degeneration of its cadres by intensifying its educational work, so as to fortify their strength of dedication to the cause of the party and the revolution, their firm militant resolve and revolutionary enthusiasm.

The party is cemented by raising the cadre's political and efficiency standards as the crucial condition for the fulfilment of their chief role as commanders of the revolution.

We in our party have a system under which every cadre spends one day a week in party study, while leading cadres spend a month every year at the party school. There are, besides, six-month retraining courses.

The Communists are the masters of the party, and through them the WPK maintains its ties with the masses and conducts its line and policy.

If the party is to be a strong political collective, every WPK member must be ideologically sound and steadfast, and perform his duties well.

It is important for party members consciously to abide by the organisational principles and rules established in the WPK, to take an active part in its life, to develop criticism and self-criticism, and concentrate on the fulfilment of revolutionary tasks, thereby tirelessly strengthening their revolutionary spirit, party conviction, proletarian class consciousness and urge to serve the people, with their vanguard role in tackling the set tasks.

A party without solid support in the masses is incapable of carrying the revolution to victory.

Since our party's foundation, when it set itself the goal of fighting for the people's interests, it has regarded unity with the masses as the mode of its existence and the source of its invincible strength. We attach special significance to educating various strata of the population and rallying them round the WPK CC.

We have a highly diverse social and political make-up of the people because of the long Japanese domination, the country's division, and the schemes of the enemies, who spread strife among the Koreans during the Patriotic War of Liberation.

The revolution could not have advanced if we had rejected people with complicated family ties and a lifetime history of social and political

contradictions, and if we attracted only those who had had no problems in the past.

Accordingly, the WPK has closely combined the class line and the mass line, and has pursued a policy of isolating the handful of reactionary elements, while rallying the working people round the party. Here the principle is that when assessing a person, we take as the basis his present ideological attitude and stand, and try to draw the greatest number of people to the side of the party and the revolution. Practice has shown that here the party has taken the right approach.

With the diverse social and political make-up of the population and the sharp contest with the enemies of the new system, we have succeeded in building a monolithic unity of the party and the people, and have transformed the whole of our society into a big family where accord and optimism reign. Fresh successes were scored in revolutionary construction through the Communists' unflagging attention to work with people.

Relying on the working people, the party now works to bring out their inexhaustible creative potentialities, thereby vigorously advancing socialist construction.

Kim Jong Il, Political Bureau Presidium member and WPK CC secretary, says: "The outcome of the revolution and the construction ultimately depends on how widely the creative powers of the popular masses are tapped."³

If the set tasks are to be successfully fulfilled, there is a need to work out a line and policy reflecting the demands and aspirations of the masses, to bring them home to all the working people, because it is the people that have a knowledge of the reality and have a wealth of practical experience. Only then does the party's course leave no one indifferent and inspires all to the struggle.

Whenever the people's will is not adequately reflected, subjective mistakes in guiding the revolution and construction may appear, and in consequence, the working people's creative potentialities will not be duly used.

Our party has always been in the thick of the masses, making an all-round analysis of the concrete situation as the basis for shaping its line and policy. That is why the WPK's course is a sure guide and powerful vehicle of revolutionary transformations.

Socialism and communism can be built only through conscious creative labour by millions of men and women.

Among the WPK's key requirements is consistent defence of the interests of the people, the source of strength and knowledge, efforts to arm the masses with an understanding of the party's line and policy, and to develop their revolutionary enthusiasm.

Throughout the entire period of socialist construction, the WPK has given priority to work with people and to their political education, and our cadres have developed a similar attitude to this matter.

Party leadership of the revolution and socialist construction is essentially political. Since it is human beings who create the material wealth, success in any sector of the economy can be attained only by working with people,

that is, carrying on political work aimed to mobilise the working people's creative activity.

The tendency among a section of party workers to substitute for administrative and executive personnel, and attempts on the part of economic executives to shun educational work as being the prerogative of the party organs, is being steadily overcome. The important thing is that both should give people due attention.

All human actions are determined, regulated and controlled by ideology, and the crucial role in the revolutionary movement belongs to the ideological strength of the popular masses and their urge for independent action. That is why we regard ideology as the basis in the course of the revolution and socialist construction.

We have established the following rule: whenever leading cadres go to some plant, settlement or fishing village, they meet with workers and cooperative members, show an interest in the spiritual and moral climate in the collectives, and start by taking measures to improve the working people's ideological seasoning, before they go on to inspecting the machinery, equipment and the fields.

Work with people, political work in our country is conducted on a broad scale, for it cannot be effected by the efforts of a narrow circle of persons. In principle, everyone involved in the revolution must become a genuine political fighter, educator and organiser of the masses.

The basic lines of the country's development for the Third Seven-Year Plan period were mapped out at a plenary meeting of the WPK CC and a session of the Supreme People's Assembly late last year. Its main goal is to build up a solid material and technical base for the complete triumph of socialism. We have to bring about a rapid growth of industrial and agricultural production (by 90 and 40 per cent, respectively), and to raise the working people's living standards. If the party's ideas are to be translated into life, they must be brought home to broad masses of people. With that end in view, all the party organisations in the country held meetings to study these documents and to decide on the concrete ways to fulfil the set tasks, and on the contribution each Communist and working person can and must make.

We have a coherent system within the WPK: the higher-standing cadre functionaries educate the lower-standing cadres, the cadres of the primary organisations educate party members, and the latter educate the masses of working people. In this way, one person educates ten persons, ten persons educate 100, 100 educate 1,000, and so on. In this way, political work is carried out by the masses themselves.

We rely on the creative powers of the working people and attach much importance to establishing the revolutionary method and popular style of activity centred on work with people. Otherwise, it is impossible to organise the working people correctly and to mobilise them for implementing the party's line and course.

The WPK has never allowed any manifestations of administration by order and decree, any bureaucratic practices, or tone of command, which may now and again emerge within a ruling party; it has always cut short such cases in due time and has worked tirelessly to assert the revolutionary

methods of work, which enable the popular masses to stand up for their interests and to act as masters of the revolution and socialist construction.

Fine traditions have been developed through such an approach. All the cadre workers share with the masses their joys and sorrows, behaving modestly and magnanimously, setting a personal example of attitude to work, and helping people fully to display their creative abilities.

Priority of political work does not mean that we have neglected administrative and economic activity, for both lines are organically blended.

The building of socialism and communism is highly organised, and is carried on in a balanced manner on the scale of the society as a whole on the basis of modern science and technology. That calls for smoothly running work in administrative organisation and scientific and technical activity.

Political work must be closely bound up with practice, and successful fulfilment of revolutionary tasks is one of its key objectives. Practical results in the advance of the revolution and socialist construction are the touchstone of its efficiency.

The WPK has scored truly great victories and gained a wealth of experience in building the new society by taking work with people as the basis. The party is now monolithically united and well-knit, it has won absolute support and trust from the popular masses, it has developed and strengthened as an invincible revolutionary party skilled in the art of leadership.

Great changes have taken place with the growing militancy and ever more skilful party leadership of the society in every sphere of the revolution and socialist construction. Our people have successfully fulfilled the Second Seven-Year Plan (1978-1984), as a result of which all the sectors of the national economy have modern facilities and equipment, and the economic strength of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been further consolidated.

The WPK will retain this principle: ties with the masses are the main thing in party work, and the prerequisite for the WPK continuing as the guiding force of socialist and communist construction in the long term. The WPK has been making an active contribution to the full triumph of socialism, to our homeland's peaceful and independent unification, and to the struggle of the international working class for peace and socialism.

¹ The WPK was founded on October 10, 1945, and now has three million members.

² Kim Il Sung. *The Historical Experience in Building the Workers' Party of Korea*. Pyongyang, 1986, p. 21 (in Korean).

³ Kim Jong Il. *The Ideas of Juche*. Pyongyang, 1982, p. 55 (in Korean).

France: What 28,000 Communist Deputies Want

Twenty-eight thousand Communist deputies now work on municipal councils (in 36,400 communes), general councils (in 95 departments) and regional councils (in 22 regions). How they work and what they have been striving for together with the party for the benefit of the whole people is described below.

There Are Many Problems Even With A Solid Majority

Vénissieux has a population of 65,000, and is the third-ranking city of the Rhone Department, of which Lyon is the centre. Communists have been at the head of the city council since 1935.

ANDRÉ GERIN, FCP CC member and mayor of Vénissieux, was asked this question by a *WMR* staff-member:

When and in what circumstances were you elected mayor of the city?

It was in 1985, when the FCP got 45 per cent of the votes in local elections, and won a majority on the council — 25 of the 49 seats. The Socialists have 14 seats, and the right-wing parties have seven.

The Communists have enjoyed great authority in the urban areas since the pre-war period, the period of the Popular Front. Sympathies for the FCP grew during the Resistance, which was most active in the Lyon area. It is not surprising that after the war, the Communist Party became the leading political force in Vénissieux.

Workers make up most of the city's population. We have 23,000 workers and employees at the steel and automobile enterprises, and that does, of course, make the Communists popular. But the main reason I think is that for years the council has been working hard to reduce the social inequality.

A comparison of Vénissieux with other cities of the department, which are run by right-wing parties or even by the Socialists, shows the especially tangible results in our city in social security, housing policy, construction of sports facilities, and development of sport. We want to reduce to some extent the gap in living standards between low-income and high-income families. Roughly 30 per cent of the local budget goes to the schools, where we have introduced free meals for children, 12 to 15 per cent goes into social security, notably assistance to the jobless (who in Vénissieux now number 4,000, i.e., 17 per cent of the able-bodied population).

Ten per cent of the budget has annually gone into the development of sport, and here we have scored some marked successes. Every week, over 25,000 persons make use of the sports facilities and equipment, something that they could not have done without the council's purposeful policy, because it is fairly expensive to go in for sport in France. We take a special

This continues our series on the Communists' work on executive and legislative organs in capitalist countries (see *WMR*, Nos. 4, 7, 8, 1985; Nos. 2, 10, 11, 12, 1986; and Nos. 3, 5 and 7, 1987).

pride in our handball team, which was set up by young workers with the council's support, and which this year was transferred to the first national league. Communist deputies helped to get it going and to create the conditions for training. We regard its success as a common achievement.

What are the main difficulties you have to face now?

There is, first, the shortage of funds. Vénissieux is in dire financial straits. The communes have to pay the banks a high interest on loans taken to cover the numerous items of expenditure. Our revenues are made up mainly of taxes paid by the population and the enterprises, and also of state funds. However, the latter are being whittled down. We are not entitled to raise taxes on enterprises, so that the lack of funds is a problem that cannot be solved within the framework of one city. There is a need for an altogether different state policy in financing the territorial collectives, a matter the Communists have repeatedly raised in Parliament. They want lower interest on loans to the communes, a progressive tax (depending on family incomes), and special penalties for companies closing down enterprises, sacking workers and refusing to make investments to create new jobs.

The council's lack of right to build public housing is another most acute problem. Vénissieux is a part of the Lyon conurbation, and housing policy is within the competence of the Lyon city council, where the right-wing parties and the Socialists are in the majority. We have been fighting for twenty years now for the right to take our own decisions on housing construction and want to have it duly funded. If that is to be achieved, however, the Communists need to have a stronger position in Lyon and throughout the country.

How are the functions within the council allocated between the representatives of the various parties? With which political forces do the Communists cooperate?

We head the working commissions on information, urban construction, sport and youth affairs. The Socialists head the commissions on finance, public health, immigration and housing policy.

Since 1971, the Communist group on the council has cooperated with the Socialists, although we have fairly major differences. For instance, in order to improve the commune's financial situation, they are prepared to increase taxes on the population or trim council personnel. We cannot, of course, accept such an attitude. In order to improve the state of things there is a need radically to change government policy, which under Chirac, the present Prime Minister, takes ever less account of the needs of the territorial collectives.

What are the relations between the Socialists and the representatives of right-wing parties on the council?

There is officially no rapprochement between them, but since it does exist on the national level, it cannot but have an effect on the situation in

Vénissieux. It is true that here the Communists have strong positions, and those who advocate such a rapprochement have to conceal their intentions.

What has the communist majority on the council been doing to involve the working people and their organisations in local government?

We have especially good relations with the working class organisations, in which the party generally has a strong influence. We also maintain constant contacts with various local citizen associations and respect their independence. Communist deputies do not, as a rule, make public judgements on the activities of this or that association or initiative group, and refrain from attaching any labels.

Our ideal is to have people themselves tackle the most important problems in the development of the commune. The council always makes a point of discussing the ways of their solution with the inhabitants, and that means not only at election time; it has even arranged for polls on some problems to bring out the majority opinion. The main thing now is to mobilise the people in support of measures which meet their wants, and here we have had some successes. For a long time, the commune wanted to have a metro (subway) line running from Lyon to Vénissieux. We now have such a line, but it took us five years to get it, five years of sending delegations of local citizens and petitions to the Lyon authorities.

We now want to use this experience to rally the population round other important issues. We recently had a forum to discuss the problems in creating new jobs and the prospects for occupational training. It was attended by representatives of the trade unions, workers' committees from the enterprises, and Communist Party activists. Action groups demanding concrete measures to protect the environment have recently been formed with our help in Vénissieux.

What are the Communist Party's prospects at the next local elections in Vénissieux?

Very much depends on the FCP's national positions at the time of the elections.

The social battles now being fought in France have effected Vénissieux as well. There has been a noticeable change of the situation at the enterprises, and the workers have become much more militant. New and important initiatives meeting the interests of the working people and evoking their response have been put forward by the FCP and the General Confederation of Labour (GCL). That is why we are hoping for better times to come.

What is your task as mayor?

In my capacity as mayor, I have to act in the interests of the population as a whole — of all the social strata — and there must be no political bias in my behaviour. Such is our party's conception. Communist mayors are guided in their actions by the needs of their communes. The party organisation or

the communist group on the city council has its say on the major national problems. They explain the FCP's positions and proposals, while the mayor takes concrete decisions for the common welfare, and conducts the line approved by the population, with special emphasis on the fight against social injustice.

Vénissieux is one of the five communes round Lyon in which the FCP is in a majority. The right-wingers who run the centre of the department would like to split these five communes and to dissolve them in the Lyon conurbation. That is what must be prevented, that is what I am most worried about as mayor. But the bulk of the city's population supports our struggle against the strategy of the Lyon authorities and for Vénissieux's greater independence and autonomy. And that is encouraging.

Territorial Collectives In Time Of Crisis

Territorial collectives have always been central to the formation and development of the French nation. The communes played a significant role before and during the 1789 revolution in the people's social life and in its spiritual and political emancipation. Since then, local self-government has lost none of its importance, although it has fallen under the control of centralised state structure.

Municipal councils, general councils and regional councils are elected by universal suffrage. They have enough power and financial resources to influence economic, social and cultural affairs. Communists are represented on all these types of councils, and through them the party keeps in touch with various strata of the population in the struggle to unite the people against the offensive of the right-wing circles and the employers, and for transforming the society. FCP deputies have a wealth of experience and constitute a great force. They exercise their duties in a consistent effort to stand up for the interests of the population and to act together with it to satisfy its wants. Their electoral mandates testify to the trust of millions of French men and women.

A FCP CC Plenary Meeting was held in late 1986 to consider various aspects of the activities of communist deputies under the crisis in the society. Political Bureau member Madeleine Vincent was quite right when she said in her report: "Crisis-ridden capitalism has been trying to overhaul the entire life of the society and to so restructure it so as to further its own ends and ensure the growth of capital and profits everywhere. To this end, it needs the territorial collectives to be put at its service."¹

There have been many changes in the life of the communes over the past three decades. The city councils were faced with strong demographic pressures, and had to deal with the construction of housing and education facilities, and to infrastructure transport and communications. The intensification of farming has left its mark on the rural localities, which are in need of energy and water supplies, the maintenance of roads, and preservation of the environment.

The state of crisis in our society has been further aggravated by the political, economic and social decisions taken by the successive governments over the past 15 years, and these have had an adverse effect on every aspect of life in the territorial collectives.

The decentralisation started after 1981 in which powers were devolved to the territorial collectives was halted and reversed. The socialist government denied them the funds they required, and that was followed by an open right-wing drive on their democratic rights. The state machinery increased and expanded its control, reducing the autonomy of the local organs and forcing them to follow the government line. There is, incidentally, a consensus on this issue between the right-wing parties and the Socialists.

The territorial collectives want to involve big capital in the services under a contractual system regulating relations between them and the state in the use of credits. Funds for infrastructuring the territory are hardest to obtain: all the investments go to develop a number of regional centres which are expected in the long run to play an important role in the wider European market. The territorial collectives are being urged to put in the infrastructure for these centres. For their part, private French and foreign investors receive direct aid from the state and enjoy great tax privileges. This transfer of capital also has a political purpose. It is designed to hit the revolutionary movement and the Communist Party by sending entire areas with a large concentration of workers into decline.

The changes in financing the territorial collectives are most indicative. While the bulk of the revenues from direct and indirect taxes goes into the state budget, appropriations from it are being cut back. Meanwhile, the population continues to bear the heavy burden of local taxes, and the territorial collectives are expected to allocate sizable funds for social needs. The authorities, whose philosophy comes down to keeping the budget balanced, want the councils to 'look increasingly to economic rationality', i.e., to aim at profit and, therefore, to finance only those projects which yield a profit. What is more, whenever a state enterprise in the services turns out to be profitable, the authorities lose no time in privatising it.

Local council budgets have also been hard hit by the fold-up of many types of activities in industry and agriculture, by the spreading poverty, and by the elimination of jobs. There is, at the same time, a growing number of applications for social assistance. The territorial collectives are, therefore, ever less capable of responding to human needs. The government's objective is to have the population pay for the consequences of its present policy with respect to the local councils.

Communist deputies have resisted this policy, the destruction of France's economic and social wealth, and its democratic institutions. The FCP CC believes that the territorial collectives "are not mere units of the state machinery, transmission belts or gears in the national mechanism. They are also the entities through which the wants and realities of daily life are expressed. They can be centres of resistance and struggle capable of improving life and advancing along the way of progress and democracy. That is what determines the choice of stand and the propositions for action by elected Communists, and that is what they have been trying to do in the communes they administer."²

When fulfilling their functions, our deputies do not at all try to make the attainment of success in one sphere or another contingent on an overall change in the society. That is contrary to the party's views and to their own

understanding of their responsibilities as persons elected on the basis of universal suffrage. They concentrate their activities along three main lines: economic progress, social justice, and democracy.

Economic progress. The essential thing is how people live. That is why the Communists believe that their central task is to combat unemployment. They object to the curtailment of industry, they want economic recovery and the creation of stable jobs in production. They join the population in standing up for the right to work, for maintaining the necessary budget revenues in the commune, and for a balanced development of housing, commerce, transport, and collective public facilities. Our deputies have contributed to research for the creation of jobs and manufacture of new products, and the rallying of popular efforts to back such projects by developing human solidarity, which is the pledge of any success. The deputies control the rational use of funds made available by the state to local enterprises.

Similarly, that is always relying on the popular movement, they try to impede the operation of mechanisms set up by the government for pushing partial employment, lower skills and underpayment of young people and workers. They take part in organising resistance to the choice of capitalist measures for crisis-management, and combat the ideas of despondency by showing how the immense material and financial resources that are available could be turned into a powerful means of restructuring the society for the people's benefit.

Social justice. Communist deputies are in the service of the population as a whole and give priority attention to the most deprived families, insisting that these should be given material support, for instance, in the form of free school meals for their children, cut-rate accommodation at summer camps, provision of recreation facilities, and various other cultural measures.

The prices of services for the population are set in the light of family incomes in communes run by Communists. Our deputies help low-income families to obtain flats in municipal houses. They have taken concrete steps for the mother-and-child protection, have dealt with various problems in public health care, education, recreation, culture and sports, and have joined the inhabitants of their communes in formulating proposals on social security, occupational training and environmental protection.

Democracy. Democratising life in the society, the 25th Congress of the FCP (1985) said, means providing the working people and all the other citizens with fresh opportunities for receiving and disseminating information and taking part in public affairs and the formulation and adoption of decisions.

Our party fully backs the idea of national unity, and Communist deputies have always campaigned for the local authorities at every level being given the widest powers and means, because that is where the best conditions are created for the working people's participation in tackling the problems that worry them, both at the enterprises and in the neighbourhoods.

What we are working for above all is to have the councils at every level formed on the basis of scrupulous observance of the principles of

proportional representation of the various political trends. The FCP also wants the councils to have more autonomy, with voluntary cooperation between them and the central authority, and with additional funding for the councils.

Communist deputies have been doing much to involve the masses in local government. Among other things, they have kept the public broadly informed of their proposals, and have modified these in accordance with the wishes of the majority, working together with the local inhabitants to implement these. The Communists have campaigned all the more actively for the establishment of a popular association and alliance, because they are aware of the diversity of popular concerns and aspirations, and have taken into account all the problems generated by the crisis and all the zigzags of development caused by changes in the life of the communes, said Madeleine Vincent in her report at the CC Plenary Meeting.³

FCP representatives on the local bodies can make a special contribution to the shaping of such an association. First, they are assured of popular confidence by their mandates, and second, they have worked to involve local people in this process for more effective administration, which means helping them to unite on the basis of concrete ideas and actions, and urging them to join together in seeking ways of conducting policies that would open up fresh perspectives before the society.

Communist deputies have, of course, to work in different conditions, which depend primarily on the balance of forces in the area. The FCP now has its representatives in many communes where the majority is in the hands of the right-wing parties. There they have to face various obstacles deliberately erected by the local mayors, and that is why the Communists seek to rely above all on the local population. Our groups on the councils of such communes are a source of support for those who fall victim to austerity policies, social injustice and privatisation. These groups are important points of support for developing the popular movement.

In cities where Socialists have a majority, Communist deputies strive to implement a common programme, but in many cases they are subjected to pressure by the mayors who insist on accepting austerity decisions cutting across such programmes. Whenever that happens, our representatives formulate their own proposals, bring out local opinion, and seek to gain its support on the assumption that the council line has to accord with the electoral commitments. For doing so, communist deputy mayors in many cities have been deprived of their powers in defiance of the cooperation accord concluded by the two parties in 1983.

We naturally have the greatest potentialities in communes headed by FCP mayors, of whom there are 1,500. That is where there is the fullest expression of the principles of solidarity with the working people, and of their democratic participation in decision-making, and where the first steps are being taken towards self-government.

If the management of public affairs is to be fruitful, party policy must always be linked with the activities of its deputies. That does not imply any kind of subordination or dependence. When offering France its concept of socialism, the FCP has stressed that it is not right to confuse the role of the Communists elected to public bodies, and their role in party organisation.

By participating in the life and activities of party organisations, in their discussions and exchanges of opinion and experience, the elected Communist comes to comprehend the diversity of the social processes which is so necessary for the exercise of his mandate. In the communes where the mayor is a member of the FCP he has regular meetings with the party secretary, and the same thing is done in the departments and regions. In order to act with initiative, imagination, boldness and a sense of responsibility, our deputy must keep in touch with the party's governing bodies. Similarly, no FCP federation or section can do without the experience of their representatives in the territorial units.

We have now had a National Association of Elected Communists and Republicans for ten years, and that is a characteristic feature of the French experience. The Association brings together almost all the FCP deputies and other deputies who find that the Communists have much to offer that is valuable and interesting. It is a medium for the exchange of opinion and experience that is useful to everyone who shares our approach to government. This coordination is effected not only on a national scale, but also on the level of the departments, where more effective action can be taken. Practice shows that the departmental associations have put forward important initiatives: they have informed, mobilised and put pressure on the authorities, and established ties with other deputies.

The battle for France calls for sustained struggle against the policy of capital and for effective solutions for the triumph of the ideas and actions aimed to transform the society. At the Fifth Congress of the National Association of Elected Communists and Republicans, which was held at the end of May 1987, FCP General Secretary Georges Marchais noted the great importance of their painstaking and persevering work to unite all the forces prepared to work for an improvement of the situation in the country. He also stressed that FCP deputies on local bodies have to play a most active role in mobilising the people in support of the Communist Party candidate in the 1988 presidential election.⁴

Jean-Pierre Perillaud
FCP deputy to the
Ile-de-France Regional
Council

¹ *La vie du parti*, No. 58, December 1986, p. 8.

² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁴ See *l'Humanité*, May 25, 1987.

Bringing The Truth To The People

Thomas Dennis — CC Political Bureau member, CPUSA; General Manager, *People's Daily World*

FOR over one hundred years the US working class has dreamed of having a national daily newspaper of its own. Workers saw the need for such a newspaper in order to have a way to bring their message to fellow workers across the land. They needed a national daily newspaper to counteract the lies and misinformation being spread by the bosses' newspapers. This need remained a dream until May Day 1986, when the first issue of the *People's Daily World* rolled off the presses simultaneously in New York and San Francisco. Regular daily publication began one month later.

Before the *People's Daily World* there was no daily paper of this kind to wage the fightback against the monumental offensive of the ruling class against the living standards of working people and against the very existence of the organized labor movement.

The challenge that faces the editors, reporters and circulators of the new *People's Daily World* is enormous, in light of the size and control of the newspapers and media by the ruling class in the USA. There are 1,675 daily newspapers in the nation. Twenty-five of the largest newspaper chains own and control 565 of them, with a circulation of close to 38 million — 58.6 per cent of the country's total daily newspaper circulation. The Newspaper Guild predicts, in its Resolution to the AFL-CIO Convention that "a handful of moguls will control the news going to the nation's entire newspaper readership, and perhaps much of its broadcasting audience."

The Gannet chain, the largest, owns 93 dailies, 23 weeklies, many radio TV stations reaching into millions of homes. Most daily and weekly newspapers of this country and of a good part of the world depend on the three largest news wire services — United Press International, Associated Press and Reuters — for their national and international news. These services give the capitalist class slant on all the news.

