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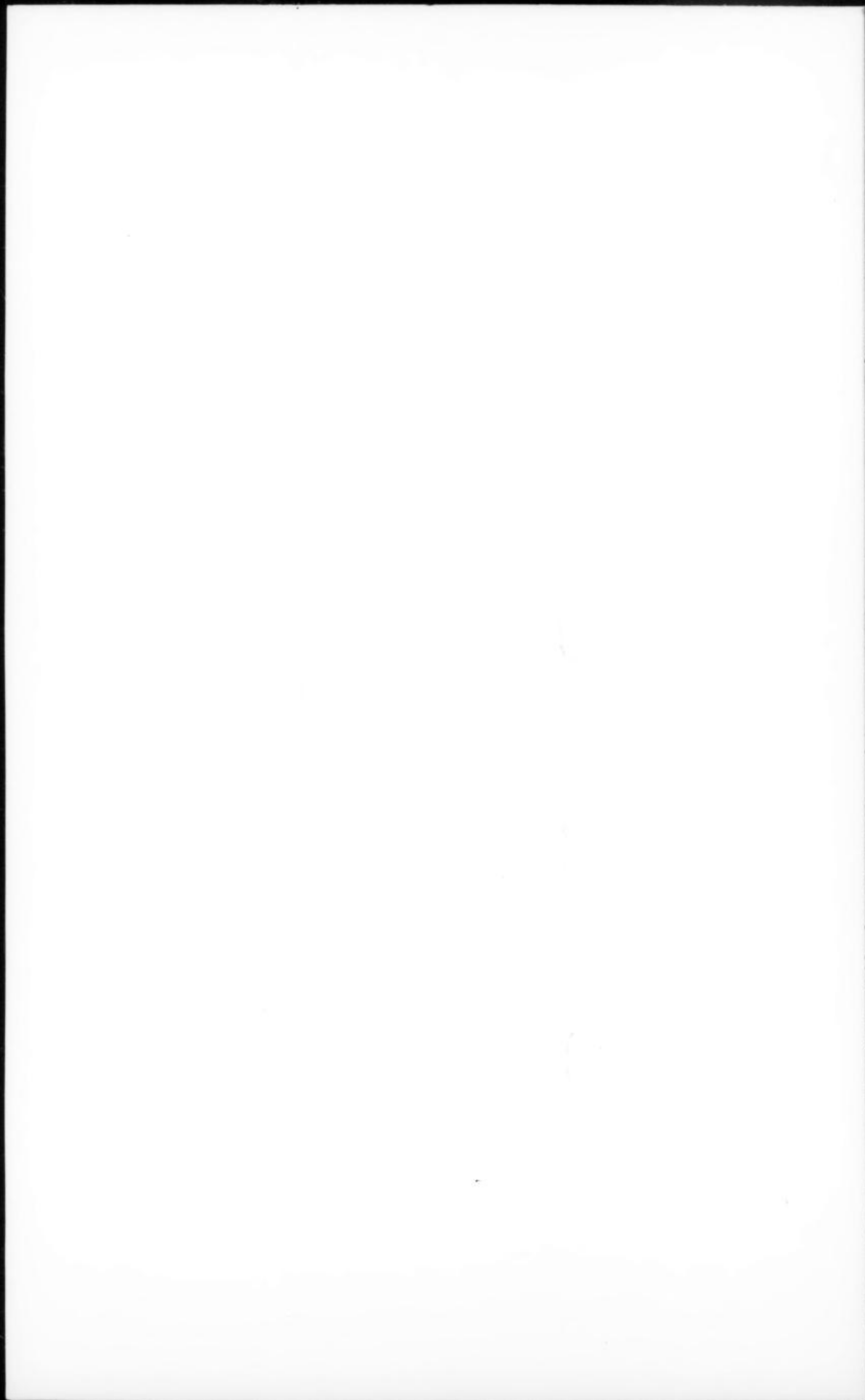
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Socialism Is Not A Gift Workers Receive From History

Wojciech Jaruzelski — First Secretary, Central Committee, Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP)

On May 4, 1988, Comrade Jaruzelski received in Warsaw Alexander Subbotin, *WMR* Editor-in-Chief. Also present were Ernest Kucza, international department chief of the PUWP Central Committee, and Stanislaw Wronski, PUWP representative on *WMR*. During the talk they held, the Polish leader said, among other things, that *WMR* could enhance its role as a forum of creative Marxism and of new political thinking and as a channel for a profound socio-political and economic analysis of today's world. He accorded particular importance to the *WMR* initiatives that helped to promote a free exchange of views and experience within the communist movement and between the Communists and other forces seeking social progress and more durable peace.

Comrade Jaruzelski submitted his answers to questions from representatives of fraternal parties on the *WMR* Editorial Council. The text of the interview follows.

Society, the Party, the State*

WHAT has socialism as a socio-political system brought to the working people of Poland and to Poland as a nation? (Hugo Campos, Paraguayan Communist Party).

I think I will specify the question because it oversimplifies some things. Socialism is not a gift the working people receive from history. It does not grant any 'rewards' but makes it possible to attain all-round development of the individual and of society. It embodies the fundamental principle of social justice, enables millions of people to become involved in the

* All subtitles are by *WMR*.

progress of civilisation and of culture, and guarantees social protection to every conscientious worker.

Without social practice, socialism is merely a philosophical, academic concept, a latent opportunity. Our system eliminates the exploitation of human labour. It asserts the equality of basic opportunity and of access to education, culture and employment. It guarantees equality before the law and in civic affairs, thus opening opportunities for social advancement of the masses. I would describe this as the universal aspect of socialist gains.

Poland's road to socialism has been marked by a number of major distinctive features rooted in the difficult history of our nation. This burden of the past and the mistakes made in socialist construction explain why the entire potential of our system has not been tapped fully.

However, I understand the overall thrust of your question. Citing the usual statistical comparisons would be the easiest way of answering it, but such comparisons cannot give us the full picture. Nevertheless, one can list three major gains our nation has made over the years of popular government.

First, there are the firm guarantees of our sovereignty and the inviolability of our borders. Never before in its history has Poland enjoyed such a favourable system of external relations. I refer primarily to our fraternal alliance with the Soviet Union and with all other countries of the socialist community.

Second, only a socialist Poland could heal the terrible wounds of the war so quickly, rehabilitate the war-ravaged country, integrate into the national economy the western and northern areas we recovered, organise large-scale migratory processes and comprehensively improve the social and material conditions of the working people.

Third, the dynamics of socialist construction, of industrialisation, urbanisation and the cultural revolution has enabled our people to throw off the debilitating yoke of socio-economic and cultural underdevelopment.

And, although progress and underdevelopment are historically changing concepts, although today we again have to seek answers to the contemporary demands of social development, the unquestionable accomplishments of the past years create a good basis for meeting this challenge effectively.

Still, socialism is not history's 'insurance policy'. The opportunities it creates can either be used fully or — as one can, specifically, see from our record — their implementation can be delayed and some of them can even be lost.

We in Poland could have scored much greater results had it not been for mistakes in economic policy and deviations from Leninist principles. These mistakes and deviations produced periodic crises and failures. This explains why the PUWP now attached overriding significance to an economic reform and a transformation of the political system (to enhance democracy and self-government) that would help make the fullest possible use of the opportunities created by socialism so as to accelerate economic development, enhance social justice and create better conditions for the development of all individuals and of all society.

There have been at least three major crises in the history of the PUWP, and they occurred almost every decade. They led to economic recessions, to the collapse of certain political institutions, to the loss of confidence in those leaders who were in charge of the party during these crises, and to widespread disillusionment with the values proclaimed and with the then socio-economic policies. Given all this, do you believe that there was some underlying cause common to all these crises? Do you believe that the PUWP has drawn proper conclusions from the lessons of the past? (Bert Ramelson, Communist Party of Great Britain).

At the Ninth (Emergency) Congress of the PUWP in July 1981 we declared that a profound examination in good faith of the causes and consequences of all crises and of the country's dramatic post-war history was essential for people to have confidence in the party. This is particularly true of the more unfortunate developments — in Poznan in June 1956, on the coast in December 1970, and the events that led to workers' protest in the summer of 1980.

The Congress instructed the Central Committee to establish a special commission to inquire into all the mechanics, circumstances, facts and decisions that prompted these events. The commission started its work back in 1981.

The report on the results was submitted to the 13th Plenary Meeting of the PUWP Central Committee in May 1983. It was subsequently published. This paper identifies the main factors behind the developments in question, both objective factors and the subjective actions of certain individuals, institutions and organisations, especially our party. An analysis of the social crises in the history of People's Poland, and of the distinctive features of each one of them, the paper notes, reflects the existence of a common mechanism generating tensions, conflicts and social protest. Our history confirms that the danger of a social crisis arises and mounts when universal principles are violated, when specific historical, economic, and political conditions of socialist construction are ignored, and particularly when its popularly approved objectives are not attained.

Speaking at the Tenth Congress of the PUWP, Comrade Gorbachov noted that although the crisis of the 1980s was rooted in Polish realities, it also reflected the more general problems and contradictions of the entire socialist community. It follows that the social tensions in Poland had broader causes too.

At the same time, I would like to emphasise that each time such events occurred, the imperialist forces saw them as a chance to be exploited. Imperialism tried to use them in its global anti-communist strategy, and it did not stop at various types of interference in our internal affairs. This was typified by the blatant and unlawful sanctions imposed on Poland in 1982 — although discriminatory financial and economic moves are taken against us to this day. Besides, the anti-Polish propaganda aggression is continuing, and various anti-communist groups in Poland are openly financed from the US federal budget.

Our party seeks to make the necessary conclusions from this difficult

experience whose painful consequences are still being felt. We have not drawn a 'curtain of silence' over Poland's modern history. We keep returning to an analysis of the phenomena and developments that created a dangerous backlog of contradictions which were not resolved in time.

Another reason we are doing that is to keep adjusting and correcting our activities. Never before have we had such an 'early warning system'. This system is particularly necessary in Poland given its difficult history and the complicated social background against which we are building socialism.

The PUWP regards the development of democracy — large-scale involvement of the working people in running the country and its economy — as essential for the strengthening of socialist gains. This makes it possible to devise programmes and ways of their implementation with due regard for the interests of the Polish working class and all working people, in line with their understanding of socialist moral values and objectives.

As the leader of the working class, the party must always heed the voice of the masses. Considering the various contradictions in the interests of different groups, it is to accord priority primarily to the national interest. That is a difficult task, much more difficult than it may have appeared in the past: witness the recent unrest and various disturbances at some of our industrial enterprises and in some sections of our society.

During the 1970s the PUWP spoke only about its accomplishments and was silent on the difficulties and mistakes which arose in the course of socialist construction. This and the crisis developments of the early 1980s weakened the party's ties with the working class, the peasants and the intellectuals. What has been done to win back the lost confidence? (Unni Krishnan, Communist Party of India; Kadhim Habib, Communist Party of Iraq; Santiago Alvarez, Communist Party of Spain; Georg Kwiatowski, German Communist Party).

By glossing over negative realities and shunning criticism and self-criticism, the so-called propaganda of achievements which was current in the 1970s undermined society's confidence in the party and in its declarations and disrupted the ties existing between the political leadership and the working people.

Wishful thinking and grave violations of the Leninist principles underlying the party's activities sapped its inner ideological strength and eroded its ability to exercise political leadership and effectively influence social consciousness. This is how we assess our record today — although naturally, the past years were not all mistakes or defeats.

That is very important for grasping the genesis of the social conflicts which erupted in Poland. It was not the crisis of the early 1980s that weakened the ties existing between the people's power and society. These ties had lost their strength much earlier. It was a gradual process.

Resorting to substantive and sometimes painful self-criticism, the party, with complete honesty, drew the attention of the working class and all working people to the objective and subjective causes of our shortcomings. Openness in the discussion of various issues is now a well-established element of our political practice. We have clearly outlined the role of the

Marxist-Leninist party — that of leadership in the functioning of the state, that of being in the vanguard of society, and that of serving the working class and all working people.

A programme of action geared to the immediate and long-term interests of the working class and all working people is very important for restoring public trust. Our party drew up such a programme at its Tenth Congress. Of decisive importance, however, are the practice and the facts bearing out the validity and feasibility of this programme. This is what the party must keep fighting for tirelessly.

We do not believe that we have a monopoly on the truth in every specific case. And so, while mapping out the prospects of socialist development, we are constantly adding to and adjusting our earlier decisions, paying attention to new phenomena and new requirements, responding to the sentiments of the masses, and analysing the contradictions that arise. The process of building socialism is a living and distinctive movement of the masses which cannot be planned in every detail. This kind of 'planned happiness' often leads to disaster.

The democratic and open style of the party's work is another important factor. Far-reaching change has occurred in the party's inner activities over the past few years. While stimulating the advancement of socialist democracy, the party must itself be a model of democratic practices and combine free discussion and free election of leaders with discipline and consistency in the implementation of the decisions adopted.

We are providing more information about the operation of all party bodies, beginning with the Political Bureau. Specifically, we publish communiques and extensive reports about its meetings, as well as detailed minutes of the Central Committee's plenary meetings. This means that the working people and the nation as a whole can always discuss the decisions and the activities of the party. Although much has been accomplished in this sphere, a great deal still remains to be done.

The functioning of every grassroots organisation and the conduct of every party member are very important for strengthening the party's positions: that is how the working people daily monitor and judge the ideas and the programmes we proclaim. That is why we attach special importance to these matters in the activities of all elements of the party and particularly in personnel policy which will be the subject of the next plenary meeting of the Central Committee.

In your interview with the Italian newspaper *La Repubblica* last year you stressed that Poland's Advisory Council of prominent figures adhering to different views and positions would not be 'just for show'. How effectively is the Council discharging its role and what function is it performing in the development of democracy? (Jose Maria Lanao, Communist Party of Argentina).

The establishment of the Advisory Council under the chairman of the State Council and the recent formation of similar bodies — the so-called civic assemblies — at *voivod* level testifies to our abiding desire to enhance democracy and to broaden the scope of the national consensus and of the

national dialogue which takes into account the great diversity of views and positions existing in Polish society.

Serving on the Advisory Council are people of considerable social and academic prestige, often differing from Marxists in their political convictions and philosophy. Non-party members account for 70 per cent of the total composition of the council, many of them with close ties to the Roman Catholic Church and some representing other denominations too. The personal and political biographies of the council members differ as much and are as complicated as have been the destinies of Poles in the twentieth century.

However, the common thing about all council members is that they want to put their knowledge and expertise at the service of the nation. For example, the council includes those members of Solidarity and other political opposition groups who, respecting the Constitution of the Polish People's Republic and guided by their patriotism, are now ready to work for the good of all society.

The council has not replaced popular government. Nor does it compete with the Sejm, the people's councils or the Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth. Under Poland's distinctive circumstances, it is in fact a means of reaching a national consensus. The discussions held within it facilitate political decision-making on some issues.

We discuss any subject openly and critically, without concealing even substantive differences, concerns or misgivings. Reports on these debates are published in full. This is an important element of our concept of democratising the social fabric.

Foreign Policy. The Party's International Activities

Poland is well-known as the sponsor of many initiatives concerning European security and disarmament. You have upheld this tradition by advancing your own initiative which has been christened the Jaruzelski Plan. What is to be the role of this plan in the overall policy the socialist countries are pursuing to prevent nuclear catastrophe? (Hugo Campos, Georg Kwiatowski).

You are quite right to point out that from the first days of its rebirth after World War II, Poland has attached great importance to strengthening security and peace on our continent — suffice it to recall the Rapacki and the Gomulka plans. Had they not been rejected, we would have much stronger European security today.

The age we live in places us under a particular obligation to think in a new, creative way and to act constructively. The historic accord signed in Washington, the Moscow summit and the peace offensive of the Soviet Union give the human race a chance and bring durable peace and security closer.

Our proposal on reducing armaments and strengthening confidence in Central Europe takes into consideration the scope and the thrust of the dialogue on disarmament currently under way in Europe. We want it to advance, to gain in depth and, above all, to yield tangible results. The

Polish plan is but an element of the socialist countries' numerous peace-oriented proposals.

I will not dwell on the provisions of our plan here.¹ I would merely like to stress that it is integral, flexible and open. We are ready to specify it further and to amend it if our partners agree to a more detailed debate.

I think our plan should be considered not only in purely military terms — although obviously, the military aspect is particularly important. We want the European continent to witness a full-fledged effort to overcome the hold-overs of the Cold War, confrontation and tensions.

There are no obstacles to Europe becoming a region of reliable security and of equitable coexistence of countries with different social systems — as it was envisaged in the Final Act of the European Security and Cooperation Conference. We are aware of vast and as yet little-used opportunities for increased cooperation in the economic, cultural and environmental spheres. I am not painting a utopian picture of a 'paradise on Earth' because the contradictions and the class conflicts will not disappear with the conclusion of a single agreement. I am referring to a feasible prospect of a 'Europe serving people'. You've got to start somewhere. That is what our plan provides for.

What is the PUWP view of the current state of the international communist movement? How do you assess the impact of Soviet perestroika on it? What do you think about the possibility of convening a new conference of the fraternal parties? (Randolfo Banegas, Communist Party of Honduras).

Over the decades of its history, the international communist movement has grown into an influential ideological and political force and presented a viable alternative to capitalist ideology. It has emerged as the most dynamic factor of social progress.

The scientific and technological revolution, the changes in the class structure of society and the need to meet the challenges civilisation is facing and to resolve social dilemmas make it incumbent on the Communists to give the right answers in their theory, in their programmes. That is essential for the ability of the Left (in the broad sense of the term) to discharge its historical mission.

There is no doubt that mistakes and deformations occurring in the course of socialist construction play into the hands of the anti-communist forces in their struggle against the revolutionary movement. In the eyes of many people, these mistakes detract from the viability of the socialist alternative.

It is therefore hard to overestimate the role played by the revolutionary transformations under way in the USSR. In all its aspects — social, political, economic, cultural and moral — the great programme of perestroika generates widespread interest, raises the international prestige of socialism and improves the positions of the international communist movement as a whole. We fully support this process which is very close to us if only because it coincides, in terms of its content, with the socialist renewal programme which is being implemented in Poland under the leadership of the PUWP.

Simultaneously, the militant philosophy of peace the Soviet Communists formulated at their 27th Congress favours the blending of class-based interests and universal aspirations and imparts a radically new dimension to the traditional unity of the socialist cause and peace.

Feasible opportunities are emerging for translating the ideals of socialism into reality more fully. That is the common objective of all our fraternal parties. It can best be defined as the shaping of a society with a highly efficient economy, a society guided by the principles of socialist democracy, a society that respects personal liberty and promotes lofty humanitarian and cultural values.

Communist parties operate within their own nations, but our movement is also a powerful international force. Today, internationalism means class solidarity and concerted action of communist parties on the basis of equality, independence and mutual respect.

Forms of international organisation that were useful in the past — such as the Comintern, the Information Bureau or even the 'old style' international conferences convened to work out common documents — are no longer tenable.

We advocate a diversity of forms in the exchange of views and experience. This diversity enriches the theory of scientific socialism and the practice of revolutionary struggle. Like most parties of our movement, we do not believe that unity should be synonymous with monolithic views on every issue. To us, the principle of 'unity in diversity' underlies the strength of the communist movement and the universal character of Marxism-Leninism.

In today's world, which is far from simple and which faces the need to decide the issue of its very survival, frank dialogue and cooperation of all Left, progressive forces is an imperative. This is why we believe that it was very useful to hold the Moscow meeting of 178 parties, mass movements and organisations as the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution was being celebrated. The meeting proved that a constructive exchange of views was possible even between the ideologically and politically different forces of a Left spectrum interpreted in broad terms.

It appears to be all the more possible and advisable for the communist and workers' parties to be able, in the years to come, to share their experience and to jointly work out ways of tackling the key problems of today's world.

Issues of Economic Development

Could you outline the main directions and principles of the economic reform currently being effected in Poland? (Georg Kwiatowski). How comparable are they to Soviet perestroika? What problems arise in the course of the reform? Is it likely to produce new social conflicts and if so, how does the PUWP plan to resolve them? (Unni Krishnan, Hugo Campos).

I don't think I should present a detailed explanation of the principles of the reform which was launched in 1982. In keeping with the decisions of the Tenth Congress of the PUWP, we are entering a fundamentally new phase

of the reform. At its Fifth and Sixth Plenary Meetings, our Central Committee adopted an integral programme for this second stage. This programme takes into consideration the views of the public which it expressed democratically during the national referendum of November 1987.

In the most general terms, the change currently under way is essentially aimed at removing all obstacles to socialist enterprise. We attach particular significance to the operation of the principal, objective economic laws in the course of the nation's economic development. This means the elimination of the various obstacles which used to restrict or deform the impact of such objective laws on the shaping of economic policy, on the economic conduct of our people and on their attitude to labour.

It follows that both in our thinking and in our work we are restoring the categories of value, price and profit to their rightful place, for they represent an objective form the relevant laws take in every type of commodity-money economy. Just like the metre, the centigrade scale or the logarithm are not connected with this or that social system and are in fact units of measurement. The crux of the matter is which class, which socio-economic system the economic levers serve.

By introducing a new economic mechanism, we want to create meaningful conditions for our socialist economy's increased effectiveness and accelerated development. This mechanism will be based, on the one hand, on central planning interpreted above all as the mapping out of strategic goals and, on the other, on the autonomy of our enterprises, on their initiative and ability to meet society's current and future requirements. The state will influence the course of economic processes and ensure compliance with the principle of social justice not so much through administrative intervention as through economic regulation.

Among other things, our record has prompted the conclusion that far-reaching change in the economic system can only bear fruit if such change is integral. This is precisely the direction in which we seek to channel the transformations that are now occurring in Poland. Similar conclusions are being reached by other fraternal parties in socialist countries irrespective of which form of economic organisation they see as geared to their national conditions. It is therefore particularly necessary and useful for the fraternal parties to exchange experience.

However, the changes in the economic mechanism are only one of the underpinnings of the new edifice we are building. The other relates to the human factor — to involvement, commitment, initiative and innovation. In other words, we are to promote socialist self-governance at the factory level, in cities and regions and nationwide. This stand was put forward very convincingly in the Political Bureau report and the decision of the PUWP Central Committee adopted at its Sixth Plenary Meeting.