The Pentagon has a public relations staff of over 3,000 people. The CIA runs the biggest news service in the world. In 1975 a Senate intelligence committee found the CIA owned outright more than 200 wire services, newspapers, magazines and book publishing complexes and subsidized many more. A *New York Times* investigation revealed another 50 media outlets run by the CIA in the United States and abroad, and at least 12 publishing houses which marketed over 1,200 books secretly commissioned by the CIA, including some 250 in English.

The first obligation of these newspapers is to make money for the billionaire owners. As much as 60 to 80 per cent of the newspaper is devoted to advertising. The owners and big money advertisers exercise heavy control over what appears or does not appear in the newspapers to assure that ideas serving the interests of the ruling class are printed. This determines which facts, which ideas, which versions of facts reach the public. The views of labor on issues of major concern to it and the people

are almost always ignored. No newspaper presents a favourable view of socialism. The daily press of the US marches in lockstep on the main goals of the largest US-based transnational corporations and the military-industrial complex.

The propaganda to the effect that the United States enjoys a 'free press' in a 'free marketplace of ideas' distorts the true picture. As Michael Parenti, the author of *Inventing Reality. The Politics of the Mass Media*, notes, "to think that information and viewpoints circulate in 'a free market of ideas' is to conjure up a misleading metaphor . . . The existing media market of ideas is more like the larger economic market of which it is a part . . . most accessible to those who possess vast amounts of capital, or who hold views that are pleasing to the possessors of capital."

The idea that censorship does not exist as far as the newspapers in this country are concerned is a highly publicized myth. Censorship by the owners, advertisers and the government is exercised behind the scenes, and it is often so subtle that it is almost invisible. Such tactics promote self-censorship by writers and editors. They know on which side their bread is buttered.

Some owners are more up front. C. Peter Jorgensen, publisher of Century Newspapers Inc., advised all editors of his three Boston area weeklies that he did "not intend to pay for paper and ink, or staff time and effort, to print news or opinion pieces which in any way might be construed to lend support, comfort, assistance, or aid to political candidates who are opposed by Republican candidates". The editors were specially instructed to submit any and all political stories which mentioned any candidate in any race and any photographs, letters, editorials, outlines, or any kind of written material whatsoever relative to the election, to the publisher prior to publication. It could hardly be made any clearer — do as I say or look for another job.

Anti-communism, anti-socialism and anti-Sovietism are dished out in a steady stream of newsprint to the people every day. No subject is too absurd, irrational, illogical for the anti-Sovietism of the media. No human suffering, be it famine, nuclear disaster or natural calamity, escapes the anti-socialist, anti-communist twist. All aspects of the aggressive imperialist foreign policy are justified in this way, as is the staggering war budget. Not only is censorship, disinformation and lies evident in what is published; it is also evident in what is not published. During the month of September 1986 a conference was called by the World Federation of Trade Unions in Berlin, representing millions of trade unionists around the world. They spent several days discussing the problems that faced workers everywhere. Yet not a word appeared in the bourgeois press, on radio or TV in the USA.

Therefore, the Central Committee of the CPUSA saw the need for a new publication that could serve the needs of our multinational working class and people's struggle. The decision was made to do everything possible to help bring into being a national daily newspaper — a newspaper that would provide a voice and bring together the diverse organisations and movements of labor and of the people in a common front of struggle against Reaganism in particular and reaction in general.

How was the Communist Party and the working class able to accomplish such an historic and monumental undertaking, especially at a time when there were only four national daily newspapers in the country — the *USA Today*, *The New York Times*, the *Christian Science Monitor* and the *Wall Street Journal* — all produced by multi-million-dollar corporations? Now the working class newspaper — *The People's Daily World* — is the fifth. The production of national daily newspapers in the US is made possible by relatively new technology.

As the new computer technology was improved and perfected, the costs declined to the extent that it was possible to combine the *People's World*, a weekly published on the West Coast, with the *Daily World*, a daily published in New York. Readers of both papers were involved in choosing a name and pointed out what they wanted to see in the new paper. The money was raised to purchase and install the technology for the production of the paper, and people who were to operate the new equipment were selected and trained. Now the pages made up in New York are transmitted by phone line to San Francisco, and only some finishing touches are needed before they are sent to the printshop.

The problem was to mold the two staffs into a single staff operating from offices 3,000 miles apart. It was necessary to retrain reporters, writers and editors to produce a new kind of paper. The new *People's Daily World* would strive to reach new standards of quality in working-class journalism, building on the best of the past.

The result has been the production of a *daily paper with shorter, more lively and easier-to-read articles*, with more pictures and graphics livening up the pages. The use of color, especially on the front page, has made the paper much more attractive to the eye. New columns and features were developed to allow the paper to speak to a wide spectrum of readers — from those just beginning to take an interest in politics to those who are among the most politically knowledgeable and active.

Each week a local, national or international figure is interviewed, providing the opportunity for leaders and activists in the people's and trade union struggles to present their views in the pages of the *People's Daily World*. In the weekend edition, the paper carries the *World Magazine* that features in-depth articles and international reprints on issues of national and international concern. The paper also has pages for culture and sports.

Our goal is to make the *People's Daily World* the voice of the *working class in struggle* and a champion of working-class interests, the reporter of these struggles in victory or defeat. The newspaper exposes and explains the machinations of the class enemy in the plant and in the government. In the weekend edition, the number of pages in Spanish expanded from three to four, to reach the tens of thousands of Spanish-speaking workers in nearly every major industrial center in the US. The paper cannot afford full-time reporters to cover the peoples' struggles in the 50 states and in the hundreds of cities. There is therefore an ongoing effort to develop a network of volunteer reporters sending in stories of people's actions in their local areas, and this network is growing.

Michael Zagarell, editor-in-chief of the *People's Daily World*, gave this description of what our newspaper should be: "Responding to the moment

means being prepared to speak out more effectively and to more people . . . In a period when critical events can be transmitted to over 100 nations in just minutes, the shaping of mass ideas is measured in hours, not days. In this situation, response time is more important than just years ago . . . In a period when television can bring events to readers in seconds, a paper must strive to become expert in giving meaning and depth to those events in easy-to-read, popularly written articles.

"The new paper should base itself on the same Marxist concepts that guided its predecessors, but should at the same time develop a style that comes out of this moment.

"It should put much more emphasis on investigative reporting and dig into problems, showing their real class meaning . . . In a period when working people are looking both for news and analysis, the paper should be like a school for its readers, taking a reader from class one all the way to the highest level of class understanding . . .

"The new paper should be one that makes the party its reference point, that reports on the activities of the party and the YCL with drama and excitement. At the same time it should also fight to reflect the thinking of the broadest sections of people."

The *People's Daily World* is a paper that tells the truth about what is happening to the people, explains who is really responsible for the problems the workers are facing and why the class is under such severe attack. It discusses with the workers how to fight back so they can win, who their real enemies are and who they can rely on as their trusted allies. It is here that the voice of the Communist Party is indispensable.

The next task is to make the *People's Daily World* the most widely read newspaper among the working people, in the face of many obstructions placed in our path by the ruling class. It means raising the circulation. While the impact and influence of the party and the paper is on the rise, there is still a long way to go to becoming a really mass-circulation newspaper.

One must not forget that the FBI, the political police of the US, has been trying for years to intimidate the readers of the *Daily World*. Readers were visited at their homes and even on the job and questioned about why they were reading the paper. News-stand dealers who sold the paper were intimidated by the FBI and the ultra-right.

The US Postal Service is practising discrimination against readers who receive the paper by mail. The most common practice has been to deliver only three or four of the five issues mailed to subscribers each week. When there is an article of political importance to readers in a given city, often the subscribers in that city do not receive that issue — a form of press censorship. The post office frequently holds the paper until three or five issues accumulate, then delivers them all at once.

The efforts of class censorship by the postal system are not confined to the communist press. The cost of mailing a newspaper has increased from one-tenth of a cent per copy in 1970 to 12.5 cents per copy today. Hundreds of trade union, religious, peace, veterans' and non-profit organizations have had to either sharply cut back on the number of issues published or to cease publication altogether.

The conspiracy to muzzle the *Daily World* generated complaints to the local post offices, to the Postmaster General and to Congressmen from subscribers in 39 states. The campaign resulted in a temporary improvement. Now the *People's Daily World* is experiencing the same kind of efforts to silence it.

Although the foregoing examples of problems are many, our prospects are quite bright. Over 80 per cent of the papers are circulated by teams of communist and non-communist readers at factory gates, in neighbourhoods and on street corners.

The *People's Daily World* made a major contribution to the strikes against the steel and electrical monopolies. Concentrated efforts brought the paper to the workers on the picket lines or in their homes, helping to strengthen the strikers' unity. The *PDW* also did much to clarify the issues in the 1986 congressional elections, contributing to a major shift in the political balance to a more anti-Reaganism stance.

Our optimism is based on the enthusiastic reception the new paper received in the first months it was on the streets. Workers warmly greet the circulators, realizing that the *PDW* is the only newspaper telling the truth about their struggle. Participants in the Great Peace March for Total Disarmament adopted the *PDW* as their paper. Every week new subscriptions are coming in from trade union leaders, leaders and activists in the peace movement, civil rights movement and seniors. The *People's Daily World* is fast becoming the most authoritative and most widely read left-wing newspaper in the US. Through it, experiences of one part of our class and party become common experiences for all. This means a more united class, a more united, more agile, more powerful Communist Party.

INFORMATION

The Communist Movement Today

Solidarity And Support

THE results of the visits to the Soviet Union of Najib, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, Heng Samrin, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea and Chairman of the State Council of the People's Republic of Kampuchea, and Joaquim Chissano, FRELIMO Chairman and President of the People's Republic of Mozambique, and their meetings with Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, were seen by the world public as a new manifestation of invariable support for the peoples' struggle against imperialist aggression and for freedom and their sovereign right to be masters of their own destinies.

The negotiating sides confirmed their readiness to strengthen all-round

cooperation between states and parties and to constantly enrich it with new forms and dimensions. For example, assessing Soviet-Mozambican relations, Mikhail Gorbachov and Joaquim Chissano stressed that close inter-party contacts had a decisive role to play in their development.

Guided by this awareness, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan and the People's Revolutionary Party of Kampuchea have made a decision of principle to work towards a political settlement through national reconciliation. In Afghanistan a new draft Constitution has been put to national debate and a law on parties endorsed, envisaging the setting up or legalisation of other political organisations, apart from the PDPA, and the publication of their press organs.

During the talks a resolute rebuff was given to the imperialist policy of diktat. Mikhail Gorbachov stressed that the Afghan and the Kampuchean problems and the crisis situation in Southern Africa should be settled in the interests of the peoples and countries in those regions.

No Common Model in Building Socialism

Talks between Nicolae Ceauçescu, General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party Central Committee and President of the Socialist Republic of Romania, and Boško Krunič, Chairman of the CC Presidium of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, confirmed the existence of broad opportunities for economic cooperation and trade, expanded production cooperations, and scientific and technical contracts between Romania and Yugoslavia.

The RCP has always proceeded from the fact that socialism, which has emerged on the world scene as a powerful force, develops in different national conditions and that objective regularities are applied differently in this or that country and at this or that period, the Romanian leader said. This diversity provides the necessary impetus for the socialist development of every particular country and opens favourable prospects for the establishment of socialism on a global scale. We think, he continued, that stronger interaction and solidarity among the countries building socialism ensures steady progress of each of them.

Boško Krunič said that differences in the two parties' approaches to certain problems should not be an obstacle to their fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation. He emphasised that the people's striving for peace was on the upswing today, just as their struggle against all forms of pressure, interference and exploitation and for just and democratic political and economic international relations and strict respect for every country's right to choose independently its own road of development and foreign policy.

In the Spirit of Internationalism

The delegations of the Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus (AKEL) and the Communist Party of Israel (CPI) voiced readiness to continue developing and expanding bilateral cooperation. The statement was made in a joint communique on the results of talks held on Cyprus. The sides informed each other of the situation in their countries and the

content of their party work and exchanged opinion on burning international problems. The talks demonstrated the complete identity of views of all the problems discussed.

The parties thought highly of the plans for the accelerated development of socialist society implemented in the Soviet Union and other socialist community countries by applying scientific and technological accomplishments, carrying out structural reforms of production management and developing socialist democracy. The process, the communique stressed, will make existing socialism even more attractive in the eyes of the working people throughout the world.

After expressing profound concern over the danger of the complete destruction of mankind and life on the globe, the delegations voiced their support for the consistent efforts and initiatives of the Soviet Union and other socialist countries aimed at stopping the arms race, at disarmament and peace throughout the world.

The AKEL and the CPI are for ensuring the security of the peoples and states in the region. The communique reiterated the two parties' adherence to the unity of the international communist movement on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism.

Positive Changes Observed

In a joint communique the Socialist Party of Australia and the PKP — Communist Party of the Philippines — stated their readiness to cooperate with all the peace-loving forces in their countries and on the regional level to improve the situation in Asia and the Pacific, in particular to eliminate foreign bases and establish nuclear-free zones.

The Australian and Filipino Communists welcomed better political, cultural and trade relations between the People's Republic of China and the Communist Party of China, on the one hand, and the parties and governments of other socialist countries, on the other. They are convinced that a united anti-imperialist front of the socialist states would be a paramount contribution to the cause of peace.

Documents

WORK WITH WOMEN TO BE OVERHAULED

THE leadership of the Workers' Party of Jamaica, says its newly adopted policy document, decided to re-orient its work among women so as to address the entire range of problems facing them and also to promote gradually organisational activity among women at their place of residence.

The discussions held within the party showed that neither its leadership nor the women's commission of the Central Committee were fully aware of the complexity of that problem, the document says. The fact that the Communists had failed to expand work among women when their exploitation was growing is explained by a number of reasons.

The chief one is a purely ideological reason. The nature of women's exploitation has not been analysed in full nor is it clear what concrete steps can lead to their emancipation. Second, the party had been too passive and too timid in its efforts, due to the dominant position of men in the country and the former misgivings about the party's work being 'feminised'.

The narrow-minded approach to women's problems still characteristic of the Workers' Party of Jamaica, which does not pay due attention to the forms of women's exploitation in many spheres (including in the family), prevents the party from boosting women's activity. The main goal of fully liberating women can only be attained by working consistently to alleviate their present-day situation.

Two wrong approaches can be foreseen here. The first one, an abstract approach, is fraught with the danger of setting forth slogans and demands that, though concordant with the aims of the party, may not be understood by the women at this specific moment. The second, an opportunistic approach, is the reluctance to raise problems in their entirety which would make any struggle for equality fruitless.

The party's practical activity should be creative, the document stresses, which will make it cognisant of the Marxist understanding of the heart of the matter, lift it above the aforementioned erroneous approaches and ensure tangible results in drawing women — an important section of the population — into the struggle for peace, national liberation and social progress.

From The Press

A REALISTIC OBJECTIVE: 50,000 NEW PARTY MEMBERS

MORE than 27,000 joined the French Communist Party in the first half of 1987 and the same tendency was observed in the Young Communist Movement. Who are these newly affiliated members?

They are primarily young people aged from 18 to 30, Jean-Claude Gayssot, secretary of the Central Committee of the French Communist Party, writes in *l'Humanité*. Next come women, whose numbers have grown considerably compared to the past year, and finally, trade union and other public organisation activists.

For these people the French Communist Party was the only one to have said a resolute 'No' to the country's decline, growing unemployment and economic stagnation. They join the party because it not only states that the situation is unacceptable but calls for struggle and takes part in it together with the working people. For twenty years now the Communists have been opposing the austerity policy, considering it to be poison rather than a remedy. And now, loyal to themselves, they propose an alternative policy of justice, freedom and peace — a prospect of building socialism French style. Many see their own aspirations reflected in the FCP programme principles and join its ranks.

Another reason behind the FCP gaining in strength, Jean-Claude Gayssot goes on to say, is the dynamic activity of the Communists themselves and their readiness to consolidate the party because they feel quite at ease in it and like its policy. No matter what the mass media say about the party, there is no 'screaming' or 'discord' in it. It is a well-knit organisation of revolutionaries. No room for backstage dealings, manoeuvring or dispute over who is to be its candidate at the forthcoming 1988 presidential elections. André Lajoinie has been nominated in an atmosphere of democracy and enthusiasm, while his election programme will be put to general debate.

And last but not least, the accelerated growth of the party ranks mirrors the mounting desire to see the Communist Party have more say on the national scene and its candidate A. Lajoinie score better in the national elections. And this is possible because everything the Communists propose meets the aspirations of all those who live by their work alone. Only in this way can success be ensured in mobilising and consolidating the popular forces and prospects opened for shifts to the left.

But for this possibility to become a reality, the author writes, the number of Communists should grow. The time has come for a daring offensive. The party has set itself an ambitious but quite realistic objective of drawing another 50,000 members to the party during the election campaign.

In Brief

BULGARIA

The Plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party held in late July 1987 adopted a resolution to convene in December a National Party Conference to discuss 'The Main Aspects of the Concept of Further Building Socialism in the People's Republic of Bulgaria'. The thesis of the conference had been approved by the plenary meeting.

CHILE

Editors-in-chief of four legally published papers and journals — *La Epoca*, *Fortin Mapocho*, *Analisis* and *Apsi* — have been brought before a tribunal in Santiago. They are accused by the Pinochet regime of having published the Chilean Communist Party's document, in which it expounded its attitude to the so-called plebiscite scheduled by the dictator for next year. The farce is designed to 'legalise' the regime in power, with or without Pinochet at the head. The Communists urged the people to continue without let-up their struggle to overthrow the dictatorship today and not to wait for the 'plebiscite'.

CHINA

The All-China Conference convened on the initiative of the CPC Central Disciplinary Commission pointed to the need to improve work with letters,

which is an important factor of implementing party policy. The conference stated that political propositions with respect to the cadres, including the rehabilitation of those falsely accused and punished by mistake, should further be put into effect.

ITALY

The participants in the plenary meeting of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Italian Communist Party passed a resolution in which they approved the report 'The ICP Position and Initiatives at a New Political Stage' made by the party's General Secretary Alessandro Natta and analysed problems of cadre policy and the organisational structure of the ICP. The plenary meeting decided to set up an ICP Programme Department and determined its composition. The department is to prepare and conduct a conference on the party programme.

MOROCCO

The Party of Progress and Socialism called for the establishment of a progressive patriotic front to resolve complicated political and socio-economic problems. The country's largest left-wing party — the Socialist Union of Popular Forces — responded to the call. Its leaders declared that their party was ready to support any action aiming at strengthening democracy in the country and ensuring the success of the Moroccan working class in struggling for its legitimate rights.

for human survival

Communists And Christians In The Nuclear Age

Nikolai Kovalsky — Professor,
Dr. Sc. (Hist.) (USSR)

MUTUAL understanding and joint action by all the political and social forces which could do so much to stabilise the international situation are of especial significance in this period of mankind's struggle against the nuclear threat. Among these forces are, quite naturally, Communists and Christians, and the development of relations between them is now one sign

of the diversity of the world and the complexities of the present period.

They represent two different ideologies — materialist and idealist: the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, on the one hand, and Christianity, on the other — and seek common ground for political cooperation, a process which is far from simple or straight forward. But the main thing now is that *it is a reality, and an element of the political and social scene.*

The urge for mutual understanding springs primarily from the fact that the world is at a steep turning point. The new thinking has been generated by the nuclear-space age, the paramount importance of human interests, the deepening of old and the emergence of new social contradictions, and concern for mankind's future.

The development of totally new types of weapons — notably ground-based and space-based nuclear weapons — has induced a search for new forms and modes of relations between states with different social systems and has made it imperative for international relations to be based on peaceful coexistence and its principles.

The human concern both of Marxists and Christians for the future of the world in the face of the mounting threat of a nuclear catastrophe has created prerequisites for discounting ideological differences and moving their political positions closer to each other.

The truth that the Soviet Union is sincerely concerned to end the arms race, and that the threat to peace and to civilisation's very survival comes from the US military-industrial complex and the political circles (whose stake in international relations is on force) has been sinking into the minds of religious people, too. They increasingly tend to associate nuclear war with the Apocalypse, the biblical end of the world.

The further development of cooperation between Christians and Communists is also determined by such an objective factor as the growing activity and significance of the popular masses in world politics. It is characteristic of all the forces under the influence of religious thinking that they are coming to be aware of this factor and have responded to it in one way or another, with their actions being determined by their social origins.

Cooperation between Christians and Communists has been made possible, in particular, by the growing differentiation and stratification of religious-minded people as a result of the economic and social changes in the world and the growing struggle for social emancipation and national liberation. Members of the revolutionary working class movement and Christian working people in the capitalist countries have common interests and are being united in the face of the monopoly offensive. Both are under oppression by the bourgeois state, and suffer from the burdens created by the negative effects of the scientific and technical revolution, and from the policy of remodelling the structures of the national economy and making it more competitive on the world market.

There is growing comprehension among believers in the industrialised and less developed capitalist countries that the imperialist system has continued to exist largely by plundering and ruthlessly exploiting the peoples of the Third World. That has made Christians more active within the emergent anti-imperialist front, in their struggle against the monopolies, and US external political expansion. These battles help to

hone the political thinking of Christians and to surmount the barriers the ruling circles and the clerical reaction supporting them want to erect in the way of the working people's unity. They feel the need for concrete action and for rallying all the forces coming out for peace and social justice.

In these conditions, there is a change in the perception of religion by the masses and in the content of faith. In some circles, there are growing doubts that the traditional church is capable of markedly lightening for its parishioners the burdens of the capitalist way of life, while some Christian working people begin to criticise capitalism and its imperialist policy from the standpoint of their faith, while others even accept socialist ideas and, indeed, Marxism itself.

The crisis of clerical anti-communism is also having an effect on the development of Communist-Christian cooperation, a process which has involved many churches and which has made itself felt in the sharpening contradictions between various members of the clergy. This process has helped to spread among Catholics and in some Protestant circles the view that they cannot ignore the urge of the labouring strata of the population for social change and for unity of action by the anti-imperialist forces. Accordingly, some members of the top clergy have taken a more flexible attitude, both in the countries of the West and of the Third World.

Cooperation between Christians and Communists is, therefore, becoming an historical manifestation of the law-governed processes of our epoch and an important factor in the anti-war and liberation struggles.

The communist movement has always attached much significance to relations with religious-minded working people and democratic circles within religious organisations and cooperation with them, regarding it as a component of the proletariat's policy of class and political alliances.

The Communists do not regard such cooperation as a makeshift or a tactical ploy, as our enemies often claim, because their attitude springs from the Marxist-Leninist ideology. Lenin regarded the relevant problems as "a direct and inevitable deduction from dialectical materialism". He showed that it would be a profound mistake to think that the attitude of Marxism to religion is "due to supposed 'tactical' considerations . . . On the contrary, in this question, too, the political line of Marxism is inseparably bound up with its philosophical principles."¹

The communist ideology not only allows for but in some cases commands alliances with those who do not share their ultimate goals, views and world-view. Rejecting political compromise out of a fear of failing in ideology would in practice amount to a lack of confidence in their ideological weapon, and would result in diehard sectarianism. Such advocates of 'pure' Marxism were subjected to withering criticism by Lenin, but he stressed that while looking to compromise one should be able to "preserve, strengthen, steel and develop the revolutionary tactics and organisation"² of its vanguard, the communist party.

The present stage in the relations between Communists and Christians is a continuation and development of a course which is rooted in the past. In the 1930s, the communist movement worked to mobilise the popular masses, including believers, to the struggle against fascism and war. When the war did break out, the communist parties in the Nazi-occupied

countries urged their members to take joint action with all the anti-fascists, including Christians, involved in the Resistance. In the new conditions of the post-war period, our movement developed the idea of unity and cohesion of all the forces and an extension of the social base in the struggle against imperialism and the monopolies, and for democracy and socialism.³

We regard Communist-Christian cooperation above all as a political problem and a component of the actions aimed to strengthen the emergent anti-imperialist fronts. We have kept asserting that the Communists do not regard cooperation with Christians as a temporary tactic, but as a strategic line and a long-term programme.⁴ This cooperation is proceeding when the struggle for peace tends to merge with the struggle for social progress, and vice versa.

The Communists do not regard Christians as a faceless or homogeneous mass; hence their differentiated approach to the various social forces under the influence of religious ideology. How and with whom cooperation is to be developed depends on the assessment of its advisability in each concrete case.

The record shows that Christians and Marxists have scored the greatest successes when striving to solve concrete problems of the anti-war and the anti-imperialist movement and the struggle for social emancipation and national liberation. Experience shows that it is clearly preferable to discuss problems on which it is possible to bring the standpoints closer together, instead of those which are patently antithetical. It follows, therefore, that dialogue on political issues can be more productive than one on doctrinal or ideological problems, if it is carried on in concrete terms instead of speculatively.

It is right to establish contacts and ties with leading church circles and with their members whenever the Communists stick to their principles in the search for common-action positions. It is perfectly obvious that relations involving the discussion of ideological questions alone will be useful if they mark a step towards joint action and help the two sides to know each other better.

If cooperation is to develop successfully, the Christian side should consist of those who sincerely seek a dialogue and want to fight against the external and internal policies of imperialism, and for peace and social justice. Whenever clerical circles establish contacts with Communists only for the purposes of yet another ideological or political act of subversion against the revolutionary forces, such a 'dialogue', we believe, will do nothing but harm.

The Communists hold firm to their ideological views and refuse to have ideological contradictions glossed over, and carry on discussions with Christians on the key issues of the day, notably the need to avert a nuclear war and help mankind to survive, to fight against imperialism, to solve the LDCs' problems, and so on. It is quite natural that the range of subjects under discussion is expressed in concrete terms in each country. The practice of many fraternal parties shows that much that is new, interesting and useful has been gained in this area. Suffice it to mention the experience gained in France, Italy, Belgium, the USA and some countries of Latin America.

While developing cooperation with Christians, the Communists do not abandon their convictions but explain their views to show the broad potentialities which the Marxist-Leninist doctrine holds out to Christians relating to their role in assuring mankind of a peaceful future and in transforming the society on the principles of social justice.