The direction and goals of our quest are close to and sometimes identical with the ideas articulated at the 27th Congress of the CPSU. Naturally, the decisions do differ due to the objective differences between Poland and the USSR — differences connected with the size of our countries, the scale and the structure of our economies, the development levels and the historically distinctive aspects of the social fabric.

Of course, the reforms we are effecting do give rise to misgivings and difficulties. We are dealing with an extremely involved process: any change that is essentially revolutionary produces an intricate struggle between the old and the new, with the trails not yet blazed and with no clear vision of all possible turns or factors.

The principal subjective obstacle to the implementation of our reform is connected not so much with a conscious opposition as with the strength of old habits and ways, with the fear of the new and the unknown. I will be frank and add that some fear for their personal or group positions and interests.

As the vanguard and motive force of the drive to overcome inertia and particularism, our party is to tackle an extremely difficult task. On the one hand, we must support all that helps improve efficiency. On the other, we must see to it that the socialist essence of our sweeping and far-reaching reforms is not eroded in the course of their implementation.

The PUWP can cope with this task, but we cannot expect things to happen as if by magic. We are fighting against many difficulties. There is still a lot that impedes our progress. But Communists are people who refuse to throw in the towel in their struggle for a better future.

Could you compare the economic assistance Poland receives from the socialist countries, primarily via the CMEA channels, with the aid from capitalist nations? What do you think should be done to repay Poland's considerable foreign debt? (Hugo Campos, Unni Krishnan).

Poland's excessive foreign debt is a serious problem of our economy. It is rooted above all in the erroneous and ill-considered philosophy of economic development adopted in the 1970s — soliciting credits to finance investment and consumption without taking due care of efficiency, a restructuring of the economy and of orienting it on exports.

Besides, the external causes of our sizable foreign debt include:

- the rapid increase of interest rates in the latter half of the 1970s and their subsequent high and sometimes usurious level;
- the change on world markets which led to a drop in the prices of many of our export goods;
- the sharp curtailment of several countries' economic ties with Poland after 1981.

The sanctions imposed by the United States and other leading NATO countries were a painful blow to us. Economic agreements were abrogated. This aggravated abruptly our debt servicing problems and caused the Polish economy to lose some \$15 billion.

Although the sanctions have been formally lifted, various forms of discrimination still persist. For example, to this day we are forced to pay in cash for 95 per cent of our imports from Western countries — a phenomenon without precedent in international trade.

Despite all these difficulties, Poland has achieved a favourable balance of trade with the West since 1982. We have begun to meet our financial commitments — although so far, this has made it possible merely to slow down the growth of the debt.

We are aware that the solution to the debt problem depends mostly on our own efforts. We should reorient a bigger part of our economy towards exports. But that in itself is not enough either. More vigorous cooperation of our Western creditors is also important. The current arrangements established by the creditor nations for solving the problem are obviously at odds with the present position of both Poland and other debtor countries. Negotiations are in progress on this issue with, among other agencies, the International Monetary Fund and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Our cooperation with the socialist countries has been and remains the key factor limiting the adverse effects of Western moves. These years of trial provided us with first-hand knowledge of the CMEA's importance. Cooperation within its framework guarantees stability and makes long-term planning possible, so it was of considerable help to our country in overcoming its grave crisis.

The internationalist assistance we received from the Soviet Union was particularly useful. Several other socialist countries also showed goodwill and a desire to help. The consolidation of economic, scientific and technological ties within the socialist world, a process that has recently been gaining ground, creates more favourable external conditions for Poland's gradual transition to the path of balanced development.

Poland's system of land tenure appears to be one of the causes of your economic difficulties. How does the PUWP intend to improve the situation today and to ensure long-term development of agriculture with due regard for the distinctive Polish conditions? (Gancho Ganey, Bulgarian Communist Party; Zenon Zorzovilis, Communist Party of Greece; Satiadjaya Sudiman, Communist Party of Indonesia; William Somerset, Communist Party of Ireland). Are you planning any structural changes? (Domingos Lopez, Portuguese Communist Party).

A combination of many reasons underlies the situation in which most of the land is in the hands of individual peasant holders.

The reasons are primarily historical. Semi-feudal hold-overs were strong in the rural areas of pre-war Poland. In one of its first moves, the popular government promulgated a decree on a radical reform which satisfied the peasants' age-old 'hunger for land'.

Having been granted land by the popular government, the peasants defended this government, and it was in their class interest to support it vigorously. Tangible opportunities emerged for establishing a broad alliance of workers and peasants. That was of fundamental importance for Poland's socialist development.

State-run and cooperative forms of farming gradually took shape, and today these farms cultivate 25 per cent of the land, most of them helping to propagate advances in agronomy.

Irrespective of its different forms of ownership, Polish agriculture is increasingly developing into an integral economic whole. Specifically, single-holder farms are closely interconnected with the socialist economy.

Rural cooperatives offer various services and play an important role too. Rural self-government also displays socialist features.

We are, of course, aware of the flaws inherent in the present situation, including the fragmented state of cultivated land and the low standard of agronomy on some of our farms. But we are also aware that most of our farmers are industrious and thrifty and that medium-sized farms are highly efficient.

The Party Programme adopted at the Tenth Congress stresses that consolidation of land tenure in Poland is an objective, stable and long-term trend. Given the population, social and cultural dynamics of life in rural areas and the growing opportunities for the use of farming machinery, the importance of collective forms of production is sure to grow.

This process will take time. It should be based on a completely free choice of the forms of operation. Therefore, it is not only an economic but also a social and cultural process. We do not plan to 'swim with the current', but swimming 'in a straight line' often ended up in a dangerous slough too.

The Trade Union Movement

The Polish trade union movement encountered a crisis in the early 1980s, and this was followed by a many-sided discussion about the trade unions. How do you see their tasks and their role in socialist Poland? (Bruno Furch, Communist Party of Austria; Georg Kwiatowski).

Poland's revived trade union movement currently affiliates more than seven million members, that is, much more than half the total of those employed in the public sector of the economy.

The present structure of the movement was formed from the ground up, beginning with factory unions which, overwhelmingly, became part of 133 industrial federations. Several thousand unions operate independently. Most of the federations established an All-Polish Trade Union Covenant.

The Polish trade union movement is therefore essentially pluralistic — witness its differentiated structure and the fact that it affiliates people who differ in their social background, organisational affiliation and philosophy. However, they are united by a common concern for the interests of the working people and for the future of the nation.

Our party shares the Polish trade unions' view that a single trade union should operate at a particular enterprise. We recognise the value of competition in economic production and on the market. At the same time, our recent experience urges us to use caution, showing what 'free competition' of trade unions at a single factory can lead to. Nor can we accept the model of those countries where the trade union movement is fragmented.

We are acting on Lenin's opinion that the trade unions not only offer a valuable form of the working people's involvement in managing public property but also are an important factor of workers' control and struggle against distortions in the activities of government and economic management bodies.

The Law on the Trade Unions which was approved by the Sejm in 1982 creates legal opportunities for the exercise of all pertinent functions by the trade union movement and defines the principles and the procedure for negotiating industrial disputes between the unions and the management, including the right to call a strike if negotiation and arbitration fail to produce results.

Frankly, it is not easy for the government to cooperate with the new trade unions. Certain moves taken within the mainstream of economic reform have affected the living standards and conditions of some working people. For this reason the trade unions express their own views and sometimes advance alternative proposals. Partnership in discussion makes it possible to devise solutions that dovetail the position of the government with the vital and long-term interests of various sections of the working class and other working people. As a rule, this process is by no means smooth, and it often leads to heated debate.

Through its members in the trade union movement, our party supports those efforts that enhance its role among the working class, promote the principles of social justice and raise the material well-being of the people.

We are gratified that the Polish working class movement has taken its rightful place as the genuine representative of our working people in the international community of trade unions.

What degree of influence do those who were active in Solidarity still retain in the working class and in other sections of the population?
(Hugo Campos, Georg Kwiatowski).

I have noted repeatedly that Solidarity, which arose on the crest of workers' protest in 1980, was not a homogeneous movement. In fact, it was fraught from the outset with profound inner contradictions.

On the one hand, the several million people who joined Solidarity hoped that this would be a genuine trade union defending their interests and rights. This was the current whose slogan was, 'Yes to Socialism, No to Its Distortions'. It expressed the workers' class-based commitment to a fuller and more consistent realisation of socialist ideas, above all of the principles of democracy and social justice.

On the other hand and for various reasons, however (mostly due to the weakness of our party), this trade union association came to be led by political groups which, manipulating the sentiments of workers and resorting to demagoguery, sought to use Solidarity not to perfect socialism but in fact to dismantle it.

Within weeks of its establishment, Solidarity essentially ceased to be a trade union. Gradually, and contrary to the intentions of most of its members, it evolved into a political movement which was clearly anti-socialist and sometimes outright counter-revolutionary.

Growing anarchy and economic dislocation pushed Poland to the brink of a catastrophe which could produce unforeseeable consequences. Emergency measures were an imperative which alone could stop the slide into disaster.

The leaders of the defunct Solidarity proved unable to arrive at realistic,

constructive conclusions. Sterile nihilism was all they could offer. As our people faced a veritable ordeal, the so-called friends of the people failed to back the interests of Poland and of its working class. They welcomed the anti-Polish economic sanctions introduced by the US administration and by the governments of other leading Western countries, called for slowdowns and civic boycotts and followed the cynical principle of 'the worse, the better' — although the turn for the worse hit the people, the workers in general.

A clear majority of former Solidarity members in fact dissociated itself fully from these leaders: witness the active participation of millions of them in the revived trade unions, in the Patriotic Movement for National Rebirth, in workers' self-management, in territorial self-government and in the activities of our party and its bodies up to and including the Central Committee.

A small group of professional anti-communists from among the ex-Solidarity leaders uses the propaganda, political and financial support provided by the Western big bourgeoisie and various intelligence agencies, plays demagogically on Poland's difficulties and still tries to act as a self-styled champion of the interests of the Polish working people. But this anti-communist group can no longer muster broad support. Their political isolation is gradually increasing in Polish society

The Church and the State

Historically, religion and the Church have played an enormously prominent part in the affairs of Polish society. As far as we know, the Church now has at its disposal a powerful and ramified ideological network (15,000 churches, 21,000 priests and 44,000 monks and nuns) which is in some ways superior to that of the PUWP (whose entire apparatus comprises only 11,000 functionaries). Besides, judging by Western media reports, at least part of the Polish clergy seeks to manipulate the masses of believers into a confrontation with socialism. Is this impression correct and if so, how does the PUWP resist it ideologically? Can the party combine the tackling of this issue with efforts to accomplish an equally important task — that of rallying the entire nation together in order to completely eliminate the aftermath of the crisis? Finally, what relations do you think should exist between the state and the Church under socialism? (Bruno Furch; Rafic Samhoun, Communist Party of Lebanon; Unni Krishnan; Kadhim Habib; Santiago Alvarez).

The Roman Catholic Church has featured prominently in the history of our nation and our state for many centuries. Under socialism, too, the Catholic faith exerts a strong influence on Poland's spiritual life. This is a long-term prospect. The forecasts that advances in science and technology would quickly and almost automatically make secular mentality dominant everywhere have not been borne out. The Roman Catholic Church has a strong base, and its not inconsiderable influence on the views and sentiments of believers is not so much political as philosophical and

emotional. In recent years the potential of the Church has increased perceptibly since a Pole was elected as the Roman pontiff.

The history of the Roman Catholic Church in Poland has certain implications for the present time. Suffice it to recall that during the periods of the country's partition, and especially during World War II and the Nazi occupation, the Church assumed a patriotic stance, and thousands of priests fell victim to Nazi crimes. This strengthened the moral authority of the Church in our society.

It was in Poland, one should note, that the Roman Catholic Church first encountered socialism, an ideology alien to it, on such a great scale. As a result of revolutionary transformations it was separated from the state and deprived of its earlier privileges, specifically, of its landed estates. It lost its constitutional status of the 'dominant religion'. This new situation often gave rise to tensions in church-state relations, and that was perfectly natural. Essentially a conservative institution, the Church is very slow to adapt to any change. Besides, we also had our share of imprudent moves and oversimplified attitudes. Nevertheless, as early as 1950 the first agreement was signed between our socialist state and the Catholic Church. Other accords followed.

However, not all hopes for normalisation came true. The complexity of the problems and the differences proved to be too great and the experience of fostering mutual relations, too small.

One should also remember that today, the Catholic Church is not monolithic. Its worldwide organisation reflects (in its own way) the principal contradictions of today's world. On the one hand there is liberation theology which is close to the struggle of the oppressed; on the other, there are the reactionary factions which keep trying to use the religious sentiments of believers to combat socialism and all progress in general.

We cannot and will not accept this second aspect, and we will take the necessary steps depending on the situation.

The fact, however, remains that believers and non-believers, the Church and socialism are destined to coexist for a long time to come. This means that the people's state and the Church must cooperate constructively, particularly on matters of public morals and for the supreme good of the nation.

Over the 40-odd years of our recent history, both sides have not only learned much about each other but also acquired a considerable store of experience in tackling complex problems. Ideological and philosophical contradictions will remain. But they must not escalate into a political conflict between the state and the Church. Particularly, they must not produce political antagonisms between believers and non-believers.

Some comrades from countries where the Catholics are a minority and the Church lacks such a patriotic tradition and does not enjoy such social prestige may consider our attitude to the Church to be wrong and not principled enough. We understand such doubts. However, in Poland with its overwhelmingly Catholic population, this attitude of the party towards the Church reflects the kind of realistic policy Lenin urged when he warned against the 'infantile disorder' of leftism.

This essence of our party vis-à-vis religion will remain unchanged.

To follow up on the previous question, what steps are the PUWP taking to educate the younger generation politically, atheistically and in the spirit of socialist ideas? (Zenon Zorzovilis, Georg Kwiatowski).

Atheism interpreted as a struggle against religion is not mentioned either in the Party Programme or in the Party Rules adopted at the Tenth Congress. At the same time, the propagation of a scientific, materialistic world-view is a major and topical task indeed.

Ideological and political education of the younger generation is of special importance to the PUWP. The crisis we have experienced has adversely affected the thinking and the views of our young people. But any idea, any political movement secures its rightful place in history only if it can secure a continuity of generations.

We are aware of the current shortcomings in our ideological work among youth. Some young people have obviously adopted a wait-and-see policy of passivity. We seek to establish closer contacts with the younger generation and to broaden the scope of our philosophical quest and of our discussions. Our aim is to highlight the humanitarian, ethical values of Marxist-Leninist philosophy, its commitment to genuine emancipation, its opportunities for gaining new knowledge, its intellectually rational and open nature.

The values and ideals of socialism are close to our youth, although young people do not always grasp them fully. Critical sentiments usually concern the practical implementation of socialist principles. In most cases, these views have nothing to do with one's attitude to religion or to the Church.

We do not want to undertake anything without our youth or to decide anything for it. We are pinning our hopes on all particularly valuable qualities of young people — their intellectual receptivity, commitment to innovation, critical approach, and rejection of double standards and outdated things. We expect youth organisations to be more independent, active and undogmatic. Expressing the interests and aspirations of their generation — which, of course, differ from those of the pioneers of People's Poland — these organisations should play a bigger role in the shaping of a truly conscious and rational youth philosophy.

But the most important thing is for day-to-day developments to confirm the validity of our ideas and to enhance the appeal of socialism. There must be no discrepancies between word and deed, between programme and practice. Young people should regard themselves as active builders of the present and the future whose contribution is taken seriously. Steering ideological education in this direction is an important duty of the party.

Does the PUWP policy towards Catholic members of the party differ from that pursued before the crisis of 1980? (Jose Lava. Philippine Communist Party).

The differentiation of our society in terms of different world-views is also reflected in the ranks of our party. We seek to preserve its class-based character as representing the interests of workers and farmers, and so we

do not stipulate that those who join the party be atheists. If believers join the party, this proves that they want to be active in politics, support our programme and do not see the socialist system as an enemy of religion.

The PUWP is above all an organisation pursuing socio-political goals. It openly supports a scientific world-view and materialistic humanism whose fundamentals it propagates primarily within its own ranks.

However, it takes a lot of time and effort for all party members to become well-grounded in this philosophy, and we are working to attain this objective.

At the same time, religious feelings are incompatible with membership in the PUWP if they are aimed against party unity or border on political clericalism. This was and remains the position of our party both before and after the 1980 crisis.

Pages From My Life

Could you tell us about your military career? How did you become an officer of the Polish army units formed in the USSR during World War II (Zenon Zorzovilis).

I have recalled my young years in many interviews and articles, and I don't think I should go over it all here once again. Suffice it to repeat that after Nazi Germany attacked Poland, I found myself in Lithuania at first and then, together with my parents and my sister, I was taken to the Altai Region. There I worked as a forestry labourer — a loader and lumberjack.

When in May 1943 the decision to form a Polish Army in the USSR was announced, I volunteered and was sent to a Polish officers' school in Ryazan. After graduation in the autumn of 1943 I became a platoon commander in the 5th Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division, then commander of a cavalry reconnaissance unit and finally, regimental chief of reconnaissance.

I crossed the Polish border in July 1944, and after that we were fighting all the way — the Vistula, Warsaw, the Baltic Line, the crossing of the Oder, the Battle of Berlin and finally, the Elbe.

As I understand, your question refers only to the beginning of my military career. I might only add that the path that led me to join the Polish Army which was formed in the USSR was typical of tens of thousands of Poles my age whom the vagaries of war washed onto Soviet soil. Our circumstances differed during those first harsh years, but I think we all developed a profound respect and admiration for the great Soviet people.

What led you to join a communist party? What problems did you encounter in the course of your inner political development? (Georg Kwiatowski).

Unlike the road that led me to join the army, the one I traversed before joining the communist movement was not that obvious.

The long-standing patriotic tradition of our family which went back several generations (including many fighters for Polish independence) was not marked by social radicalism. The secondary school I went to before the

war was run by priests and did not promote progressive ideas either.

The war years were not the best time for studying revolutionary theory. Although I encountered cases of social injustice since I was a child, only my contact with forms of social organisation completely novel to me and a young man's natural curiosity were factors that stimulated my quest in their own right. My political maturity was brought closer by what I learned about events in Poland and in other overrun countries and then by the aftermath of Nazi crimes I saw for myself.

Gradually I arrived at an understanding of two things which I regard as fundamental to this day. First, despite its difficult birth and its grave mistakes, socialism not only gives one the only hope for victory over reaction and fascism but also, and primarily, it is the social system of the future. Second, Marxism-Leninism is the best, the most rational intellectual means of understanding the world properly and guiding its purposeful transformation for the better.

But it took time for me to reach full political maturity. Throughout my wartime military service I remained a non-communist army officer.

The final turn which prompted me to become a party member occurred during the first two post-war years. Generally, little is known outside Poland about those developments. At that time we were fighting to defend popular government: it was a kind of civil war. I was active in it, and I saw and understood so much that in 1947 I submitted my application for membership in the Polish Workers' Party.

That about sums it up. I have been serving the party to the best of my ability for more than 40 years now.

In Conclusion, About *World Marxist Review*

How do you assess the role of *World Marxist Review* and what wishes would you like to convey to it? (Alexander Subbotin, Communist Party of the Soviet Union).

World Marxist Review is a valuable collective forum in which communist and workers' parties exchange their views and experience. The journal is an instrument of their cooperation. It also conducts a dialogue of partnership with the world's other progressive, democratic and liberation forces.

Today, these functions of the journal assume priority. In searching for new ways and means of influencing its readers and maintaining close ties with reality and with the aspirations of working people in different countries, *World Marxist Review* is also aware of its international obligations. This combination is essential for your journal.

The challenge and the supreme value of our age — the defence of peace through balanced disarmament, universal security and progress — calls on the journal to adopt a new way of thinking and on its team, to change the concept of its work (and that is our heartfelt wish too). I think you are now at the beginning of such a new stage. The activities of the fraternal parties and the support they demonstrated at the April Meeting held in Prague to discuss the work of our collective periodical create favourable conditions for progress in this direction.

¹ The plan is examined in detail in *WMR*, No. 7, 1987, pp. 132-135. — Ed.

Facing New International Realities

Mátyás Szűrös — Central Committee secretary, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP)

POSITIVE trends have recently gained ground in international affairs, and East-West relations have become less tense. The signing of the Soviet-American INF Treaty in December 1987 has increased the probability of nuclear arms limitation and disarmament becoming a comprehensive process. Since the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, this has been the first example of political détente being complemented with a specific accord in the military sphere. Meanwhile, the strict and effective verification mechanism stipulated under the treaty proves that, given goodwill on both sides, accommodation is possible even on the more sensitive issues.

Soviet-American summits are not only a step forward in lowering the level of military confrontation. They also herald a future breakthrough in the overall process of disarmament. Emerging as an effective and regular forum of negotiation, such meetings can help promote business-like East-West cooperation on a more constructive basis and create better conditions for the next stage of détente.

The Soviet-American treaty is *above all a result of the nascent restructuring of international relations, of the new political thinking adopted by the Soviet leadership and of its increased flexibility and readiness for dialogue. However, the success would have been impossible without the change that occurred in the stand of the United States and its West European allies, notably the FRG, without the constructive foreign policy pursued by the Warsaw Treaty countries, or without the rise in the activity of the peace forces throughout the world.* Realistic accommodation which threatens no one's security has obviously improved the attitude of world public opinion to the USSR, increased the trust in its foreign policy proposals and reduced the ingrained Western fear of a 'Soviet military threat'.

I am glad to note that it is precisely the USSR and the Warsaw Treaty Organisation who took and preserved the initiative in tackling the issues of overall disarmament. The ever increasing worldwide desire for global disarmament is blocking the possible avenues which the West could use to realise its military ambitions. As long as the danger of mutual assured destruction persists, steady progress in the reduction of nuclear arsenals is essential. This calls above all for the ratification of and strict compliance with the Soviet-American treaty. The HSWP also supports conclusion of an agreement on a sizeable — 50 per cent — reduction of strategic offensive armaments, naturally, provided there is strict observance of the

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— Ed

ABM Treaty. Besides, we attach importance to the soonest possible completion of the talks to ban chemical weapons and eliminate their stockpiles.