The objective prerequisites for Christian-Communist cooperation spring from the intricate processes now under way in the religious communities.

Religious working people in the industrialised capitalist countries such as Italy, France and the FRG, among others, have joined in the class, anti-monopoly struggle. In these countries, the ruin of the middle strata in town and countryside and their movement into various areas of production have led to the formation of a mainly new and large contingent of the proletariat — wage-workers. While being in many respects under the influence of religious ideology, this contingent has nevertheless come to play a big part in the struggle against the monopolies and the bourgeois state, and has taken an active part in the strike movement. Christian trade unions, other Christian workers' organisations and their national and international alliances and associations now play a much bigger role in some countries of Europe, Latin America and Africa. While their members take the traditional religious view and consider themselves to be believers, they are increasingly an important political and social force.

Liberation struggle under religious slogans has assumed extensive proportions in Asian and African countries. On the African continent, forward-looking religious forces reject apartheid and racism and resist the neocolonialist policy of the imperialist powers, to say nothing of Latin America, where many Christians have been coming out against the domination of the United States and its local servitors. Indeed, that is where the 'insurgent church', the 'liberation theology', and the 'basic' and 'people's' churches first made their appearance.⁵

The overall trend among liberation theologians seems to echo some of the political decisions of the Paris Commune in the nineteenth century, which, for example, issued decrees preventing the churches from acting as property-owning corporations. Marx says that "the priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the alms of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the Apostles."⁶

Religious circles have become an important component of anti-war movements and the struggle for peace. As compared with the 1950s, believers and their organisations have displayed much more initiative in the early 1980s and have been more consistent and resolute in showing the rising level of political consciousness and understanding of where the threat to peace actually comes from. Their actions against nuclear war are mainly anti-Reagan, and the most realistically-minded members of the clergy see the threat of war coming from the militaristic course of the US imperialist forces and support the Soviet Union's peace policy and proposals. They have come out for international relations based on the principles of peaceful coexistence.

The geographical boundaries within which religious circles take part in anti-war actions have been enlarged beyond Europe, to the United States, Canada, and the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa. There is a

difference in the scale and forms of the struggle for peace in various countries and in different political and social conditions, a struggle which is highly diverse in content, and political and ideological orientation.

Religious-minded people are increasingly confirmed in their view that peace needs to be fought for. Passiveness is giving way to dynamism in standing up for concrete peace objectives, such as elimination of mass destruction weapons, nuclear test bans and others, and cooperation with other contingents of the anti-war movement. The threat of nuclear war is no longer perceived only as 'punishment for original sin' and as the coming Apocalypse, the Armageddon,⁷ but also as the result of action by definite social forces which can and must be rebuffed.

Many believers and members of the clergy are increasingly aware that the arms race contradicts the Christian ethic and leads to cutbacks in social programmes in which the churches also have an interest, as it was characteristically stated, for instance, in the Pastoral Message of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops of the United States in 1986,⁸ which considers the spread of hunger, the growth of unemployment and the rising prices in the country in the context of the arms race.

The right-wing clerical circles have tried hard to prevent their flock and members of the clergy from taking part in the struggle against the danger of war. The most conservative members of the church have issued orders hampering contacts and joint action by Christians and the peace forces, the Communists in particular.

The right-wing clericals have countered the peace-making attitudes of religious-minded men and women with concepts whose purpose is to substantiate support for the militaristic policy of imperialism and its arms race, and to distract believers from the struggle against the threat of a nuclear war, laying emphasis on eschatology,⁹ which says that the danger of war comes from the 'forces of evil', allegedly embodied in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries. On the same logic, the United States is the embodiment of the 'forces of good' and the 'forces of justice'. International tensions are thus reduced to a contradiction between atheism, lack of faith and the idea of God.

Some conservative church ideologists insist on presenting the principle of peaceful coexistence not so much in international terms, as in internal political and even family terms, urging peace between labour and capital, the bourgeois state and its citizens, between the generations, etc.

Ultra-right clericals completely deny that there can be peaceful coexistence in the world, and claim that wars are a necessary ingredient of human life, drawing the conclusion that the imperialist line of nuclear deterrence is justifiable, and that the nuclear arms race has the sanction of religious ethics.

The reactionary clericals seek to induce among their flock a sense of hostility, intolerance and hatred for the Communists, and to present them as 'crafty enemies' covering up their plans for 'a takeover of power' with talk of cooperation, which is designed to suppress any freedom of religion and to ban the belief in God. From this primitive premise they draw the conclusion that any dialogue between believers and Communists is harmful.

They claim that the Communists, as Marxists and so also as atheists, cannot sincerely engage in such a dialogue because of their doctrine, for they are almost 'prohibited' from doing so, while the dialogue itself is only a communist 'trick'. Another false premise of reactionary clerical propaganda is that believers are induced to feel that contacts and cooperation with Communists are a betrayal of their faith and of their God, which turns them into an instrument of the 'forces of evil'.

The Vatican has taken a contradictory stand on the dialogue. On the one hand, it seems to accept that such a dialogue is natural and advisable, and on the other, makes demands and sets conditions hampering an honest exchange of views. Nor have relations with Catholics, represented by the Roman Curia, been made easier by the Vatican's abusive statements addressed to those who, in accordance with the persisting lexicon, are tagged as 'totalitarian and atheistic regimes', and proclaimed to be the 'disgrace of our time'.

The dialogue is a process that cannot be halted by its enemies either on the doctrinal or the practical level, as it will be seen from the regular meetings of Christians and Marxists held since 1971 by the International Institute for Peace, and the Centre for Peace Research at the Vienna University. These discussions of the problems of peace from the angle of two different ideologies help prominent scientists, university professors and leaders of public bodies to make a comparison of views on the key issues of our day, to gain a better understanding of each other, and to draw the practical conclusions. The results of these meetings were reported in Christian periodicals and in the communist press.¹⁰

We believe that the meeting between Marxists and Catholics in Budapest in October 1986, which was sponsored by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Vatican Secretariat for the Affairs of Non-Believers, was useful. Within the framework of the topic of 'The Society and Ethical Values', it examined the problems of peace, justice and solidarity underlying the cooperation between religious forces and the Communists.

The practical dialogue has been spreading in the form of Easter anti-war marches and other joint actions for peace. In the social sphere, it is expressed in cooperation between trade unions of different affiliations in standing up for the working people's interests in the face of the offensive by the monopolies and the right-wing forces now in power in some Western countries.

Over 200 religious leaders from nearly 60 countries took part in the social forces forum in Moscow in February 1987. Its religious section unanimously adopted an appeal to join efforts 'for a Nuclear-Weapon-Free World, For the Survival of Humanity'.

The Soviet public, as the 27th CPSU Congress stated, is prepared to go on developing ties with non-communist movements and organisations, including religious organisations opposing war.¹¹

The dialogue between Christians and Marxists has yet to bring out its potential. *Its consistent development is surely in the interests of both sides, and on the whole, in the interests of peace and social progress.*

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*. Vol. 15, p. 405.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 30. p. 492.

³ For details, see *WMR*, No. 2, 1987, pp. 55-56. — *Ed.*

⁴ This idea has been dealt with at length in Fidel Castro's writings, notably his book, *Fidel y la religion. Conversaciones con Frei Betto* (La Habana, 1985). For details, see the article by Esteban Ona in *WMR*, No. 1, 1987, — *Ed.*

⁵ For details, see *WMR*, No. 3, 1986, pp. 83-90, and *WMR*, No. 2, 1987, pp. 55-67.

⁶ Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1969, p. 220.

⁷ Armageddon, the name given in Revelations (xvi, 16) to the site of the last great battle between the forces of good and evil with the participation of all the kings of the Earth. — *Ed.*

⁸ For details, see *WMR*, No. 5, 1987, p. 100.

⁹ Eschatology (from the Greek *eschatos*, meaning last, farthest), a branch of theology concerned with the final events in the history of the world or of mankind. — *Ed.*

¹⁰ See, for instance, *WMR*, No. 1, 1985, pp. 66-69.

¹¹ See Mikhail Gorbachov, *Political Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 27th Party Congress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1986, pp. 83-84.

Disarmament: Urgency of Cooperation

TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FORUM AS VIEWED BY A DELEGATE

Last June Tokyo was the venue for an international symposium to stave off nuclear war, completely abolish nuclear arms and forge a unity of action by champions of peace and democracy. Its organiser, the Japanese Communist Party, timed it to coincide with its 65th anniversary. Taking part were 38 delegates from communist and workers' parties and national liberation and peace movement organisations in 30 countries.

THE forum's objective was a free exchange of views (without a final document to summarise it) on communist work and cooperation in achieving the crucial goal of our time — nuclear disarmament.

In his opening address, Chairman of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party **Konji Miyamoto** emphasised the notable advances made over the past two years in the world movement to ward off atomic war and abolish nuclear weapons. He noted, among other things, that the "Soviet Union came out with comprehensive disarmament proposals for a world free of nuclear weapons, for their elimination within a limited time-frame. This had a great impact on many forces which had been sceptical about the elimination of nuclear arms. The Soviet proposals made in the Reykjavik talks last year raised the hopes of the world's people, who have for so long been disappointed with the arms control talks which had led us nowhere."

This appraisal aptly summarised the general view. Delegates sounded the conviction that given a constructive and realistic attitude by all interested parties it is possible to reach an international accord completely

eliminating the global nuclear arms stockpiles. The debate keynoted the communist view that after Reykjavik it is no longer possible to 'close the door' to nuclear disarmament. In the recent past, it was stressed, quite a few members of peace action saw it as only a remote objective, almost a romantic ideal to be pursued. What we see now is a clear, concrete and considered programme of joint practical action to remove the nuclear peril from the life of humanity within the visible future.

The following ideas aired by the delegates are indicative of the marked changes in the anti-nuclear movement outlook.

"Since 1985 when such a symposium was held in Tokyo the struggle to prevent a nuclear catastrophe reached qualitatively new frontiers, which makes it possible today to look into the future with greater optimism. This short but extremely important period saw landmarks, each of which elevated the struggle for the elimination of nuclear weapons to a higher level, bringing into action new forces and fresh reserves" (**Georgi Korniyenko**, CC member, Communist Party of the Soviet Union).

"While Soviet proposals are becoming the focal point of humanity's survival, the USA and NATO refuse to respond positively. This refusal is a reflection of imperialism's commitment to the nuclear cult . . .

"In fact, today, the SDI has become the central obstacle to the progress of talks on disarmament and nuclear arms reduction" (**Sitaram Yechury**, CC member, Communist Party of India [Marxist]).

"This menace [the threat of war] did not diminish in the last decade, it grew. American theories about the possibility of a limited nuclear war in Europe alarmed the peoples of Europe, especially as they were accompanied by the stationing of cruise missiles. SDI clearly has its own place in this concept" (**Marcus Bakker**, representative of the Communist Party of the Netherlands).

"Zero nuclear weapons by the year 2000 is the meaning and the goal of our action. But above all, the possibility of attaining this objective has been made real by a series of proposals. And we support unreservedly all initiatives in favour of disarmament, wherever they may come from, provided their goal is the same. This is the case of the proposals made by the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, the Delhi Six, or the peace movements in France, Europe and the world" (**Laurent Ballouhey**, representative of the French Communist Party).

Delegates agreed that continued life on this planet absolutely requires complete and general disarmament. The key issue is elimination of nuclear weapons. It should be an everyday urgent concern, among other pressing ones, for all the parties, both in power and not. It should be pursued with partial and comprehensive measures. There was underscored the need to resist the insidious bourgeois concept that a complete abolition of nuclear arms was purportedly unrealistic owing to their critical 'deterrent' capacity.

Support was voiced for all initiatives by states, political parties and civic organisations and movements striving for nuclear disarmament. There was specific endorsement for a proposal to abolish individual types of atomic weapons and create nuclear-free zones, corridors, countries, towns and areas. There was much interest shown in ways to remove the nuclear menace and defuse tensions in various regions.

"In our 'third world' countries, the demand for an end to the arms race is linked to the only possibility of being able to obtain necessary resources for facing the international economic crisis and the dramatic and distressing situation of these countries . . . If the developed countries eliminate the latent nightmare of a nuclear holocaust — which, of course, would reach us all — the peoples of the 'third world' could also more certainly hope for the disappearance of another holocaust nightmare: hunger, disease, poverty . . . affecting now hundreds of millions of people" (**Jose Felipe Carneado**, CC member, Communist Party of Cuba).

There was a candid and comradely exchange of views on the new requirements facing the peace movement, the ways to most effectively meet them, and the role and place of communist and workers' parties in the nuclear disarmament drive. The debate that followed revealed new ideas and proposals. More specifically, there was intense discussion of and broad support for a JCP initiative for a 'single world anti-nuclear front'.

"A far greater involvement of the working class and the trade unions is of cardinal importance for the successful development of the movement for peace, against the nuclear threat. In a number of countries the world over the peace movement has made its way into industrial plants to become inseparable from the struggle for workers and working people's social demands . . . The Communists are a major constituent of the movement for peace, against nuclear weapons, and they stand in it for equal partnership and for co-operation . . . Their authority within the peace movement is growing . . . Our party is convinced that the most effective form of the struggle for peace is that which enjoys wide popular support. The working class and the communist parties must be the vanguard in the struggle for a world free from violence, a world free from nuclear weapons" (**Michal Hocko**, CC member, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).

"To attain these objectives [disarmament and cooperation to stop the arms race] . . . we Italian Communists act at the level of our government, and in all the international organisations in which we are represented . . . seeking agreement and common commitment with the European Left, as well as with all the forces for peace in our country, Europe and the world" (**Bruno Bernini**, representative of the Italian Communist Party).

There was a consensus that the symposium organised by the JCP confirmed the pressing need for more frequent non-formal get-togethers and closer cooperation by communist and workers' parties, national liberation movements, and all anti-war elements.

Jindřich Novak
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For Peace In Lebanon And The Arab World

Rafic Samhoun — Political Bureau
member, Central Committee, Lebanese
Communist Party (LCP)

WAR has been ravaging my country for 12 years now. The internal conflict is compounded by the continued aggression of Israel. Lebanon has in fact become a springboard for imperialist forays in our region, a proving ground for the perfection of 'traditional' weapons (the guns of the US battleship *New Jersey*) and for the testing of the latest 'infernal machines' (nerve-gas artillery shells and vacuum bombs).

As many as 150,000 of my countrymen have been killed — by bullets, by the falling rubble and by wounds. Whole districts of Beirut and other cities, as well as many villages, have been razed to the ground. Almost half the economically active population has left the country, and the nation's infrastructure is a shambles. Thousands of families are starving, and the national currency has lost about 99 per cent of its value.

These are chilling statistics. Meanwhile, the bloodshed is continuing, and the conspiracy against Lebanon is widening. Problems are piling up and getting hopelessly intertwined. All this makes it difficult to readily grasp *what kind of peace we are fighting for and how we are doing it*. Having the tragedy of my country in mind, I shall try to explain.

Two Policies

The struggle to preserve peace is by no means a problem imposed externally on the peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, and they do not regard it as an alien issue of minor importance. It also affects the vital interests of the Arab peoples and is linked directly with the very essence of their struggle. The reasons? *First*, the universal nature of the nuclear threat is reason enough for the involvement of every nation and even of every individual in the struggle for its elimination. *Second*, local conflicts — be it the destructive war between Iran and Iraq or the Middle East conflict — inflict huge losses on the belligerents and on neighbouring countries and threaten to escalate into a global conflagration. *Third*, the mushrooming hotbeds of tensions and the growth of militarism have a pernicious effect on the national liberation movement. Finally, *fourth*, the arms race impedes the solution of urgent socio-economic problems and hampers the efforts to overcome backwardness.

Enormous resources are now being spent on weapons of war at the expense of civilian needs. The developing countries account for three-quarters of the world's arms imports, with the member countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf alone having spent some 400 billion dollars for this purpose over the last 15 years. This use of financial resources only aggravates the already disastrous living conditions in the Third World where the average per capita income is

1/13th of the level in the industrially developed nations, and more than one billion people suffer from hunger.

The steady acquisition of new weapons leads to a rapid increase of the foreign debt, highlighting the direct connection between the trillion-dollar debt of the developing countries and the corresponding increase of US military spending during the past decade. In other words, neocolonial plunder pays for the militarist budgets of imperialism, above all of US imperialism.

The issue of peace has recently acquired a new dimension as far as we are concerned, in view of the emphasis Washington has placed on direct military intervention in various parts of the world — Lebanon and Libya, Grenada and Nicaragua. Simultaneously, the Reagan administration is working to assure its neoglobalist claims in the military, political, economic and ideological spheres, seeking to involve its NATO allies in this process too.

Opposing this course is the policy of peace, embodied in the responsible and radical initiatives advanced by the Soviet Union and all socialist countries in order to normalise and restructure international relations and gear them to the new way of political thinking.

These two different policies have been thrown into bold relief in our region. The USSR and the socialist community as a whole have assumed a position of principle, calling for a fully-fledged international conference on the Middle East attended by all parties concerned, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation; for the recognition of the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to independent statehood; and for the complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from all occupied territories, including the south of Lebanon.

But the United States is encouraging Israel to continue the occupation and preaching its own concept of the conference. The aim is to turn it into a smokescreen behind which separate talks with Tel Aviv are to be held so as to again conclude agreements equivalent to the Arabs' surrender, after the disgraceful pattern of Camp David.

The alignment of forces in our part of the world was dangerously upset when Egypt, the biggest country of the region, was ousted from the Arab world. A civil war began in Lebanon, and hostilities broke out between Iraq and Iran. New political, military and police blocs have been created in the Middle East, dozens of military bases have been set up, and the social strata with a stake in arms purchases have gained strength. Many economies have been undermined.

All this has occurred against the background of the Israeli aggression and occupation of Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese territories — something that would have been impossible without the expansion of cooperation between Israel and its US sponsor in the framework of their 'strategic alliance'.

These moves fit perfectly into the policy of neoglobalism pursued by the Reagan administration allegedly to resist a 'Soviet threat' — Washington's way of referring to the struggle peoples are waging to eliminate the legacy of colonial rule, for independence, social progress and peace.

The aggressive course of the United States is particularly dangerous in

the Middle East, above all due to the *growing geopolitical importance of Israel as a forward base of imperialism in the region*. Israel is creating an atom bomb and *turning into a nuclear power*. Furthermore, it is *involved in the SDI programme* — both in research and in the construction of special projects for its implementation.

Washington's desire to make the Persian Gulf a US-NATO 'lake' is another reason. That is why the United States is exacerbating and prolonging the Iran-Iraq conflict, which enables it to increase its interference in the affairs of the region and its military presence there. US imperialism is also trying to turn the Mediterranean into a similar 'lake' by entangling it in a network of land-based and seaborne nuclear missile bases.² All this is making our region a hotbed of particular danger and tensions, while the Arab peoples fighting for their rights and for the return of the occupied territories are being subjected to nuclear blackmail and to an intensified build-up of ultra-modern weaponry.

The experience of the Arab peoples confirms that more durable peace creates more favourable conditions for the development of the national liberation movement. During the period of détente the popular masses in many Arab countries won important political, social and economic gains.

With Due Regard for Distinctive National Features

Our party has long been stressing these points, and it is laying particular emphasis on them now that they are gaining universal recognition. We are addressing those who, as recently as the 1970s, claimed that détente was nothing but a deal between the great powers concluded to the detriment of the liberation movement. The record also bears out another assessment we have made: while linking issues of nuclear disarmament to regional problems, the United States in fact refuses to seek a genuine and fair solution to the latter. It merely wants to secure a higher price for its illusory concessions in the field of arms limitation — at the expense of the peoples' independence, freedom and progress. Obviously, the US refusal to work for constructively settling the key issues of our age makes regional problems even more explosive.

This imparts greater urgency than ever before to the questions of *which approach should be chosen* in the drive to preserve peace and eliminate armed conflicts and *which forms of struggle* should be used with due regard for our distinctive national features.

It is clear that anti-war activities cannot be reduced to any one aspect or form, nor are there any ready-made universal recipes for removing the threat of war. It follows that there can be neither a 'Chinese wall' nor any contradiction between the work to uphold peace and the anti-imperialist struggle, the action to advance the political and socio-economic interests of the working masses. The two issues are dialectically interconnected, and success in the solution of one will lead to progress in the settlement of the other.

How, then, are we to champion peace given distinctive features of our country and region? Let us examine the situation in my country from this angle.

A situation in which our people are exterminated, driven from their

homes and robbed of their crops, when our economy and commerce are being destabilised, when thousands roam the streets hungry and homeless, this situation provides the answer to the question of *how we should fight for peace and why, in Lebanon, this struggle has a direct bearing on the solution of domestic socio-economic and political problems and on the struggle against imperialism whose constant pressure we are feeling everywhere.*

A nuclear-free world and the cessation of local wars across the globe are not abstract notions to us Lebanese Communists. We are fighting for peace in our own distinctive situation, and our struggle is an integral element of mankind's progress toward universal and durable peace. In our country, this struggle cannot be reduced merely to appeals and exhortations. Can we remain indifferent to aggression and violence? We simply must combat armed terror and destruction. That, too, is a way of contributing to peace.

A non-resistant and passive attitude may result in a peace, Camp David style, or a 'Pax Americana' which would spell Israeli and US hegemony and betrayal of the national liberation struggle in the region. This would create the danger of an unjust peace which favours imperialism alone spreading to other countries.

If we fail to continue to fight on, although the struggle is harsh and sanguinary, not only the viability of our state but also the security of our brothers elsewhere in the Arab world will be in jeopardy. Washington's schemes are not confined to Lebanon alone: the objective is to transform all Arab countries without exception into forward bases of neoglobalism. The threat to the socialist countries will increase too. This means that *the internationalist duty of the Lebanese patriots, their responsibility for peace in the region and in the world* are also involved.

A Flexible Political Course

The Communist Party and all other patriotic forces of the country have therefore been rebuffing imperialist, Zionist and reactionary forays for several years now. The list of our practical achievements in the efforts to secure peace and a just settlement of the conflict includes the withdrawal of the US-NATO 'multinational force' from Beirut; the abrogation of the May 17, 1983 agreement with Israel which gave the seal of approval to the sway of Israel and its sponsors over my country; and the upsurge of armed resistance which made the aggressor pull back from most of Lebanese territory.

The hostilities have made it incumbent on the LCP not only to defend itself and preserve its ranks³ but also to work to prevent the genocidal extermination of the forces favouring national reconciliation. The Party is a steady advocate of better relations with all groups fighting against the invaders and is ready to accept any form of cooperation aimed at ending the civil war. This cooperation is particularly important given the escalation of threatening moves by Israel which increasingly often raids peaceful towns and villages of South Lebanon, as well as Palestinian camps. The Israeli military is preparing the ground for a new invasion and hails the aggression of 1982. The LCP notes with concern that extreme right-wingers who act as Israeli and US agents are stepping up their

activities within the country. Simultaneously, the fundamentalists have free rein to do as they please; the action taken by the obscurantists against all democratic and healthy forces in Lebanon plays into the hands of imperialism, Zionism and reaction.

There will be no peace in our country unless there is stable coordination of action among all Lebanese patriots who are duty bound to resist the schemes of the invaders and of the domestic reactionaries. Nor can peace be attained and the acute socio-economic crisis curbed without the unity of the patriotic Lebanese and Palestinian forces and Syria. By upholding a unitary approach, we Communists are making yet another contribution to the strengthening of Arab anti-imperialist unity and to the elimination of a hotbed of war which threatens the entire region.

In its commitment to these goals, the LCP does not propose immediate implementation of an advanced democratic reform at the current stage. It does not even demand any political or socio-economic concessions to the working class. As the Communists declared at their Fifth Congress in February 1987, *first and foremost, we need a guarantee of democracy*. This guarantee, essentially a pledge not to resort to armed force as a means of solving internal problems, will make it possible to *continue the political struggle and advance a feasible programme for the settlement of the Lebanese crisis*, a programme that would lay the basis for cooperation of all people of Lebanon.

The LCP refuses to give up its principles, but it pursues a flexible political course and adapts its activities to the actual state of affairs and to the alignment of forces within the country. We hold that it is possible to rally all patriots around a democratic and non-confessional programme for a settlement. The Communists were the first to put forward a democratic national project for the liberation of the south of Lebanon from the yoke of Israeli occupation and for overcoming the country's crisis by healing the confessional and religious rift.

The Communist Party has been working hard to help establish patriotic fronts similar to the 1982 Front for National Salvation. We have recently sponsored the creation of a Front for the Unification and Liberation of Lebanon.⁵

The programme of the Front states that it is to fight for the liberation of the occupied territories, against any and all attempts to partition the country, for the return of the refugees to their homes, for political and socio-economic reform, for security guarantees to the 500,000 Palestinians living in Lebanon, and for guarantees assuring the continuation of the Palestinian revolution. In this way the LCP makes a contribution to the cause of peace in Lebanon and in the region.

A Dialectical Interconnection

The struggle against war and aggression and the drive against imperialism and Zionism, for social progress are indivisible, and this conclusion is borne out by the experience my country has accumulated. This we see as the answer to the question about the meaning of the struggle for peace. It is *not the priorities in the solution of this or that problem but the intricate*

dialectical interconnection of both the problems themselves and their solutions which is the relevant point. If we accept this argument, it becomes clear that *peace in Lebanon will also further the cause of peace in the Arab World and across the globe.*

That is why the people must be able to grasp this interconnection more fully, and we should not confine ourselves merely to the usual and familiar forms and methods of the struggle for peace.

All patriotic and peace-loving forces in Lebanon should now concentrate on mobilisation and political education. This is a tough challenge, particularly given the vast expertise and opportunities of the mass media controlled by imperialism and reaction. But the task is feasible.

The masses should be firmly convinced that *the threat of war can be removed when peace becomes a truly common cause, when everyone joins the struggle irrespective of ideological, political or class-based differences, and when this struggle reaches a level corresponding to the realities of our age.* This is the goal of all peace forces across the globe, of all those who want to survive.

¹ Established in 1981, the Council comprises six countries — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. — *Ed.*

² Striving to turn the Mediterranean into a zone of peace, good-neighbour relations and cooperation, the USSR and all other Warsaw Treaty member-states are calling for a special conference similar to the one on European security and cooperation. They also advocate an agreement on the mutual withdrawal of Soviet and US naval forces from the Mediterranean and on removing and barring nuclear weapons from the area. Member countries of the socialist community have also put forward constructive proposals with regard to the Persian Gulf.

³ Over 1,000 party members have been killed in the civil war. — *Ed.*

⁴ That is, without religious or communal division: the population of Lebanon follows as many as 17 different denominations.

⁵ The Front comprises the LCP, the Progressive Socialist Party, the Baath Party, the Nasserites, the Syrian Social Party, the Amal movement, etc. — *Ed.*

Possible Steps Toward Denuclearization Of Europe

Bernard Feld — Professor, Physics
Department, Massachusetts Institute of
Technology (USA)

The discussion on ways toward human survival is continued by Prof. Bernard T. Feld, a Nobel Prize winner and a participant in the US A-bomb project, who is now an anti-nuke activist and a member of the Pugwash Movement* of scientists for peace and disarmament.

BEFORE marshalling my arguments, it is necessary that I define a number of terms: first of all — by 'denuclearization', I mean the removal of all nuclear weapons. The term, as used here, does *not* apply to peaceful nuclear power production activities. However, since the source materials for nuclear power (enriched uranium and plutonium), as well as the inevitable plutonium by-product, are also the basic ingredients for nuclear explosive devices, there is clearly an intimate and inevitable relationship between the two types of activities. These inter-relationships must be taken into account and provided for in the attainment and maintenance of the goal of denuclearization.

Second, I must define Europe. Where does it start, and where does it end?

For the purposes of the following discussion, Europe is the entire land-area from the Ural mountains on the east to the Atlantic on the west (including the British Isles), and from the northern borders of the Scandinavian countries and the USSR to the Mediterranean Sea on the south (I leave open the question of whether it includes Greenland).

There is in this definition an obvious asymmetry between 'east' and 'west': while Russia is part of Europe, the United States is not. Hence, European denuclearization does not in any way affect the territory of the USA, while the same is far from true for the USSR. On the other hand,

* The Pugwash Movement emerged in July 1957, when the first international conference of scientists from socialist and capitalist countries met in the fishing village Pugwash in Canada on the initiative of Albert Einstein, Frederic Joliot-Curie, Bertrand Russell and other prominent figures. The purpose of the 22 participants was to discuss the threat posed to humanity by the development of the H-bomb. The movement has gathered strength in the three decades; it unites today more than 1,000 scientists from all over the world who have joined in efforts to avert nuclear war and safeguard peace. The movement, headquartered in London, convenes one or two conferences a year in different countries. These forums are characterised by frank and free exchanges of views between participants regardless of their political persuasions, and by high professionalism and competence; they submit their scientific recommendations to heads of government and the UN Secretary-General.

The Pugwash Movement has been of great help in drafting a number of international agreements intended to contain the arms race. Along with the movements of physicians and ecologists and the World Federation of Scientific Workers, among others, it plays an important role in promoting understanding and closer ties between scientists committed to peace efforts. — *Ed.*

since weapons deployed just on the other side of the Urals, even of the intermediate-range variety (and thus not covered by the constraints of SALT Agreements) — e.g., SS-20 — are capable of striking anywhere on the territory of West Europe or the UK, to strike the Soviet Union with intermediate-range weapons, NATO would have to deploy them in Western Europe (e.g., Pershing or cruise missiles). However, Soviet deployments just east of the Urals can be (and are) matched by NATO (or even independent British and French¹) deployments in submarines in the waters of the Atlantic adjacent to Europe. Thus, an agreement for the denuclearization of Europe (as I define it) can provide for a balance between limited (eventually, it is to be hoped, zero) deployment of Warsaw Pact and NATO weapons *just off the boundaries of the European continent*.

Of course, the intention (and necessity) is to avoid a nuclear exchange in Europe. Owing to the extremely high population density in Europe, such a nuclear exchange would be an absolutely unmitigated disaster.

Still, despite the obvious desirability of European denuclearization, the achievement of this goal will certainly not come overnight, even assuming the best of intentions (and recognition of basic self-interest) on both sides. The problem, for political 'pragmatists', is to devise a series of plausible, hopefully not too gradual steps that could enable European governments and the international community to start moving inexorably in this direction. Some of these steps are listed below:

1. *Establishment of a completely demilitarized zone — of, say, 100 km on both sides of the current East-West 'border' — open to free inspection on both sides.* Such an agreement would be very easy to inspect, even by purely national means. Furthermore, withdrawal of the nuclear and conventional forces of both sides by 100 km would have a minor effect on the ability of either side to respond to a surprise attack from the other. What such a zone would do, however, would be to markedly decrease the current tensions arising from the direct, day-after-day confrontation of the two sides and increase stability in case of a crisis.

2. *Appreciable decrease in the offensive components of the forces on both sides* (e.g., large tank deployments, likewise large battle-ready troop deployments and offensive aircraft).

3. *Enunciation of non-offensive military doctrines by sides² — e.g., 'no-first-use' proclamations — coupled with changes in force postures that clearly favour the implementation of such doctrines — such as in (2) above.* In response to the argument that 'no-first-use' is entirely a declaratory move — and certainly non-verifiable — it should be noted that the most important arms control arrangement in the last half-century has been of this nature; namely the Geneva Protocol of 1925, prohibiting the first use of biological, chemical and toxic weapons. The Protocol led, eventually, to the 1972 Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Biological Weapons.

4. All of these desirable steps would be greatly facilitated if the arms race in all these areas were not continuing at full speed, even as the negotiations for their limitations drag on, thus guaranteeing that almost any feasible agreement will be rendered obsolete by new technical developments even

before the treaty has a chance to come into effect. This is a profound weakness of the arms control process, recognized by friend and foe alike.

Another simple principle is proposed: *simultaneously with the beginning of any international negotiation with respect to any weapon or weapons system, the further production and deployment of such weapons should be frozen. It is irrelevant whether one side or the other is 'ahead' at the moment of freezing.* First of all, both sides have such a variety and quantity of lethal weapons deployed that any 'imbalance' on one or another aspect of these deployments has a miniscule effect on the overall balance — we are both 'deterred' at levels that are many orders of magnitude greater than what would be required by any 'rational' military or political considerations.

To the objection that a freeze solves nothing in this situation of mutual 'overkill', that only serious disarmament can make any real difference, I would respond that if you are in an automobile, heading at 80 miles per hour toward the edge of a precipice, the first thing that you do is jam on the brakes. Only then do you start to discuss whether the best tactic is to turn right, or turn left, or go into reverse.

As a concomitant to the 'freeze', a universal 'no-first-use' agreement would buy the time needed for such negotiations to come to fruition.

But equally important is the avoidance of new arms races in newly developing military technologies. What comes most quickly to mind here is 'star wars' or, as it is more formally known in the USA, the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI). But this is by no means the only military 'will-o'-the-wisp' that is being sold to the American public: small and mobile Midgetman missiles; cruise missiles — land, sea and air-launched varieties; stealth bomber technologies; laser systems equally effective for 'zapping' the opponent's offensive and defensive systems; binary nerve gases; neutron bombs (that only kill people while preserving property) — you name it; we've either already got it, or it is on the way; nothing is too exotic or difficult to phase the 'whiz kids' of our weapons labs.

However, all these projected devices suffer from the 'fallacy of the last move'. Each and every such system can be overcome by a technically advanced and determined opponent, and usually at a cost well below that of the original system; and even if the cost is, though only very occasionally, somewhat higher, it is never too much for the other side to pay. In fact, rather than 'bleeding the Russians to death', as our military zealots have futilely been hoping over the last decade or so, it is we who are doing the most bleeding — both economically and politically.

Like it or not, if Ronald Reagan were tomorrow to accept Mikhail Gorbachov's latest proposals, we would benefit in every respect at least as much as the Russians. And the rest of the world would be the greatest beneficiary — gone would be the imminent threat of European devastation and nuclear winter, both too real threats in this era of overkill.

¹ Britain's nuclear potential is known to figure in the NATO plans, while the French military doctrine is increasingly drifting toward the NATO's activity and concepts. — *Ed.*

² The Warsaw Treaty member countries approved in Berlin last May a document proclaiming the defensive character of their military doctrine. — *Ed.*

viewpoints

"I Saw A Real Revolution"

A Belgian Communist Discusses His Trip To The USSR

Jef Turf — CC Political Bureau member, Communist Party of Belgium

WMR has asked the Soviet journalist Vitaly Dymarsky to contact Jef Turf in Moscow and ask him to share his impressions of his trip around the Soviet Union and his assessment of perestroika and of its international significance.

You're back from a ten-day tour of the Soviet Union. What are your first impressions?

'FIRST' is the right word because a summing-up will come later. My notebook is bulging with notes on the talks I had and with clippings from the Soviet press. It'll take time to bring some sort of order to my impressions. Still, I would venture to say a few words about what I now see as the essence of perestroika.

The Soviet Union is drawing practical conclusions from what I regard as the biggest theoretical discovery of the latter half of the twentieth century, a discovery made by the CPSU — the realisation that the world is interdependent and integral. This draws our attention not only to the purely military danger of building up various types of weapons but also to other consequences of this build-up. Specifically, aside from swallowing up huge technological and financial resources and squandering the intellectual and scientific potential, the arms race also has an extremely adverse effect on the environment — air and water pollution, the destruction of the ozone layer, and the accidental or intentional spread of radioactivity.

These fears are nothing new, and the communist movement has voiced them too. But it was the world's first socialist country which was also first to deduce such clear-cut and specific conclusions from the present situation and to offer a new vision of the future.

The CPSU is stressing the need to take urgent practical action so as to stop the accumulation of weapons, to give up what I might call the

Jef Turf was born into a Catholic family in 1932. Holder of a Ph.D. in physics, he was a researcher until 1963, when he became a party functionary. A member of the CPB Central Committee since 1960 and of its Political Bureau since 1963, he served as Deputy Chairman of the CPB and Chairman of the party's Flemish Regional Council from 1969 to 1986. Since 1971 Jef Turf has been political director of the Flemish-language newspaper *De Rode Vaan*, the party's central press organ.

quantitative approach to issues of security and to tackle them in an entirely different way — on the basis of understanding and trust. Today, the two opposite systems can no longer contend in the old way — either agreement is reached, or we all perish. This is how I see the Soviet Union's integrated disarmament programme, insistent initiatives and tangible steps.

I think it is also important to note that, as far as I understand, the concept of an interdependent and integral world implies not only unity of the socialist countries, of the international communist movement in the drive against the war threat, but also cooperation and joint action with all forces of reason, even if they represent capitalist monopolies.

How do you see the interdependence of Soviet foreign and domestic policy?

You can't separate one from the other. Everything I have just said about international affairs has a direct bearing on perestroika within the Soviet Union. Judging by what I saw during my trip, the task on the domestic scene also involves a switch from quantitative to qualitative solutions. I'll cite an example that is close to me professionally (I am a nuclear physicist by training). I refer to nuclear power production, which has recently become the subject of heated debate.

The view is still current that there is no ceiling to the level of energy consumption and that technology will allow us to solve all the difficulties which are still outstanding. I am convinced that this blind faith in technology is a product of obsolete thinking. Of course, nuclear power production is so far indispensable, but you cannot close your eyes to the possibility of giving it up in the future. I have learned from articles in the Soviet press that this subject is being widely discussed in the USSR, specifically in the academic community. And debate results in specific, practical decisions: the clash of views over the construction of additional generating units at Chernobyl has led to the conclusion that the project should be scrapped. I think this shows that a search is on for viable alternatives to endless linear growth in the production and consumption of power, to purely technological solutions.

In short, the switch from a quantity-oriented to a quality-oriented approach is what perestroika, its revolutionary character and its interconnection with Soviet foreign policy and peace initiatives are all about.

I was somewhat uneasy at first to hear the notion of 'revolution' applied to changes in a socialist country. After all, I thought, relations between the classes or relations of production are not being changed. But now that I have seen perestroika with my own eyes for ten days, I realise that the word has been chosen very aptly. I have witnessed a genuine revolution — but a revolution affecting the minds, the attitudes and the methods of work, not the social basis. It's a revolution which is to impart a new quality to the entire Soviet way of life.

This isn't your first visit to the Soviet Union. What changes do you find particularly striking?

Yes, I have been to the Soviet Union several times, but my last visit was ten years ago. Why such a long interval? Frankly, because during the period the CPSU has described as stagnant I often had the impression that time was standing still. In Tallin, one of the stops on my itinerary, a woman working in a small café which had adopted new forms of organisation of labour and remuneration told me that a perestroika like that in the service sector and elsewhere should have been launched some two decades earlier. A dedicated effort to catch up, to give a powerful push to social development is now evident in the USSR.

I saw tangible changes in day-to-day life, but I was struck most of all by the frankness of the discussions dealing with highly charged issues, such as ways of perfecting democracy, the struggle against the bureaucracy, or the ethnic question. There is no fear of conflicting views or of contradictions that surface inevitably. As far as I could see, people are almost racing one another to present their own interpretation of this or that issue. They suggest different and at times mutually exclusive solutions, as though 'unburdening' themselves of ideas long bottled up.

Nonetheless, it's not something impulsively headstrong. It is a process sponsored and directed by the Communist Party. The CPSU has brilliantly charted the main course of perestroika and presented it to the people; specific steps along this way are submitted for discussion. Ever the first to act, the party has found the courage and the strength not only to identify and analyse the factors that had led to stagnation but also to work vigorously to eliminate its consequences, point out the main aspects of renewal and give a new impetus to the progress of Soviet society.

Judging by what I have seen, glasnost is the foremost accomplishment of perestroika. You can feel glasnost above all in the open and frank way things are being discussed, but also in the marked change in the work of the mass media, and in the unmistakable spirit of revival in literature, in cinema and in the theatre.

As far as the economy is concerned, I think it is too early to speak about perestroika's practical results yet — if only because, generally, you cannot expect a novel approach to the economy to yield immediate results. You've got to wait patiently for it to bear fruit. Still, I hold that the course the USSR is now firmly steering to promote economic autonomy and viability of enterprises, democratic economic management and economic self-government, will prove effective. But although it is too early to take stock, to review accomplishments or failures, I am convinced that everything will work out properly, and I sincerely wish success to my Soviet friends.

During my trip I paid special attention to the service sector where, as the country's party and government leaders say and the public concurs, the lag is particularly noticeable. I agree with those Soviet economists who ascribe this lag to a disdainful view of commodity-money relations and to the long-dominant prejudice against the market viewed as a devilish invention of the capitalists.

But the market had existed even before capitalism emerged, and it is still with us. To me, the market under socialism is a form of relations among people, a form in which the fruits of their labour are distributed (not only in terms of quantity but also of quality). This is why I was particularly interested to follow the effort the USSR is making to develop the market that is socialist.

So it's been 'ten days that shook Jef Turf'?

I think I can accept that. Although, to be accurate, I began to be 'shaken' even before my trip began because, like all members of our party, I closely followed all news from the Soviet Union and the CPSU. That was why I decided to tour, as a journalist, the country in which the most exciting things were happening.

What I saw really shook me — and I'm using this word in its positive meaning. Some Communists still believe that anything happening in the Soviet Union is invariably good. I have never shared this attitude, but I am very enthusiastic about the developments now under way in the USSR. They nurture great hopes among us West European Marxists.

That's the subject of my next question. How do you assess the impact of perestroika on the struggle of the working people, of progressive forces in the capitalist world?

There is long-established agreement in the communist movement about the equality and independence of all parties. However, it is obvious that the CPSU holds a special place in it. The CPSU is the party at the helm of the world's first socialist state which made an everlasting contribution to the defence of democratic values during World War II and which has developed into a great power, and this great power plays a major role in the shaping of world affairs.

But, to be frank, the impulses generated by the USSR during the recent period described as stagnant did not mobilise foreign Communists effectively enough. I do not mean an effort to offer any model for copying. Every party draws up its own policy guided by the distinctive national features of its country, by its own history and by the actual conditions of struggle. Meanwhile, all foreign and domestic policy initiatives of the CPSU generate widespread response within the international communist movement. I hold that this impact was not effective enough during the period prior to April 1985. Besides, the bourgeoisie acted skilfully by capitalising on negative phenomena in socialist society to mount anti-communist and anti-Soviet campaigns.

Today, the situation is changing visibly and fast. The shifts occurring in the Soviet Union are influencing public opinion in our countries. Even observers whose positions are far from communist are responding. The influence of perestroika can also be felt in the effectiveness of CPB activities.

I'll cite an example which I think is typical. Early this year we launched our annual campaign for subscriptions to *De Rode Vaan*, the

Flemish-language weekly of the CPB. The posters we issued featured a photo of Mikhail Gorbachov. The result was greater than we hoped for — 500 subscriptions more than we had planned. This seemingly minor fact reflects the tremendous popularity of the Soviet leader and of his policy.

This is true above all of the Soviet Union's steady and unremitting struggle for disarmament and peace — a major objective of all communist parties, including the CPB. Soviet proposals and steps in this field are helping both the Belgian anti-war movement in which the Communists are active and the CPB itself: our party demands that Belgium cut its military spending and channel the released funds into social programmes.

But that's not all as far as perestroika's impact is concerned. The Belgian government is imposing the US model of neoliberalism on our country. Until recently the people tended to accept this policy even though it ran counter to their interests. The reason is that the Belgians did not see any viable alternative to the government's course, any other solutions to their problems, any clear outlook for social progress.

But if people see democracy perfected in the USSR (and my trip has convinced me that this will indeed be the case), if they see basic freedoms developed (and these are real, not formal freedoms, in contrast to what we have in our country) — freedoms of the press and of expression, the freedom to personally influence decision-making and its follow-up, to advocate environmental protection, to fight against red tape and to refuse to blindly follow orders — then, in addition to the firm foundation of socialism, all this can actually sway public opinion in capitalist countries. And so we Communists warmly welcome perestroika and wish it success in raising the prestige of the Soviet Union and enhancing the appeal of socialism.

While on the subject of comparing the two systems and while discussing the competition between them, I'd like to share an observation I have made. Developed countries, socialist and capitalist alike, face many problems that appear similar. This idea was confirmed during my trip to the USSR: people I talked with spoke about difficulties I was familiar with in Belgium, although my country's social structures differ radically from those of the Soviet society.

Take the problem of the bureaucracy, an issue hotly and caustically debated both in the USSR and in Belgium. Bureaucracy exists in different forms which are distinctly Belgian or Soviet, but in both countries there is a need to strip the bureaucrats of the enormous power they have come to wield. Or take freedom of the press, another issue of concern to our public. As I could see for myself, open discussions are conducted in the Soviet press, and anyone is free to take part in the debate. In our country, newspapers, radio and television are coming to depend increasingly on big capitalist groups. Progressive forces have no access to the mass media because that is where the 'market rules of the game' determine everything: you have to have a lot of money to publish a newspaper or periodical, let alone get established in radio and television, fields that are 'off limits' to Communists.

Let's now take up yet another aspect of our theme. Perestroika means self-management, greater democracy, and an ever bigger say people have

in deciding on matters of nationwide importance and on questions affecting them as members of work teams. That is the course the CPSU is steering. Meanwhile, the 'recipes' proposed by the ruling quarters in my country go in the opposite direction — toward dismantling democratic institutions, granting unwarranted powers to the executive, and curtailing social rights. In the USSR, pay is increased as an incentive to workers; in the capitalist world the gap between the incomes of the employers and of the workers is increasing with every passing year — naturally, to the disadvantage of the latter. Under socialism, the principle underlying the organisation of production and distribution is, 'to each according to his work'; under capitalism it is 'to each according to his clout'.

Therefore, while the problems look alike, the heart of the matter is that the solutions being devised in the Soviet Union differ fundamentally from those which capitalism seeks to impose. And the difference concerns not only the proposed solutions but also the actual results. The success of perestroika, an endeavour which will take years, not months to complete, will, in my view, result in a situation completely unlike anything we used to have. This success will not only produce momentous changes in the Soviet social fabric but also exert a powerful influence on the minds of people in our countries. Actually, this influence is already in evidence.

Could you give us an example?

I could cite many, but I'll only mention one. Within a short span of time, the Russian words *glasnost* and *perestroika* entered our language. You don't have to translate them. They are now household words to us Belgians, and not only to us. A Flemish newspaper has recently published an article on the situation in the Belgian trade union movement and on the marked shortage of democracy in it. The author was asking whether it was time to 'introduce *glasnost*'.

At the same time, our public sees what sort of words we have borrowed from the US vocabulary — 'star wars', 'overkill'. That is a glaring contrast, and people make their conclusions accordingly.

My next question is about perestroika and the development of theory. You have spoken in detail about your impressions related to the practical record of renewal in the Soviet Union and about the international role of this process. How would you assess its significance as far as theory is concerned?

I have already mentioned some aspects, such as the extremely important theoretical precept the CPSU has advanced about the interdependent and integral nature of our world. But I have noticed that many other theoretical questions are being discussed vigorously, frankly and straightforwardly in the Soviet Union. Naturally, this results in novel and interesting conclusions which add to our common store of knowledge.

Orthodoxy, hidebound immobility, claims to the 'ultimate truth', appeals to 'sacred cows', to 'apostles' of sorts — all this is alien to our teaching. Renunciation of these 'principles' is also typical of the new

approach to theoretical work the CPSU has adopted. A few years ago I discussed with Soviet experts a book I had just published at the time,¹ and we disagreed on things I am sure would cause no controversy today.

Generally, one can hardly overestimate the value and the importance inherent in constant exchanges of views and information among Communists — fruitful, not formal exchanges. All those involved in such discussions are bound to benefit from them. For example, the idea about the interdependent nature of our world prompts one to conclude that no matter where they work, Communists tackle largely similar tasks. So let's tackle them together.

What forms do you think such discussions could take?

It is not all that easy to find such forms, of course. We West European Communists, for instance, are yet to work out generally acceptable forms of ties, of contacts, of organisational practices in political discussions of problems we all encounter. But look for such forms we must. Finally, there are the traditional, conventional forms — writing articles, responding to them and conducting serious debate. *World Marxist Review*, too, has a role to play in promoting such discussions.

I am not advocating a return to the times of the Comintern but an effort to organise continuous contacts among the communist parties. Take, say, the Socialists who disagree on many issues, and the differences are often quite acute: you cannot really draw any parallel between the Israeli and the Scandinavian Socialists, or between the Socialists of Spain and Belgium.

Nonetheless, the Socialists do get together to discuss issues and to exchange information. Meanwhile, the communist movement has virtually abandoned this practice. And even if the question of an international conference is raised, it takes us ten years to draft a document which is acceptable to all but with which no one is really happy. I believe it is time we revived the practice of collective discussions which would not necessarily culminate in an agreed text but make it possible to analyse a given subject in depth, to identify the differences on this or that problem, and to help us bring our positions closer together.

¹ Jef Turf, *L'identité politique des communistes*, Anvers, 1977. — Ed.

Mexico's Left Forces In Search Of Unity

Several of Mexico's left-wing political parties intend to hold a unification congress in November 1987. In view of readers' interest in the specific circumstances under which the new party is being formed, a party that wants to build a socialist society in Mexico, *WMR* asked two members of the leadership of the United Socialist Party of Mexico (PSUM) to give their personal views on the present condition

of the left-wing forces in the country. Comrades Raymundo Cardenas Hernandez, PSUM CC Political Commission member, and Arnaldo Cordova, PSUM CC member, answered our questions and shared their views on various aspects of the unification process.

Below is the gist of what they said.

Raymundo Cardenas Hernandez

How is the unification process developing?

FIRST some background information. Back in the late 1970s, the idea was mooted in Mexico's left-wing parties about uniting forces, overcoming sectarianism and giving up any claims to exclusiveness. The Mexican Communist Party and a number of other organisations decided to merge in 1981 into what is now the United Socialist Party of Mexico. It has been officially registered, has won considerable representation in the Chamber of Deputies, and has set up and consolidated its organisational structure throughout the country. By the middle of last year, five parties had moved to the next stage of the unitary process. They are the PSUM, the Mexican Party of the Working People (PMT), the Left Communist Unity (UIC), the Revolutionary Movement of the People (MRP), and the Revolutionary Patriotic Party (PPR). They are all left-wing and revolutionary organisations, and none of them is social-democratic. The governing bodies of these parties have set up working commissions to study the conditions for unification in the light of the experience of joint activity by the PSUM and the PMT in the trade union movement and in parliament. They have drafted the Rules and the Programme, and have also defined the guarantees for every participant in the unitary process.

All the five parties have held congresses to consider these documents and to approve the unity line. A merger agreement was signed last March, and a National Coordination Commission was formed. It is known as the Commission of 35: it consists of seven leaders from each of the five parties. The primary organisations have started to discuss the draft Rules and the Programme, and these may be amended at the first congress in November.

The name of the new party has been endorsed: it is to be known as the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS)¹, and is to be headed by a national council. For the first six years, it will consist of seven leaders from each of the merging parties, and they will each have at least one deputy in the future parliamentary group. All groups are guaranteed representation on the commissions and departments of the PMS National Council.

The merger agreements are to be signed in the localities as well, as the basis for the merger of the organisations in the states. When the process is completed in 25 of Mexico's 31 states, there is to be the congress in November.

What is the left forces' view of the way out of Mexico's deep crisis?

There is, first of all, the emergence of a party that is more massive, more widely represented in the leading trade unions and university circles, and

among influential sections of the urban population, and that will be of fundamental significance. Let me recall that during the latest elections in 1985, the left-wing opposition won nearly 20 per cent of the votes in the Federal District.² It now looks as though our popularity has grown as a result of the recent major action by the students, with members of the left to the fore. Accordingly, we have been working for unity while simultaneously favouring the establishment of a broad front with the participation of organisations and forces which have for various reasons refused to join the PMS. There are now some circles within the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) — mostly working people, and their numbers are considerable — who suffer from the policy of the government they had once supported. If a broad front alternative were there, many of these people could join it. It is, of course, not right to insist on their joining the PMS or to insist on our party's leading role, because it is no more than a component part of the left-wing forces.