Now that the international climate has become more favourable, we are working purposefully to secure reliable and irreversible improvements in the field of European disarmament. We are firm in our opposition to any and all plans for 'offsetting' the loss of the nuclear weapons to be scrapped under the INF Treaty. Such 'compensation' may not only weaken but possibly even completely destroy the positive impact of the treaty. We all remember that even before it came into force, the Soviet Union withdrew its missiles from the GDR and Czechoslovakia. World public opinion welcomed that move.

Our view is that priority emphasis should be on business-like talks to negotiate reductions in armed forces and conventional armaments, for that is a key element of European security. If we fail to achieve results in this field, Europe will hardly be able to make any progress in the political, economic or other spheres or to create conditions for reducing and then eliminating tactical nuclear weapons. Obviously, the allies of both the USSR and the United States have a direct stake in a positive solution of this issue. *The intricate imbalances that exist on both sides of the military equilibrium could be removed in those armaments in which either side has an advantage* — provided there is mutual respect for the perfectly understandable desire to ensure one's security. We hold that this would perceptibly improve the chances for mutual and balanced reductions. Should it prove possible to reduce armed forces and conventional armaments to a level sufficient for purely defensive purposes, the significance of this process would go far beyond the European framework. It is therefore essential to display considerable flexibility, to exercise restraint as much as possible, and to contemplate seriously even unilateral moves.

Given the socialist nations' proposals and the reaction to them on the part of the NATO countries, progress in matters of tactical nuclear weapons also appears feasible. We support a compromise solution under which the imbalances in dual-purpose weapons would be eliminated with due regard for the results achieved at the talks on conventional arms. At present, these negotiations could be conducted without reference to the nuclear component of the dual-purpose weapons.

An accord on a specific reduction of armed forces and conventional armaments in Europe — from the Atlantic to the Urals — would make it incumbent both on NATO and on the WTO to make gradual yet profound changes in their military doctrines. Not only political but also military steps are therefore both necessary and possible to back the new concepts of our security policy and the statements of principle made by the socialist countries. *Greater openness and a relaxation of outdated and excessive secrecy in military matters will promote European disarmament and, equally, help in the solution of other issues as mutual confidence builds up.*

We are aware, however, that the West reacts to the steps taken towards disarmament not only in terms of approval and support. One can expect particularly stiff resistance to conventional arms reductions because this

will directly affect the political, military, and economic interests of certain quarters in capitalist countries. Hence the great significance the HSWP attaches to the socialist and other countries' constructive initiatives whose implementation would favour the forces calling for a genuine relaxation of military tensions. We appreciate and support Poland's plan for arms reductions and greater confidence in Central Europe, as well as the proposals of the GDR and Czechoslovakia on a nuclear-free corridor and a chemical weapon-free zone in Central Europe. Also important are the new integrated initiative of Czechoslovakia on creating a zone of trust, cooperation and good-neighbour relations along the line of contact between the two alliances, and the proposal of Bulgaria and Romania on a nuclear and chemical weapon-free zone in the Balkans. The joint initiatives of the SED and the SPD to outline ways of strengthening peaceful coexistence also merit a positive assessment. After all, *the development of Soviet-American relations increases rather than downgrades the role of the smaller countries and their chances of advancing initiatives*, in this way facilitating further improvement of East-West relations in general.

Hungary seeks to use its bilateral and multilateral ties so as to help create a new international political atmosphere. We have advanced several initiatives on arms limitation. We are involved in the elaboration of the socialist countries' new concept of security and, as a coordinator of these activities at the UN, we are working to ensure acceptance of this concept by world public opinion. The HSWP is shaping its thinking, practice and style of work in the field of foreign policy in concert with the domestic socio-political transformations and reforms under way in Hungary.

In January 1988, acting in the spirit of the socialist countries' foreign policy initiatives, our party, along with the Finnish Social Democratic Party and the Italian Socialist Party addressed an appeal to the European countries possessing no nuclear weapons. As they stated in their joint document, the HSWP, the FSDP and the ISP believe that it is possible and necessary for the non-nuclear nations, medium and smaller countries to take part in the European arms limitation and disarmament process in three interconnected areas where they have relevant opportunities and objectives — reductions of armed forces and conventional armaments; the elimination of nuclear weapons with a range of under 500 kilometres; and the attainment of mutual trust through enhancing the defensive nature of military doctrines that rule out aggression.

That is the first proposal of its kind in Europe, submitted jointly by ruling parties or parties involved in a coalition government — one from a Warsaw Treaty country, one from a NATO country and one from a neutral nation pursuing a vigorous foreign policy. In February 1988 this idea was supported at a conference of dialogue between the Socialist Party of Belgium (Flemish), the Bulgarian Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party of Denmark, the SED, the Labour Party of the Netherlands and the HSWP. I would like to stress that this is an open initiative, that all communist and workers' parties are invited to take part in its implementation. Our objective is to help the talks on arms limitation and disarmament and to strengthen European security by jointly reflecting on relevant problems and devising feasible proposals.

A certain degree of understanding has been achieved at the Vienna Meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, although some questions remain to be agreed upon. This forum has virtually arrived at the responsible juncture of political decision-making. That is why we advocate more vigorous work in Vienna.

We hold that it is a matter of great importance to advance new and flexible initiatives so as to break the deadlock in military talks, set the Conference on Confidence-Building Measures, Security and Disarmament in Europe working again (after its first phase in Stockholm in 1984-1986), and reach agreement on the mandate for the talks on reductions in armed forces and armaments. The outline of an agreement on economic cooperation is already taking shape.

We also need similar initiatives on the 'third basket' questions — human rights, information, culture and education, including the organisation of a Moscow forum on humanitarian issues, an idea which was put forward by the USSR and which we support. Obviously, if no compromise is reached in this sphere, it will be impossible to draft a final document of the Vienna Meeting.

Progress in this direction is hampered by the fact that several Western countries present excessive and unwarranted demands and do not always assess things realistically. At the same time, we see that the socialist countries are not unanimous on this score either. In our opinion, any step forward in this field should not be regarded exclusively as a concession to the West. Overwhelmingly, the proposals submitted do not envisage any radical concessions but merely call for adjustments to the existing practice which, in the final analysis, is in line both with our international obligations and with our efforts to enhance socialist democracy. Certain attitudes of some of our partners have, unfortunately, become ingrained. But the spirit of Helsinki and the urgent need to score positive results make an inflexible approach to the positions of either side impossible.

Adoption of relevant recommendations on the rights of ethnic groups, on practical steps to develop national culture and education, on the use of national and minority languages and on human contacts across national borders is particularly important to Hungarian foreign policy. *The HSWP's position of principle is that special attention and care should be exercised to ensure basic human rights and individual and collective rights of ethnic groups.*

The world economy is struggling with grave contradictions, but its growth and structural changes are continuing. Some industries have long been in crisis, the rate of exchange of Western currencies is subject to sharp fluctuation, the United States has developed a huge budget deficit, but science and technology are advancing in giant strides. It is becoming increasingly clear that those who cannot adapt to this process are endangering their own future. No substantive changes are expected in the alignment of forces, but differences in the ability to adapt have exacerbated the differences in the positions of various regions and groups of countries and the contradictions between developed capitalist and developing nations.

Changes in the world economy are not yet determined by what is

happening in the socialist countries (although these developments do have their impact). Specifically, this is borne out by the low level of the CMEA countries' participation in world trade. Our ability to adapt leaves much to be desired, even though the issue of economic modernisation and retooling has long been an urgent agenda item.

We maintain that in parallel with domestic reform in some of our countries, we should *reorganise radically* — in terms of both content and structure — *our economic cooperation, above all, the activities of the CMEA. Otherwise we will be pushed to the periphery of the world economy, and that would be a long-term threat to the positions of socialism as such.*

There is another serious warning: by the mid-1990s, a sphere of European capitalist integration may emerge, with a population of 360-380 million and with a volume of economic output greater than that of the United States or Japan. The socialist countries will be unable to compete with this might going it alone, in isolation from one another. That is another reason why we attach great importance to the renewal of socialist economic integration.

Adaptation to the conditions of the world economy is a task facing both socialist and developing countries. We have a common stake in *changing the existing world economic order*. We therefore support the continuation of the North-South dialogue and the relevant efforts of social democratic parties which seek to promote both development and security.

The underdevelopment of most of the Third World and the broad spectrum of related problems not only have a depressing effect on the respective regions but also keep producing dangerous situations which, in the final analysis, threaten peaceful coexistence. The pressure applied to curb these nations' economic growth is a source of constant political conflicts. Eliminating the causes of such tensions is a task of historic scope, but their alleviation should be a day-to-day objective.

We have long held that disarmament is inseparable from development. The two notions are closely interconnected. Today, even most of the developed countries are aware that disarmament concerns not only the industrialised nations, that it is part of the common desire to preserve world peace and therefore improves the chances of the Third World. This view was also articulated at the non-aligned summit in Harare. We believe that it is an important starting point for reappraising cooperation between the socialist and the developing countries since it reflects largely mutual interests. Naturally, our cooperation cannot by itself solve the problems of underdevelopment or the foreign debt. Progress makes it necessary for those involved to be more vigorous and to practice joint action. Besides, *the responsibility of the developing countries for the preservation of peace is greater than they used to believe*. It is particularly great as regards restraint in disputes with other, similar states. Of course, we will keep up our solidarity with the forces fighting for self-determination, democracy and social progress.

We know that almost all Third World countries depend heavily on Western economies. However, this does not justify our overcautious attitude to mutually beneficial economic ties which, for those countries, would also mean a lessening of their one-sided dependence on the

capitalist powers. Nevertheless, in assisting national liberation movements, we consider it inadmissible to choose their paths of development for them or to urge them to copy mechanically the European socialist countries' experience which was accumulated under different historical circumstances.

Regional conflicts are a serious obstacle to development. Recently, a desire to settle them peacefully has become more pronounced in some cases. We support the peace-making efforts of the Soviet Union and the activities of the Afghan leadership aimed at a political settlement of the situation in and around Afghanistan. As it was noted in the joint Soviet-Afghan communique of April 7, 1988, the consistent policy of national reconciliation pursued by the Afghan leadership and its constructive stand in matters of a political settlement is the only viable course consonant with the interests of the Afghan people, of their neighbours, and of the entire international community. We see the Geneva accords on the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan as an example of the way regional conflicts should be defused peacefully on the basis of new political thinking.

I would like to dwell, in particular, on the situation in Central America. The signing of the document entitled 'The Ways to Durable and Lasting Peace in Central America' in August 1987 was an important step. We welcome the fact that the directly involved countries and political forces are playing a major role in the settlement of local conflicts. In our view, we are dealing with an internal Latin American solution based on a compromise which takes the interests of all sides into consideration. The sober and flexible thinking of the Nicaraguan leadership merits particular recognition and appreciation. As for the implementation of the accords, the resistance of the conservative quarters and certain countries' domestic difficulties and dependence on foreign powers, primarily on the United States, lead one to expect this process to be complex and contradictory.

The celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the October Revolution and the Moscow Meeting of Parties and Movements were an outstanding event of recent international politics. Conclusions important to the entire international communist and working class movement were voiced at that meeting. *Socialist renewal is particularly furthered by the fact that the CPSU regards development of socialist democracy and the economic reform as an integral and indivisible whole.* The resolve to fill all historical 'gaps' is also of importance in terms of both principle and practice. All-round consideration of the past is essential to our efforts to shape our future. New and convincing arguments were also marshalled in the analysis of the capitalist world, the historical adversary of socialism. *In assessing the situation in the international communist movement, the view was reiterated that it had approached what was in many respects a turning point. The parties' full independence is now irreversible, and conferences resulting in binding decisions are a thing of the past.* We also attach importance to the statement that internationalist cooperation of the socialist countries rests on generally accepted principles of relations between them, including unconditional and full equality, a party's responsibility for the situation in

its country, furtherance of the common socialist cause, mutual respect and commitment to the basics of peaceful coexistence.

The ideas expressed in Moscow are additional proof that the issues of ensuring peace and security and preventing nuclear war are central to the international efforts of the socialist countries. That is the foremost problem of our age, and it is closely connected with the development and domestic affairs of every nation. Hence the inescapable conclusion that *the class struggle waged by the working people should be accompanied by the tackling of universal human problems together with various other parties and movements*. The interrelationship of socialist and capitalist countries as they face global problems accords priority to the task of preserving peace and civilisation.

This does not mean — as it is sometimes asserted — that the socialist countries will withdraw their support from progressive social movements in situations where internal conditions for radical and even revolutionary change have matured. But it is also true that the export of revolution by force of arms is useless and inadmissible. *Socialism now consolidates its international positions above all through democratic and economic development, not through global claims. This is not a renunciation of the world revolutionary cause but its realistic, contemporary and adequate understanding geared to our actual potential.*

We attach fundamental importance to the fact that representatives of parties and movements expounding different views have held a dialogue about the tasks connected with the need to overcome the common dangers threatening the human race. We hold that the Moscow Meeting marked the beginning of a new stage in the cooperation of Left, progressive, democratic and peace-loving forces on the basis of their common responsibility for the world's future. We maintain that the tackling of global problems also calls for broad unity with the Social Democrats; for their part, they have also been displaying a steadily growing readiness for joint action.

Naturally, all this does not mean that we are abandoning our fundamental views or ideals. *However, the only way leading to the future implies dialogue, peaceful competition and cooperation of systems and ideologies.*

The Truth: On Whose Side?

Some New Features of the Current Ideological Contest

Rene Urbany — Chair, Communist
Party of Luxembourg

THE great importance of the struggle of ideas in the modern world is something of a home truth, for the prospects of development and the

destinies of nations largely depend on the notions that rule people's minds. It is an incontrovertible truth for Marxists that the content and character of the views prevailing in a society are determined by the objective conditions of existence, but while these reflect the condition of the various social groups and strata and their contradictory interests, they are not asserted automatically, but as a result of the clash and conflict between the various opinions.

As Communists consider in this context the problems facing them in the industrialised capitalist countries, it is natural for them to give thought to this question: why do socialist ideas still fail to meet with the support their significance, historical role and humanistic substance deserve, and why, now and again, do they even have to retreat under pressure from conservative and reactionary views? Is it possible to alter this and to increase the ideological and so the political influence of our parties, and to surmount the barrier of anti-communist preconceptions and prejudice, which bourgeois ideologists have worked hard to erect in the public mind?

The answers are, of course, neither simple nor straightforward. They depend on a great many national and international phenomena and tend to be differently formulated by the parties in their efforts to find the most effective ways and means for spreading socialist ideas. There are, at the same time, a number of common factors in the evolution of the industrialised capitalist world which have a profound impact on the course of the ideological contest. I want to deal with some of these.

One will often hear it said nowadays that the prospects for socialism largely depend on the successes of the peoples already building a new society. If they succeed in realising the ideals of socialism and demonstrating in practice the attractiveness of the socialist perspective, the masses in the capitalist countries will then also be more receptive to the Communists' slogans and proposals.

The state of the socialist countries does, indeed, have a great influence on the attitude of the working people in the capitalist countries to Marxist ideas, and that is why there is now such a sharp debate over the Soviet perestroika. The bourgeois press has made something like antithetical judgement about its significance. Some claim that it means abandonment of the socialist principles and the borrowing of capitalist methods of economic management and administration of society, while others write about the 'illusions' produced by the perestroika, which allegedly does nothing to change things, but is merely designed to lull the vigilance of the West and to undermine its security. In any case, the thrust there is to prove that socialism has 'not worked' in practice, and that this is evidenced by the changes in the USSR.

These dissertations give a hint of the obvious anxiety over the prospect of the Soviet Union's growing authority. Its constructive role in the struggle for peace and disarmament enjoys broad public sympathy throughout the world. There is deep interest in its internal changes. After the October Revolution, Lenin made the point that the Soviet republic exercises its main influence on international development by its economic policy.¹ The notions of the working people in other countries about the nature of the new system now to a great extent depend on the results of this

policy, on the growing efficiency of its economy, the development of democracy and rising living standards.

The growing prestige of existing socialism tends to create more favourable conditions for the activity of the other communist parties as well, and to rid the public mind of anti-communist 'complexes', it was said at our 25th Congress,² and we whole-heartedly wish every success to perestroika in the USSR, the faster development of the socialist world, and improvement of its every sphere of economic, social, political and cultural life. The failings and mistakes in socialist practice have also had a painful effect on the activity of the Communists of Luxembourg, causing disappointment among some of our adherents and weakening the attractive power of our ideas. Conversely, the achievements of socialism help to strengthen the positions of those who stand for social progress everywhere.

However, it would be altogether wrong to assert, as bourgeois propaganda does, that our ideology has been injected from outside, that it depends on support 'from the East', and that it is alien to some kind of 'Western values'. One should not forget that scientific communism emerged 'in the West', to use a current bourgeois term, on the basis of developed capitalist states, and that it provided solutions to their own problems. Marxism is deeply rooted in the realities of capitalist society. Lenin's analysis shed light on its new peculiarities characteristic of all the imperialist countries, and it is an analysis which is *still a reliable compass for finding one's bearings in the intricate processes of social development*.

The concrete way of social transformations today can, however, be determined only through an in-depth study of the peculiarities of modern capitalism, and the changes within it in this epoch of ours, which also require essential corrections in the activity of the communist parties in the industrialised capitalist countries, making them take a fresh look at some of the problems in our ideological work.

The social consequences of the scientific and technological revolution have, above all, had a tremendous impact on the whole set of conditions in which we have to work, and here our small country, which presents many of the new processes in the most obvious form, offers a highly indicative example. Luxembourg has, after all, passed through the typical phases in the development of industrial capitalism, and is, in a sense, an embodiment of its characteristic features. Its mining, steel and metal-working industries have grown rapidly. The Grand Duchy leads the world in steel output per head. Arbed, the steel consortium, which is one of the largest in Europe, is widely known. The earliest plans for West European integration on the basis of the heavy industry likewise first appeared in Luxembourg. Three giant iron girders rising on a concrete pedestal near the Grand Duchess Charlotte Bridge have come to symbolise the first West European Community: the Coal and Steel Community.

The country's working class has taken shape and developed accordingly. Miners, steel founders and metal workers constituted the backbone of the industrial proletariat, which is well-knit, and militant, and has a high level of class consciousness. Our party has always relied on these strata of the workers and has enjoyed influence among them.

However, profound changes have taken place in this picture over the past few years. Steel output reached a peak in the early 1970s and then began rapidly to decline. The crisis in the steel industry was a painful blow at the country's southern region. The mining industry had been wound up even earlier: the last pit was closed in the early 1980s. The miners' trade has completely disappeared, and the number of steel workers has been more than halved over the past 15 years. In 1970, the steel industry accounted for over 28 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, and for 21 per cent of all the jobs: today the figures are 11 and 9 per cent, respectively.

Meanwhile, foreign firms set up enterprises in new industries with an eye to the Luxembourg working people's high standards of skills and education, and this has led to a growth in the number of those working in these trades. Many immigrants from Portugal and other countries, along with earlier immigrants, notably from Italy, were employed to do the 'dirty' and lower-paid work. A quarter of Luxembourg's population now consists of foreign workers and members of their families.

The party's 25th Congress analysed the major shifts in the social structure of the population and noted a number of new processes and phenomena which have an impact on the conditions of our party's activity. There has been a sharp expansion in the sphere of the services and in the number of those working in trade, supply, transport, communications, etc. Take banking. The vast growth in the scale of financial operations which is characteristic of the entire capitalist economy has also changed the face of our capital, with street upon street of new financial and credit institutions emerging. Luxembourg is being converted into a second Switzerland: it now has over 120 local and foreign banks, and over the past year alone their personnel went up by 12 per cent, which exceeds the number of steel workers. Add to this the effects of automation and computerisation, the introduction of high technologies and new forms of labour organisation, and the important changes in the occupational, educational and skill structures of wage-workers will become obvious. *There is a change in the character of labour and way of life for sizeable masses of people and this is having an effect on their mentality and perception of the surrounding world.*

These working people are often farther apart from each other than the traditional workers in industry, more inclined to individualistic attitudes and less inclined to joint, organised action. The working conditions which are physically not as arduous as they were in the past reduce the inducement to protest, to efforts to get rid of the social oppression, which is, besides, subtler and more camouflaged.

The bourgeoisie has sought to use the peculiarities of the condition of the new strata and to win them over by spinning out a set of diverse myths. They are being made to believe, for instance, that they belong to some kind of 'middle class' and to entertain the illusion that their problems have individual solutions, and that they should strive for personal success as the alternative to 'collectivism'. Through such arguments and reactionary views, the conservative and right-wing forces have tried to extend their mass base.

Does it follow that the basis of the Communists' activity is shrinking, and

that they have no prospects for strengthening their positions?

One has to admit that changes in the social structure have truly been one of the causes behind the weakening of the party's influence in the late 1970s, as the party's 24th Congress said in 1984, a fact which also had an effect on the election results, but this objective factor became a crucial one only because we failed to adapt to the new conditions with due promptness and flexibility and to bring our work into accord with them. This mistake was corrected. Without abandoning its traditional base — the workers in the heavy industry — the party began to give more attention to the working people in the new industries, to engineers and technicians, employees in administrative establishments and the services, the white-collar workers. We have had a concerned response to our message.

Many illusions among these people are dispelled by the harsh realities, making them alive to their subordinate and dependent condition, which is, in principle, similar to that of the workers. It makes them see that there is only one difference: while the ones have to sell their physical energy to their employers, the others have to sell their mental and nervous energy. Incidentally, work at many establishments tends to be increasingly reminiscent of assembly-line operations in the way in which it is fragmented. Many members of these trades, with their higher educational and cultural standards, tend to respond more sensitively to any infringements of their dignity and the appropriation of the fruits of their labour by a handful of big proprietors.

Besides, as new high technologies are introduced, the role of specialists operating the intricate and costly equipment tends to grow, they are required to display more competence, imaginative thinking and sense of responsibility, and so to be more involved in running production. But the capitalist form of property keeps them away from decision-making, turning them into cogs in the production machine.