There is a need for a political front to nominate a common candidate for the presidency and candidates for deputies and senators. On the other hand, we have also offered for a possible coalition an economic strategy aimed to tackle Mexico's priority problems (the malnutrition of a part of the population, the housing shortage, and the sense of insecurity). Our strategy envisages considerable financial assistance to cooperatives and enterprises in the public sector. Moreover, we believe that the modernisation now being advocated by the government must not be effected by means of dismissals of working people or abolition of their historic gains. The economy certainly needs to be modernised. Mexico must keep in step with the changes under way in the modern world, but that should not be done at the expense of the working people.

The solution of the existing problems calls for the broadest democratisation of state and social life. We shall carry on the struggle for rights and freedoms with reliance on trade unions, peasant associations and educational establishments. In the course of it, we shall put forward the demands for changes that are already overdue, such as the introduction of a system of proportional representation. We think that it will help to prevent the establishment of a bipartisan system in Mexico like the one in the United States, a system under which the monopoly of power would be shared by the PRI and the right-wing National Action Party.

We believe that the left-wing forces must be turned into a power alternative right away, and this requires that we should build a democratic party in which the minority will have the right to be represented on the governing party bodies, and would be able to try to convince the majority that its view is correct, without, of course, harming unity of action. That is the type of organisation we are striving to create.

Arnaldo Cordova

Why has the need arisen for another unification? What are the organisations which intend to set up the Mexican Socialist Party (PMS)?

There is no favourable soil for rightists in Mexico, and the country inevitably goes to the left, as Lombardo Toledano once said.³ The Mexicans have attained civic maturity and are capable of making their own choice between the various political trends. The people already know who the centrists and the rightists are. They now want to see a left capable of proposing its own alternative for the nation's development.

For a long time, a divided left was our main problem. As a Mexican saying goes, 'Two leftists could set up five parties'. We are seeking a way out of this situation.

Why has the need for another unification arisen? Because within about a year after the PSUM was founded, it was left by the Revolutionary Socialist Party, and three years later by the People's Mexican Party, so the unification process had in fact failed. We then lacked experience and made many mistakes. We may be making some even now, although we are not aware of them. But the mistakes have certainly become fewer. There is now a prevalent awareness of the importance of unity and cohesion.

The task is made more pressing by the political changes in the country. The electorate does not support forces which are divided at such a time, and that is why the left has been losing votes.

What are the merging organisations? The PSUM is probably the largest of them all. It is a Marxist party and has many Marxist-Leninists in its ranks.

The second and about as major a force is the Mexican Party of the Working People (PMT), a left-radical, nationalistic and, one could even say, populist organisation which does not recognise Marxism as its ideology. The PSUM and the PMT are the two pillars of the new association.

The Revolutionary Patriotic Party (PPR) consists of former participants in the guerrilla movement who used to preach violence and then joined in the legislation of left-wing political groups. The PPR has had one deputy in our parliamentary group in the last two Chambers of Deputies (which in Mexico is elected every three years).

The Revolutionary Movement of the People (MRP) is another party many of whose leaders were Maoists in the 1970s. They are now convinced that there is a need to consolidate democracy and have recognised the importance of legal struggle. The MRP is most active in the poorer neighbourhoods of the big cities. It strives for direct activity in the midst of the people and has included in its programme some highly interesting ideas on work with the masses.

There is, finally, the group which once broke away from the Mexican Communist Party because it disagreed with the criticism of the USSR over the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia. It is called the Left Communist Unity and has one congress deputy, who is a member of our parliamentary group.

The PSUM's experience has proved that unity can be established. The lessons of the past six years testify that the stronger the cohesion, the greater is our strength. We have never had anything like the process of unification that has now got under way. We are learning to speak a different language. There are some difficulties, of course. For instance, a

Mexican Communist finds it hard to accept the idea that a nationalist and a radical will be a member of the same organisation. That naturally calls for new thinking.

Most importantly, we have laid aside everything that used to divide us, with emphasis on what is common to us all: style of work, experience and the conceptions. The new party needs an atmosphere in which each is able to express his own opinion, being perfectly aware that there are some who think differently.

Does that mean that the new party will not have a clear-cut ideological platform?

We are putting in a great effort to reach agreement. There are still some differences on the key issues: the character of the Mexican revolution, and whether it should go the peaceful or the violent way.

For the new organisation the basic idea is that of socialism, of the socialist transformation of the Mexican society, and this is accepted by all the five parties. Each of them is probably guided by its own notions of the future, but we are in fact trying to keep our thinking pluralist so as to be able to discuss things. Despite the different origins of the organisations and their dissimilar notions of the ways to socialism, the main thing is that we all want socialism in Mexico. The problem is how to explain our views to the people. This is being done through discussions of concrete problems: the external debt, economic policy, the role of state enterprises, etc. We have declared that when we take power with the support of the popular majority we shall get down to building a society in which everyone will be paid according to his work, privileges will be abolished, and other socialist principles applied.

Could you specify the kind of socialism that implies? Is it scientific or some other kind of socialism?

The discussion on this matter is still on. Some want the new party to be a Marxist-Leninist party, but the PSUM itself has not proposed that Marxism-Leninism should be the ideology of the new organisation. We feel that we need to assimilate a broader political culture.

What do you mean by 'culture'?

You may perhaps have heard of the German sociologist Max Weber.⁴ Well, I think that one has to study his writings, to take their best elements and translate them into experience and knowledge that could be applied in practice. The truly scientific political consciousness implies the need to study everything done by others and to use the results.

Would that not make the ideological platform eclectic?

No, because eclecticism is a species of dogmatism. We believe that the society, the social reality, is something that is most complex, and needs to

be studied from different standpoints. Marxism has, for instance, not dealt with some problems. I have already mentioned Weber, some of whose works are on religion and its history, and are written from a standpoint Marxists have failed to take. That is why it is our duty to use the most diverse concrete studies in economics, sociology, way of life, etc.

The theoretical thinking of Marx and Lenin does, of course, remain significant for the new party, but it will not be called a Marxist-Leninist party. Marxism in the best traditions of Marx himself will undoubtedly continue to be the main ideological source. We are striving to develop a science by learning about the society in which we have to act. We are Marxists of method, not of dogma. All issues are brought up for discussion, as, incidentally, it is now being done in the Soviet Union as well. The important thing is to be innovative Marxists, instead of dogmatists who have memorised a textbook or a footnote. We want to discover and discuss what is new and to analyse the realities of our country.

¹ The PMS was officially registered in June 1987. — *Ed.*

² Mexico City, the capital, is a special administrative unit known as the Federal District. — *Ed.*

³ Vicente Lombardo Toledano (1894-1968) was a prominent leader of the Mexican and international trade union movement, a well-known politician, an active champion of peace, and a doctor of law and philosophy. — *Ed.*

⁴ Max Weber (1864-1920), a German philosopher, historian and sociologist. He countered Marxism with his conception that the various attitudes to power, status and prestige among social groups were just as important as the different attitudes to property. He held that the main conflict in the bourgeois state lay in the struggle between political parties and the bureaucracy, and believed that it was impossible to establish socialist relations of production. — *Ed.*

Policy of Neutrality. A New Dimension

Erwin Scharf — Central Committee member, Communist Party of Austria (CPA)

WHAT are the tasks and functions of a neutral state in today's complicated international relations, which have reached an exceptionally crucial point? The question, like many other things in the world today, calls for a reconsideration. It has long been thought that neutrality is not merely a position of passively staying aloof of conflicts and wars. Today a neutral state is expected to pursue an active policy of disarmament, détente and

Erwin Scharf (b. 1914), a journalist who has been active in the Austrian communist and workers' movement and fought against fascism. After the war he was one of the leaders of the socialist and then left-socialist Workers' Party. When the latter merged with the Communist Party in 1956 he was elected a member of the Political Bureau of the CPA CC. In the period from 1957 to 1965 he was editor-in-chief of the *Volksstimme* daily published by the Communist Party of Austria; from 1965 to 1984 Erwin Scharf was CC secretary. Since 1974 he is editor-in-chief of *Weg und Ziel*, the party's theoretical journal, and since March 1987 member of the CPA CC.

peace. Such a policy also serves as a factor in establishing national independence and sovereignty in the face of diverse forces of gravitation coming from the military alliances.

In the past few years the Austrian ruling élite have been complacent that nobody would dare to invoke the mayhem of war: the nuclear deterrence strategy and the 'balance of terror' seemed a sufficient guarantee. It is, however, clear that the arms race and war threat are growing in the world. That is why we Communists find the Austrian politicians' complacency unjustified, to say the least. In our opinion, more attention should be given to the opportunities arising from Austria's neutral status in the present international situation. It is after all a matter of the country's security and at the same time of that of the world, where *peace can be only universal*.

Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and Federal President Rudolf Kirchschläger declared in their time that the security of the republic was guaranteed most effectively by a sound foreign policy. But so far, regrettably, neither the incumbent president, Kurt Waldheim, nor the current foreign minister, Alois Mock, have drawn a similar conclusion. More, ever since the Socialist Party of Austria (SPA) and the Austrian People's Party (APP) came to power in 1987, the coalition government has invariably stressed that it is necessary to build up the country's armed forces as a decisive factor of defending its independence and neutrality. In his foreword to the 1986 Foreign Policy Report¹ Mock used, for example, the following argument: neutrality calls for "effective defence as a guarantee of survival in case the competing blocs and states forget that the use of violence is banned." Incredible! Could he really believe that any foreign policy would be at all necessary after that?!

There is more truth in the document's next statement about a 'force within the country', which can only mean the right to use the army against the people. The Austrians need no explanation of what it might be: they still remember the role played by the armed forces in February 1934, when it struck out against democracy and the working class movement and eliminated the main pillar of the state which resisted Hitler's annexation plans. In other words, what is being demanded under the pretext of defending neutrality by force is in fact a threat to the country's security and independence.

The spectre of the evil past has been dominating us of late. In *the military field* it finds expression in fresh efforts to build up armaments; in *the economic field*, in the gradual 'creeping' into the EEC; and in *the political field*, in focusing public attention on Austria's belonging to the capitalist world and mounting anti-Communist propaganda.

The political atmosphere is becoming ever more tense with debates on the purchase of interceptor-fighters. No federal land of Austria wants to deploy them on its territory because of noise pollution and damage to the environment. Besides, we are too small a country for supersonic flights. Clearly, the acquisition of new weapons systems creates difficulties rather than strengthens security.

The reactionary militarist forces also insist on equipping the army with missiles, which is forbidden under the 1955 State Treaty on the restoration of an independent and democratic Austria. But the adventurists do not

hesitate to violate the provisions of the Treaty, a paramount document which is a cornerstone of the republic's political standing on the international scene today. Their demand is echoed by *Die Presse*, a paper published by the industrialists who claim that when the Treaty was signed the concept of 'missile weapons' referred to only large offensive systems like the German V-2. "It would, of course, be wrong," the paper writes, "first to ask the signatories to the treaty or to consult them. Austria is by no means obliged to ask anybody for permission to do anything. The country has a formidable legal foundation and, it is to be hoped, good enough nerves to face calmly even strong notes of protest if need be and to follow its course . . . The panic fear of Article 35² characteristic of the Kriesky era, should no longer lead to unquestionable obedience and extreme self-limitations on the freedom of action by Austria."³

We Communists resolutely oppose demands of this kind and such a defence policy. It runs counter to the principles of neutrality and will not give more security either to Austria or to the international community. To dispute accords reached by the USSR, the USA, Britain and France in 1955 will hardly help promote national and universal security. With differences among the great powers so big (SDI and the Euromissiles are just examples) that they have long been a threat to other states, too, the Austrian government should strive ever harder not to cause additional problems and conflicts.

And what is the attitude of the Austrian People's Party to détente and disarmament?

Take, for instance, the results of the Stockholm conference, which can, beyond doubt, be considered an accomplishment. Its final document, which contains provisions on restricting and controlling troop movements, can be lauded. But the APP was not at all that positive about the progress made in Stockholm. It was described as the 'unilateral success of the East', to which the party was unwilling to reconcile itself. Its theoretical journal, *Österreichische Monatshefte*, published an article on the results of the conference, worrying that NATO might find itself in a fix. After all, the APP chairman is none other than Alois Mock. What can then be expected from our country's foreign policy if the Minister of Foreign Affairs has such pro-NATO views?

This lack of understanding of the state's pledge to maintain neutrality and negative attitude to détente and disarmament not only mirror the reactionary ideology of some elements of the People's Party but also serve to demonstrate their 'loyalty' to the US. With Reagan in power, Austria's positions were again subjected to attacks. For several years now statements have been made from across the ocean, showing that Washington would like to put an end to the republic's neutrality, the sooner the better. The US does not recognise even the modest old formula, according to which a neutral state, remaining impartial should avoid taking part in any conflict, and *would like to involve it into its confrontation strategy even in peacetime.*

Hardly any attempt is made to conceal the desire to persuade the Austrians that they should renounce their national political principles. With the passage of time this line found practical expression in government policy: after the 'big coalition' had been formed, it became noticeable that

the rot had set in. Needless to say, it is not some sensational renunciation of neutrality: it is being forsaken gradually and by other means. For example, constant — above all economic — pressure is being used to inculcate readiness to recognise EEC supremacy. The authorities would like to ignore altogether the fact that the Common Market is an agglomeration of the economic potentials of the NATO member states. They cite the example of Ireland in a bid to prove that neutrality is quite compatible with belonging to the EEC. But how can Ireland's specific relations with NATO be compared with the status of constant neutrality of our republic officially proclaimed and formalised in its Constitution?

The advocates of joining the Common Market substantiate their stand by mentioning the steps taken by the Soviet Union and the other CMEA countries to establish official relations of cooperation with it. Herein lies the fundamental difference — the *CMEA maintains* its image of an economic community of socialist states whereas Austria is drifting towards the EEC *to the detriment of the policy of neutrality*.

The capitalist mass media in our country have a fairly important role to play in preparing the public for entry in the Common Market by increasingly subjecting it to anti-Communist indoctrination.

There is an economic 'cudgel' for the stubborn ones. After all, the Austrians are being told, money rules the world and you better watch out lest you find your pockets empty one day. And a Vice-President of the European Community, Manuel Marin, overbearingly asks "Where else will you get money? You know about the debt crisis . . . What can you do alone? And in an interesting situation, being between Germany⁴ and Italy and, besides, having a long border with the East. This is indeed the most incredible situation in Europe!"⁵ What can one do but yield to such eloquent persuasion?

A characteristic feature of the foreign policy pursued by the coalition government is that when the attention of the entire world is riveted to the nuclear disarmament talks, neutral Austria prefers negotiations with the EEC on closer relations. 'Who knows what Europe will be like by the year 2000?' the rightists in the APP muse. By that time the question of full membership may arise, they say, be it with reservations about neutrality or not. The current federal chancellor Franz Vranitzky also counts on the 'habituation effect'. He declares soothingly that no full EEC membership is expected for Austria in the near future but adds that 'new circumstances' may emerge in the 1990s.

Government officials justify their policy of closer relations with the EEC by the objective economic necessity. They say primarily that by 1992 the EEC member states will have a common *domestic* market, which Austria should allegedly enter. *However, already now the EEC countries account for more than 60 per cent of its imports*. Consequently, trade deficit with them amounted in 1986 to nearly 65,000 billion schillings⁶, which is *practically the entire* foreign trade deficit of the republic.

The invasion of Austria by Hitler's troops in 1938 was also preceded by sweeping ideological preparations in the form of constantly repeated doubts about the economic viability of a small state. Similar arguments are being used now that the country is in a complicated economic situation, to

propagandise closer contacts with the Common Market. Though under the circumstances an utterly different way out prompts itself, namely *a far-reaching re-orientation and diversification of our foreign economic contacts* in the interests of fortifying resistance to outside pressure and offsetting restrictions to be faced if Austria is tied to the EEC. The latter will narrow opportunities for developing the state independently.

Participation in the community, especially in the integrated market to be formed, will amount not only to a corresponding contribution to the NATO member states' economy. It will also give West European transnational corporations a decisive sway in Austria's nationalised industries and devalue them as a factor of the country's economic and therefore political independence. Already today there is a tendency towards transferring nationalised enterprises to foreign capital.

The EEC members tend to coordinate their foreign policies, including military issues. Indicative in this respect is the EEC conference convened to discuss the Soviet proposal to eliminate medium-range missiles in Europe. Such practice also limits political independence of a state, especially of a neutral one.

The careless establishment of closer relations with the Common Market engenders yet another danger, namely, possible violations of Article 4 of the State Treaty, which forbids political or economic alliance in any form between Austria and Germany.

Some people seek to prove that the prospect is allegedly nil, arguing that nobody can seriously claim today that entry in the economic zone of twelve countries is tantamount to an economic alliance with one of them. But the point is that such a claim is justified! Especially if we take into consideration Austria's one-sided economic orientation to West Germany: 44 per cent of our imports come from West Germany, which also absorbs 32.7 per cent of our exports. The share of West German investments amounts up to 30 per cent of foreign capital in the country's economy. Traditional political ties, the common language and West German information and propaganda influence should not be underestimated either.

To all appearances, today's political leaders have so far failed to realise what an important bulwark of Austrian independence the State Treaty is. They tend to treat it as a bothersome document, whose significance should be lessened to open the road to a closer relationship with the Common Market.

Other countries, especially Sweden and Finland, have long been giving us an example of actively using opportunities offered by the policy of neutrality. Suffice it to recall Ölaf Palme's initiative to set up a battlefield nuclear weapons-free corridor in Central Europe and the proposal by Finland to turn Northern Europe into a nuclear-free zone, among other things. Even Greece, which is a NATO member, vigorously advocates a nuclear-free Balkans.

Austria looks quite passive against this backdrop. Of course, the 1985 and 1986 Foreign Policy Reports, that is, thick volumes of several hundred pages each intended for narrow coterie of politicians and experts, accord

recognition to the Soviet proposal to eliminate nuclear armaments by the year 2000, praise the Soviet moratorium on nuclear explosions and criticise President Reagan's SDI programme. But all of these remain unknown to the public at large and have not prompted any peace initiative useful to the international community.

All the more important today is the activity of the Austrian peace movement, which has more than once organised mass campaigns in support of disarmament in the past few years. The collection of signatures to terminate all nuclear weapons tests has become a major action. The federal chancellor, who received more than 70,000 signatures after the first stage of the campaign, pledged early in 1987 to support that demand. The government approved the idea of holding without delay talks to conclude a comprehensive international treaty banning nuclear explosions. However, not a word has been heard since then. Mock, for one, takes care not to use the words 'disarmament' and 'détente'.

The Communist Party of Austria and all those who cherish their homeland's independence and neutrality advocate a *different approach*. CPA Chairman Franz Muhri graphically expounded the possibilities of an alternative policy at the 26th Party congress. He stressed the need to work out an original foreign policy and pointed to the advantages the country has in Europe. By defending the nationalised industry we are defending not only jobs but Austria itself. The CPA has spoken out in favour of expanding the production of top quality competitive goods by raising spending on science and research instead of boosting imports. The positions of the republic vis-à-vis the EEC monopolies could be consolidated in this way.

The peace-loving Austrian people demand that their government take *concrete practical steps* to promote the cause of disarmament and détente. The resolutions adopted in Helsinki can serve as a groundwork. It is a most opportune time to come up with constructive initiatives now that the representatives of the participants in the Conference on European Security and Cooperation are meeting in Vienna. What is the point of the bias shown by Austrian officials who emphasise certain aspects of the human rights problem? After all it is only Washington and its NATO partners who stand to gain from this activity for propaganda purposes. Other provisions of the Helsinki Final Act — those ensuring mutual security — are yet to be implemented. They should be given priority by all countries, Austria included.

The grand prospects charted by the socialist states — the elimination of nuclear weapons by the year 2000 and the disbandment of the military blocs — might become a prerequisite for developing a Pan-European economy and building a common European home. Should the arms race and the 'star wars' programme continue, however, great damage will be caused to security and cooperation on the continent, while Austria's possible EEC membership will threaten the country with major disasters. The bastions of its independence will find themselves even greater jeopardised than they are now.

The very course of international development confronts Austria with the

vital problem of working out a concept of the policy of neutrality in the spirit of the new thinking. In the present-day circumstances it can only mean consistent advocacy of détente, disarmament and peace in deed.

¹ Last year Mock was not yet in charge of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But as president of the International Democratic Union, a world association of conservative parties which advocate an arms build-up, he exonerated President Reagan after the Reykjavik summit, claiming that peace was better promoted by respect for human rights than by disarmament.

² According to article 35 of the State Treaty, the signatory powers have the right to interpret its provisions. — *Ed.*

³ *Die Presse*, February 21-22, 1987.

⁴ Meaning West Germany. — *Ed.*

⁵ *Kurier*, April 9, 1987.

⁶ 5.5 billion dollars. — *Ed.*

Palestinians Serrying Ranks

Mahmoud Shukeir — Central
Committee member, Palestinian
Communist Party (PCP)

SEVERAL months have now passed since the 18th session of the Palestinian National Council was convened in Algiers.¹ Nonetheless, its results continue to evoke a passionate and mixed response, first and foremost in our region. The long-term and far from local significance of this event is coming increasingly to the fore.

The session marked the restoration of Palestinian national unity after almost four years of discord and strife which sometimes even erupted into armed clashes. This strife caused serious damage and even threatened to undermine the prestige and reputation of the PLO among the Palestinians, in the Arab world and on the global scene. The United States and Israel stepped up their forays in a bid to saddle the organisation with US plans for a Mid-east settlement; the ultimate goal was to eliminate the PLO and completely strike the Palestinian problem from the list of the issues of prime importance facing the international community. Some Arab countries, particularly those under reactionary regimes, built up the pressure they brought to bear on the PLO, vying to control it and to deprive the Palestinians of the right to independent decision-making.

The latest session of the PNC can be said to have put an end to a period during which dissension and conflict were overwhelmingly typical of the situation within the PLO. At that time the political course that prevailed in the organisation was based on attempts to reach the illusive settlement

Mahmoud Shukier was born in Jerusalem in 1941. A member of the Jordanian Communist Party since 1965, he has been repeatedly arrested by the Israeli occupation authorities. In 1977 he was elected to the Central Committee of the Jordanian Communist Party. With the re-establishment of the Palestinian Communist Party in 1982, Mahmud Shukier became a member of its Central Committee. He is also a member of the Palestinian National Council and of the General Secretariat of the Palestinian Writers' and Journalists' Union.

American style; embodying this course was the Amman Agreement of February 11, 1985.²

A fundamentally new stage has now begun. Its salient features include unity of the Palestinian movement on a consistently anti-imperialist platform and support for the idea of holding a full-fledged international conference on a Mid-east settlement; this would mean that the Palestinian problem would be tackled by a broad international forum and be resolved on the basis of UN resolutions. Given these changes, it is no accident that what appeared as a purely internal Palestinian issue immediately prompted a negative reaction in certain quarters. In the wake of the PNC session, Israel delivered massive strikes at the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. PLO bureaux were closed in Morocco and Egypt. The Jordanian authorities promulgated a new electoral law in the hope of cobbling up a Palestinian 'leadership' that would 'replace' the PLO. The Lebanese Parliament abrogated the Cairo Agreement,³ giving rise to the threat of another massacre of Palestinian refugees.

Why this knee-jerk hostile reaction? We believe the sole reason is that, having approved a policy of rebuffing imperialism and Israeli occupation, the unification session of the PNC seriously challenged Washington's claims to a monopoly in the settlement of the Mid-east crisis, to the role which the United States and its allies in the region tried to play since Camp David. Or, to be even more precise, the recent Palestinian forum dispelled the myth which Sadat used to peddle, asserting that the United States held 99 per cent of the cards in the Mid-east deck. The imperialist forces, above all the United States, Israel and their henchmen, are aware that the Palestinian revolution remains a source of revolutionary ferment in our region. The anti-imperialist restoration of unity among the contingents of this revolution threatens to stir up the largely stagnant situation there.

How has it been possible to restore Palestinian national unity now that the right-wing, reactionary circles have gained the upper hand on the Arab scene and the revolutionary forces are mostly on the defensive? This historic success is explained by a series of objective and subjective reasons.

To begin with, a settlement American style has been exposed as a pipe dream, although the PLO leadership, which expresses the interests of the national bourgeoisie, did pin certain hopes on it, particularly after the withdrawal of Palestinian armed units from Beirut (1982) and the grave difficulties that followed. The leadership displayed an inclination toward appeasement and made a number of concessions. However, the enemy was looking for complete surrender or total destruction of the PLO. When its leadership hesitated, swift reprisals followed: on September 30, 1985 the Israeli air force raided the PLO headquarters in Tunis.

Simultaneously, the Palestinian masses were putting grassroots pressure on the PLO leadership. They were working to consolidate unity and to overcome minor differences because the main contradiction, the one that pitched the strategy of the Israeli invaders and US imperialism against the goals of the liberation movement, persisted. The population of the occupied territories acted in concert, in a single front, dismissing all internecine feuds. Major anti-Israeli actions there, especially those staged in the autumn of 1986, produced a radically new turn of events. Similar

developments also occurred in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon which were besieged by the Shi'ite Amal movement in an attempt to destroy them. The joint struggle completely erased the differences rooted in the affiliation with different parties and organisations. Having to fight for their lives, people joined forces.

A number of international factors played a major role in promoting Palestinian consolidation. One can cite the initiative of President Chadli Bendjedid of Algeria who invited the different contingents of the Palestinian revolution to conduct a dialogue in Algiers in pursuit of this objective. One should also mention the vigorous efforts of communist parties, particularly in the socialist countries (the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and some others), to assist the principal Palestinian organisations in launching such a dialogue and overcoming the dissension.