That is why our proposals, which take account of the interests of all the working people, also meet the urge of the members of these strata for self-assertion, for creative endeavour, and a worthy social role and fitting place in the economy. For instance, when putting forward the programme for nationalising the steel industry, we explained to the managerial personnel and the engineers and technicians of steel mills that there could be better guarantees for their future if the operation of this vital national industry is not geared to the drive for private profit, which has already led to sizeable cutbacks in investments and to the flight of capital.

We showed that nationalisation alone could help to reckon with the international economic realities in the light of the country's interests, to channel investments into sunrise industries, and to give greater scope for imaginative effort and broader involvement of all the working people, including workers by brain, in the taking of decisions.

Our 25th Congress pointed out that *there has never before been such telling confirmation of our conclusions* as today, when new dangers hang over Luxembourg's steel industry arising from the stock-market war between the major shareholders seeking to establish control over entire sectors of the economy.

Taking account of the new realities means, besides, putting forward

demands to neutralise such new instruments of capitalist exploitation as flexible working and technological rationalisation. It is most important to insist on shorter working hours, higher wages, and wider opportunities for occupational training and retraining. The point is to have criteria formulated on the state level for managing the economy which take account of social, ecological and national interests.

Many problems in human relations, notably *the role of the individual in production and social life*, have been put in a new light by the working conditions and labour organisation generated by modern hardware and technology, the growth of new categories of working people and their ever greater importance.

Do we take account of this factor in our ideological and political work? Not always, I'm afraid. The Communists tend to speak more about the 'collective' and the 'masses' than about the individual. One can well understand some comrades taking a guarded approach to individualism and to examining all the vital problems through the prism of the individual's egoistic motivations. After all, the struggle for social emancipation implies above all *a change in the condition in society* of large groups of people. We start from the interests of the working class, the working people, and the nation as a whole. All of that is true, but we must also be mindful of what Marx and Engels said in their *Manifesto of the Communist Party*: bourgeois society, with its class antagonisms, must be replaced by a system in which "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all".³

Concern for improving the life of the majority does not at all exclude attention to the individual. Indeed, it is for the *happiness of every person* that the Communist Party is engaged in its struggle. We cherish the originality, individuality and personal fortunes and aspirations of the living people, to whom we address ourselves, and this is especially important in a small country like ours, where talk of 'broad masses' often produces an ironical smile, a country in which the inhabitants of a big or small town know each other personally, and where everyone is in the public eye. But the problem is a much wider one, and refers not only to us, even if, perhaps, with a sharper focus in Luxembourg in virtue of these circumstances.

The paradox is that the champions of the bourgeoisie appeal to the individual, address themselves to the feeling of the individual, presenting themselves as champions of individual rights and freedoms, and defenders of individual capabilities and talents, although in actual fact it is the capitalist system that deprives the individual of individuality and levels down the individual, so effectively reducing the individual's accomplishments to a single denominator: the size of his fortune and his bank account.

Much has been written about the power of money in capitalist society in the long years of its history, but it is now especially important to expose the striking contradiction between the power of money and its anti-humanistic substance, and the growing importance of the individual caused by the development of the productive forces and the changes in social life.

We have to give the closest attention to everything that is pertinent to

creating the conditions for the development of individuality, for defence of human rights and dignity, not only in production, but elsewhere as well. This means access to education, culture and health care. We did, of course, deal with these matters in the past, but nowadays these problems tend to acquire an especial significance. There is the new level of demands caused by the present stage in the evolution of the society and the ever higher role of the 'human factor'. One will often hear in our countries talk about 'investments in the human being', which, it is said, turn out to be more profitable than investments in equipment. The Communists naturally want such 'investments', but only with this difference: they must involve more than a limited circle of the select for whom special conditions are created; they must involve *the right of each to use the fruits of modern civilisation and to have access to knowledge and the accomplishments of culture*. All must have an opportunity for self-realisation, for expressing their individuality, and for developing and applying their capabilities and talents.

These demands are consonant with the mood of the working people, and especially of the members of the new strata. Our party's arguments have increasingly fallen on fertile soil among them, and one indication here is last autumn's communal elections.

In all the communes where the party was represented at the previous elections in 1981, it made some advances, winning an average of 8 per cent of the poll. Its positions were markedly strengthened in the capital and in a number of municipalities of the industrial South, where the number of communes in which we got over 10 per cent of the vote increased. The party fielded its candidates in a greater number of communes than ever before and won back one municipal council and increased the total number of its seats on the local organs of power. There is now a coalition of the left-wing forces, with the participation of Socialists, in three regions, notably in the second and third most populous towns of Luxembourg.

While there are still many 'dark spots' in some communes, the elections have enabled us to influence the country's political life, and just when some were predicting that our party would be left in the outer darkness.

The Communist Party characteristically received many votes from the new strata, so strengthening its influence where it used to be fairly weak. It is indicative that more and more people from these strata are joining the party, although they appear to have little to complain about from the standpoint of their own well-being: they have secure and well-paid jobs, and can hardly be failures or ill-starred people. However, they find our arguments cogent and join in the struggle for restructuring social relations on new and more just principles.

We do not, of course, exaggerate the scale on which people come to see the light, for it is a difficult and intricate process, but I want to stress that the current economic and social changes should not be seen as being unfavourable to the Communist Party. On the contrary, *they hold a great potential for the rise of our movement, and for the spread of Marxist ideas, with fresh confirmation of them in the changing reality*. The important thing is not to ignore these changes, to respond to them in due time, and boldly

to advance in the light of the new conditions with the Marxist-Leninist approach.

These conditions are connected with yet another highly important factor, which puts a deep imprint on the whole of our ideological work. I have in mind the dynamic changes in the mass media, and above all the role which television now has to play in our life.

Like high technology in production, television has opened up gigantic potentialities, helping to enrich the people's spiritual life, broaden their horizon and knowledge of the surrounding world. It can be a beneficial source of the growth of culture and education, and an instrument of enlightenment and progress, but in the hands of those who serve the ruling class it has become a mighty instrument of influence on the feelings and behaviour of people, which they use to implant in their minds ideas suiting the bourgeoisie. It offers unprecedented means for the manipulation of thinking and the creation of illusory notions. Hollywood once used to be called a 'dream factory', but many TV studios have become assembly lines churning out daydreams, factories of false ideas.

In the political struggle, television has become something of a strategic weapon of mass destruction, and its impact on the shaping of political views is very much stronger than that of either the radio or the press. Newspapers are now not all that widely read; for people prefer to get their news from the screen. Some spend nearly all their leisure hours watching the box. This leads, in particular, to growing seclusion, separation and more tenuous ties and contacts between people.

Considering that most of the people working in TV studios take the bourgeois view of things and that the advocates of the bourgeoisie also now the bulk of the other mass media, one can well understand how much harder it is for the Communists to carry on their ideological work. We in our country, for instance, have Radio and Television of Luxembourg (RTL), one of the biggest in Western Europe, which offers programmes from seven West European countries on 19 channels, all of which (to take only the political programmes) are shot through with the anti-socialist and anti-communist spirit. Despite the great number of broadcasts, there is no programme in the Letzenburgish language and under public control. There is only one two-hour broadcast in the Letzenburgish language on Sundays, and the Communist Party has access to it within the framework of political programmes for parties represented in parliament. We try to make the utmost use of this broadcast by taking part in round tables and screening short films (during election campaigns).

The Communists see opportunities for spreading their views, strengthening the party's ties with the working people and increasing its influence in the new situation as well. The capacity of television to 'transform' the pictures of the real world for the benefit of the ruling class is not at all boundless, for it cannot ignore the vital problems of life and move too far away from the reality, as otherwise those who produce these programmes risk losing their credibility and their reputation. That is why many acute economic, social, and political problems, such as the crisis in production, the unemployment, the financial upheavals, the destruction of the environment, the crime, the condition of women, young people and

immigrants, etc., are presented on the screen and discussed. Some TV journalists have democratic views and strive to present an objective picture of internal and international developments and here the Communists' views can fall on fertile soil and meet with a wide response.

We have changed the character of our newspaper, *Zeitung vum Letzeburger Vollek*, in view of the fact that our citizens receive the bulk of their information on television. The paper now gives more attention to commentaries and puts the right interpretation on events, their meaning and underlying causes, and to reporting the facts and details of which television and the other mass media say nothing. We have tried to give the paper a more attractive format, with greater diversity to meet the various preferences and interests. Its circulation has recently grown. The fiasco of the judicial proceedings started against the editors by the World Anti-Communist League shows that its exposés are effective and hit the moves by the reactionary forces right on target.

Finally, considering to what extent the mighty 'TV idol' can be cut down to size, let us look again at the point I made earlier on: the need for closer contacts with people and better knowledge of their daily interests and thoughts. The fact is that television tends to produce not only isolation, but also the reverse trend: the urge for personal contacts, so as to break out of the seclusion and isolation, and to revive various forms of collective life.

We in Luxembourg have many diverse political, social, occupational, cultural, and sports associations involving a large number of citizens. We seek to take an active part in their activity, to establish close ties with them and also to give their members a wider knowledge of our party, its activity and views.

Personal contacts are of vast significance, for we are unable to rival the bourgeoisie in the powerful mass media it has in its possession. But our party's strength lies in its activists, the honest, dedicated and selfless men and women who are convinced of the justice of communist ideas. Most of them come from the midst of the people, are well aware of their problems and concerns, and speak their language. Even in this age of the rapid and powerful expansion of the mass media, person-to-person contacts can sometimes leave a greater impression than either radio or television voices.

The success of ideological and explanatory work does, of course, depend, above all, on the content of the ideas we carry to people, on the precision of the party's assessments of daily events and phenomena, and the cogency of our proposals.

The rapidly changing scene compels us to review and renew our ideological arsenal and to respond sensitively to current demands, and here I want to bring out a factor which, I think, is highly important. When we urge the need for new thinking, *we must go beyond putting aside various old notions; it is also important to formulate in their stead a positive and concrete action programme* following an analysis of the actual situation. That is the most difficult thing. Are our proposals, perhaps, now and again too abstract and schematic? Do they sometimes spring from speculative judgements, instead of a close look at life in all its diversity, and with all its details and nuances?

If we are to meet the challenge of the times, we need more than 'new

formulations', invention of new terms, or scholastic debates about wordings; we need above all knowledge, the processing and assimilation of a vast mass of new data which determine the conditions in which the working people exist from day to day, for they are the chief productive force in society. We emphasise that *it is important not only to be right, but also to get people to recognise that we are right.*

The new way of thinking requires not only the ability to learn from the experience of the past, but also a capacity to look ahead, to discern the trends in social development, which are just in the offing. The world now stands on the threshold of the year 2000, and on the eve of the new millennium the debates on mankind's prospects and destinies, and on the possibilities and dangers of the epoch ahead have waxed, instead of waning. Variants for the solution of social problems and ways into the future are being offered by political forces representing different classes. It is up to the peoples to decide where the truth lies, but let us not forget that it is the individual, 'little' man with his wants, concerns and hopes, that is central to all our debates. If we succeed in finding the way to his heart and mind, our ideas will truly take hold of the masses and become a material and transforming force.

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 437.

² Held last April. — *Ed.*

³ Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. 6, p. 506.

The Moscow Summit Has Strengthened The World's Hope

The results of the fourth Soviet-American summit held in Moscow from May 29 to June 2 are still being discussed world-wide. The intensive talks between Mikhail Gorbachov, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, and Ronald Reagan, President of the United States, the signing of the protocol on the entry of the INF Treaty into force, the conclusion of several new agreements, the negotiation of many provisions of the future treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic offensive arms, as well as the overall atmosphere of the US President's visit to the Soviet capital — all these things were of immense international interest. The press centre extended accreditation to more than 5,300 journalists from all over the world. *WMR* asked three of them — Moscow-based correspondents of communist newspapers — to share their impressions of the historic event they witnessed.

NEW THINKING VS. OLD PATTERNS

Masood Ali-Khan (*New Age*, India)

LEARNING to live together is a long and difficult process, sometimes even agonising and painful. But the two systems, the two power blocs must

learn this art if humanity is to survive in the nuclear age. Like the previous ones, the Moscow summit between the leaders of the USSR and the USA has been devoted to a difficult but fruitful search for a balance of interests. Even if there is no complete trust in all matters, there is considerably reduced mistrust between the two sides. The world welcomes this and rejoices at every television image which shows warmth and human relationship between the leaders of the two powers. The more they meet, and the more they talk, the better for all of us.

New thinking has to fight and make way for itself conquering the old. Mr Reagan had to say publicly in Moscow that he no longer thought the Soviet Union to be an 'evil empire'. Coming from him, it was not easy. But objective reality and the force of circumstances can make even the most conservative of politicians change their views.

The struggle of the old and the new approach could be clearly seen in the stance of the US delegation. For example, in his speeches the President said that disputes could not be decided by weapons, that war was neither possible nor admissible in the nuclear age, that disarmament was the common goal, that political solutions were preferable, etc. But in the same breath he proclaimed force and military might as the main principle of US policy. On the one hand, an important segment of the American business community wants to develop commercial relations with the USSR; on the other, there is the old tendency of preserving the bans, restrictions, and intimidations. In another example, one could cite the clumsy preaching on human rights and the President's meeting with a specially selected group of 40 'refuseniks' and dissidents. One Indian journalist called this the behaviour of a bull in a china shop. At any rate, the head of the US administration showed that on this score he was definitely out of step with realities and that he had not yet grasped the full essence of perestroika.

The Soviet side reacted with dignity and restraint and, in accordance with glasnost, the Soviet press did not ignore the US propaganda exercise. But it pointed out politely to the guests the state of human rights 'back home'.

Another example of old thinking was the President's persistent use of falsified quotations allegedly from Lenin to prove the 'aggressiveness' of communist ideology. Obviously, for better *understanding* a better *knowledge* of the other side's ideological principles is required, even when one does not agree with them. I think it is high time the President changed his speech-writers and assistants on this subject. Meanwhile, he would be well advised to use more Russian proverbs rather than 'quotations from Marxism-Leninism'.

Tangible chances emerged during the summit for resolving regional problems.

For example, as regards the Middle East, positions were drawing closer, and there was greater understanding of the need to solve all its problems along the lines of an international conference. The interests of all parties to the conflict should be taken into account. First and foremost, the occupied territories must be returned and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination restored. The Israeli people and state also have a right to security, for there can be no security for one state at the expense of

another. As soon as the international conference on the Middle East met, the USSR would be prepared to consider the issue of diplomatic relations with Israel.

Much attention was devoted to Afghanistan. Having reiterated its resolve to observe strictly the Geneva agreements, Moscow expects the other parties to the accords, including the United States, to do the same. Successful implementation of the accords will be a positive precedent, while its failure will have serious consequences and will adversely affect attempts at solving other regional problems.

An approach of realism, a political approach, as well as regard for balanced interests are required. New political thinking, abandoning the power game, regard for the people's interests make up the method for solving regional conflicts. This, too, is a lesson of the Moscow summit.

A BLOW AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE COLD WAR

Carl Bloice (*People's Daily World*, United States)

During the Moscow summit, Mikhail Gorbachov stressed that since the Geneva meeting, US-Soviet relations had overcome a 'prolonged period of confrontation' and reached an 'acceptable level' from which it was possible to go further. The task now, said the Soviet leader, is to make irreversible the tendency that has emerged in international affairs, the search for political solutions, and cooperation for peace.

A major concern is that the process of improving relations between the Soviet Union and the United States begun at the 1985 Geneva Summit not 'choke', wrote a Soviet commentator one week before the US President's arrival there. It didn't choke; the momentum and continuity of previous summits was sustained but, from all available evidence, it appears the effort to fashion a new relationship between the two major powers had to endure a tough trial.

Take, for example, the human rights issue and the President's meeting with 'select Soviet citizens'. Listening to the President, one would have to conclude there are not close to six million homeless people in our country, nor are there tens of millions of people denied the opportunity to earn a living in the countries where there is capitalist 'economic freedom'. Not one word was spoken about the continued existence of racial discrimination and anti-Semitism in the West. With much audacity, the leader of an administration that has done much to curtail the rights of labour organizations posed as a champion of free trade unionism.

The US President presented a nirvana-like picture of life under capitalism that could only cause millions of people in the US to smile and others to laugh out loud.

The contrast in the approach to humanitarian issues on the part of the US leadership and of that of the Soviet Union is quite striking. As Soviet foreign policy expert Georgi Arbatov noted, when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov went to Washington for the third summit he didn't even mention Irangate or other negative things: "He spoke about perestroika, our problems and how we were solving them and what we were going to do in the future." Had Reagan done similarly in Moscow, Arbatov

commented, it might have been a contribution to solving some outstanding problems in this area.

During the summit some journalists and commentators, particularly in the socialist world, were prone to view many problems in high-level relationships between the US and the USSR through the prism of internal US politics. Most of the time it is premised on the erroneous notion that the Right is strongest amongst the US electorate and that the anti-Soviet soundings from the White House are for 'domestic political considerations'. But there is another, more plausible explanation: there was the need to divert attention from the fact that the administration had nothing of substance to offer the summit. There was a lacking of what Gorbachov calls 'political will' on the part of Washington. No new significant agreements were concluded at this meeting not because of a paucity of negotiations or preparations but, I believe, because the President was not prepared to agree to any.

Prior to the summit, Soviet officials expressed their concern over the fact that the Reagan Administration continues to hold back on compliance with the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, and makes no signs of coming to agreement on the question of both land-based and sea-based Cruise missiles. These I see as the chief stumbling blocks to agreement on a treaty on a 50 per cent cut in strategic nuclear arms.

The key question here remains whether the current US administration is prepared to give up its plan to extend the arms race into space; whether it still seeks the means to acquire weapons superiority through advanced technology while seeming to move in the direction of disarmament. The logic of the mis-named Strategic Defense Initiative and the effort to deploy and hide sea-based Cruise missiles is the logic of deterrence. It suggests to the world public that a tit-for-tat spiral of the arms race produces security.

This runs counter to agreements reached at the first summit in Geneva in 1985. There it was concluded that nuclear war cannot be won and should not be fought and that security can best be achieved by lowering the level of military confrontation.

That key element of realism in international and bilateral US-Soviet relations produced the historically important treaty eliminating short- and medium-range nuclear missiles. The next step is the conclusion of a treaty reducing by half strategic nuclear weapons.

That it remains on the bilateral agenda is testimony to the tremendous changes that have taken place in international relations over the past three years. Perhaps one has to step aside from the contradictory details of the summit itself to really appreciate this factor.

The fourth US-USSR summit is the latest stage in a positive process underway in the world, a process due largely to the policies of the Soviet Union and the idea of a 'new thinking' in world affairs.

DESTROYING PRECONCEPTIONS

Bernard Frederick (*l'Humanité*, France)

Not only the Soviet people and the Americans, of course, had an interest in the results of the Moscow summit: both the bilateral relations between the two great powers and issues of peace and security are of import to the

whole of mankind. But Europe seems to have been involved more than any other part of the world for it is there that the two strongest military alliances face each other and it was there that the two largest world conflicts broke out, claiming millions of lives.

The Moscow meeting supplied proof of the profound understanding by the Soviet leadership of the importance of European problems, the need for disarmament, the achievement of security by political methods, and also exchanges and cooperation. The West says: let us start with détente and disarm ourselves later. But can there be any détente if the threat posed by arms is there? The Soviet Union's policies and peace initiatives in their entirety show the way to détente and European security based on trust and demilitarisation rather than on military superiority. President Reagan flatly turned down the Soviet proposals for speeding up the Vienna talks on cuts in conventional weapons. But are those proposals addressed to Ronald Reagan alone? What does Western Europe think?

Mikhail Gorbachov's point that the letter and the spirit of the INF Treaty should be strictly respected not just by the USSR and the USA but by all the countries deserves attention. I have in mind, first and foremost, the two European nuclear powers, France and Britain, which are making plans to 'rectify' the Washington accords by increasing the range and yield of their own nuclear systems. If we really want to eliminate nuclear weapons on our continent, these countries should also draw conclusions from the Moscow talks and help sustain the incipient progress and clear away the difficulties which have remained after the Soviet-American summit, and refrain from an arms build-up.

The Soviet Union's peace-orientated diplomacy with its dynamism and innovative character and a realistic analysis of the dangers looming over the world have had a beneficial effect on public opinion. Influential forces and the mass anti-war movement have given support to Moscow's policy, which fact has made a number of leaders of imperialist powers revise their approach to the Soviet Union. If there had not been any perestroika, democratisation and glasnost, one could hardly have expected the American leader, who posed as a crusader of anti-communism, a Saint George about to pierce the dragon from the 'evil empire', to evolve so dramatically within such a short span of time! The whole of mankind and all of Europe stand to gain as a result.

Peaceful coexistence and dialogue between the leaders of capitalist and socialist countries facilitate the working class struggle in every country and increase possibilities for the establishment of broad popular alliances.

We should have no illusions, however. Anti-communism and anti-Sovietism will not disappear as if by magic just because Mr Reagan has visited the USSR and found for himself that there are no prison bars on Red Square or barbed wire in Moscow's streets. The imperialist bourgeoisie will continue fighting socialism and the liberation movement. The nature of imperialism has not changed, and the class struggle is going on both in every imperialist country and in the world as a whole.

Yet we see that the bourgeoisie today has to carry on that struggle in the face of a new correlation of forces, and has to assume the defensive. Take, for instance, the human rights issue, which was raised at the Moscow talks.

We all know the 'weakest link' idiom. In the period now called in the USSR the pre-crisis years or the stagnation period it was not on matters of free health care or space exploration that socialism was being attacked; it was human rights that were the target, as aim is always taken at the more vulnerable spot. Nowadays, the USSR is effectively repulsing those attacks, primarily by its actions at home and by its far-reaching democratic reforms, but also by its foreign policy, by concrete disarmament proposals, by contributing towards the settlement of regional conflicts, such as Afghanistan, and by questioning the 'free world' about its much vaunted human rights performance. The imperialists will not, of course, lay down arms for bunches of flowers and go sing love songs under the balconies of socialism. Rather, they will act the more desperately the greater the change in the new world.

That was the message (as I perceived it) of the show in the President's Moscow residence on May 31. The US delegation arranged it, I think, because they had come to Moscow all but empty-handed. But imperialism will never stop exploiting its foothold in that area. The US and Western Europe have always been good at finding some 'persecuted' X or Y. Andrei Sakharov's name was on the front pages of newspapers as long as he was in Gorky; and now that he is back in Moscow, working at his job and supporting perestroika, the West has lost interest in him and he was not among those hand-picked Soviet citizens who were invited to meet President Reagan.

The Soviet Union has taken a new line on the theme of human rights as a whole. It faces up to the problems and resolves them, and also points out that the issue is not just the situation in the USSR or the two different concepts of the freedom of the individual but also the situation in the capitalist world.

The spirit of glasnost dominated the atmosphere of the Moscow meeting. It was likewise important that there had come to the Soviet capital thousands of Americans (and not only Americans) who had never before seen the USSR and had horrendous misconceptions about it. Now they have developed an interest in the American-Soviet relations and in what is taking place in the USSR. They have seen perestroika, socialist pluralism, and a rich cultural life. One should have seen Nancy Reagan's face when she strolled through a Leningrad museum: she seemed impressed not so much by the Rembrandts she saw as by the fact that she enjoyed that beauty in the 'evil empire'. Such trifles may seem amusing, but they exclaim the need for and importance of exchanges and contacts which help destroy misconceptions and prejudices and therefore strengthen peace.

Young Intellectuals Turn To New Thinking

Joseph Skala — President,
International Union of Students (IUS)

THERE were thousands of budding physicians, scientists, engineers, lawyers and teachers among the makers of the Great French Revolution and the Great October Revolution in Russia, among the Resistance fighters in the Second World War and the national liberation fighters in countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, among those whose will for freedom prevailed over their instinct of self-preservation. It was in the progressive student movement that Lenin and Ho Chi Minh, Fidel Castro and Indira Gandhi, Olof Palme and Agostinho Neto started their admirable roads in life . . .

But history offers us other examples too: young intellectuals donned the garb of 'nobility of spirit' while still on the student benches, made alliances with mobility of birth and the propertied and administrative élite, and helped them to supplant privileges of the estates with those of 'free enterprise'.

True, the students are not monolithic in their sympathies and alliances. It was observed way back at the start of the century that they "always and inevitably reflect the political grouping of society as a whole . . . There is no party in the civilised countries that does not realise the tremendous value of the widest and most firmly established educational and trade unions; but each seeks to have its own influence predominate in them."¹ Reaction is working vigorously and insidiously along those lines today. But do the progressive forces counter it adequately, to say nothing of displaying initiative of their own? Does the initiative of future intellectuals go farther than protests and become translated into a constructive contribution? Is it confined to education and to protection of 'purely student' interests?

The time has come, I think, to speak about *the students' new responsibility* in the face of the decisive challenges of our age, which displays common human aspects to an ever larger extent in spite of differences between the socio-economic systems. To what extent is new thinking projected onto young people and is absorbed by students and to what degree do they themselves generate it? Last but not least, are the vital issues of our time a reason for revising the role and tasks of international organisations and mass democratic movements?

These are just some of the questions which are the subject of lively debates in the international student community (and, hopefully, not only there). But if we turn to contemporary theoreticians for answers to these questions, we will come up with many blanks, to put it mildly. Meanwhile, such answers are important if the budding intellectuals are to contribute towards human survival, development and progress.

Step by Step Towards Maturity

Student corporations are mentioned even in Middle Age chronicles, and shortly after the First World War national student unions were formed in most of the industrialised countries. Severe social discrimination in access to education naturally had an effect on their positions and for decades the development of those unions was dominated by the corporate (syndicalist) spirit. Anything that went beyond the 'purely student' concerns was taboo.

But practice ruled more and more imperatively in disputes between the democratic forces and the advocates of élitism in the student movement and it transpired that *the more importance students attach to 'purely student' issues, the less they are able to get to the heart of the central problems and the more helpless they are in having even their specific interests met; the more students rely on their own forces or even assert themselves as the trailblazer of progress, the more they lose the support of their natural allies; the more students deceive themselves as to their ability to stand aside from the struggle between the forces of democracy and reaction, the weaker their resistance to the policy that is against the interests of most of them.*

The Second World War served as proof of the far-sighted warning of Julius Fučík, who was politically active in the student movement: "If you, gentlemen democrats, take more time persuading fascism that you are not Bolsheviks, instead of fighting fascism, you will all end up as 'Bolsheviks' in fascist concentration camps."² Tens of thousands of those students who failed to join the anti-fascist Popular Front because of both their political myopia and their élitist illusions of 'pure academism' died behind the barbed wire of those camps and also on the battle-fronts and under Nazi bombs.

Student riots flared up in the Sorbonne, Paris, and in American and other Western universities in spring 1968. They were unprecedented both in scope and in the violence of protests against the existing order of things. Those protests undoubtedly were an important factor of opposition to the US bloody venture in Indo-China and to other reactionary policies.

But the scare was short-lived because the rebellion became bogged down in the morass of extreme anarchism. The students' natural allies turned away from their extremely utopian ideals, far-fetched messianism, eclectic ideas and emphasis on blind violence, while the 'silent majority' gave its consent to the suppression of youth protests. Some of the ideologists of the New Left ended up as ordinary terrorists, while others rose in the world and became advisers in the top echelons of political and economic power.

Yet those protests of radical leftist students were not in vain: their high educational standards and critical spirit enabled them to articulate some of the values and problems, which have now been taken up by new social movements.

In late 1986, student unrest started anew in the Latin Quarter of Paris, spilled over into many Western countries and coincided with militant actions of students in Latin America, Asia and Africa. Quite a few students gave up their lives for their progressive ideals, among them Malik Oussekin in France, Luis Corvall in Venezuela, Pak Jong Chol in South Korea, Manuel Valencia in Chile and Palestinians Ibrahim Al-Qualak and Zahed Shehada.

On that occasion university and secondary school students rose against the encroachments on their immediate interests. That struggle was and is directed against the true causes of 'economising' on the free development of the individual, against the militarists' profligacy, the merciless 'noose of indebtedness' and the cynical practices of transnationals and Big Business. Most of the student organisations joined forces broadly, effectively and without delay in spite of their disparate political sympathies. Supported by the democratic forces, young people in a number of countries for the first time ever wrenched concessions from the ruling circles, brought to power on the crest of the neoconservative wave in the late 1970s.

Binding Traditions and Instructive Lessons

The International Union of Students is still receiving letters of gratitude for the broad support it rendered to the protesters in those days. It was established as a framework of international solidarity back in 1946 by national student associations of South, East and West on the basis of the anti-fascist unity of young people, who had learned the lesson of a lack of such unity in the pre-war period. That was the first-ever world organisation of students and postgraduates united regardless of their future occupations. The tasks of struggle for their vital rights and interests are organically harmonised in the IUS platform with the upholding of the cause of peace, national independence, democracy and social progress.

The Cold War took its toll of the student movement, too. But even at that time dozens of organisations from developing countries joined it because of its consistent support for the national liberation processes. Today our Union is an umbrella organisation for 117 national unions which represent tens of millions of college and university students. It still is the only framework for students that is global in scope and universal in composition and character of activities, and this fact distinguishes the student movement from other mass public movements, which have been plagued over the decades with confrontation between international associations of different political persuasions.

But who has ever benefited from wishful thinking? The IUS has been tempted more than once to claim all but a monopoly right to speak for all the students, to lay down the line for them and to consider itself the only fountain of progress. At such times the role of the mass democratic movement which, unlike parties and other political organisations, does not have a definite body of ideology, was often overlooked. Such errors on our part virtually played into the hands of the Cold War warriors as they tried to divide various student associations. That was a costly lesson which should be learned well.

It is our firm conviction now that it is the absence of an 'anti-IUS' — though more than one attempt has been made to cobble together such an organisation — that makes it possible better to use the potential of our international democratic organisation as a catalyst of and simultaneously a platform for broad united action rather than a 'guiding centre' for a closed group of organisations.

The 15th Congress of the IUS in Havana in November 1987 and the

subsequent World Student Conference under the keynote 'Learning to Work Together for a Better Future' demonstrated the productivity of that course more graphically than any other past experience. The entire political spectrum of the student movement (with the exception of the right fringe) — from young revolutionary democrats who have to fight with arms in hand to young conservatives — was represented at those forums. But we did not take to the trenches of confrontation.

All the participants unanimously said yes to the deliverance of mankind from nuclear weapons by the end of the millennium, to the establishment of all-embracing guarantees of international security, to the right of every people to choose freely a road of development, and to the practical implementation of the humane alternative 'through disarmament to development'. A range of other key demands related to survival and progress were supported as well. A strong no was said to the Star Wars plans, to continued nuclear tests, to the undeclared war against Nicaragua and to other regional 'crusades', to the plunder of the natural, human and material resources of the Third World countries, to the ecological brigandage of transnationals and to other manifestations of the policy of social selfishness and vengeance.

A campaign of solidarity with Nicaragua became evidence of a qualitatively new level of unity in action. Not just those who share the Sandinists' revolutionary programme but also thousands of students who profess other political views but are sensitive to justice and humanism contributed to it. Dozens of rallies, demonstrations and concerts were organised in countries whose leaders are openly hostile to Nicaraguan policy and whose national student unions had broken away from the IUS way back in the 1950s. It was in cooperation with them that most of the funds for Nicaragua were raised and that a representative team was put together to go to Nicaragua to help take in the coffee harvest.

Support of the anti-apartheid fighters in South Africa is being organised on a similar and even broader basis; actions of student solidarity were launched on May 15, the Day for the Palestinian State, a fact-finding team went to the Israeli-occupied lands and a goodwill mission was organised in support of national reconciliation in Afghanistan. IUS reports sent from some of the world's 'flashpoints' by joint East-West teams of student journalists contribute towards the broad mobilisation of young people; these palpably moving documents are now circulated on video cassettes.

Imperatives of New Thinking

No temptations or structures of their social milieux prevented Giordano Bruno, Jan Hus, Voltaire, Karl Marx, Albert Einstein and Che Guevara from pursuing their Promethean roads in life. But today the suppression of the humanistic mission of science and abuses of science for reactionary, destructive purposes augur more far-reaching consequences than the tragedy or feat of an individual scientist. Being captive to the forces of social selfishness, science and technology, potentially capable of ensuring decent lives for all and helping resolve the problems involved in the interaction of man and nature, threaten the very survival of the human race.

The appeal for new thinking, which was first made by Albert Einstein and other architects of the scientific and technological revolution and which has become the imperative of our time, is addressed not just to statesmen. Unlike the enlightened altruism of the past, it aims at the new responsibility of intellectuals, namely, human survival and development, which has coincided with the instinct of self-preservation. The tasks which were once pursued only by the more consistent opponents of reaction are now becoming pressing interests and obligations for all people. It is this fact rather than someone's utopian well-wishing that prompts *the reality and necessity of a new unity of action* among the young intellectuals, a unity that would be far broader and more diversified and effective. It is in this way that we can speedier find solutions to the most pressing problems, for which the forces of peace and progress, I think, have so far lacked the energy.

The special responsibility of the student movement is, I think, a result of the generally increased role of intellectuals and of their growing influence on public opinion. And it is in colleges and universities that the basic social positions of intellectuals, their world outlooks and their social and political attitudes are in the main shaped. The student movement often is the last instance of those people's organised participation in politics.

The role of work by brain is growing more important as science becomes a direct productive force to an ever larger extent. But white-collared workers, who are persistently portrayed as an 'exclusive caste', nevertheless have to work for a wage with all the consequences of that status, which in the past was the 'prerogative' of the working class.³ On the other hand, all the underprivileged strata now have a direct interest in the fulfilment of the slogan 'Education is a right, not a privilege', which has been the keynote of a campaign carried on by the IUS for more than ten years now. Access to education and its ability to meet the new challenges posed by the development of the productive forces and by the growing cultural needs are also vitally important to young people about to make 'a start in life'. Almost 20 million young Americans, according to a commission of US business leaders and educators, are not at all certain to make a good 'start in life': they are not likely to attend college and most of them are forced to 'scramble for unsteady, part-time, low-paying jobs'.⁴

Dozens of organisations which are not IUS members vigorously contributed to preparations for the Union's forum, which effectively helped to tear down artificial barriers between students. That made it even more incumbent on IUS spokesmen to match the social responsibility of intellectuals and meet the needs of protecting their specific rights rather than make things easier for themselves by repeating from the podium the well-known truths and '-isms'. At the same time first-hand experience of how things were done at the IUS was for leaders of those other organisations the best cure for reactionary stereotypes. That was the beginning of the process of mutual and ever broader enrichment. Thanks to it, incidentally, we are better appreciating some of the problems which we used to neglect to some extent, such as the specific problems of female students, the traumatic experiences of a large segment of foreign students, pollution and the deterioration of man's ethical and cultural environment.

Our guests in Havana had the right effectively to contribute to the discussion of all our documents, and some of their proposals were included in the resolutions. Our documents thus became honest, detailed and realistic plans for joint initiatives that appealed to all those who were concerned about the same threats and were willing to contribute to the solution of the more pressing problems. That approach calls for solutions which would not be confined to denunciations of reactionary policies but would outline constructive choices. It helps involve in joint actions those forces which are likely to turn away from too general-sounding and superficial anti-imperialist slogans or even grow more set in their former prejudices and stereotypes because of them.

One can hardly count on broad unity unless there are conditions for free exchanges of views that will be an adequate reflection of the diverse political and philosophical views of the younger generation. Willingness to conduct an open dialogue here, however, should not be taken as readiness to surrender one's own convictions. Conversely, in this situation a number of progressive student unions will be able to break out of isolation that is a left-over of the grim period of 'witch-hunts'.

Pursuing Common Human Interests

The key issues of war and peace are the focal points for the broad pluralistic alliances of students. The raising of concrete aspects of the paramount problems of our time that are relevant to students and to education as a whole also is decisive to progress from fruitless confrontation to vigorous cooperation.

The IUS is showing more and more initiative in the movement for education in the spirit of peace and against the propagation of the 'enemy image' and the use of academic circles for militarist purposes. Interesting studies are being pursued together with the World Student Christian Federation, the International Federation of Medical Students' Associations and the US associations of young scientists. They will show to what extent the academic programmes of different countries inform young people to the nuclear threat and of ways of removing it and inculcate in future intellectuals a sense of responsibility for the peaceful mission of science. Students and young scientists will analyse possibilities of reconverting military production and prospects for professional advancement in the civilian sphere for those researchers and engineers who are being tempted by the architects of SDI.

'Peace Universities' are an original and long-term initiative. They are growing more and more representative of the diversity of academic, educational and research contributions to the anti-militarist struggle. Dozens of such universities in different countries, in which students cooperate with professors and scientists, are merging into a network. This autumn the Fourth International Peace University will take place in Poland. Here is another fact: recently, student leaders from the Delhi Six states and nuclear powers, meeting in India, formulated a humanistic pledge of peace, which we now offer to college and university graduates.

What are the sources of the nuclear threat? There are different answers to this question, and early accord on the matter can hardly be expected.

There is similar controversy over the factors of the hunger and poverty which plague hundreds of millions of people in the former colonies. Our Union, in which Third World student organisations predominate, supplies clear answers to such questions. But if differences persist, blocking broad constructive efforts, will the suffering of those who live from one day to the next be eased? Meanwhile, common human interests are clearly in jeopardy today. Small wonder that discussions of the students' contribution to the war on backwardness, to development and to the solution of ecological and other global problems have now formed the basis of another alliance of most university students. There emerge new forms of cooperation, such as the Club of Vienna (an analogue of the Club of Rome), which unites notable young researchers, or the International Association of Young Philosophers. It is the student movement that has set up the first Delhi Six support group, in which the national student unions of the three Western nuclear powers and the USSR are represented. Students lobby vigorously in other areas as well. The IUS energetically coöperated with the UN Brundtland Commission for the environment and development and now is a member of a group of governmental and non-governmental organisations in support of a World Centre for Our Common Future, established on the basis of the Commission's work. We have joined forces also with outstanding men of literature and the arts to find a way to avert the threat looming over humanistic cultural values so as to save dozens of national cultures. In short, our union is considered a serious partner of UNESCO and other UN agencies with regard to the solution of an ever larger number of pressing problems.

Far-reaching reforms of higher education are on the agenda in countries belonging to different social systems. To what extent will they reckon with the views of students themselves? Will the students have more say in decision-making as a result? There still are specific problems alongside common ones. In the socialist world they are related, as a rule, to the still inadequate conditions for the development and encouragement of talent and to a gap between education and the latest achievements of the scientific and technological revolution. The public in the Third World countries is worried by bad shortages of specialists in the key sectors, further aggravated by the 'brain drain' into the former parent states in the West, and that at a time of 'overproduction' of specialists in other fields. West European student unions concentrate on conservative plans for educational reforms with a view to making education another area of capitalist integration. Those plans have already fuelled the worry that the gap between 'élite' and 'mass' education may widen and that Big Business, first and foremost transnationals and military-industrial complexes, will tighten their hold of the financial and therefore administrative levers of education. Won't education in a number of key sectors become concentrated in those countries where the voice of the student and other democratic movements will go unheeded? The conservatives governing some of the West European countries have already launched a campaign in parliaments and in the mass media so as to put an end to the very existence of national student unions.

However, the forces of reaction, such as the Israeli leaders, have

themselves been taken aback by the higher educational standards of the younger generation of the Palestinian people; they make the people's uprising in the occupied lands something more than 'mere' militancy of the young and their readiness for self-sacrifice, and brute force no longer works in these new circumstances. The gap is widening between the growing knowledgeability, cultural and intellectual needs and ideological and political independence of the younger generation, on the one hand, and the practices which are hostile to the humanistic mission of science and culture, to the better understood national and social interests and to the harmonious development of the individual, on the other. This new potential of resistance to the reactionary circles should be given more attention not just in the student movement, we think.

School students' organisations have come to play a far more meaningful role as well; they are more and more active in broad alliances formed to carry through the joint initiatives of the IUS and other international youth structures.

A collective search for effective answers to all those new tendencies has resulted, *inter alia*, in the formation of a representative International Centre for Defence of Student Rights, which also offers legal aid. Together with the European Young Christian Democrats we will sponsor in October this year a large seminar on the responsibility of youth and students in our interdependent world. These facts are just isolated examples of the chain reaction that has been in evidence in the past few months but was unthinkable in the past: most of the student unions which once withdrew from IUS now ask themselves if they should rejoin it.

H. G. Wells once observed that the history of civilisation is a self-perpetuating race of disaster and education that can avert it. Disaster can by no means be allowed to prevail now. Today's students will presently take upon themselves immense responsibilities. Still in lecture halls, they are growing aware of them and try to contribute by word and deed to the struggle for the solution of the paramount problems of human survival and progress. Acting in this spirit and meeting the imperatives of new thinking, our union is ready for equal dialogue and cooperation with all those who intend to contribute to the victory of education over disaster in the impending decisive battle of our age.

From the open letter of the 15th Congress of the International Union of Students to all students of the world and their organizations

— Consider the broad-minded, constructive and consistent steps toward a fundamental expansion and deepening of contacts with student movements outside the ranks of the IUS;

— proceed from the categorical priority of universal human interests over political and other differences which must be fully stripped of the layers of mutual alienation and enmity;

— do our utmost so that these discussions and dialogues lead to a broad unity of action and practical cooperation, especially in the defence of the crucial interests and rights of academic youth, the development of its social

responsibility face to face with the danger of humanity's nuclear self-extermination, and further threats to the survival of civilization as a whole;

— work together for achieving a nuclear weapon-free world by the end of this century, for disarmament measures paving the way towards this goal, the establishment of nuclear weapon-free zones all over the world, a nuclear test ban, the banning of chemical and biological weapons, the prevention of the extension of the arms race into outer space, for conventional disarmament;

— manifest a maximum of goodwill and constructive effort, even if the realistic possibilities of cooperation with a partner are reduced to perhaps one single meaningful question, being aware that the joint defence of universal human values and goals does not amount to a renunciation of one's own beliefs and pledges;

— continue on the basis of previous experiences and further and thoroughly develop the existing democratic forms and methods of work in the organization of broad student activities, enabling all their participants — members and non-members of the IUS alike — to enjoy a completely equal possibility to influence the content, means and results of these joint discussions and activities.

¹ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 7, pp. 49-50

² Julius Fučík, *Obyčejný kapitalismus*, Prague, 1978, p. 85 (in Czech).

³ In some Western countries unemployment among specialists is above average and the situation of recent graduates is even worse.

⁴ *International Herald Tribune*, January 22, 1988.

More Ploughshares, Fewer Swords

Miguel de la Madrid — President of Mexico

WMR continues to publish answers to our questions by the heads of state and government of the Delhi Six (the Initiative of Six Countries from Four Continents for Peace and Disarmament).¹

The joint peace actions of the Delhi Six have had wide international repercussions. What do you think of their impact on the positions of other states and on world public opinion?

THE struggle for disarmament is one of the priorities of Mexican foreign policy. Pursuing the goal of disarmament, Mexico joins efforts with other states in the United Nations; it has been a member of the UN Disarmament Commission ever since its establishment. Working at the regional level, Mexico secured the signing of the Tlatelolco Treaty, which established the world's first nuclear-free zone.

In accordance with its disarmament policy, Mexico became a member of what is known as the Group of Six; our participation in the group is explained by the Mexicans' conviction that mankind as a whole bears responsibility for achieving disarmament, restricting the arms race and securing world peace.

The Group of Six promotes a broader participation of public opinion in the analysis of the possible consequences of nuclear confrontation, thereby contributing towards public awareness of the perils of atomic war. In addition, the Group has submitted its conclusions and recommendations to the leaders of the USSR and the USA, and also offered them its technical assistance in the control and verification of a ban on underground nuclear weapons tests.

It is my conviction that the activists of the Group of Six have an influence on the positions of all the states, in particular the great powers, because they are a reflection of the demand of broad sections of the international public for concrete treaties on disarmament, especially nuclear disarmament, so as to have nuclear testing banned and the arms race stopped.

Mexico aims at preventing nuclear weapons from being introduced into the territory of Latin America. What is being done in this respect?