Similar initiatives were born within the Palestinian resistance movement. I am proud to note that the Palestinian Communist Party pioneered this effort. The lessons of the Israeli air raid against the PLO headquarters guided us to the logical conclusion that the US-Israeli alliance would only be satisfied either with the PLO's complete surrender or with its total destruction. Meanwhile, even though it hoped to secure a role in the US-orchestrated settlement, the PLO leadership refused to surrender. The night the headquarters was bombed our party, the only one among all Palestinian political organisations, contacted the leadership. Several meetings followed, culminating in the restoration of unity.

And now about the most important political results of the Algiers session. First, the abrogation of the Amman Agreement. Second, the reassertion of loyalty to the principles unanimously approved at the 16th session of the PNC and formalised in the Aden-Algiers Agreement⁴. Third, the acceptance by the participants in the Algiers session of the Soviet-sponsored formula for an international conference on a Mid-east settlement.

The latter point deserves special consideration. The PLO holds that preparation for such a broad and representative forum are currently its central task. As the unification session stated in its decisions, "the Palestinian National Council supports the convocation of an international conference within the framework and under the aegis of the United Nations, attended by the permanent members of the Security Council and by all interested parties, including the PLO, on an equal footing with others . . . It reaffirms the need to endow the conference with full powers, supports proposals on the establishment of a preparatory (sponsoring) committee, and insists on its soonest possible formation and convocation."

It is worth noting that, as before, the idea of an international conference on the Middle East has been put forward by the Soviet Union. But now this initiative has an objective support base — the Palestinian national movement. Our revolution lives on despite all attempts to destroy it — precisely the reason why this idea is gaining increasing popularity with world public opinion.

We are entering a new stage in the confrontation over the prospects of convening an international conference on the Middle East. The clash is mostly between two approaches. The first, the US-Israeli one, is also

shared to varying degrees by the ruling circles of some Arab countries that toe Washington's line (such as Egypt and Jordan). Advocates of this position hold that the conference should be a sort of 'umbrella' or cover for US-sanctioned bilateral deals and that it should not have the power to determine who would take part in the talks or to take binding decisions. The other approach, unequivocally supported by the Palestinian National Council, envisages the convocation of a full-fledged international conference attended, on an equal footing, by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and all parties to the conflict, including the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

The importance of this approach as far as we the Palestinian patriots are concerned, is that the idea of an international conference as an alternative to the US proposals is an obstacle to their implementation. It is a way of telling the United States and its allies, 'If you want a settlement, an international conference will lead to it.' Besides, a forum of this kind would also promote unity and help mobilise the progressive forces on the international scene in putting pressure on the US-Israeli alliance so as to force it to back down and accept a settlement which would accommodate at least the minimal national demands of the Palestinians.

Regrettably, the alignment of forces in the Middle East so far favours our adversaries. It will be possible to correct this regional imbalance in the foreseeable future only by globally influencing the situation in the Middle East, and an international conference involving the permanent members of the UN Security Council, above all the Soviet Union, is the only way to do it.

Now let us switch to another issue made topical by the 18th session of the PNC — Palestinian-Syrian relations. We believe that after the 18th session of the PNC and its clear-cut political decisions the objective background for restoring these relations to their former level has been created. The resolutions of the latest Palestinian forum point to the need to "work for improving PLO-Syrian relations, with equality and mutual respect . . . forming the basis of the anti-imperialist and anti-Zionist struggle."

We are well aware that the anti-imperialist movement of the region suffered a severe setback when the alliance of the Palestinian revolution, Syria, and Lebanon's national patriotic forces was upset. Our party is doing its utmost to bring all components of this alliance together again. For the past two years we have been trying to ensure normalisation of Palestinian-Syrian relations, maintaining that their improvement should help restore Palestinian national unity. Unfortunately, success proved elusive at that time. The Communist Party decided to tackle the issue from a different angle — to end the fragmentation of at least the principal Palestinian organisations so as to subsequently improve relations with Syria and thus restore the tripartite alliance. Although these efforts have not yet borne fruit, we refuse to give up, and we are optimistic about the future.

The Palestinian National Council also advocated normalisation of relations with the Lebanese national patriotic forces. Here, too, certain shifts have occurred, and we continue working in this direction.

The fact that the Palestinian Communist Party is now, as an independent

organisation, a member of the PLO is an important accomplishment of the Algiers session. The PCP is now represented on the PLO Executive Committee. This has been the final step toward the restoration of Palestinian national unity, unity embodied in the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The fact that the Communists were not, until recently, represented in it as an independent organisation was a flaw in the structure of the PLO. The decision taken on this matter reflects the appreciation of the role played by our party in the overall Palestinian struggle, particularly in the occupied territories, and recognises the tangible contribution made by the PCP to the restoration of Palestinian national unity.

The Communist Party has given the PLO a revolutionary base. The PCP has joined the PLO as a force with a great body of experience in the patriotic struggle it has been waging relentlessly since the early 1920s despite huge sacrifices. In their approach to the complicated and acute Palestinian problem the Communists have always firmly steered a steady political course permeated with a sense of revolutionary responsibility. There came a period when the party struck deep roots in our native soil, in the midst of our people. Simultaneously, its internationalist ties with the revolutionary forces in the Arab region and in the world grew stronger. Now that the Communists have joined the PLO, our expertise is sure to be used more fully in the struggle of the Palestinian people for their just cause. This historic decision will no doubt add new dimensions to Palestinian democracy too, and will influence the future of the national state the Palestinians are fighting so stubbornly to establish.

An analysis of the results achieved at the 18th session of the PNC shows that it has exposed as untenable a number of fallacious approaches and concepts current in the past.

First, the session has acknowledged that there must be no armed internecine clashes within the ranks of the Palestinian revolution, among comrades-in-arms (no matter how serious the differences). Such differences must be resolved through a democratic dialogue within the Palestine Liberation Organisation. For even during the period of disunity all truly patriotic Palestinian organisations fully and categorically rejected any alternative to the PLO and fought resolutely against its destruction. They have been guided by the conviction that today the PLO is not simply a broad national front but also a distinctive form of government representing a nation living mostly in exile. This aspect of the Palestine Liberation Organisation was thrown into particularly bold relief after its recognition by the international community and by the United Nations. No true patriot may give up his national identity or his state, or allow its fragmentation or disintegration. It follows that dialogue, debate and the efforts to overcome differences should be conducted within the organisation and not outside it — something that happened when certain progressive, left-wing democratic Palestinian organisations committed a grave mistake by abandoning the PLO.

Second, the session has demonstrated the fallacy of the policy to split the movement, a course pursued by some right-wing Palestinian politicians and theorists. Eventually these were attempts to apply the bourgeois rules of the parliamentary 'game' to the Palestinian revolution. Advocates of this

policy asserted that it was possible to have a majority and a minority within the revolution's ranks. We believe that this view is very dangerous. It is no accident that each time the Americans wanted to push their plans through, they increased pressure on the PLO, demanding that it should comprise 'moderates' without 'extremists'. This had nothing to do with 'moderation' or 'extremism'; it was an attempt at splitting the organisation. *At the current historical stage of the struggle the Palestinian people are waging, the stage of the national liberation revolution, of the battle for national territory, a national state and a national identity, the main yardstick of one's commitment to the people's cause is not one's views — right-wing, left-wing or moderate — but whether one is a patriot.*

Some claim that although Palestinian unity has been achieved, it is not yet complete. We maintain the opposite. The reason is that we Marxists realise that it is *united policy*, not blocks which is of prime importance. The political platform endorsed at the latest session of the PNC was approved by all Palestinian organisations without exception back at the 16th session. If there is anyone who has still not adopted it, that is his concern, although we are going to do our best to draw them into this unity.

There are other reasons why it is wrong to assert that unity is so far absent. First and foremost, the Algiers session has united the main Palestinian organisations operating in the occupied territories where the future of our cause is being decided and frantic efforts are being made to create an alternative to the PLO. I refer above all to Al-Fatah, the Communist Party, and the Popular and the Democratic fronts of Palestinian liberation.

The principal task our people and their patriotic forces are facing after the unification session of the Palestine National Council is to uphold and protect its historic achievements and to prevent their erosion or emasculation in the course of the subversive efforts the United States, Israel and Arab reaction have recently stepped up. It is imperative to do everything possible to consolidate these gains and to strengthen allied ties with the Arab anti-imperialist forces and countries so as to revive and activate the Front for Steadfastness and Confrontation and any other forms of alliance aimed at combating imperialism and Israeli occupation. It is important to keep promoting fraternal relations with our friends on the international scene, first and foremost with the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, who have always selflessly assisted and resolutely supported the just cause of the Palestinians.

¹ The PNC is the supreme body of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and functions as a parliament-in-exile. — *Ed.*

² Signed by the PLO leadership and King Hussein of Jordan. — *Ed.*

³ Concluded between the PLO leadership and the Lebanese authorities on November 2, 1969 and mediated by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the agreement regulated the Palestinian civilian and military presence in Lebanon. In May 1987 Lebanon's parliament passed legislation to abrogate it. — *Ed.*

⁴ Concluded by the leaders of several Palestinian organisations, including Al-Fatah and the PCP, in 1984. — *Ed.*

Golan Heights Are Syrian Territory

Khalid Hammami — Political Bureau member, Central Committee of the Syrian Communist Party, SCP representative on the *WMR* Editorial Council

THERE have been ever more frequent reports about actions by the Arab population against the Israeli invaders on the Golan Heights*, which have been occupied for twenty years now.

Any unbiased observer of events in the Middle East beginning with 1948 cannot but notice that Israel has been and is seeking to expand its territory at the expense of the neighbouring Arab states. It launched several aggressions both in direct collaboration with imperialist powers (the abortive triple aggression against Egypt in 1956) and with their support (aggression against Egypt, Syria and Jordan in June 1967 and against Lebanon in 1982).

These acts of aggression resulted in the occupation of vast territories, including the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and South Lebanon. To justify the invasion, Zionist postulates are constantly being used, which claim the territories to be an inalienable part of Eretz Israel, that is, 'the land of Israel' allegedly 'God's promised land' for the Israeli people, and are accompanied by pharisaic talk about the security of the Israeli state.

From the Israeli point of view, both arguments hold force with respect to the Golan Heights: firstly, geographically the Heights are situated between the Euphrates and the Nile and, secondly, when they were part of Syria they strategically 'threatened the security' of Israel.

In late 1981 the Begin cabinet officially declared that the occupied Golan Heights were annexed and put under the Israeli internal jurisdiction. The action was endorsed by an extraordinary session of the Knesset (Israeli parliament).

A glaring violation of international law, which prohibits the forced annexation of other people's lands, that step runs counter to the UN and Security Council resolutions, including the resolution on the ceasefire between Syria and Israel. In doing so Israel primarily relied on the unlimited US support in keeping with the US-Israeli 'strategic cooperation' agreement. Besides, the annexation of the Golan Heights was a practical result of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's truckling policy, which led to the Camp David accords and which is supported by the incumbent president, Hosni Mubarak.

*The Golan Heights is a strategically important area in south-western Syria as it borders on Israel. It has actually no industrial enterprises and the local population is for the most part engaged in farming. Some of the local residents left the area when it was invaded by Israeli troops. At present 15,000 Arabs live on the occupied land in four settlements, the biggest of them being the village of Majdal Shams.

In 1974, as a result of the staunch struggle waged by the Syrian people against the invaders Israel had to sign an agreement on withdrawal from a part of the territory on the Golan Heights, including El Kuneitra. — *Ed.*

Though the US pressed by world public opinion had to vote for resolutions characterising Israel's annexationist decision as untenable, invalid and violating international law, US support for the aggressor remained essentially unchanged. Symptomatically enough, the US representative at the UN insisted on the Security Council excluding from its resolution any denunciation of Israel or any proposal to take sanctions against it.

All the inhabitants of the Golan Heights rose against the Israeli decision on annexation. Their resistance to the invaders acquired different forms, of which the general strike of the local population was the most representative.

The strike began on February 12, 1982 and lasted for more than a month. All the while meetings were held in the occupied villages. The coordinated actions by the Golan Heights inhabitants were aimed at frustrating the invaders' plans. For this goal to be achieved, they decided:

"To declare their resolute rejection of the decision on the annexation of the Golan Heights;

- to refuse Israeli passports and citizenship;
- to forbid the sale of any plot of Syrian land to the Zionists;
- to refuse to pay taxes;
- not to yield to intimidation;
- to boycott Israeli goods and communal services;
- to take measures against the establishment of Israeli settlements;
- to work towards the liberation of the patriotic leaders held in Israeli prisons."

More than five years have passed since then. Despite all forms of repression and persecution used by the Israeli authorities the inhabitants of the Golan Heights continue their struggle to see their demands met. Not so long ago they erected a monument, to commemorate the Syrian fighters who gave their lives for their homeland and to mark the 60th anniversary of the 1925-1927 Syrian uprising against the French colonialists. A fallen hero was portrayed against a background group of revolutionaries led by Sultan Pasha al-Atrash who headed the uprising (died in 1982). The monument, which got the name of the 'Road of Struggle', was unveiled in the village of Majdal Shams on April 4, 1987, when the people held mass demonstrations against the invaders under Syrian flags and the slogan 'Golan Heights Belong to Syria'.

The appearance of the monument was used by Israel as a pretext to step up repressions against the population of the Golan Heights. The invaders sealed off each of the four villages so that their inhabitants could not contact each other, and stopped water and electricity supply.

On April 10, the Israeli authorities demolished the monument, which evoked an outburst of indignation among the local people and aggravated the confrontation between the Golan Heights inhabitants and the invaders. Many people were wounded, a woman from the village of Bakaata, Galia Farhat, was killed, and numerous arrests followed.

Though the April events (when this article was prepared for publication) are already in the past, the Golan Heights are still rife with unrest. Broad denunciation of Israel's criminal actions can largely promote solidarity with

the struggle waged by the population of the occupied Golan Heights. It will also intensify the struggle of the different sections of the Arab national liberation movement to free the occupied lands and to guarantee the right of the Arab people of Palestine to self-determination and to the establishment of their independent national state under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. The road to it lies through the convocation of an international conference that the Soviet Union has repeatedly called for. This measure is widely supported by forces acting on the international scene and all the sections of the Arab national liberation movement. Only the US and Israel are against it.

The population of the Golan Heights will continue fighting until its lands are fully freed, upholding its belonging to Syria and the Arab world. The Golan Heights have been and will be Syrian Arab territory.

¹ *Nidal al-Shaab*, April 1982 (in Arabic).

Marxism In Britain: Past And Present

WMR asked **Martin Jacques**, Editor of *Marxism Today*, and a member of the Executive and Political Committees of the CP Great Britain; **Dr. Sam Aaronovitch**, Director of the Local Economy Policy Unit at the South Bank Polytechnic in London, and a member of the Economic Committee of the CPGB; and Professor **Lawrence Harris** of the Economic Department of the Open University at Milton Keynes, near London, for their views of the state of Marxist studies in Great Britain today.

Martin Jacques. It is important to give a perspective to this question. In the late 1960s and 1970s, there was a new generation of intellectuals that came to Marxism. And very rapidly their ranks multiplied. A lot of this development was associated with an interest in the theoretical side of Marxism. There was a wave of thinkers that helped to shape the parameters of these studies. Initially, the Marxists Althusser and Poulantzas¹ were very influential, and then, by the mid-1970s the centre of gravity shifted to a keen interest in Gramsci, for he seemed to have something to offer relative to the experiences of the new social movements. The interest in Marxism is not stimulated simply by some abstract developments in the world of thought, but is a response to something that is happening in the political world. That was a very stimulating period in the development of Marxist thinking in Britain. There was not just one school of thought, but different schools. It was expansive, it was vibrant.

By the end of the 1970s, that phase came to an end. No longer was a really new generation of Marxist intellectuals being recruited. The political situation began to change in Britain and internationally for the worse, which rapidly dimmed people's perspectives and expectations. Whereas

the 1970s was the decade of an expansion of interest in Marxist theory, the 1980s has been the era of expansion of interest in Marxist-informed politics. In the 1970s, the classical problems that were being analysed were the state, the relationship between the state and the society, or the notion of hegemony, and the theory of crisis. In the 1980s, people have been preoccupied with much more concrete political problems: the nature of the radical right, the nature of Thatcherism, what are their causes, directions, popular base. Why is the left being in such a decline, what are the causes of the crisis of the left, had we understood in this context the nature and significance of the recomposition of the working class?

Take, for example, Stuart Hall, who is probably the single most important writer on Thatcherism among Marxists. He was the architect of the theory of Thatcherism, and insisted that it was a new kind of political phenomenon which was not simply a variation of the old Toryism, but something more fundamental, essentially the product of the crisis in the British society and the perception by the radical right that the solution to it had to be in terms of destroying the post-war social-democratic state and consensus. Hall described Thatcherism as 'authoritarian populism', which seeks to create a new popular consensus for the ideas of the radical right, which are marked by authoritarianism, with emphasis on the use of the state, an appeal to discipline, to law and order, to a new set of values which have an implicit authoritarianism about them, and so on.

Eric Hobsbawm is another very well known writer in this country. He is one of Britain's most prominent historians and a Communist. It was really he who triggered off in 1978 the debate on the crisis of the left with an article he wrote for *Marxism Today* called 'The Forward March of Labour Halted'. A number of other people have written about different aspects of this problem: is it due to the recomposition of the working class, the new geographic structuring of the society, the changing nature of popular forms of culture, or has it to do with the nature of the media?

Such writings have come to structure a great deal not just of debate within the Communist Party and amongst left intellectuals, but more widely in the labour movement. That is perhaps a new stage, a new phenomenon signifying that intellectuals have become politically active in a way which is very unusual in British political culture.

What has actually been happening amongst Marxist economists here? One does not feel that they have particularly managed to grasp the new dimension of what is happening. We have been entering a new economic age. Right neoliberalism is not simply a political and ideological phenomenon, but an economic phenomenon as well. We are witnessing a crucial national-international shift. The drive from the radical right is rooted in all kinds of new material circumstances: the rise of the multinationals, and the new circumstances prevailing in the financial markets. A new internationalisation is taking place on the back of computer information and information technology. This has completely and utterly transformed the traditional framework in which the left has seen national economic development. For many years, the characteristic left mode has been a national economic role. There is now a growing recognition of these new international circumstances, the recognition that

Britain cannot go it alone, and that there has to be a real reassessment of our attitude towards Europe.

Marxist writings have dispelled the illusions and helped people to face the harsh realities. But there is now an uncertainty about the way forward which is undoubtedly affecting the confidence and the ability of the left to define itself in relationship to, say, the 1990s or towards 2000. The first problem is that there is no clear sense of a model of socialism for the future, and the second is that there is no clarity about exactly what the agencies of change are. The old model of the working class is much smaller than it was in the past, and there is no imminent sense in which that is likely to change. Hence the notions of a post-industrial society and some other kinds of favoured clichés. In the 1970s, there were new social agencies acting which related themselves, either directly or otherwise, to the working class and the traditional forces of social change. I am thinking of the women's movement and the student movement. In the 1980s, that relationship became much more problematic.

In Britain, as in some other West European countries, there is a debate round the 'two-thirds — one-third' society. The argument is that Thatcher and the radical right are set out to create a new set of divisions in the society, a new hierarchy, where the one-third is the lower sections of the working class, the unemployed, those in casual employment, those dependent on state benefits, the old, the racial minorities, etc. The majority consists of the people who stretch in their fortunes from those who are doing very well to those who are not doing so well, but who see themselves as having a stake in the system in a way that the one-third do not. The important thing is that the radical right has tried to carve out for itself a new social majority in society.

In terms of the future, the left is requiring a renewal in the concept of socialism in the West. I do not mean by that necessarily what a socialist society would look like in the West, because that is almost a kind of apocalyptic question which we have been talking about for many, many decades. What I mean is at least an answer to the crisis of the welfare state (say, what sort of health service do you want in 20 years' time, what sort of incomes are we for, what are the constraints, what parts can be allocated by the market, and what are the new elements that would have formed these conceptions?). Up to now the left has been pretty dead in relation to these questions.

That is the great problem. There is a need to work out a programme, a set of policies that would tackle the problem of the new divisions of society and would create new forms of egalitarianism as opposed to the new forms of inegalitarianism, in other words, begin to destroy the 'two-thirds — one-third' society. The second problem is what new social alliance needs to be constructed and what sort of political project, new social proposition will replace the 'two-thirds — one-third' society.

Lawrence Harris. In Britain at the beginning of the 1970s there was a great development of Marxist economic thought, after decades when it was not being taught or discussed. A large part of these new discussions was on high theoretical issues: the role of the theory of value, the law of the

tendency of the rate of profit to fall, the concept of state-monopoly capitalism.

After these debates came a sort of stalemate, and the struggles focused to a very large extent on the role of the trade unions round economic issues. There came to the fore quite a strong current that argued that the trade unions' political role should be developed and should be seen as being counterposed to the economic role: the struggle over wages, redundancies and multinational capital should continue to take a certain place, with the priority given to broader political issues.

These arguments were promoted very strongly at the beginning of the 1980s and led to a new concept of what kind of economic policies should be fought for by the labour movement. There has been strong criticism of the traditional economic policies that had been formulated under the heading of Economic Strategy, first by the Communist Party and then promoted by the trade union movement.

The strongest idea of the Economic Strategy was not simply a change in the ownership of capital, in the distribution of income and wealth through nationalisation, taxation, etc., but specifically to intervene in and interrupt the market forces, through which multinational capital and financial capital operate. A large part of the thrust of the new thinking that was promoted by *Marxism Today* was to argue that the working class movement and its allies cannot really interfere with those market forces, must not confront them head on, but instead must try to work for smaller local initiatives operating within these market forces.

In some ways, that was a reflection of the times, since the national government was and still is under the control of a particular grouping within the British bourgeoisie which is pushing very hard for using market forces for its own ends, fitting in with multinational finance capital and operating very strongly against the interests of national industrial capital. The main strategy of this grouping is very much in terms of international and financial strategy in which national economic strategies are not particularly relevant. With the dominance of that section of the bourgeoisie, it was quite understandable that sections of the labour movement should concentrate upon local strategies, because they felt that any nationally structured interventions were out of the question for the time being, but that they did have some chance to gain power, or little bits of power, only on the local level, through control of pension funds, local authorities, and so on.

But this view does not reflect the desire of the party membership to achieve a national solution and a national intervention, as a way out of the crisis. Some emphasise the need for the labour movement to construct a national economic strategy, including a new industrial strategy, taking account of the need for a new system of planned control of international trade and capital movements. It is emphasis upon national planning and its methods that distinguishes the writings of authors such as Andrew Glyn of Oxford University and Jerry Coakley of the City of London Polytechnic. That is also where my own work is principally concentrated.

A second dimension to that work is within trade union circles: the role of trade unions in national strategy. In Britain, it comes down very much to

questions of strategy towards incomes policy and productivity improvements. Among the academics who are working out a strong perspective on that is John Kelly of the London School of Economics, who has criticised the concept of industrial democracy which tends to divert the trade unions from the main issues of their struggle against wage cuts and redundancies, and questions the value of militancy and national strikes.

There is also Marxist work in Britain concerned with the Third World. One has to say that in the economics departments of British universities there is quite a strong repression of Marxists, and it is very difficult for them to work there, but there is more flexibility in the development studies departments.

Sam Aaronovitch. It is universally agreed that throughout the United Kingdom urban problems and inner city deprivation have become more acute. Large areas of the UK economy have been deeply affected by restructuring, relocation and technological change. Overcoming decline and responding to change have become major preoccupations of local authorities, voluntary organisations and community groups. In 1983, we set up the Local Economy Policy Unit at South Bank Polytechnic as a centre for discussion on local economic policies and strategies and to provide training in required techniques for members and officers of a wide range of local authorities, and voluntary, community and trade union organisations.

Local economic policy has become in Britain a subject of controversy. Many local authorities led by the left see the public sector as a necessary stimulus for economic change, consider the lack of planning as a major cause of economic decline, and aim to develop new forms of industrial and sectoral planning backed by popular involvement. They give priority to defending and developing existing indigenous industries, technologies and jobs.

But local authorities' economic initiatives have been exposed to severe attack by the Tory government, which promotes its free-market approach to local economic development. The Tory government has set up 28 Enterprise Zones, six Freeports, and two Urban Development Corporations with the focus on the private sector as the motor of economic development and priority to the attraction of new inward investments.

There is, therefore, a clash of two opposite approaches. Which of these is more relevant to the interests of local communities and residents? There is no doubt that it is the former.

Take the example of the Merseyside Enterprise Board (in Liverpool). It has invested over £1.2 million in the economy of the region helping to secure the jobs of 1,100 people. When providing assistance to private companies, the Board ensures that they recognise the appropriate trade unions and meet the agreed industry terms and conditions of employment. It also provides advice and financial assistance to worker cooperatives and ethnic minority businesses.

Another example is Scotland's largest region, Strathclyde, with high and persistent unemployment. Here people have recognised that neither private nor public companies will do anything directly for them, either build factories or create new jobs. Therefore, they have set about creating

their own local economic self-management structures. This 'third sector' includes community businesses (of which there are already 35), housing, food and worker cooperatives and credit unions. Any resident is entitled to become a member of a community business upon payment of £1.00 per individual. The members elect a board of directors and encourage worker participation in running the business. Profits can be used only for reinvestment in the enterprise, as bonuses to workers and for sponsoring new community projects. The aim is to maximise employment creation for local residents, particularly the long-term unemployed. These enterprises are engaged in product recycling, building, printing, craft production, hairdressing and other local services. As a result, nearly 1,800 jobs have been created in the region.

Since 1986, we have been publishing a quarterly journal, *Local Economy*, which started a debate about the theoretical foundations of local economic policy. What are the perspectives of the different forms of municipal enterprises? What are the most progressive forms of local government intervention, and how does it affect the unemployed and other groups? We feel that this is a highly promising and very practical area for Marxist economic analysis.

¹ Louis Althusser, a French philosopher and the author of works on humanism, the theory-practice relationship, and the role of the state in forming ideology. In the 1960s, he published a criticism of the views of Antonio Gramsci. Nicos Poulantzas, a Greek sociologist and the author of works on the state, and the basis-superstructure connection. — *Ed.*

Special for WMR

'I Seek To Capture Life In Its Fullness'

Gaili Abdel Rahman — Sudanese
poet

The man we met and talked with was over 50, but he was lively and vigorous and looked younger than his age. His name is well known to the Arab literati. The author of popular poems which have appeared in Egyptian, Lebanese and other periodicals and been published in separate collections, he holds a doctorate in linguistics and is a prolific literary critic and an expert in Sudanese and Arabic literature.

What launched you on your artistic career?

I STARTED writing poetry and became active in cultural and political affairs in the early 1950s. Those were turbulent years. The Egyptian and the Sudanese peoples were fighting to throw off the colonial yoke and to abolish its mainstay, the monarchist regime.¹ Progressive members of the

artistic community — writers and poets — played an important role in these anti-colonial efforts.

They were also active in the peace movement which was gaining strength. I remember the impression Abdel Rahman el-Sharqawi's poem 'An Egyptian Father's Letter to President Truman' made both on his fellow poets and on the general public. In it, el Sharqawi called on the then US chief executive to support the world's children and mothers in their desire to live free from fear of war. Or take the emotional response of writers to the Bandung Conference, an historic event representing a major step in building up the solidarity of Asian and African peoples who were fighting for durable peace and a policy of positive neutrality.

Then there was the Suez crisis when, expressing the will of the Egyptian people, Gamal Abdel Nasser announced the nationalisation of the Suez Canal and advocated an independent policy in international affairs for his country. This was followed by the tripartite aggression of Britain, France and Israel. In the course of these developments, we the inhabitants of the Nile Valley, both the Egyptians and the Sudanese, saw for ourselves the noble stance of the Soviet Union which supported the victim of the aggression in the struggle against the invaders.

The political situation kept changing abruptly. In 1956 Sudan became an independent republic. In 1958 General Ibrahim Abbud seized power in the nation's first military coup. Side by side with other progressive Sudanese authors, I used the weapons I had at my disposal — poetry and journalism — to combat the regime which suppressed democratic liberties and moved to erode national sovereignty by forcing upon our people US 'aid' on humiliating terms. The revolution of 1964 swept away that regime.

Sudanese literature has always sought to keep pace with the political movement, sometimes perhaps even outstripping it a bit, and sometimes falling behind. Our literature — at least, its democratic revolutionary component — saw its task in working both openly and underground to help the people attain what they were striving for.

Could we say that political subjects are the leitmotif of your work, that it offers a direct reflection of politics?

It isn't all that simple. Art, let alone poetry, uses its own, distinctly aesthetic means to deal with reality. For a poem to be born, the author must filter his experience and impressions through his soul, and reconstruct reality as he sees it in images, symbols and even phantasms. You cannot, of course, apply the same yardstick to all art. For example, drama is more concrete and more precise than lyrical poetry. A lyrical poet may sing the beauty of a woman or a flower, or offer his emotional perception of some momentary event — sunrise or nightfall. At first glance, politics does not fit into it at all.

But every single event, however fleeting, is a moment of life, a moment of history, and the way it is perceived inevitably depends on one's world view. Whatever philosophical arguments the advocates of 'art for art's sake' marshal — specifically on elitist or escapist grounds — it is still a fact that man cannot exist outside or independently of society. I do not claim

that art can be reduced to a direct statement of one's political position. But as a form of social consciousness, art, I repeat, uses its own distinctive means to reflect the salient features of one's life or natural or social environment. Willy-nilly, this reflection mirrors one's political convictions as well.

I write my poems about what I have experienced, what has struck a chord in my emotions. From the outset, homesickness, a yearning for my country which I left early and could not return to for a long time was a major source of poetic inspiration for me. Homesickness was combined with affection for the ordinary people and their ingenuous ways. This gave rise to another theme: I contrasted rural life with life in the capitalist city, perhaps more 'civilised' but torn by acute social contradictions.

As I grew more mature and as my political and literary experience increased, my poetry acquired greater versatility and scope. I have travelled widely around the world and seen many countries. New knowledge and new impressions were added to my work. I'll cite only one example. The way of nature and life in the Nile Valley, something long familiar to me, is quiet and even somewhat monotonous. Month differs little from month, or season from season — there is merely a slight drop or rise in rainfall or in the warmth of the air. But elsewhere I saw other, majestic or sometimes stern faces of nature, and I learned about the different seasons — the red and gold leaves of autumn stripped by the snowstorms of winter, and winter yielding to the life-giving exuberance of spring. And my bitter homesickness gained new and deeper dimensions, while its poetic expression spoke in a richer language.

I could say the same about the motley social fabric I saw in different countries. I drank in eagerly all that was new, adding it to my earlier impressions, and to my memories of direct participation in the struggle of my people for freedom and democracy. My poems do not harp on (or, to be more precise, rehash) a single theme. There's love in them, and sadness, and enthusiasm, and militancy. I seek to capture life in its fullness and to express it as best I can.

Were you influenced by other poets and writers? Do you regard yourself as a follower of a particular literary trend?

I am convinced that only he who has found his own poetic voice can call himself a poet. I worship no idols. But I have drawn a great deal from the treasury of Arab art in all its forms, primarily from classical poetry, the heritage of such great masters of the past as Bashshar ibn Burd, Abu Nuwas, Ibn el Rumi and Al Mutanabbi.² I was also influenced to a considerable degree by the so-called new wave in Arabic poetry which was on the rise in the 1950s and 1960s. Actually, I, too, had a hand in the emergence of this current. Its foremost representatives include Abdel Wahhab el Baiati, Shawqi Bagdadi, Badr Shakir el Saiab, Al Vituri and others.

In those days contacts among poets in different Arab countries were much closer than they are now. Unfortunately, the deepening split in the Arab world has weakened these ties. Many ruling regimes have begun to

place obstacles in the path of artistic contacts and to confiscate books and periodicals from abroad.

In its heyday, classical Arabic literature made a great impact on European culture. For example, the Europeans borrowed some motifs of lyrical poetry about love from the Arabs. By the late nineteenth century, an influence in the opposite direction began to be felt. After World War II, as the first translations from Russia began to appear, we were introduced to the previously little known world of Russian and Soviet literature — Dostoyevsky, Chekhov, Gorky, Mayakovsky. Even unable to read their works in the original, we felt their powerful impact. For example, I wrote a poem entitled 'City Streets' in those years, and the critics said it clearly echoed Gorky's themes.

Later I had an opportunity to live and work in the Soviet Union. I learnt Russian and made friends among Soviet writers. I worked extensively on translations of Boris Pasternak, Yevgeny Yevtushenko, Rasul Gamzatov, Boris Ruchyev and others into Arabic. I am not exaggerating when I state — and I have said so repeatedly in the press — that my knowledge of Russian poetry has enabled me to reach a new high in my own art. The composition of my poems became more orderly, and I got rid of excessive prosaic and descriptive details and of the desire to close everything with a happy ending, so typical of my work in the 1950s. I got over a superficial understanding of realism as a correlation between the general and the particular, the typical and the distinctive, and I added to my store of means of artistic expression. Recently I have been trying to make my poems more expressive by turning to the national cultural heritage, to elements of myth and even to certain positive values of Sufism.³

Interpenetration of literatures has truly assumed global dimensions. The artist can no longer confine himself to the narrow national framework, but neither can he turn into a reckless advocate of cosmopolitanism and ignore national distinctions which are actually sets of coordinates marking the position of this or that individual on the map of humanity.

Any work of art springs from a national soil with all its unique features. A work of art can acquire a universal value only inasmuch as it expresses these unique features so vividly and profoundly that they are elevated to a universal level. Strictly lyrical works or out-and-out expressionism may be the only exceptions. The contribution an artist, a poet can make to world art depends on how effectively he injects the national experience of his people into his works.

How do you assess the present state of Sudanese literature and poetry in particular?

I think that at least among the Arabs, Sudanese poets are second to none. But they are little known in other Arab countries. This is connected with the overall situation in the Arab world I have mentioned, but much of the blame is on the Nimeiri regime which stifled free progressive thought and encouraged inferior writing.

This situation also affected the state of literary criticism.

Regrettably, it was dominated by structuralist and existentialist trends. These were given free rein, while critical works based on a progressive and integral world view were suppressed. Now that the Sudanese people have overthrown the dictatorship, I hope that as democracy gains strength these trends will be overcome through dialogue and through literary and philosophical debate. Actually, even those who swim with these currents merely follow a fashion and have poor understanding of the ideas they advocate.

Last year the Sudanese Writers and Artists' Union was established on a democratic basis. One of its tasks is to promote and strengthen ties with progressive authors the world over. There are many things we can and must tackle together. Foremost among them is the mission of upholding peace, preserving life on our beautiful planet and preventing nuclear catastrophe from ending what may well be a unique phenomenon in the Universe. Whatever its structure or form, any poem, any literary work that is a weapon in the battle against oppression, humiliation, disregard of human dignity or suppression of civil liberties contributes to the strengthening of peace and to the shaping of national cultures which, in one way or another, leave an imprint on universal culture.

¹ Until independence Sudan remained essentially a British-Egyptian condominium. — *Ed.*

² Prominent classical poets of the eighth to tenth centuries. — *Ed.*

³ Moslem mysticism. — *Ed.*

surveys, letters, and diary

Growing Monopoly Pressure

Facts and Figures on Capitalist Exploitation

There has been a marked exacerbation of the antagonism between labour and capital in the industrialised capitalist countries over the past 10-12 years. As the conditions of production worsen under the impact of ever more frequent economic crises and technological renewal in the national economies, the monopolies are induced to

toughen up their attitudes and actions with respect to the working class. They have been trying to find a way out of the crisis by mounting a broad offensive on its social rights and living and working conditions. Here are some of the many facts and figures which show how this is being done.

New Technology and Unemployment

UNDER capitalism, the current phase of the scientific and technical revolution, with the stepped up introduction of new automated information and communication technologies, and their ever wider merger into a single network, leads to a massive reduction in the number of jobs.

That is exemplified by the US automobile industry: in 1978 it had 725,000 workers, and in 1986 only 510,000. There is a 5 per cent reduction in the number of jobs every year on average as a result of rising labour productivity at the subsidiaries of General Motors, the world's largest automobile corporation.¹ Its project Saturn exemplifies the strategy of this transnational corporation in modernising production. The core of it is the construction of an ultra-modern assembly plant at a cost of \$3.5 billion. It will take less than a third of the time to assemble one car at the plant, with only a small group of high-skilled specialists.

Similar processes are under way in other industries. Since 1979, one-half of the jobs were lost in metallurgy. The manufacturing industry had 27.3 per cent of the total workforce in 1977, and only 22 per cent in 1987.

By 1990, says the Union of the Automobile Industry in the FRG, introduction of new technologies is expected to wipe out roughly 152,000 jobs, or almost 23 per cent of the employment in the industry. Here is an example of the process. In 1983, Volkswagen's head plant at Wolfsburg started an assembly shop with a high level of automation, and this made 1,000 of the 5,000 jobs redundant. Volkswagen intends to install similar assembly hardware at all its other plants.²

The number of jobs in the steel industry dropped from 330,000 in 1974 to 203,000 in 1986, and another 20,000 jobs are to go by 1990.

Thirty-nine pits were closed down and over 60,000 miners lost their jobs in Britain within two years, from March 1985 to March 1987.

There are many such facts and they show that *the complex modernisation of production under capitalism based on the use of high technologies, together with the incapacity or unwillingness of the ruling circles to conduct a long-term structural policy has led to a marked increase in unemployment in most of these countries.*

Let us look at the figures. From 1979 to 1986, inclusive, the total number of officially registered fully unemployed in the OECD countries went up, according to its own report, from 16.5 million to 28.7 million, which comes to more than 8 per cent of the economically active population (to about 12 per cent in the European Community countries). There was also the following trend: unemployment is being increasingly separated from the course of the economic cycle, and tends to increase, rather than to fall, in the recovery phase. In that period (since 1982), unemployment declined

only in the United States, mainly through wider employment in the services, where jobs are often casual, do not require high skills, and are, therefore, low-paid. In other leading capitalist countries, there was an absolute and a relative increase in unemployment, as Table 1 shows.

Table 1
Unemployment in the Major Industrial Capitalist Countries (1,000 persons)

	USA		Japan		FRG		France		Britain		Italy	
	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II	I	II
1980	7,637	7.1	1,140	2.0	889	3.8	1,451	7.8	1,665	6.8	1,698	7.6
1982	10,678	9.7	1,359	2.4	1,833	7.5	2,008	10.3	2,917	9.8	2,052	9.1
1984	8,539	7.5	1,608	2.7	2,266	9.1	2,310	11.6	3,160	11.1	2,391	10.4
1986 (first half- year)	8,538	7.1	1,695	2.8	2,344	9.4	2,445	10.3	3,217	11.6	2,666	11.3

I = number of unemployed (1,000); II = level of unemployment as a percentage of the economically active population.

Estimated from: *Main Economic Indicators*, OECD.

Unemployment is, therefore, the main social outcome of technological progress under capitalism, an outcome which hits at the interests of the working class, both directly and indirectly, as it creates the psychological and technical conditions for stepping-up capitalist exploitation.

'Split-up' of Working Conditions

The monopolies want to effect the widest modernisation of production by conducting a strategy of creating more flexible and individualised working conditions, and that involves attempts to invalidate or abolish altogether the legal regulations governing the duration of working time which the trade unions had earlier won and to 'split up' the standard basic rates and differentiate wages to a greater extent.

Part-time labour is ever more frequent in the economic and social practice of capitalism. The International Labour Bureau says that part-time employment now involves 14.1 per cent of all the working people in the United States, 15.3 per cent in Canada, 15.8 per cent in Japan, 18.9 per cent in Britain, 24.3 per cent in Sweden, and 18.9 per cent in Norway. According to the National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, from 1982 to 1986, 550,000 permanent and full-time jobs in France were replaced by part-time working and 300,000 temporary contracts.

Something like 35 million do part-time work in the industrialised capitalist countries as a whole, most of them being mothers in the 25 to 44 years age group, as well as students and disabled persons. That means low-skilled and low-paid work, without any prospects for advancement.

There is a trend to introduce wage schemes differentiating the working

people by categories, irrespective of their skill standards, or the quantity or quality of output. Here, the United States is in the lead. Many wage contracts provide for a two-tier system under which the basic rates for newly hired workers and even those taken on again after temporary lay-off are markedly depressed.

Table 2
Two-Tier Wage System in the United States
Starting Per-Hour Pay (US\$)

Corporation	New Collective Contract (newly hired and re-hired temporarily laid-off workers)	Old Contract (permanent workers)
Boeing	6.70	11.38
Lockheed	6.00	8.64
Giant Food	5.00	6.95
Dow Chemical	6.89	7.08

Source: *Fortune*, January 9, 1984.

American Airlines says that the two-tier system gave it \$1 million of additional profits in 1984 alone. Lockheed, one of the leading US arms manufacturers, increased its annual superprofits by \$19 million through the same system. According to the US Bureau of Labour Statistics, this structure involved 25 per cent of all jobs in late 1985.

The 'splitting-up' of wages has continued to spread, and here and there the unions have been forced to accept a three-tier system. For instance, a Westinghouse plant in Muncie, Indiana, has a new structure, introduced in 1986, which provides for three levels of per-hour pay: one for permanent workers, another for those who are re-hired after temporary lay-offs (minus three dollars), and a third for those who are newly hired (minus five dollars from the rate allowed to permanent workers). This kind of discrimination against the workers of the last two categories is designed to run for 5 to 7 years, unless, of course, the plant is shut down.

The artificial differentiation of wages is also a growing trend in other countries. There are ever more frequent calls for such schemes from corporate boardrooms in the FRG, France and Britain. The Japanese wage system is also set up as a model for Western Europe. It provides, among other things, for 25 per cent of a worker's average earnings to be paid once in six months in the form of a 'bonus'. Since the size of the bonus depends mainly on the size of the profits, the employers have no fear of 'overspending' on wages when the market outlook is poor.

The transfer of industrial facilities to cheap-labour countries is an important technique by means of which the TNCs exert pressure on wages. In 1985, for instance, almost 80 per cent of US microchip production, with the exception of military-related devices, was located in Taiwan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore and Hongkong.³ Wages in these countries are so low (as compared with those in the capitalist centres) that it is obviously

profitable for the monopolies to effect such transfers.

The tendency of wages to stagnate or even to decline in many capitalist countries is reflected in the reduction of the share of wages in the national income. In the FRG, for instance, it came to 44.2 per cent in 1975, to 42.2 per cent in 1980, and to 37.6 per cent in 1985, and it has continued to shrink since then. In Britain, the ratio of total wages to profits was 72 to 28 in 1972, 69 to 31 in 1980, and 64 to 36 in 1984.

Trade Unions on the Defensive

The actual economic and social situation which has taken shape in the industrialised capitalist countries in the recent period enables the monopolies to keep depressing the price of labour power, virtually ignoring the changes in labour productivity. "Tens of thousands of factory workers are quickly discovering that no matter how much they give, the pressure on them to increase productivity and to lower labor costs, is not diminishing", says the US press.⁴

According to US statistics, real per-hour pay of industrial workers (i.e., with increases to cover the growth of prices) went up by an average of only 0.8 per cent a year, and even declined somewhat from March 1986 to March 1987. Meanwhile labour productivity in that period grew at an annual average of 4.0 per cent, and in some industries — rubber, automobiles, steel, cement, etc. — by more than 6.0 per cent, a differential which naturally went to swell corporate profits or into cost-cutting investments.

This trend can also be illustrated by the aggregate data for industry and the services in the first quarter of 1987. While productivity (in annual terms with seasonal fluctuations) went up by 0.5 per cent, real per-hour pay dropped by 5.0 per cent. That was, in effect, the biggest drop in the purchasing power of wages in the United States over the past 36 years.

Similar processes are in evidence in many other countries, and these are connected with objective economic factors and with monopoly capital's policy of 'social clawback' with respect to the working class. *The unions find themselves under constant pressure from the class enemy and have to give up some of their positions.*

In the United States, for instance, fewer collective contracts concluded by the major unions have clauses linking wages to the rising cost of living. This kind of protection against inflation was available in March 1987 to only 38 per cent of unionised workers, as compared with 56.7 per cent in 1985, the main reason being the marked reduction in the strength of the unions as corporations continued to automate production, close down plants and trim their workforce. Major unions now represent only 6.4 million workers, as compared with 10 million in the 1970s.⁵

That has naturally weakened the positions of the unions in negotiations with the employers, who have tried hard to capitalise on the present state of the labour market. The employers' appetites are vast, as will be seen from the following statement by a vice-president of the Goodyear Tyre and Rubber Corporation: "Until we get real wage levels down much close to those of the Brazils and Koreas we cannot pass along productivity gains to wages and still be competitive."⁶

In recent years, the monopolies have mounted *a wide offensive against the working people's class interests and their collective strength as represented by the unions*. Meanwhile, resistance to their drive is being seriously hampered by mass unemployment, fear of layoffs, and the anti-union policies conducted by the ruling circles.

In the United States, this policy has sprouted a great many 'labour consultants', which are companies actually working to prevent the formation of new unions or forcing the existing ones to be more complaisant in their relations with the employers.

The anti-union atmosphere being hotted up by the Tory government in Britain has brought about a situation in which there are either no unions at new enterprises (in electronics and the services) or those which are set up undertake not to strike.

The law to promote employment, which entered into force in 1985 in the FRG met the employers' demand for wider part-time employment, temporary lease of manpower from other enterprises, and establishment of labour relations for a limited period. The amendments made in the law in 1986 markedly reduced the unions' ability to resort to strikes.

* * *

Those are the changes in the economic, social and political conditions determining the relations between labour and capital in the recent period. The monopoly bourgeoisie has mounted a wide offensive against the labouring masses in an effort to take revenge for past defeats and concessions. The leading contingents of the working class believe that the main task now is to mobilise all their forces to beat back this offensive.

Gerald Meier
Institute of International
Economics and Politics (GDR)

¹ *The Financial Times*, October 20, 1986.

² *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, February 24, 1984.

³ *WSI-Mitteilungen*, 6/1986, p. 421.

⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, June 6-7, 1987.

⁵ The situation is the same in some other capitalist countries. For instance, the membership of the GCT, the biggest national trade union body in France, fell by more than 15 per cent (from 1,918,583 to 1,622,095) from 1980 to 1983. The Trades Union Congress in Britain lost roughly 2 million members from 1979 to 1986: down to 10.5 million, i.e., 38 per cent of the economically active population, from the 50 per cent in 1979.

⁶ *International Herald Tribune*, June 6-7, 1987.

The Reader Wants To Know

A Coalition For Democracy In Guyana

I read with much interest an article in your June issue about the struggles of the progressive forces in Guyana. Among other things you report that a broad Patriotic Coalition for Democracy was established in the country in January last year. I would like to know how such an alliance was put together and on what basis, what its goals and tasks are and if that political force can be considered an alternative to the regime.

Ahmed Mustafa (Sudan)

The question is answered below by the author of the article, Donald Ramotar, who represents the People's Progressive Party of Guyana (PPP) on the journal.

FIVE out of Guyana's six parties which are in opposition to the regime of the People's National Congress joined forces in the Patriotic Coalition for Democracy; three of the five are bourgeois parties. The alliance also includes trade unions, farmers' and religious organisations, groups of liberal professionals and people without political affiliations.

Why did such a broad assortment of forces reach an agreement to join in a coalition?

The paramount factor was the stifling undemocratic atmosphere in which the regime is suppressing the basic rights of the working people and making the country bow to the diktat of imperialism and the International Monetary Fund. In late 1985 the government rigged yet another general election, which was the last straw. Having learned the bitter lesson, the coalition last December called for a blanket boycott of five municipal elections, thus thwarting another sham planned by the government.

Our party called for unity after the PNC rigged its first elections way back in 1968. At that time, however, a front was not possible because of many factors, some of them interrelated. The 1970s saw the situation change. The mass of people were dismayed by the drop in the living standards as a result of the neocolonialist policy of imperialism and the subservient government. The proposal made by the PPP in 1977 for the formation of a national patriotic front government helped to promote the working people's political awareness.

The largest and most energetic trade union, which represented the interests of factory and field workers employed in the sugar industry, finally won recognition after 20 years of struggle and was able to join the Guyana TUC. It later forged a progressive alliance of six industrial trade unions. Many small and middle businessmen began to form political parties. The progressive intellectuals are more vocal in their opposition to the government's policies. Liberation theology helped towards positive

shifts in the church and today it is far more critical of the regime than ever.

Developments in the Third World and in our region and the growing prestige of existing socialism have also played a positive role.

A new situation made it possible to establish the Patriotic Coalition for Democracy. It is an alliance for free and fair elections, but it aims also at more ambitious goals, such as day-to-day protection of democratic freedoms, legal education, exposure of civil rights violations, respect for the constitutional guarantees and the broadening of the pluralistic political system and parliamentary democracy.

The coalition has built a structure designed to ensure the broadest possible involvement of the mass of people in the activities of the organisation. The Coalition's supreme governing body, the Assembly, includes representatives of all forces and independents, and its Council is made up of delegates from the founding organisations. The Council is responsible for day-to-day work and reports to the Assembly, and its members rotate as the council chairman.

In its less than two years in existence the Coalition has called numerous mass rallies all over the country to educate and mobilise the population. Protest demonstrations were organised on such issues as shortages of basic necessities and soaring prices. The Coalition has been lobbying international meetings held in Guyana to highlight the real situation in the country. It has sent a delegation on a tour of Caribbean countries to secure their vigorous support.

The joint actions of diverse forces, their newly gained experience of overcoming difficulties and discussion of differences in the favourable atmosphere of direct communication — all help clarify positions and preclude misunderstandings. By agreement between the Coalition's member parties, no constraints are put on their activities in pursuit of their own programme if they do not clash with the Coalition's goals or harm Guyana's national sovereignty.

While working in the Coalition, the Communists are carrying on their independent work in industry and communities, and participate in mass organisations, arrange meetings and rallies and read lectures. We make use of the opportunities offered by Parliament, weak and ineffectual as it is because of the rigged elections, to expose the wrongs done by the regime and stir up debates on major national and international issues.

The PPP recognises the decisive importance of democracy and its relevance to development. It has long pointed out that lack of democracy in our society has a deleterious effect on economic growth because the working people are denied an effective role in the current processes. In the view of our party, however, democracy alone cannot resolve the sharp social economic problems of Guyana.

We therefore do not consider the Coalition an alternative to the regime. Its broad goals are limited in class terms: they merely reflect the consensus of the diverse organisations making up the Coalition. To achieve a real national alternative, the party is seeking to build a solid left alliance whose aim would be to form a national patriotic front government to pursue consistently an anti-imperialist course towards a socialist perspective.

Can Workers Strike Under Socialism?

L'Humanité not long ago reported on a strike at the Iskyr plant in Mezdra, Bulgaria, quoting the *Rabotnichesko Delo*, the newspaper of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party. I would like to know more about that strike.

Jean Leroy (France)

YES, a team of twelve workers led by Georgi Yashov did stage a week-long work stoppage at that plant. They would turn up at their machine-tools but did not work. What caused their action? Were they short of feedstock or did not know what to do or just did not have the skills to do the job?

Nothing of the kind. After the introduction of new technology, which had raised labour productivity, the managers lowered the pay rates without informing the team (it is, incidentally, a front-ranking one in the socialist competition drive at the plant). It was not until they got their wages at the end of the month that the workers learned about it. The team decided to call a meeting to discuss the matter and invited the administration to send a representative to it. None of the latter came. To add insult to injury, a machine-tool was taken from the team, again without its knowledge, and the atmosphere grew rife with tension.