It is common knowledge that Mexico and other countries of Latin America came up with the idea of establishing a nuclear weapon-free zone in the region and pioneered such a policy in different parts of the world. The nuclear powers signed Protocols I and II to the Tlatelolco Treaty thanks to Mexico's unrelenting diplomatic efforts. In this context our country welcomes the initiatives aimed at having other parts of the world freed from nuclear weapons, such as the Rarotonga Treaty, providing for a nuclear-free zone in the South Pacific. We support such proposals also for the Balkans, for Scandinavia, and the idea of a nuclear weapon-free corridor in Central Europe.

What is your stand on SDI and the possible development of space weapons systems?

Military rivalry between states must not be allowed to assume a new dimension, the Group of Six concluded at its meeting in Stockholm last January. Outer space is our common asset and the number of countries benefiting by its peaceful uses keeps growing from year to year. Outer space must not be used for purposes of destruction.

World public opinion is well aware of Mexico's constructive stand on a peaceful settlement of the crisis in Central America and on preventing the militarisation of the region. What steps is your country taking to achieve that goal and what can be the consequences for states of Latin America and for world peace if your individual and collective efforts are blocked?

Mexico is known to have set up in January 1983, jointly with some other Latin American countries, the Contadora Group, which was later joined by the Contadora Support Group. Their goal is to contribute towards a political settlement of the crisis in Central America. The Esquipulas 1 and 2 accords² were concluded thanks to the energetic efforts of the two groups, and talks between five Central American states were resumed as a result. The accords prepared the ground for talks between the Nicaraguan government and representatives of the counter-revolutionary forces in Sapoá, Nicaragua.

The resumption of a dialogue between the foreign ministers of the EEC countries, Central American states, the Contadora Group and the Contadora Support Group in San Jose, Costa Rica, was another accomplishment of our diplomatic efforts. Four meetings have already been held and an accord has been reached on ways of supporting economic growth in the region.

The results of the peace efforts make us optimistic and for the time being a possible failure of the cause of peace in the region and all over the world should not weigh heavily on our minds. We should recognise the fact that countries of Latin America and the Caribbean are aware of the need to use the scarce resources available to them for the development of their peoples and therefore will not stop their efforts for peace.

For this goal to be achieved, it is important that their will be respected and that countries outside the region refrain from intervention. That would be the best possible contribution towards the settlement of the crisis.

The view is gaining ground in the world community that disarmament is a condition of the normalisation of international economic relations and guaranteed economic security, equality and independence of states. The problem of the developing countries' external indebtedness has worsened unprecedentedly. What are the possible ways of settling these pressing problems, in particular, in view of the results of a meeting of the presidents of eight Latin American countries in Acapulco in November 1987?

Mexico recognises the complex relationship between disarmament, development and security, which was discussed at the Stockholm meeting of the Group of Six. The world's resources are limited and we should make our choice: if we want enough ploughshares everywhere, there should be fewer swords left. On the other hand, the Acapulco meeting of the heads of state of the Group of Eight stressed the need better to articulate and harmonise the interests of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean so as to make the region less vulnerable to external factors. This approach is in concert with the concept of joint responsibility for the settlement of problems of concern to the international community. The brunt of the burden has so far been carried by the debtor countries because foreign indebtedness has caused the mass outflow of financial resources abroad to a point where those countries have become net exporters of capital. This fact along with a sharp increase in the interest rates, a worse price situation in international trade and growing protectionism has brought about a drop

in the living standards in our countries and narrowed possibilities for their independent development.

What is your general idea of prospects for the current processes in international affairs in view of the results of the Soviet-US summit meetings? Will the world take the road to new perils or that to a better future in the 21st century?

Mexico welcomes the Soviet-US summits. The signing of the INF Treaty in Washington on December 8, 1987, can be considered a practical historic step towards disarmament and evidence of a political will for mutual understanding. A great deal is yet to be done, however: the arms race has not been halted, let alone reversed. Nuclear weapons of new types and other weapons of mass annihilation continue to be developed and tested. In this situation it is necessary to promote trust in international relations so as to facilitate comprehensive and far-reaching disarmament treaties. They make us optimistic: on the threshold of the 21st century we hope for a world without wars, universal security and cooperation for human development and progress.

We consider the new meeting of the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union a very positive development and give it every support: it spells fresh steps along the road to disarmament.

¹ See *WMR*, No. 5, 1988, for an interview with Rajiv Gandhi under the title 'A Nuclear Weapon-Free and Non-Violent World Is Attainable'. — *Ed.*

² The accords reached in Guatemala in 1987 on ways of achieving peace in Central America. For details see *WMR* No. 5, 1988, p. 39. — *Ed.*

looking towards the 21st century

Can Capitalism Do Without Militarism?

Victor Perlo — National Committee
member, Chair of Economic
Commission, Communist Party USA

The prospects for humankind's survival in the nuclear missile age, as well as other global problems of today's world raise totally new and

The ideas presented here reflect the discussion still going on in the CPUSA, and there has not yet been defined a comprehensive position on all aspects of this complex and important subject.

complex issues before Marxism-Leninism and the international communist and working-class movement. One of these issues concerns the opportunities for and the ways of dismantling militarism under capitalism. Can the more dangerous manifestations of its aggressiveness be blocked at the current stage? What is the basis underlying the prospects of socialist and capitalist countries building a nuclear-free world?

MILITARY force has always been the decisive means of capitalist expansion, from the colonial wars of expansion — and, in the United States, wars against the Native American peoples and the Mexicans — to wars of one imperialist state against another. In addition, the bourgeoisie uses military force against revolutionary workers in its own countries and internationally.

The Collapse of Power Politics

The main edge of imperialist military force has been directed against the socialist countries, primarily the Soviet Union. Imperialism sees working class power, wherever it exists, as its mortal enemy. The existence of socialist societies weakens world capitalism politically, presents an example that inspires workers to end exploitation and to build a good life.

The main weight of US militarism is directed toward preparation for nuclear aggression against the USSR. Aside from armament production, preparations include a global network of anti-Soviet military bases; military occupation of West Germany, Japan and South Korea; and the partial occupation of most other NATO members. US imperialism also directs major military activities against the national liberation movements throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America — with substantial assistance from South Africa, Israel and some NATO countries.

The appetites of imperialist states for conquest and expansion are unlimited, and the savagery and genocidal aspects of their aggressions extreme. Hitler Germany strove for world domination in alliance with Japanese imperialism, but was defeated, largely by the heroic efforts of the USSR. Thereupon US imperialism in its aim to dominate the world took over the drive for 'leadership' in destroying socialism, and threatened genocide on a more massive scale with its atom bombs.

Proponents of nuclear weapons argue that for 40 years the 'balance of terror' between the 'two superpowers' has prevented a major war and provided a record long period of peace. This argument is completely flawed. The danger of a Third World War was created by US imperialism's development of the atom bomb and its use against Japan as a means of preparing for war against the Soviet Union. And it has been the Soviet Union, primarily, with support from the world's peace movements, that thwarted the plots for a nuclear war by its successful efforts to match the US build-up. Moreover, so long as nuclear weapons are stockpiled, the danger of a catastrophe increases — through technical errors or through fanatical extremists coming to power in the United States.

Today both Soviet and American authorities concur that there is

complete *strategic equality*. Thus any US/USSR atomic war would ensure the destruction of both the United States and the Soviet Union — and likely the entire population of the earth. This parity places an insuperable obstacle in the way of nuclear aggression. Ronald Reagan has been compelled to agree, in public statements with Mikhail Gorbachov, that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought; and that our countries should move toward nuclear disarmament.

Aggressiveness: A New Mimicry

However, this does not mean that US monopoly capital has accepted the perspective of a demilitarized future, or of the actual abolition of nuclear weapons. But there are somewhat different approaches to the issue on the part of the far-right sectors, on the one hand, and the more 'moderate' conservative sections of US monopoly capital, on the other hand.

The recently released report of the far-right 'Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy' appointed by former Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger made only limited acknowledgement of the unacceptability of nuclear war. But the report is based on the concept of a war between the USA and the USSR, fought in Europe with conventional weapons and 'limited' use of nuclear weapons — as if this could really be controlled: "If non-nuclear force proves inadequate, we must be prepared to use nuclear force to stop a conventional invasion. But this force should be effective and discriminate, kept under control rather than a suicidal bluff." Or: "The huge Soviet advantage in conventional forces makes it likely that the Alliance (NATO — *Ed.*) will need some nuclear weapons to defend Europe for many years to come."

Needless to say, the claimed Soviet advantage is a propaganda myth, as is the reference to a Soviet 'invasion', since all the threats and all the preparations have been for invasion from West to East, not vice versa.

The report also emphasizes unlimited testing of new military technology and a prominent Star Wars force, assuming US superiority in these areas. Far from accepting a future of demilitarization, it advocates a 3 per cent per year 'real' increase in military spending, constrained by the US budget deficit.

Yet the report is forced to confront the deepening financial difficulties of the United States, including both its budget deficits and its deficit in foreign payments. This hampers any further increase in the share of total production going to the military, for the present, which would make it difficult to carry out the aggressive plans the report contemplates. At the same time, it urges planning for a time when a crisis will create conditions for a 'surge' in military spending far beyond the present relative level.

The more 'moderate' view is expressed by Secretary of State George Schultz in a *Foreign Affairs* article. Although written in 1985, it reflects views that have apparently remained basically unchanged to this day. Indeed, he uses the same phrase as General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachov. The title of the magazine article is 'Shaping American Foreign Policy: New Realities and New Ways of Thinking'. However, in most ways his views are restatements of old aggressive positions. In contrast to the position of the

Soviet leadership, he envisages a future of global Soviet-US hostility in foreign relations, expressing an ill-founded confidence that US imperialism has the necessary advantages for aggressive initiatives in that relationship.

Schultz's principal 'new thought' is his conviction that the world correlation of forces is shifting back in favour of capitalism. According to him, it is not the United States that is in the grip of a structural crisis, but the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. Therefore, he claims, a more aggressive stance can be adopted by Washington. The Soviet Union must be 'disciplined' for its wrongdoings: "... symbolic responses to outrageous Soviet actions have their place, and so do penalties and sanctions."

As usual with Washington polemicists, he regards all Third World conflicts as Soviet-inspired aggression. In actuality, they are imperialist interventions against countries that have broken away from capitalism; they are aimed at installing counter-revolutionary puppets. Schultz expresses strong support for more US intervention, and not only in Latin America, Africa and Asia! He praises what he hopes will be a Chinese return to capitalism and he contemplates intervention to overturn socialism in Eastern Europe. Concerning socialism in these countries, he writes: "The United States has never recognized it as legitimate or permanent."

But in one respect his 'new way of thinking' coincides with Gorbachov's: "At the same time, in the thermonuclear age both sides have a common interest in survival; therefore both sides have an incentive to moderate the rivalry and to seek ways to control nuclear weapons and reduce the risks of war . . . A world free of nuclear arms is an ultimate objective to which we, the Soviet Union, and all other nations can agree."

However, in accordance with continuing US official policy, he sees the build-up of 'defensive' nuclear arms in space as a necessary stage on the road to nuclear disarmament instead of as a roadblock to decisive progress and as a magnified danger of nuclear conflict.

Conversion to Civilian Production

Can capitalism function as a system without militarism? Decidedly yes in terms of simple economic arithmetic. The example of Japan, with its relatively low degree of military outlays and its successful rapid growth, has often been cited. But one can find examples from US experience as well. There was a vast reduction in military outlays after World War II, from 41 per-cent of gross national product (GNP) in 1944 to 4 per-cent in 1947. Even without the benefits of a planned reconversion program, US capitalism found its output increasing and its corporate profits rising, along with gains in wages won by workers.

Expenditures for military procurement declined 54 per-cent in constant prices between the Vietnam War peak and the mid-1970s. While this was a period of structural crisis and included a serious cyclical crisis, that cannot be attributed to the decline in military orders. Indeed, the structural crisis continues and another severe cyclical crisis bottomed in 1982 after years of rising military orders.

Military expenditures are currently calculated at about 6.5 per-cent of

the GNP, and production of military and space equipment at 5.4 per-cent of total industrial output. Considering the vast, rapid structural changes in industrial and other economic patterns in recent decades, the elimination of the military share of GNP and industrial output would surely be replaced by other 'more promising lines,' especially since the abolition of militarization would not be all at once but would be extended over decades.

Capitalist governments — at least that in the United States today — will not adopt a reconversion program on a national, organized scale. However, now more than in the past, important unions — notably the International Association of Machinists — are demanding such programs and are struggling for reconversion where cutbacks have already been made. Thus specific victories are possible, and they will increase as labor representatives gain positions of power in Congress and in government administrations.

However, a considerable degree of *reconversion will take place in the anarchic operation of capitalism*. Government space contracts would convert from military to civilian purposes. Indeed, there may already be pressure for such a change because of the widening lag of the United States behind the USSR in space exploration. Many other facilities can be switched, as from production of military to civilian aircraft and parts. This especially applies to the smaller sub-contractors, whose products do not have an exclusive military end-use.

In a program of demilitarization that extends over many years, even with no formal reconversion, the plant shutdowns, layoffs, etc., that would occur each year would be a minor fraction of the shutdowns and layoffs that result every year due to the anarchy of capitalism, its uneven development and extreme instability in the present stage.

It is in the interest of the working class to *try to get as much advance planning as possible for reconversion*. The objectives would be a guarantee of jobs — retention or substitution — for all workers involved in military production; provision of necessary social benefits; and public construction projects, so sorely needed in the United States, to be financed from funds released from military procurement.

For the scores of giant corporations that have become major military contractors as part of their conglomeration of activities, the gradual reduction and ultimate elimination of military business would be accommodated within the normal pattern of their operations. A company like General Electric, for example, buys up scores of businesses that appear to be promising, financed by the sale of other businesses that show a below-norm return on capital, or for which a declining market perspective is likely. GE's policy would be to salvage whatever capital were possible from the military units for use in other industrial, financial, or service operations.

The dozen or so large companies depending primarily on military business would either have to go out of business, sell out to some conglomerate, or shift to emphasis on related civilian business. Boeing, for example, already produces more civilian aircraft than military goods, and apparently makes more profit on the civilian work. Naturally the

executives of these companies will be among the most furious opponents of disarmament agreements. Yet it must be remembered that the major stockholders of these companies are the same financial institutions which control the corporations that supply mainly civilian needs and, therefore, are not totally dependent on military business.

Benefits and Losses

The social consequences of demilitarization would be positive for the great majority of the population: restoration and increase in social programs as workers, freed from the pressures of the military-induced budget deficit, would be in a strong position to campaign for added benefits.

The international balance of payments crisis and debt situation of the United States would be eased; its balance of trade might well improve as companies, deprived of military business, strive to find export markets for products they could supply.

However, the *political consequences to capitalism would be severe*, undermining the foundation of the political and economic power of US monopoly capital. It would reduce its ability to continue the rapid escalation of the rate of surplus value and, consequently, the profits of the financial hierarchy.

In the changed political climate that would result from demilitarization, the influence of the CIA, the FBI, and the military on the public in general, and on the labor movement in particular, would be curtailed. The influence of such anti-labor, anti-Soviet, anti-Communist forces as the International Department of the AFL-CIO would be diminished. Inevitably there would be a strengthening of working class political and economic activity, with the aim of reversing the deterioration of the living conditions of the masses. Awareness of this potential is a significant motive for maintaining support for a militarized economy among virtually all sectors of monopoly capital.

Obviously the global power positions of the United States, with its vast network of bases, its collection of repressive puppet dictatorships, its ability to exert pressure on many governments, would be much curtailed. More anti-imperialist revolutions would be likely, with the peoples of more and more countries taking the path towards socialism. Neo-colonialism would follow the fate of outright colonialism.

These changes would not worsen the US foreign trade balance. Rather they would tend to improve it. But there would be a reduction in the superprofits of US financial and industrial combines from investments in and loans to developing countries, and from unfair price ratios in such trade. That these losses would not be trivial is shown by the plight of the New York money center banks today.

Also, there would certainly be important economic gains when the vast peaceful markets of the socialist countries are opened up, an inevitable development in the non-militarized, peaceful world economy. But the political loss to capitalism by disclosing to US workers the benefits of socialism would be considerable.

A determined defense of militarism on the part of the armament companies and the military brass has to be anticipated. These forces would

attempt to mobilize political support from the several million civilians employed by the armed forces and by armament firms, and from millions more whom they would try to convince that they benefit from military business by servicing and supplying goods to military personnel on or near military bases.

So monopoly capital in general — aside from its military involvement — fears the *political consequences* of demilitarization and hence opposes it. In sum, it is necessary to recognize that the US capitalist class, taking into account the various positions of its different sectors, has no intention of significantly reducing the degree of militarization of the economy. And this applies to both the Republican and Democratic parties of monopoly capital. A decisive reduction in militarism requires the political mobilization of the working class and intermediate sectors of the population, including formation of a *united peace-oriented political coalition* that can compete for government control against the forces of monopoly capital.

Every US-USSR agreement on reducing nuclear weapons and testing, and every agreement settling an armed conflict, strengthens the forces seeking a demilitarized economy. The struggle for unity, for disarmament, for peace, must continue if demilitarization is to be achieved — success will not be automatic.

Militarism is as much a feature of capitalism as exploitation of labor. It can be reduced or alleviated, but not totally eliminated while the system prevails. However, the potential for reducing militarism, especially in its most dangerous forms — nuclear weapons, chemical weapons, etc. — is great. The struggle against militarism embraces the vast majority of mankind — workers, peasants and farmers, professionals, merchants, as well as oppressed peoples, countries still under colonial bondage, apartheid or occupation. The United Nations is a significant base of political support. And the struggle has behind it the tremendous prestige of the diplomacy pursued by the USSR, the most persistent and principled fighter for peace and disarmament, and by other socialist countries.

Thus the statement that militarism is inseparable from capitalism is not meant in a fatalistic or defeatist sense. Just as workers can win gains from capital, so the massive peace forces of the world, to the extent that they unite their efforts, can win even bigger victories against imperialist militarism

International Trade Union Centres Facing Global Problems

To Create A Climate Of Mutual Trust

Stig Malm — Vice-President,
International Confederation of Free
Trade Unions (ICFTU)

How would you describe the role and the opportunities of trade unions in the search for ways leading to a nuclear-free, non-violent world? Would you please comment on official ICFTU statements concerning disarmament.

BOTH the trade union movement as well as all other movements and organisations bound by close ties to the people have a duty and a task to represent their members. Since we know that all development and all life can be exterminated by the horrible nuclear arms arsenal existing on Earth, the work for peace, détente and disarmament also must be the work of the trade union movement.

It is my hope that ever more organisations will intensify their work for a more peaceful and safe world. One positive sign of progress in this direction is the fact that the peace movement has grown in strength all over the world. This will have an increasing importance for understanding between the people and the governments of different countries.

It is my firm belief that regardless of whether people live in the East or West, they have many basic moral values in common. In this sense the trade union organisations have a clear mission, that is, to participate in various types of activities in order to show that it is possible to initiate a vigorous disarmament effort involving all nuclear weapons.

The positions that we have taken in the ICFTU cover a lot of areas. The absolutely most important task is to facilitate a process which will lead to the disappearance of all nuclear weapons from the face of the Earth through a nuclear test ban and reductions of strategic nuclear weapons.

But this is not enough. There is also a need to prohibit the terrible chemical weapons still in storage. Furthermore, it is important to continue, on a bit longer-term basis, seeking agreements on the reduction of conventional arms. Concrete plans for a conversion from military to civilian production are another central question of great importance. Long-

Stig Malm was born in Sandbiberger, near Stockholm, in 1942. After graduating from a vocational training school he was a metalworker with the Arenko Ab company and was elected to the chair of the trade union local there when he was 22. In 1967 he started working as a functionary of the Swedish Metalworkers Union and became its vice-president in 1978. He was elected vice-president of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation in April 1981 and its president in May 1983. He serves on the boards of the European Trade Union Confederation and of the Nordic Trade Union Council.

In 1984 Stig Malm was elected to the Board of the Swedish Social Democratic Workers' Party and is now a member of its Executive Committee.

term work, endurance, dedication and method make it possible to decrease the tensions in the world and to increase understanding between different countries.

However, the most important thing is to bring about an even greater commitment of people and the trade unions and a more lively debate on these issues. This can be done through the spreading of knowledge and by creating an opinion in our organisations and in the mass media.

One fundamental part in the work for peace and solidarity is to consider the younger generation much more seriously than today. Young people are the decision-makers of tomorrow. Therefore the younger generation must be brought up in a spirit of mutual understanding and the feeling that international efforts are aimed at creating a world in which we will trust and respect each other.

I would like to point out yet another aspect in the work for a more peaceful world that we in the ICFTU consider important. In order to cope with all the big tasks that lie ahead of us, we need a stronger United Nations. We need a strong UN as a guarantee of peace in turbulent corners of the world and as a counter-balance to international terrorism. It is my absolute conviction that the peacekeeping activities of the UN will need increased support, both in personnel and in material resources.

As a member of an ICFTU delegation you have met with leaders of NATO, the non-aligned movement and different countries, including the USSR and the United States. What is the value of such contacts? How do you assess these leaders' attitudes to problems of security? Can you try and anticipate the future course of the positive process begun by the Soviet-American treaty on the elimination of two classes of missiles?

I note with satisfaction that the ICFTU peace initiative has been received with great interest and attention. The experience we have acquired after meetings with military and political leaders is, on the whole, positive. A complete evaluation has not been made yet. But the fact that the leaders of the two super-powers received us as representatives of more than 85 million wage-earners' from all over the world indicates that they attach much importance to our organisations and show a greater openness to different ideas and opinions.

The process now developing between the Soviet Union and the USA is extremely gratifying. It shows the importance of the peace movement when it comes to influencing the leaders of the most powerful countries in the world. But above all it shows a great foresight existing within the Soviet and the American administrations. I hope that they will follow up these conversations with binding agreements on disarmament in various fields.

One hears it said increasingly often that the world's progressive forces act in concert on the basis of universal human values which have priority over differences rooted in class-based or national interests. If this is so, does it imply that the trade unions are abandoning their class-based positions or that this priority threatens to weaken the working class movement?