On the initiative of the trade union organisation which at first, regrettably, stood aloof from the dispute the workers had two meetings with the administration. After heated debates the administration had to pay the workers in full for the preceding period at the earlier rates. New pay rates were also agreed upon and the team received a machine-tool similar to the one withdrawn. That settled the labour dispute.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the issue is that there have been no objective reasons for a strike. The Iskyr plant is a specialised enterprise within the CMEA framework producing gear wheels for home market and has a sufficient stock of orders for normal operation. Workers in basic production get good pay, averaging 350 leva a month (as compared with the country's average of 213); many of Yashov's workers earned even more, up to 550 leva in each of the two months before the conflict.

What played the decisive role in the Iskyr conflict was the subjective factor. The administration was too slow in revising its methods of work in accordance with the new Labour Code and new methods of economic management. The point of the changes taking place in our country is that the work collective is becoming the true master of fixed assets. The enterprise has been granted the rights of self-managing economic entity. In these circumstances, the factory and office workers are no longer mere executors of orders and instructions but active participants in the entire production process, including administration and management. The highest body is the general meeting of workers, which elects the economic council of the enterprise and its director.

The conflict, however, showed that the Iskyr administration has not yet

shed the old style of work and remained in the rut of managing things by decree. The collective, on the other hand, has not learned to use its rights correctly.

In these circumstances, the workers can hardly be accused of having abused their rights. The answer to the question in the heading is that Bulgaria's labour legislation does not ban strikes, that is to say, workers can strike. The collective has every reason to demand respect as the master of the property entrusted to it and every right to exert pressure on the management. I doubt, however, that in the new conditions the course of action chosen by the workers of the team was the best way of pressuring the 'higher-ups'. By laying down tools, they hurt the plant and thereby their fellow workers and themselves. They could have used some other methods of influencing the administration to the point of calling a no-confidence vote and relieving the director of office at a general meeting of the workers.

Tolerance and mutual respect in human relationships are needed more than ever before today, when socialist democracy is being expanded, self-management introduced, public openness broadened and the accountability of higher bodies to the lower ones enlarged. It is important to improve the standards of administration and management, including the skill of handling disputes. This process is far from easy, many people will have to part with their old habits and patterns of behaviour, and conflicts like the one described here cannot be ruled out.

But all this cannot be considered a danger to socialism.

Gančo Kostadinov
Bulgarian journalist

Notes and Comments

Apropos Of The Article 'Become A Citizen Of The World'

Dmitri Likhachev's article under the above title carried by the May 1987 issue of *WMR* drew considerable reader response, ranging from the approbative to the sharply critical. The differing responses are, on the whole, expressed in the three letters (from Austria, Britain and the Soviet Union) printed below with some abridgement.

THE article 'Become a Citizen of the World' by Dmitri Likhachev highlighted the contradictions of the 'new way of thinking'. Quite often stereotypes lie concealed under its cover. Likhachev's stand is, in my view, anti-historical; it can only be coupled to bourgeois genetic theory, which despises the masses; it is at variance with the concrete experience of life.

His arguments do not tie in with reality, although, of course, they contain some valid points.

Having said that the intelligentsia with their heightened sense of responsibility have few children, Academician Likhachev draws the conclusion from this that culture is generally in decline in all countries.

In the world there are roughly one billion illiterates and not the least of the impediments to their intellectual development is that intellectuals have hired themselves out to capitalism. In the Third World some 70 per cent of the children are undernourished and they will have no chance of developing intellectually. Over 20 per cent of the world's population live in abject poverty under the conditions of capitalist culture. They are cut off from any sort of culture, for to reach out to culture people need a certain material base. But Academician Likhachev is thinking about a legal code to protect the rights of animals.

What sort of general cultural level has Academician Likhachev in mind, when he speaks of its decline? An historical fact of culture is that since World War II there have been more than 100 military conflicts in 60 countries with a toll of 10 million lives, that children are being killed every day in South Africa, Nicaragua and Palestine. It is also a fact of culture that in the industrialised countries of the so-called free world, television — whose programmes are blueprinted by intellectuals hired by monopoly capital for wages — is conducting an unprecedented drive for literacy. But Academician Likhachev is worried not by these facts of culture implicit in imperialism. He believes that a supra-class Cultural International will be the way out of the period of culture's decline.

Academician Likhachev does not believe in teamwork. He does not believe that a Sistine Madonna could be produced by a team of artists. In my view this is superficial argumentation.

The magnificent works of Raphael and Michelangelo were paid for with the blood of 'converts to Christianity', they served the church hierarchy, its system of suppression. One should not forget these facts despite the beauty of the masters' creations.

The Soviet academician did not devote even a single line to the herculean collective strength of the working class, which with the October Revolution laid the beginning of humanity's most remarkable cultural achievement — the building of a society in which *all* members have the opportunity to develop their intellectual and physical capabilities all-sidedly, a society "in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 506).

Academician Likhachev would not like to see man change the creations of Nature, which, he says, is endowed with a supreme intelligence. This leaves no room for interaction, between man, society, and Nature.

It would be useful to refrain from reproducing any more of such 'new thoughts'. I very much regret their publication in a journal of the communist and workers' parties.

With friendly greetings,

Professor Gerhard Oberkofler,
Innsbruck

I read *World Marxist Review* with great interest every month, and find it very valuable indeed. I am sorry to write to you for the first time to say how puzzled I was about the content of the article by Dmitri Likhachev, 'Become a Citizen of the World', in the May 1987 issue. Some of his ideas appear quite un-Marxist. For example, "the ethical properties distinctive to the intelligentsia are not only a question of upbringing and education but also a question of genetic heredity". What is the author suggesting that genetics do for the children of intellectuals?

Similarly, the author says "In Nature, everything is arranged in a way proving beyond doubt that there exists an extraordinary intelligence which has been working for millions of years" . . . Charles Darwin killed such ideas over 100 years ago! I repeat that I find the journal invaluable, and this is the first article I have found which appears to be reactionary.

Yours,
Alan Tait
Cambridge

I enjoyed reading Dmitri Likhachev's vivid and stirring article. I find topical and understandable, above all, his outraged condemnation of the world-wide arms race with its psychology and terrible consequences to humanity, and his denunciation of the contagion of nationalism that is making this an even more feverish race. I see a significant sign of the times in the fact that a consistent humanist like Dmitri Likhachev wrote for an international journal of communist and workers' parties, in his call for a Cultural International to help preserve the values of all nations.

His appeal for association among nations, and his exhortation that each person learns to be a 'citizen of the world' are, I would say, in keeping with the new way of thinking that seeks to bridge the gulf between political practice and humanity's ethical norms. Mikhail Gorbachov spoke of this last February at an international forum in Moscow.

I should like to draw attention to the disparateness of progress and the growing threat of dehumanisation. Indeed, has our generation not witnessed — and been the object — of the most outstanding scientific and technological achievements and of the most monstrous, genocidal, fascist-totalitarian regimes? The development of socialism itself and the doctrine and practice of the class struggle have also proved to be disparate. True, thanks to socialism working people have been freed from uncertainty about their future, there has been a cultural revolution, and formerly oppressed nations have embarked upon unfettered development. True, the Soviet people have built a mighty state, one of the two 'superpowers' as they are called in the West, in terms of economic, military, and political capability. But the absolutisation of industrial development and the class struggle, and the Stalinist notion that it grows in proportion to the triumphs of socialism led to the erosion of moral values and of the human conscience itself, whose definitive significance is rightly noted in the article.

Our attention and that of world public opinion were drawn to these disturbing circumstances by distinguished leading personalities of Soviet literature and culture, one of whom is Academician Likhachev. They

follow the great humanist traditions of Russian critically-minded intellectuals. Today the intelligentsia rightfully hold an important place in our social development, in our truly revolutionary reorganisation. There is today, properly speaking, our first-ever alliance between the political leadership and the progressive intelligentsia, and this is, I would say, a paramount guarantee of perestroika.

I do not rule out a negative reaction to the article on the part of some readers, particularly among those who continue to take a fetishistic view of the class struggle, although Lenin, as we all know, put the interests of social development, as a whole, above the class interests of the proletariat. The entire world has today found itself in a situation in which precisely human interests must be given priority. In this lies the essence of our new way of thinking.

Of course, in some quarters Marxism is seen differently — as a closed theory, as an absolute boundary separating the 'clean' from the 'unclean'. But this alienation from life does more than offend the creative spirit of the living, constantly enriching teaching of Marx and Lenin. It poses the risk of Communists condemning themselves to self-isolation, to 'proud solitude', to the laboratory retorts of 'pure' models.

Some people may be surprised, even shocked by Likhachev's defence of animals, of Nature generally at a time when such a great number of people in the world, ruthlessly exploited and dying of hunger, need to be defended. But the fact is that today humankind can preserve itself as such only together with Nature, if it helps Nature to cope with the calamities inflicted on it by man. That is what makes unacceptable the alternative: humanity's liberation from oppression and violence or the defence of everything living. Both the one and the other are needed; more, the one helps the other.

Regard for humankind's great moral traditions or, to quote Marx, for the everlasting laws of morality and humaneness does not conflict with Marxism. Although in the day of Marx and Engels the ecological problem was not so acute globally as it is today, was not an aspect of humanity's survival, and the issue itself did not arise, they shrewdly foresaw the significance of harmonious relations with Nature in the future socialist society and hoped that men will "not only feel but also know their oneness with nature" (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, 1969, p. 75).

It goes without saying that a fault-finding critic may, not without grounds, dispute some of the author's ideas, for example, about socio-genetic factors being the cause of the misgivings of intellectuals about having large families. Demographers and sociologists will most likely find other, more weighty, reasons for this phenomenon than fear of a nuclear war that has as yet not become — whether regretfully or happily is something else — an element of our day-to-day attitudes. A child who grows up to be an eminent humanist, a genuine intellectual, may be born also in a large working-class or peasant family. However, Academician Likhachev is right when he says that intellectuality is also a question of genetic heredity to which, I regret to say, no significance was attached in past history.

But this is a detail. The main thing is that the article shows the importance of everybody, non-Communists and Communists, having a new outlook on the world, prompts all of us to reflect seriously upon present-day problems, upon whether our conceptual apparatus can cope with them and, in the event of necessity — to re-examine it critically.

Yevgeni Ambartsumov,
historian, sociologist
Moscow

'World Marxist Review' intends to continue publishing readers' responses to its articles.

the book scene

Priorities: Welfare Of Man And Peace On Earth

Mikhail Gorbachov, *Selected Speeches and Articles*, Politizdat, Moscow, 1987. Volume 1: 463 pp., Volume 2: 510 pp., Volume 3: 511 pp. (in Russian).

THE building of socialism has proved to be a time-consuming and complex undertaking. In the Soviet Union, it was launched 70 years ago. The country has gone through periods of rapid growth, which has been the salient feature of this historical process. But there have also been periods in which socialist principles were violated and stagnation set in; that gave rise to negative and even pre-crisis social phenomena.

The dialectics of life demands that political leaders unflaggingly and objectively study phenomena which are either nascent or in full swing and delve into their inner logic and contradictions so as to rely on and strengthen what has been accomplished and take the right decisions in overcoming drawbacks and moving ahead. This approach is typical of the speeches and articles of Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, collected in the three volumes under review. They cover a span of almost 20 years — from November 1967 to July 1986. Back in the 1970s Mikhail Gorbachov put forward ideas which he later elaborated and added to and which, in definitive form, he presented in his

speeches at the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee, at the 27th Congress of the party, and at the January and June 1987 Plenary Meetings of the CPSU Central Committee.

Guided by the creative essence of Marxism-Leninism, Mikhail Gorbachov has set out several new theoretical concepts relating both to the immediate tasks and to the long-term prospects of socialist development. He performs a thorough analysis of the historic turning point the world has reached, and he proves that, given the current nuclear confrontation, we need a wholly new approach to international relations. The three-volume collection adds new aspects to the doctrine dealing with the emergence of the communist social system, to our vision of the interaction between the productive forces and the relations of production under socialism, and to our understanding of the cooperative movement, commodity-money relations and socialist ownership.

Mikhail Gorbachov's report to the April 1985 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee marked the beginning of radical change in the policy and activities of the CPSU and in the life of Soviet society as a whole. This report and other items included in the collection offer an integral concept of accelerating the country's socio-economic development — a concept linked indelibly with the profound overhaul of usual practices and representing socialist society's objective and inevitable advancement to a higher qualitative stage.

In the *economic sphere* this means efforts to raise the national economy to a completely new scientific, technological and managerial level; it means intensive economic development and the attainment of the world's top standards in labour productivity, economic efficiency and product quality.

In the *social sphere* it means unswerving implementation of the principles of social justice, unremitting efforts to improve the working and living conditions of the Soviet people, and strict application of the socialist principle of remuneration — according to the quantity and quality of the work performed. It also signifies consistent overcoming of socio-economic differences between urban and rural life and between intellectual and physical labour; it means harmonious development of the individual and new dimensions in the socialist way of life.

In the *political sphere* it implies a comprehensive drive to enhance socialist democracy and, on this basis, the broadest possible scope for the creative energy and initiative of the masses. Mikhail Gorbachov holds that in this respect it is essential to ensure a fuller exercise of self-governance in work collectives and in residential areas and to involve people as broadly as possible in economic management, in affairs of state and in civic activities — in other words, to shift from government on behalf of the people to government directly by the people.

In the *intellectual sphere* it calls for continued work to strengthen people's commitment to Marxist-Leninist ideology, the moral principles of communism and a collectivist spirit of comradely mutual assistance and to introduce the masses to scientific advances and cultural values.

Mikhail Gorbachov examines all aspects of the transition to a radically new condition of Soviet society — a shift rooted both in domestic needs and in the international situation — in a dialectical interrelationship, as

component parts of a single, integral concept. There can be no restructuring without acceleration and vice versa. As the author said in presenting the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 27th Congress of the CPSU, the situation is such that "we cannot limit ourselves to partial improvements. A radical reform is needed. Its meaning consists in truly subordinating the whole of our production to the requirements of society, to the satisfaction of people's needs, in orienting management towards raising efficiency and quality, accelerating scientific and technological progress, promoting a greater interest of people in the results of their work, initiative and socialist enterprise in every link of the national economy, and, above all, in the work collectives" (Vol. 3, p. 212).

Far from keeping silent on the issue, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee warns that the acceleration and restructuring drive will not be easy, that it will keep running into stubborn resistance. It will be necessary to break down long-established stereotypes of thinking and action — stereotypes common to a sizeable part of the ranking party, government and economic cadre — and to wage an uncompromising struggle against conservative attitudes, inertia and people who put their own self-seeking interests above those of society.

Those who closely follow the developments in the USSR are sure to conclude that the healthy forces of the party and of the nation are fully behind the policy of restructuring, and that they are mobilising the masses to remove the obstacles that hamper renewal.

The works that make up the three-volume collection include many passages dealing with the ways, methods and means of the restructuring drive. The author by no means intends to offer ready-made recipes. He encourages the reader to join him in a creative quest for economic, scientific, technological and social progress incentives more powerful than those operating under capitalism, in thinking how best to integrate plan-based management with the interests of the individual and the collective, and how to use the advantages of socialism more fully.

Mikhail Gorbachov said at the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee that the aim of restructuring was "to reorient economic growth from intermediary to final, socially significant results and to public needs, promoting all-round development of the individual, making technological progress fundamental to economic growth, and creating a dependable thrift mechanism."¹ The granting of broad powers to factories and enterprises, as well as the incentives to encourage their self-management and complete operational economic autonomy will assist in the fullest possible use of the creative potential inherent in the work collectives.

As the author stresses repeatedly, the emphasis on the human factor is closely linked with the expansion and deepening of socialist democracy. That, in turn, implies greater public openness, conditions essential to criticism and self-criticism, an unremitting struggle against red tape, stricter control from below, and a greater role of the public in day-to-day affairs. Socialist democracy is incompatible with crude *administration by decree*, with excessive regimentation and prohibitive practices, with lack of faith in the potential of human intellect and in the expertise of the

individual and the work collective. At the same time, it has nothing in common with licence, irresponsibility or absence of discipline. The strengthening of law and order is an integral part of socialist democracy.

The collection highlights the leading role and the responsibility of the CPSU, its various bodies, grassroots organisations and all Communists in the struggle to attain the targets that have been set. "The activeness of millions of working people, the scope and the depth of the people's creative endeavour — the decisive factor of acceleration — in many respects depend on how party organisations operate. Only by placing man at the centre of party work shall we be able to carry out the tasks set by the congress. The essence of the radical restructuring of party work lies precisely in turning to people, to real work" (Vol. 3, p. 448).

In this connection the volumes under review reflect the author's attention to matters of selecting personnel, training the cadre and improving leadership. *Perestroika* begins with an overhaul of the cadre, with changes in the patterns of its mentality and action. "Issues involved in changing the style and methods of work and taken in the broadest possible terms are coming to the foreground. If we accomplish this task — and accomplish it we must — we shall be able to accomplish others, no matter how complex they are" (Vol. 3, p. 353). The party cadre should resolutely abandon administration by fiat, 'arm-twisting' and technocratic attitudes. Political methods must have pride of place.

It is therefore clear that the Soviet party and government leaders have at their disposal a comprehensive system of theoretical precepts and practical attitudes to be used for a revolutionary restructuring of society in accordance with the demands of our age. As Mikhail Gorbachov reminds the reader repeatedly, an unflagging and creative daily effort of everyone — from a cabinet minister to an ordinary industrial or agricultural worker — is the main thing now. "Today," he told Soviet mass media executives and leaders of artistic associations in July 1987, "we are reaching what may be the most important juncture. Now we have to translate all this into reality."²

The works of Mikhail Gorbachov contain a thorough and in-depth analysis of today's world, a world that is dynamic, complex, multifaceted and contradictory but at the same time interconnected and integral. Facing the threat of mankind's self-destruction in our age of nuclear missiles, governments are duty bound to be guided by a new way of political thinking in their relations, to promote constructive cooperation on a global scale. This calls for mutual trust and respect, all-round collaboration, no more reliance on armed force, as well as a common understanding that nuclear war must never be launched and that there can be no winners in it.

The philosophy underlying Soviet foreign policy represents a new stage — shaped by new realities — in the development of Lenin's concept of peaceful coexistence of countries with different social systems. The most important conclusion this philosophy has drawn is that now "confrontation between capitalism and socialism can proceed *only and exclusively in forms of peaceful competition and peaceful contest*" (Vol. 3, p. 247). Moscow has translated this conclusion into a series of bold initiatives, particularly the plan for the elimination of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction

by the end of the century, to be coupled with steps preventing militarisation of outer space.

Advocating a constructive exchange of views with all socio-political forces, including even those that hold opposite ideological positions, the author attaches great importance above all to the anti-war activities of communist and workers' parties and revolutionary democratic and national democratic movements. "In our opinion, if we go by facts," he says, "the left-wing, democratic forces, of which the Communists have always been and remain an integral part, could act in a more concerted way in the struggle against the war menace" (Vol. 3, pp. 150-151). This conclusion gives one food for thought.

The international prestige and the influence of the socialist countries, first and foremost of the Soviet Union, rose higher after the 27th Congress of the CPSU and the congresses of other sister parties. All Communists and all people of goodwill see the changes under way in socialist society as proof of its viability, dynamism and capacity for self-renewal.

The three volumes of Mikhail Gorbachov's works are an example of the way Marxism-Leninism should be applied creatively in analysing the complex problems of our age. The collection is sure to generate great interest not only in the USSR and other socialist countries but also among broad sections of international public opinion.

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¹ *Pravda*, June 26, 1987.

² *Pravda*, July 15, 1987.

The Making Of A Revolutionary

Alberto Granado, *Con el Che por Sudamerica* (With Che Across South America), Editorial Letras Cubanas, La Habana, 1986, 240 pp.

TWENTY years have passed since Comandante Ernesto ('Che') Guevara was trapped and killed in cold blood in Bolivia on the CIA's orders. Still, people in different countries, and of different views and political persuasions, continue to publish books and papers about his life.

Another book has been put out in Cuba, the second homeland of Argentine-born Ernesto Guevara. It describes the travels of the future revolutionary, then a medical student, in South America in 1951-1952 which he made "to learn about the continent and about the internal and external enemies, who exploit and rob the people" (p. 7).

The Argentine explorer and scientist Alberto Granado, the author of the book under review, was Guevara's childhood friend and his companion on that journey. His story gives us a perfect idea of Che's remarkable human

traits, such as strong will, perseverance, modesty, honesty and a keen mind.

The two young men took seven months to cross almost the whole of South America, travelling virtually without money or their own transport except an old motorcycle they had at the start of their journey. They went from Cordoba to Buenos Aires and then followed the Atlantic coastline to Bahia Blanca. Hitch-hiking, stowing away on trains and steamships and doing odd jobs to keep themselves in food, they journeyed across Chile, Peru, Colombia and Venezuela.

The journey gave the two friends a glimpse of the exotic realities of the continent and, moreover, became a milestone in their development as individuals.

Many events and incidents described in the book testify to the perseverance and courage of the young Guevara. Once the brakes of the old motorcycle failed on a steep slope and only his catlike reflexes, self-control and cool head saved the friends from plunging down into the precipice. Such incidents corroborate the author's statement that his friend kept his head in the face of any challenge. Granado forcefully illustrates the young Guevara's profound knowledge and remarkable gifts.

What can be said of Guevara's political views at that time? He had not yet arrived at a Marxist-Leninist understanding of social development but, as the author notes, already showed clearly an aptitude for a substantive critical analysis of the capitalist system, had a radical anti-imperialist stand and was perfectly aware of the need for social change in Latin America. Che was shocked by the ruthless oppression of the working people by foreign banks and the local oligarchy in Chinchinales (Argentina) and wrote: "The beautiful landscape and lush nature stand in sharp contrast with the poverty of those who till that land. The noble spirit and dedication of the poor folk are the opposite of the callousness and depravity of the landowners and those at the helm of government" (p. 30).

Many years later, in 1960, Che recounted his travels in an address to Cuban physicians in Havana: "I saw a child who could not be cured for lack of resources, and people degraded by continuous hunger and suffering to such a state that the father just shrugged off the death of his child . . . And I understood that there was a task no less important than becoming a greater explorer or making a tangible contribution to medical science, and that task was to help those people."

Having witnessed the inhuman exploitation of miners in the copper industry and the misery of the Quechua Indians in Peru and farm hands in Bolivia, who were denied every right, the young man, who had not yet seen much in life, realised the need for drastic political and social change, for the abolition of the system of exploitation of man by man and of the poor countries by multinational monopolies. Whenever these problems came up in conversations, Che boldly and openly championed social justice and branded both the arbitrariness of those in power and the slavish obedience of the exploited.

As a medical student, Guevara showed much interest in health care institutions, such as clinics or institutions for lepers. He thought that society should be more humane towards disease-stricken people and

stressed the need to stamp out the avarice which was eroding the health care system (see p. 22).

The author shows that Guevara took interest in many other things as well as in social issues, such as ways of saving landmarks of ancient cultures on the continent. He was well versed in Latin American poetry, which owed its fame to Jose Marti and Pablo Neruda, and knew many verses by heart. Guevara's incisive thoughts on sculpture and painting and his fondness of sports, too, are recalled by the author. Guevara joined a game of rugby or football whenever he had a chance.

The best traits of Che's character, those which won him the affection of so many people, further evolved and firmed up in subsequent years, along with the final formation of his class-based world outlook. "I began to become a revolutionary in Guatemala," he recounted. While in that country in 1953-1954, Guevara enthusiastically supported Jacobo Arbenz's progressive government. A future leader of the Cuban revolution had his political baptism by fire during the US act of aggression, when the fate of democratic change in Guatemala was decided. Che was greatly influenced by a meeting with Fidel Castro in Mexico, by fighting side by side with the Cuban revolutionaries and, finally, by the victory of the 1959 Revolution.

Fidel Castro, usually sparing in his praise of human virtues, considered Guevara to be a man of extraordinary qualities, irresistible simplicity, honesty, friendliness and originality. Amazingly courageous and resolute in action, Che was ready to undertake any mission regardless of the danger. He proved his mettle in more than one fierce and unequal battle in Sierra Maestra, on the march to the western provinces and in the battle of Santa Clara, which precipitated the fall of the Batista dictatorship.

Guevara had a brilliant mind and sound cultural background and could accurately evaluate events and human actions. All that made an imprint on his writings, meaningful and elegant, which were in the best tradition of Latin American literature. Che wrote several papers on the strategy and tactics of guerrilla warfare, a book of memoirs about the battle against the Batista regime, and reports and lectures on Cuba's history and foreign policy and the development of party, state and economic structures in the country. His *Bolivian Diaries*, too, deserve special mention.

"Che's writings and his political and revolutionary thought are of everlasting significance to the revolutionary process on Cuba and in the whole of Latin America," Fidel Castro noted at a meeting dedicated to Ernesto ('Che') Guevara in Havana in October 1967. "And we have no doubts about the value of his ideas to humanity; they are the ideas of a man of thought and action, of most lofty moral principles, unsurpassed humanism and irreproachable standards of conduct."

The book has offered us a portrait of a true Marxist-Leninist, which is very different from that which mercenary bourgeois pen-pushers and some armchair scholars have been holding up for the world to see. His thoughts and deeds were totally free from selfishness, and he had just one crystal-clear goal in life, that of liberating the oppressed peoples and doing away with social exploitation.

'The guerrilla of Latin America' was a standard-bearer also in mastering revolutionary theory, which he creatively applied in practice. He stressed

the need for discipline and responsibility in everything, and uncompromisingly stood for the leading role of the party.

With his boundless energy, Che was the heart and soul of a movement of voluntary free work for society. With great dedication he served the revolution as Cuba's industry minister and director of the National Bank and in other posts of responsibility.

A staunch Communist, Guevara had absolute belief in man and his intellectual and cultural potentialities, and considered the moral factor to be the main lever of building communism. "His virtues made him what we call a model revolutionary," Fidel has said.

Alberto Granado's book gives us an insight into an important period in the life of the remarkable internationalist fighter.

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