I think that contacts between different progressive forces starting from a joint, general, human point of view will strengthen democratic developments and thereby also strengthen the trade union movement. This concerns the peace question, especially due to the fact that real peace and détente are not possible if there are no broad agreements on the aims to achieve. Furthermore, it is my firm belief that the positive developments that we see today are the result of efforts undertaken by many people. This is a guarantee that the demands for détente will be dealt with seriously.

How do you explain the weakening of the trade union movement in several advanced capitalist countries? How can one relate the widespread belief that the complete elimination of the trade unions is a strategic objective of the bourgeoisie with Olof Palme's words to the effect that attempts at eliminating the trade unions would be like trying to devise an unworkable economic model? What do you regard as essential for a fuller realisation of the trade unions' potential in contemporary capitalist society?

Many countries have in recent years suffered from economic hardships and high unemployment. In this type of climate it is difficult for the trade union organisations to make their voices heard. The high rates of unemployment cut down wages, and trade unions find themselves up against the wall.

When the trade union movement is attacked from various sides it is very difficult to maintain our positions. Through an often very aggressive propaganda the employers try to foment anti-union feelings in society. In addition to this, we see a growth of anti-union legislation in some countries which aims to pinion the trade union movement.

Even in Sweden — where there is an almost national unity on the fact that the trade union organisations have a great value on the Swedish labour market and that they play an important part in an open and democratic society and where even the employers understand that strong trade union organisations mean a calm labour market — we see many different attempts by the non-socialist parties to weaken the trade unions' effectiveness. This is one of the reasons why the trade unions have lost influence and power in many countries.

Another aspect of the problem is that if the trade unions are to be able to strengthen their position, I am convinced we have to broaden our work and commitment and take into consideration our members' overall life situation. What I mean is that jobs influence lifestyles. A poorly paid, monotonous job often leads to impoverished leisure. Therefore it is vital for the trade unions to assume a greater social responsibility and deal with a wider range of issues.

What form can cooperation between trade unions of different orientation take in solving the problems raised by the scientific and technological revolution and in combating hunger, disease and the threat to the environment? Is the international trade union alternative to militarisation of the economy, to unemployment and economic dependence feasible?

As I have pointed out on several occasions already, contacts between trade unions in various countries are extremely important. But I also firmly believe that we should not take too large steps. We must keep in mind that we still have very different conditions in different countries. And this fact is reflected, of course, in the discussions held on different occasions. The best way to consolidate the good relations existing today is primarily by continuing the bilateral exchange on different levels.

I also believe that in the positive forces which today work for better conditions for the wage-earners and against the arms race you can find a real alternative to the negative development you see in many parts of the world today. And I am convinced that this alternative will secure growing support and that it will yield results in day-to-day politics.

What is your vision of public participation in politics, including the enormous social role of the trade unions?

We in the democratic popular movements have a great responsibility to encourage more people to become politically active. And we must try new ways of doing this. It is a question of encouraging and giving priority to the younger generation and also to impart knowledge and information to people about the bigger vital questions.

The most important message we can convey is that human survival depends on agreements and talks in which the common ground is general security and not deterrence.

¹ The numerical strength of the unions affiliated to the ICFTU. — *Ed.*

The Time For General Declarations Is Over

Miroslav Zavadil — Vice-President,
World Federation of Trade Unions
(WFTU)

How do you assess the international situation in the late 1980s and the current state of the trade union movement?

Miroslav Zavadil was born into a working-class family in Prerov in 1932 and was trained as a coal miner in the Ostrava-Karvin Coal Basin. He held several posts in the Czechoslovak Youth Union (CYU); after graduating from the Higher Political School under the CPCz Central Committee in 1960, he was elected to the chair of the Ostrava Regional CYU Committee, and to the chair of the CYU Central Committee in 1963. He later worked as a party functionary, economic manager and diplomat. In 1987 he was elected to the chair of the Trade Unions Central Council.

Miroslav Zavadil joined the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1948. Elected to the Central Committee for the first time at the 13th Congress of the CPCz, he has been a member of the Central Committee Secretariat since 1987 and an alternate member of the Central Committee Presidium since April 1988.

THE signing of the Soviet-American INF Treaty has added a new dimension to international relations and generated the hope that the nuclear disarmament programme advanced by the USSR in January 1986 can be fulfilled by the end of the century. That is a possibility, but it will take a lot more effort to make it a reality and to solve other global problems that are looming so large before us.

The trade unions made a substantial contribution to the cause of peace and social progress. But their strength is weakened considerably by the fragmentation of the trade union movement at the national and international levels and by the lack of concerted action. Unity has always been in the focus of our attention at the WFTU. But circumstances have recently emerged which, more than ever before, call for trade union coordination and cooperation on a global scale.

That is why at its 40th session held in Bucharest in late 1987, the WFTU General Council defined the basic task of our organisation as follows: to seek unity at the national, regional and broadest possible international levels, to fight for stronger workers' solidarity, for defending workers' vital interests more effectively.

We hold that all trade unions should, without exception and without delay, take steps to pool their efforts aimed at ensuring international security, building a nuclear-free world, eliminating new forms of exploitation and expanding trade union and civil rights. They should fight together against the grinding effects of unemployment, social injustice and racial and ethnic discrimination that affect millions of people in today's world which is full of contradictions.

What obstacles to the constructive development of international trade union cooperation do you see as particularly serious?

Some of the obstacles are rooted in our own ingrained shortcomings and obsession with outdated methods. I think we should explain more convincingly and much more broadly the ideas and objectives of the WFTU to the public. We should not shy away from public appearances, debate and polemics. On the other hand, I regret to say far from all our partners are ready for joint action, and some are simply unwilling to cooperate with us. That is particularly true of the ICFTU leadership which invariably rejects all WFTU initiatives. Although there are certain points of contact between our two trade union centres and although we hold similar views and positions on certain issues, the leaders of the Confederation so far lack the political will, the resolve to launch a dialogue. All this benefits only those who do not want to see workers pool their efforts to resolve today's problems. The working class has common interests, and it is absurd for some trade union leaders to do all they can to block progress towards unity.

In a letter sent to the 14th Congress of the ICFTU held in Melbourne in March 1988, the WFTU General Council again suggested a constructive, objectively necessary dialogue. Unfortunately, the delegates of the congress did not even see our message.

While East-West contacts are expanding steadily at the inter-

governmental level (and that includes multilateral cooperation), relations between the trade unions are often virtually non-existent. Moreover, we hear voices, as though coming from the political netherworld (as it happened at the latest AFL-CIO convention) about the need to curtail contacts with 'communist trade unions' — naturally, including the WFTU.

That, I believe, is the key to why some trade union leaders reject so stubbornly any proposals on cooperation. Outdated, conservative views and inability to grasp what age we live in and what the world's workers expect from us are among the more serious obstacles to the unity of the international trade union movement.

Let me emphasise two things. First, no one will benefit from a debate over whose stand is more valid, who is 'better', which trade union organisation is more important, who is more responsible for which problem and the like. It is time we removed from our agenda the things that divide us and spoke about issues on which we can find common ground and common viewpoints. Second, we should, of course, welcome the recognition, reflected in the documents of the latest ICFTU Congress, of the fact that there is now no universal model of trade union organisation since every trade union operates in different conditions. I would venture to express the hope that this fundamental conclusion will be followed up by the ICFTU leaders in their practical work, that they will acknowledge the present-day political realities. I hope they will understand that today the international trade union movement indeed has no alternative to a constructive dialogue and to cooperation aimed at improving the lives of all workers.

And so you take an optimistic view of the future of the international trade union movement?

There are many other valid reasons for it, aside from the ones I have mentioned. There are our fruitful contacts with various governmental and non-governmental international organisations, and there is also growing cooperation between national trade union centres.

Taking into account the positive experience accumulated at the Fourth European Regional Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), we have proposed the establishment of a special working committee comprising representatives of international trade union organisations. Acting within the framework of the ILO Working Group, the committee members would draw up a joint draft resolution on the interconnection between disarmament and development and submit it to the Working Group's next session.

We also suggest that much more vigorous action be taken to establish a UN-sponsored international development fund to be financed by the resources released through disarmament.

We attach great importance to the African Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt jointly convened by the WFTU and the Organisation of African Trade Union Unity (OATUU) in Addis Ababa in December 1987, with the participation of virtually all African trade union organisations. The conference called on the world's trade unions to support the proposal

on holding a World Trade Union Conference on the Foreign Debt as soon as possible in view of the particular gravity of the problem. The trade unions are working out their own stand on this issue. No wonder the criteria they apply to the situation reflect the dialectics of our age and are as diverse as the world we live in.

The World Trade Union Conference on International Economic Security held recently in Paris is another event of major importance to the international trade union movement. Several valuable initiatives of the conference have already been implemented.

As Paris Conference participants noted, the more reactionary forces of imperialism and of the US military-industrial complex seek to block positive international developments. We would all benefit from the disarmament process continuing and becoming irreversible and from the signing of a Soviet-American treaty on a 50 per cent reduction of strategic nuclear weapons. The largest possible sections of international public opinion should be mobilised to attain that objective. Let new political thinking lead to joint action and a concerted approach of the entire world trade union movement to the key problems of our age!

We regard ties between national trade union centres and individual unions as a basis for arriving at common views and joint, coordinated attitudes. Proposals that open broad vistas for cooperation include the one voiced by Miloš Jakeš, General Secretary of the CPCz Central Committee, on creating a zone of trust, cooperation and good-neighbour relations along the line of contact between the Warsaw Treaty and the NATO countries. This is a valuable package proposal that covers all spheres — political, military, economic, environmental, and humanitarian. I hope that trade unions on both sides of the 'line of trust' will support this initiative.

The time for general declarations is over. The effectiveness of trade union efforts domestically and internationally should be judged only on the basis of actual, tangible results.

Europe After The INF Treaty

Relus Ter Beek — Labour MP,
Deputy Chair of Foreign Affairs
Committee, Parliament of the
Netherlands

THE Soviet-American INF Treaty is a big breakthrough in the drive for disarmament. Dutch Labourites received it with special enthusiasm, because they had from the very outset opposed NATO's 1979 double-track decision that led to the deployment of US Cruise and Pershing II missiles in Western Europe. In a way, our party was the only one. The other European social-democratic parties were not as dead set against it as we were.

Inspired by the powerful anti-missile movement in Western Europe (suffice it to recall the mass manifestations of 1981-1983), we tried to convince other parties. So an informal grouping, Scandilux, was set up in cooperation with Social Democrats from Denmark, Norway, the FRG, Belgium, and Luxembourg. The effort was not in vain, for a few years later all the social democratic parties of Western Europe began coming out against missile deployment. Not that the Dutch Labourites had swung the job alone. But faith in our option and confidence in ourselves increased as a result.

The hopes of most of my countrymen had finally come true. The launching pads that were being built in the country were no longer needed. Work on them was stopped. For the Netherlands had been last on NATO's list, and the stationing of new nuclear weapons in our country had not yet begun. Pity that so much money had been spent, for it could have been used with far greater benefit.

What now? The thing is to make the most of the favourable international situation that has resulted from the conclusion of the INF Treaty and consolidate this initial success. The aim is to relieve Europe of all nuclear arms. The budding disarmament process must therefore make headway. Unfortunately, the West is nursing plans of modernising armaments and thus compensating for the missiles that are to be scrapped. It is planning development of new types of weapons, and so on. That is an untenable and mistaken course. Nothing will then remain of the INF Treaty, which stood for the beginning of a movement towards a world free of arms, wars, and violence.

Keen debate is raging in Western Europe on all these issues. The spectrum of opinion is very broad. A fairly numerous group of those who favour the old way — often called 'nuclearists' — wants everything back where it was: to build up rather than cut back armaments, and work for military superiority over the Soviet Union and its allies. But the majority want to reverse that approach, to revise it. This shows that new, unusual elements have begun surfacing in Western thinking. The treaty has aroused the Old World, has made it think and subject many a thing to doubting scrutiny. More important still, NATO found itself involved, and has, it seems, begun wondering if the flexible response doctrine is grown to the needs of the day.

The idea that *arms reduction is essential* is winning more supporters. But, of course, we must never forget mutual security. People do not want to live in fear of annihilation either during arms build-ups or when arms are being scrapped. What we want is the lowest possible arms level that would guarantee a more stable peace. The important thing is to have an appropriate UN disarmament control mechanism. It would be the eyes and ears of the world community, ruling out accidental or deliberate unilateral military advantages, and any attempt at exploiting them. Besides, that mechanism would enhance the UN peace-keeping function.

But that is a future it will be hard to achieve. At the moment, the critical task, as we see it, is to get rid of at least the enormous surpluses of arms, and to defuse the exceedingly tense politico-military situation in Europe and the rest of the world.

The Soviet Union and the United States have worked out their own agenda, envisaging subsequent negotiations of a 50 per cent reduction of strategic arsenals; prevention of an arms race in outer space, an accord on chemical and conventional arms, and so on. I would not say that the nuclear test ban idea has been entirely dropped from the arms control agenda, but, regrettably, it has not got the high priority that it deserves. The Soviet Union and the USA started test-ban talks last December, but on a limited plane, seeking just to lower the number and yield of tests. We consider this insufficient. The negotiators' efforts should be directed to concluding a comprehensive ban that would halt all tests and serve as a powerful instrument containing the nuclear arms race.

Europe would do well to see if this agenda is in its interests. Perhaps some supplementary European priorities should be added to it. This, as I see it, applies to the so-called third zero option, meaning elimination of short-range nuclear systems with an action radius of up to 500 km. There is an enormous number of them, and they are as dangerous for Europe as any other type of nuclear weapon.

It is pleasing to note that during his January visit to the FRG, the Soviet foreign minister suggested starting talks on the elimination of that very class of weapon. Certainly, this should be done with an eye to the imbalances in the two sides' conventional arms. General Secretary Gorbachov has reiterated Soviet readiness to that effect. I assume that he was referring mostly to tanks and artillery.

The latest Soviet proposals generate hope for progress in the bid to reach a more stable balance in Europe at a lower level of armaments, and to include issues that trouble Europe on the great powers' negotiation agenda.

Naturally, Europeans have their own priorities as regards the triple zero. When we come to it, we will have to choose what missiles to get rid of first — land-, air-, or sea-based. I would say the first priority should go to land-based systems, and here my choice would be to start by eliminating nuclear artillery, which is a battlefield weapon, because it would be used at a very early stage of any conflict and might trigger off a real nuclear exchange. In fact, nuclear artillery seems to be the main destabilising factor that lowers the nuclear threshold. Then will come the turn of systems of a somewhat longer range — say, the Lance missiles in NATO's case and the new SS-21 and older tactical missiles on the Warsaw Treaty side. Let me say again that this should be tied in with cuts in conventional armaments.

Soon, the European states will have to look into many an important problem deriving from the new arms limitation set-up. They will have to work out their own position on it and place their own package of priority proposals on the disarmament negotiating table. *Europe wants a peaceful and stable future, and must take an active part in shaping it.*

There is a good basis for such participation. In recent years, a number of countries have (in addition to the USSR) come forward, jointly in a few cases, with interesting ideas. That these initiatives appeared at all, is highly significant. First, they speak of a considerable constructive potential, and of the ability of the European countries to raise issues of universal importance. Second, they give an idea about the growing political will of

the European states to take both individual and joint action and untie some of the tighter knots that had appeared over the previous years, securing a radical improvement of the general situation. The need is an old one, but long-term opportunities have only begun to crystallise. The main opportunity of all may undoubtedly be traced to changes in the field of disarmament, in Soviet-US relations, in relations between East and West.

What, then, is the substance of the desired changes? What are the roads that lead to them? We consider *radical change of the pillars of international security, now unstable and fraught with conflict, the main objective*. What does security depend upon? So far, on mutual deterrence through arms build-ups, suspicion, and fear. The egoistic principle — security exclusively and mainly for oneself, often at others' expense — predominates. Yet viable and lasting security can repose only on the principle of *equal security for all*. Consequently, the thing to do is to substitute a strategy of mutual understanding, confidence and cooperation for the strategy of mutual deterrence.

People say mutual deterrence is the product of a lack of communications. It follows, therefore, that ties between the European West and East should be based on a different strategy and different approaches. That is the only way a renewed Europe can emerge. The new political thinking proclaimed by Mikhail Gorbachov is needed by all of us — not only the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries, but also by the West European lands.

Mind you, while seeking military détente, we must not forget *political détente*. There must be intensive dialogue and large-scale *European cooperation* in the economic, commercial, scientific, technical, and cultural fields. When building a new edifice, it is important to reckon with the entire complex of issues. Otherwise it may collapse. Divided Europe, the European countries, will be getting closer and closer. That is inevitable. Especially if we consider the enormous technological advances expected in the next few years and decades. We will have to buttress inner-European ties whether we like it or not. We have one continent for the lot of us, and we must all be ready for gradual evolution towards an entirely new situation.

The public at large, and notably the peace movement, is making a tangible contribution to European affairs and a better international climate. The Netherlands peace movement was, and still is, very strong and influential. In the past few years it concentrated its attention on the missile problem, though, of course, it wants much more than just a stop to the deployment of certain nuclear systems.

At present, the peace movement is changing its accents, and putting more and more emphasis on détente in European East-West political relations. It is looking for someone in the other part of the continent to start a dialogue — but among ordinary people rather than official organisations. As a politician, I feel that this is very important: such a dialogue must not be reserved for governments. It must also involve the people.

The Tanzanian leader Julius Nyerere once said that peace is much too important to be the business of Moscow and Washington alone. I would

add that it is the business both of professional politicians and the mass of the people. Peace is a common concern. It has got to be invigorated, and jointly by all concerned, producing a broad coalition for the sake of a secure future.

the party

Renewing The Strategic Line

Serge Pierre-Justin — Political Bureau member, Guadeloupe Communist Party (PCG)

THE Guadeloupe Communist Party held its Ninth Congress on March 11-13, 1988, at Pointe-à-Pitre. Preceded by four months' discussion of its draft, the Political Resolution was carried almost unanimously (with two abstentions). The leadership of the PCG was renewed and rejuvenated. Notably, the new General Secretary, Comrade Christian Celeste, is 40, and his predecessor 63. Three members of the leadership aged over 60 had asked not to be re-elected to the Secretariat, and one of them has decided to return to work to a primary organisation. We opened the windows to a fresh wind of change.

The party's constitution was amended. From now on the General Secretary is to be elected by the Central Committee, not directly by the Congress as previously. The entire political leadership will be elected by secret ballot, whilst a vote by show of hands is to be confined to procedural matters. The role of the two central control commissions (political and financial) will be greater. All of these innovations aim to promote democracy and openness. A special effort will be made to augment the efficiency of the party cadres, and especially of the Central Committee staff.

But the major innovation of the Ninth PCG Congress was to formulate the main slogan of our strategic line. Before the Congress, for many years we had fought to achieve 'popular democratic autonomy as the stage leading to independence with a socialist content'. Now we demand "*socialist-oriented national independence the stages of advancement to which should be democratically decided by the people of Guadeloupe*".

There is no contradiction between the two formulae, only a shift of emphasis: today we place independence (the long-range goal) first and the stages (immediate objectives) second. But in both cases we consider Guadeloupe's independence inconceivable without a break with capitalism

— we reject neocolonialism — and we recognise the inevitability of stages because independence, and especially socialism, cannot be decreed. They become reality to the extent that objective and subjective conditions make them possible, on the basis of ever more far-reaching democratic demands.

In other words, to the extent that the level of the productive forces and mass consciousness enable a rupture with the past and prepare the passage to a new, higher condition of society. Because the effects of centuries of colonial domination and of cultural alienation, of exploitation and of economic backwardness cannot disappear as if by magic.

Having analysed the situation in the country and the world, we have decided to concentrate on a struggle against the Single European Act,¹ which has as its aim the creation of a West European unified market of 325 million inhabitants, with free movement of goods, capital and manpower.

Officially, 'Guadeloupe is France', as were once Vietnam, Algeria, or the countries of West and Equatorial Africa. Considering that the population ratio is 1:1,000 between Guadeloupe and the European Economic Community, it is easy to see that at stake is the survival of our country as an entity being menaced by absorption.

That is why we have, at the Congress, worked out an economic programme as our alternative to the West European initiatives of collective colonialism towards Guadeloupe. The integration of our country would signify its more or less rapid disappearance under EEC blows. For this reason we say: Cooperation? Yes! Integration? No! We know better than others what we need in terms of development, and we are determined to articulate that ourselves, without any counsellors or intermediaries.

In parallel, the Congress has more precisely defined our stand on alliances, both within the country and outside it. It reaffirmed the unalterability of certain principles, like proletarian solidarity and the rejection of any forms of opportunism. These considerations led us to appeal to the Guadeloupe electorate to vote for André Lajoinie, candidate of the French Communist Party, in the first round of the recent presidential election in France. Without illusions, we refused to 'rush to the succour of victory', long before the second round on May 8, because it would have signified, for us, taking the path of least resistance and inconsistency, at the first round of the elections.

All of this justifies the adjustment of the slogan of our party to the current stage. But there are other considerations, notably the fact that the class struggle has sharpened. With the systematic destruction of our productive capacities (only 14 per cent of our GDP in 1986 came from the productive sector, while our exports covered just 12 per cent of the spending on imports), the preferential agreements existing between Guadeloupe and the EEC may soon prove to be a one-way street, since we will have almost nothing to sell to foot the imports bill. The Common Market will turn for us into a cheat.

And then the Guadeloupe youth, deprived of the opportunity to work, are angry. Their disarray and disillusionment have reached a critical point. The central authorities can no longer reassure anyone with their endless and never-kept promises to provide work in France for the young people who accept leaving their country. Literally and figuratively, we live on a

volcano in Guadeloupe: a surprise eruption may occur at any moment, and nobody can predict either its amplitude, or the gravity, or the date.

In the course of the stage we have lived through, our people's political consciousness has deepened and the illusions and myths have evaporated. To the cynicism of some politicians incapable of renovation, even in words, our party has had to give a decisive answer while retaining its dignity and the sense of responsibility, when it became clear that the routes we had hitherto followed were now closed.

Without lapsing into adventurism, we have been trying to convince the other anti-colonialist currents, and notably the nationalists, that socialism is only one (scientific) — or it does not exist at all; and that a policy can be effective and endure only if it is based on the will of the masses — this is the truly democratic path. New prospects are opening up before us, the prospects of widening the scope of our alliances so as to isolate the French and local protagonists of the colonial-departmental status quo.

The Ninth PCG Congress will go down in history as a crucial moment in the life of our people — a thrust forward rejecting the outdated structures. It was the congress of dynamic maturity of our party which, on March 30, 1988, celebrated its 30th birthday after 14 years of functioning (from April 30, 1944 to March 30, 1958) as a branch of the French Communist Party. In addition, it was a congress that affirmed our unique identity as the PCG, and also one that reaffirmed the cultural individuality of our people. An Afro-Antillean art presentation, on the forum's opening day, was particularly refreshing in this respect. It was a forceful and vivid reminder of our roots and sources.

We summed up the work done, and gave the green light to movement forward as we reach out to meet new challenges and to realise new hopes. For today the dilemma presents itself starkly before the Guadeloupe people: To be or not to be?

For our part, we wish Guadeloupe to be: we have both the right and determination to fight for this. *The party has emerged politically and ideologically stronger from its Ninth Congress. Its unity will be tempered in the fire of the struggle, in its concrete acts.* The numerous messages we received from all over the world, and the presence of representatives of the fraternal parties of the Caribbean, of the American continent and of Europe, have all been a great encouragement for us, and an earnest that we shall be able to face up to the new tasks and forge the key to the doors of the future.

¹ Signed on February 17, 1986, it envisages broader 'supranational' powers for the EEC bodies. — Ed.

International Communist Movement

The Meaning of Unity Through Diversity

Gerry Pocock — member, Political Committee of the Executive, Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB);

Jim West — member, National Executive Board, Communist Party USA (CPUSA)

IN the dialogue given below, the representatives of the two parties dealt with issues connected with the unity and cooperation of communist parties, with the differences in their attitude to questions of internationalism and international solidarity, and with the Communists' cooperation with other progressive forces in today's world.

One Formula, Different Solutions

Gerry Pocock. I think that today, unity in diversity is the only principle applicable to relations between communist parties. In a sense, it is a description of reality. For quite a number of years we in our party have held the view that you should have unity, you should have joint work with other communist parties even though there are quite serious differences of views between these parties. We have advocated that view at various international meetings, but it has not always been accepted. There has been a view in the international communist movement that if there are differences, then one side has to be wrong or even moving away from being a genuine Communist party. I think it's very good that that period seems to be over now.

Jim West. The trouble with such a phrase is that it is subject to different interpretations. What do we mean by diversity? Do we mean that the only way to arrive at unity is through diversity? I find that these general formulae are much more satisfactory and conducive to solution of problems, if we can approach things much more concretely. I think everyone, for example, would find no problem with striving for unity to put an end to the threat of nuclear war. I think it's preferable to always seek the more concrete placing of problems and not rely on abstract formulations.

G.P. But don't you think that this could lead to a situation of unity through abstract generalities? One can always get a unity based on very broad and general principles. But it is precisely when you come to real-life situations that you do get divergences both because parties might have different estimations of the same phenomena, and also because circumstances in various countries differ. Even on peace and disarmament you are going to get diversity. To give a concrete example: when some years ago there was the siting of missiles in Czechoslovakia and the GDR a

number of voices in our party asked why the Soviet Union was doing that. We didn't think they were being anti-Soviet. We felt it was a legitimate point of view to hold.

J.W. Of course, it's the easiest thing in the world to get unity on abstractions. You can have agreement, unity on overall major objectives like the abolition of the threat of nuclear war, abolition of nuclear weapons. The differences might arise as to how this is to be carried out in each country. But nobody is requiring that there be universal unity on the method of this being done in each country. That, I think, is understandable, and we can all agree on that.

G.P. That's not the way I see it. I think you have to recognise that there can be actual differences which are not just accounted for by particularities of this or that country. There can be a disagreement with a policy pursued by a particular party or country in the fight for peace and I quoted the example of the siting of missiles.

J.W. In terms of hindsight, there could have been no INF Treaty unless there were these missiles to be removed.

G.P. I disagree. I think it's a very dangerous argument that you need to site missiles in order to negotiate their removal as a measure of disarmament.

J.W. It's not what we would like to do, it's what we have to do when we deal with imperialism.

G.P. But there is always a choice of paths to take. You can adopt a military response to imperialism's moves, or you can adopt a political one.

On Revisionism

J.W. Let us turn to the realm of theory, of ideology. In terms of organic unity, in a party there must be ideological unity, you cannot have two ideologies within a communist party.

G.P. But who decides what principle is to underlie the unity of our movement? Is it our party, the Communist Party of Great Britain, your party, a majority of parties or a consensus?

Today, when it's universally recognised that there are so many complex problems in the world, it would be extraordinary if there was no disagreement or differences in the assessment of different phenomena. Who can say what is the correct, the principled approach? You can only test it out.

J.W. New problems that arise must be resolved on the basis of some theory. We have that theory. The theory is Marxism-Leninism. We don't seek for the answers outside the realm of Marxism-Leninism. (How well we understand Marxism-Leninism, how well we apply it, that's another question.) We are talking about the basic unity of theory, unity on the basis of theory and ideology as the basis for a communist party. On this basis it is possible to have diversity in understanding, diversity in application and so forth. But you can't separate this question from living practice, from living reality and from the history of parties. We have a living experience of Eurocommunism which was a different interpretation of Marxism-Leninism. In fact, it discarded the Leninism part at a certain point and said: this is 'Marxism now'. But where has Eurocommunism succeeded? It

has failed. The fact of the matter is that the parties which were Eurocommunist have abandoned it, and there is a healing process taking place, and this is most welcome, because unity can be re-established, but I am profoundly convinced that it will be re-established on a Marxist-Leninist and no other basis.

G.P. A few years ago our party was occasionally referred to as a revisionist party. In the international communist movement a number of parties were regarded as being beyond the pale. I think we must abandon that practice absolutely, the practice of saying that such and such a communist party has deviated so far from the path of Marxism-Leninism, it can no longer be regarded as a communist party. If you adopt an approach which says that the parties have somehow got to be united on a common understanding of certain principles, it opens the door to excluding a party. I don't think we can do it.

Now on the question of Eurocommunism. It's a very imprecise term, and it does not have any real meaning. What did happen in Western Europe in the mid-1970s is that a number of communist parties adopted a number of propositions related to political pluralism as their conception of the democratic process of achieving socialist transformation in those countries, as well as publicly expressing criticisms of actions and policies practised by the USSR — criticisms intended to be constructive and now largely accepted by Soviet spokesmen as having been justified. These were very important principles. I still think they are valid. In that sense, our party was a bit of a pioneer with our 'British Road to Socialism', the programme we first adopted in 1951.

J.W. I think each individual party defines its own character itself, and there is no set of rules on this score governing all parties. But the question of what Eurocommunism is can't be ignored or resolved by silence, it should be studied in greater depth. And to the extent that one can speak about a crisis in the world communist movement (and there has been that characterisation), I'd say it was really a crisis — and a failure — of what is known as Eurocommunism. I think that there is now a process of overcoming that crisis.

I think in general that what is called Eurocommunism was a departure from Marxism-Leninism. In terms of theory and politics it happened under different names in different parts of the world. We had it in the United States, and it was called Browderism¹ in the 1940s or, even before that, in the 1920s, American exceptionalism. We see it as an attempt to distance a party from the totality of the experience of the Soviet Union. After the revelations about Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU this tendency became more pronounced.

G.P. Are there any contemporary recent examples in Europe?

J.W. I am referring to a certain basic problem which can be called Eurocommunism in one set of circumstances and Browderism in another. But in all instances it has certain common features or components — the separation of Leninism from Marxism, the replacement of democratic centralism with legitimate minorities in the party which always set in motion centrifugal tendencies and could lead and did lead in many cases to formal splits. These tendencies were degenerative and destructive for a

communist party — liquidationsim, loss of party discipline, loss of cohesion. Accompanying much of this was a lessening of attention to the working class, the replacement of working-class leadership with middle-class, petty-bourgeois, professional people leadership, work among the proletarian masses being neglected, the training and promotion of working-class cadres ceasing.

G.P. Is this a situation you're describing from the past in your own party, or does it now exist in other parties?

J.W. It is a common problem that existed in different countries. As far as your party is concerned, it is for you to say.

G.P. Once someone begins to pass judgment on other parties and whether they are Marxist-Leninist or have departed from Marxism-Leninism, it's a sure recipe for disrupting the international communist movement, an encouragement to its fragmentation. Take the Italian party. A few years ago it made very sharp criticisms of the Soviet Union. And there was abuse of the Italian party. But today's situation is evidence of a greater spirit of tolerance, understanding and recognition of the complexities of the problems we are all facing. This is helping our parties to come closer together.

Or take another example. A few years ago members of our party were saying that we have ceased to be Marxist-Leninists, given up proletarian internationalism, become revisionists, etc. There were articles published in the *Morning Star* about this. It was an attack on our party. And your party journal, *Political Affairs*, reprinted an article from the *Morning Star* without any reference to what we say. This is what happens when you try to 'excommunicate' other parties.

J.W. You reserve for yourself the right to criticise another party, the Soviet party, but you would deny the right of our party or another party to criticise you.

G.P. Not at all, I welcome comradely criticism. Attacks are something else.

J.W. I think at this point we could switch to objective trends in the development of our movement.

Pluralism and Joint Action

G.P. I think we can have pluralism in the international communist movement. In the past, differences in views were regarded by some parties as either heretical or as evidence of a departure from Marxism-Leninism or from what should be the 'true position'. We are still emerging from that. We are rediscovering the pluralism of our movement. I hope that one day it'll be regarded as a norm, as the natural way in which you can have cooperation between communist parties. If you trace the history of our movement, there has been a continuous evolution. Much of what is practised today would have been totally impermissible in the days of the Comintern. Now we regard it as normal.

J.W. This is too general, you know. I think it is necessary to seek agreement above all on concrete issues — the struggle for peace, the reconversion problems involved there for the capitalist countries moving away from militarism or the problem of the transnationals. This is the way

to heal the situation and promote communist activities. This requires direct consultation between parties. It's a process we've got to start in order to re-establish unity.

G.P. Yes, the parties can work together in unity even when there are differences. In fact we very much practise this in our party. We have very good relations with parties with which we've had very strong differences on certain questions. I think the important thing is to recognise that there will be differences on particular questions. It is also sometimes necessary to publicly speak of differences — not in the sense of poking into somebody else's business, but taking a position. In fact, that's glasnost, and it's perfectly in line with new political thinking.

J.W. Our party regards new thinking primarily as a struggle to transform the world agenda from confrontation to peaceful coexistence and to understand the problems of class struggle within the framework of peaceful coexistence. This means we have to take a new look at many questions. It doesn't mean doing away with class struggle under capitalism but taking a new look at how it manifests itself, how it should be conducted, and what is our role in relation to it in the light of the present world situation. So it is new from that point of view. New thinking does not negate Marxism-Leninism but develops it further.

G.P. I agree with you in that we need to be precise: I think it is absolutely vital to really have new thinking and not just go through the motions or pretend to have it. There are a lot of new problems which have not always or not often featured in communist discussions. New thinking should also include a re-examination, a discarding of old thinking. You can't examine capitalism today without giving up some old notions about the nature of capitalism. I would include in that a re-examination of the concept of the general crisis of capitalism. In all developed capitalist countries there are quite profound changes taking place in the composition of the working class and in its consciousness. This also requires a lot of new thinking on our part about how we interpret and analyse these changes and anticipate their effects. Finally, new thinking concerns the way we Communists should work on a more consistent and permanent basis with other progressive forces.

I wouldn't like any Communist to imagine that if you are taking up new thinking you've got to dump Marxism or Marxism-Leninism. I am not too worried about whether we refer to Marxism or Marxism-Leninism. Those who prefer the term 'Marxism' are not rejecting Leninism. They are incorporating the thinking and the writings of other Marxists. I think we equally need new thinking to deepen our understanding of how to apply Marxism to the vast changes in capitalism since Marx and Lenin's days.

J.W. I see a problem here. There's a need for some elaboration of the relationship of new thinking to our general social theory, so that people don't get the idea that the two are unconnected.

Meeting on What Basis?

G.P. It's important for communist parties to find ways of working together, whether in terms of discussion or in terms of concrete joint action. I don't think that the sort of conference that took place in 1969 would be all that

appropriate. In trying to draft a document agreeable to all parties, years would be wasted getting such a consensus document. Nor would all communist parties necessarily be able or willing to be present. I don't think a conference like that would have a great deal of value these days.

But it would be good for the communist parties to work together on particular issues and in particular regions. It would be unhelpful if the communist parties adopted a stand-offish position in relation to other progressive forces. I think looking for the forms of cooperation between communist parties needs to go hand-in-hand with developing to the maximum our relations and joint work with other progressive forces in the labour movement and beyond it. One without the other would be lopsided and harmful.

J.W. I think there is a need for general conferences of communist and workers' parties to be held from time to time, particularly on questions of peace and peaceful coexistence, in order to win the fight for peace, for a nuclear weapon-free world. I think we need besides this to find ways and means of developing unity and joint action on concrete questions. Overall international unity will arise from the experience gained in concrete unity on specific questions. Again I refer to the question of dealing with the transnationals. We are not yet tackling it sufficiently. It would be great if we could have a standing committee of a few representative parties by common consent, which would work on this problem — not for decision-making but for consulting each other, for fact-finding, for discussing suggestions and so on.

G.P. I would not be in favour of working groups on particular questions.

J.W. Not even as an experiment?

G.P. Take peace and disarmament — we all totally agree on that. My recollection is that the last time an attempt was made to get a conference of communist parties on peace and disarmament was the 1980 conference in Paris. Our party did not take part because we said it was useless to discuss peace and disarmament without discussing the situation relating to Afghanistan.

Besides, in each particular country the communist party is cooperating with other forces, working out concrete demands and strategies related to their own very particular circumstances, e.g., on the question of disarmament. If we had a meeting on these issues with many parties present, there would surely be an argument. Even with regard to transnationals, the views may differ considerably on what to do. It's best to recognise from the start that this is not the form of cooperation we should be looking for.

J.W. What would you think of a meeting of the parties of the EEC countries to discuss common problems?

G.P. If we had a discussion on the Common Market aimed at drawing up a joint strategy, a joint statement or anything like that, the meeting would be a failure from the first moment. The best you could get would be a meeting of the EEC communist parties to exchange views and experience. I would say that if you tried to go further, you would be wasting your time.

The Left and the Internationalism of the Communists

J.W. The fact that we work with non-communist peace movements, ecologists or religious forces cannot be an excuse for not having consultations among Communists. They would be very useful. If we have difficulties in developing relations with, say, the Socialists or the ecologists, an exchange of experience would be very helpful to us. We in the United States have certain problems with the social democrats: there's a wing that's ready to recognise us and deal with us, but there's another wing that remains anti-communist. We would like to learn about the experience of other communist parties, to learn how they cope with this, how they overcome similar difficulties.

Any time you have unity with the Socialists, the issue of reform usually arises. We are for reform, but some reforms are aimed at patching up capitalism and others tend to move in the socialist direction. It is sometimes hard to distinguish one from the other. So I think we need international consultation on the question of working with the Socialists, and that doesn't preclude united action with them. We don't demand that they disband the Socialist International in order to have unity with us Communists. On the other hand, we are not saying that we should have the Third International re-established. It's wonderful that there are relations between the Socialist International and individual communist parties. But that is no substitute for developing relations with the Socialists in each country or for exchanging experience on how to do it.

G.P. While Jim was speaking, the thought occurred to me that it would be good to have some sort of meeting between communist and socialist parties discussing how they can or cannot work together on common problems. It would probably best be done on a regional, on a group basis. Then we'll have two processes occurring simultaneously — we'll be developing our relations and working more closely with other progressive democratic forces on particular issues, and we'll have consultation and meetings with other communist parties.

J.W. I can understand the situation where a communist party works out a certain programme in agreement with other broad forces, but that does not negate the right of the communist party to its own independent position. These things are not incompatible.

G.P. The problem can arise if there is an attempt to get a collective public statement from communist parties on one of these issues, because the priorities of each party in different countries vary.

J.W. I think that's a matter of studying each situation and determining whether this or that move is going to help or not. I see the Socialist International issuing statements from time to time. But this doesn't impinge on the various affiliates in terms of what they do, nor does it necessarily make their work more difficult. We have no Communist International, but if a group of parties get together and take a position, I'm sure they will have a sense of responsibility that the statement they adopt will help, not hurt their cause.

G.P. In a world where interdependence and internationalism are of such great and growing importance, it is inconceivable that we don't find every

opportunity of expressing internationalism. We don't in our party use the term 'proletarian internationalism' for a number of reasons. We think that even in its literal sense it's an imprecise and out-of-date term. Besides, it's not the language that people use. We would refer to 'working-class internationalism' and, of course, there is also a history attached to these terms. In a certain sense, 'proletarian internationalism' is associated with an acceptance that the Soviet party is the determining factor.

Our party is very internationalist in its relationships, in its policy, in its work of solidarity and so on. In my view, we've got to give a new content to internationalism. Take the 1975 European parties' statement on all these new global issues. They've got to feature in the strategy and the campaigning of communist parties much more than they do at the present time.

Whatever different parties call it, internationalism has got to be given a new content. It's got to provide for relations with all other progressive forces and for international solidarity, and that's particularly important for Britain because of its connections with South Africa, the Middle East and all other areas.

J.W. There are all kinds of internationalism, but we are talking specifically of proletarian internationalism which we in the United States also call working-class internationalism. We believe that, for one thing, the Soviet Union does not have the patent on proletarian internationalism. The patent was given to the working class of the world by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels — 'Workers of the World, Unite!' And it's basic, fundamental to the existence of the working class and to its mission. Of course, solidarity is an essential part of it. We are talking about international working-class solidarity, about working-class internationalism, and it's needed at all levels more than ever before, not less. And it is not a substitute for international cooperation on other issues and at other levels, involving ever more people.

Even if one talks about a new internationalism or any other kind of internationalism, this does not negate the absolutely essential need for working-class internationalism — to guarantee historically the hegemony of the working class in all major social and political struggles, including the struggle for peace. Nor does this negate the role of other strata. But the working-class role should be always kept in the forefront because otherwise we will lose our birthright, the role of the revolutionary vanguard.

¹ E. Browder, General Secretary of the CPUSA 1930-1945. At the 12th Party Congress in 1944 he proposed a resolution, which was adopted, to dissolve the Party. He spoke in favour of creating a Communist Political association of an educational character. He was expelled from the Party in 1946. — *Ed.*

WMR Introduces

Dimitris Christofias

General Secretary, Progressive Party of the Working People of Cyprus (AKEL)

AT its plenary meeting on April 22, 1988, the AKEL Central Committee elected Dimitris Christofias its General Secretary. Born into a working-class family on August 29, 1946, he became active in politics at the age of 14. In 1964, after graduating from a Nicosia high school, he joined the AKEL, the Pancyprian Federation of Labour (PEO) and the United Democratic Youth Organisation (EDON), becoming a member of the EDON Central Council in 1969. Dimitris Christofias majored in philosophy and history and holds a doctors' degree. Elected Secretary-General of EDON in 1977, he remained in that office until 1987, simultaneously serving in several responsible posts within the party and becoming an alternate and then a full member of the AKEL Central Committee. In July 1986 he was elected an alternate member of the CC Political Bureau, a full member after the 16th Congress of the AKEL, and an AKEL Central Committee Secretary a year later. In April 1988 Dimitris Christofias served as acting General Secretary of the AKEL Central Committee.

Károly Grósz

General Secretary, Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party

THE Hungarian Party Conference, held on May 20-22, 1988, elected new leading bodies of the Party by secret ballot. At the plenary Central Committee meeting which followed right after it, Janos Kadar was elected Party Chair, and Károly Grósz General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party.

He was born on August 1, 1930, in Miskolc, into a working-class family with long-standing communist traditions. At the age of fifteen he started his career as a printing-house typesetter. Also then, he joined the Communist Party of Hungary and became active in its local branch.

In 1948 he was elected the secretary of the County Borsod youth organisation. In 1949 he held positions in a county committee, and then the Central Committee of the Party. In 1950 he was sent to study to the Sandor Petofi Officers' School, and after graduation served as a political officer in the Hungarian People's Army. From 1954 he worked in the County Borsod Party Committee.

During the counter-revolutionary events in October 1956, having shown adherence to principle and determination, Grósz became an organiser of a

rebuff to armed rebels in the county. For his services in the defence of the people's democratic system he was awarded a Medal of Merit for Workers' and Peasants' Power.

In 1958 Grósz was appointed Editor-in-Chief of the county newspaper *Eszak Magyarorszag*. From 1959 he concurrently studied at the Higher Party School attached to the HSWP CC. After graduation he was the secretary of the party committee of Hungarian Radio and TV (1962-1968). From 1968 to 1973 he held the post of deputy head of the HSWP CC Agitation and Propaganda Department. Meanwhile, he completed Budapest's Eotvos Lorant University by correspondence.

In 1973 he became First Secretary of the HSWP County Fejer Committee, and later headed the Agitation and Propaganda Department of the HSWP CC. From 1979 to 1984 he was First Secretary of the County Borsod Party Committee. Since 1980 he has been a member of the CC of the Party.

In December 1984 Károly Grósz became First Secretary of the HSWP Budapest City Committee. At the 13th Party Congress (1985) he was included in the CC Political Bureau. Since June 1987 he has been the Chair of the Council of Ministers of the Republic.

International Contacts

Meetings in Budapest and Bucharest

ON June 1-2, 1988, Budapest played host to a regular meeting of the secretaries of the central committees of the communist and workers' parties of the CMEA member countries who are responsible for economic affairs.

The participants discussed the basic aspects and shared their experience of the implementation of the CMEA Comprehensive Programme for Scientific and Technological Progress, the related party decisions and the collective concept of an international socialist division of labour now under development. Opinions were also exchanged on the topical questions of mutual cooperation and socialist economic integration.

In the same days Bucharest hosted a meeting of the secretaries of the central committees of the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries who are in charge of the agro-industrial complex.

They had a broad exchange of opinions and experience regarding the implementation of the decisions of the congresses of the fraternal parties on intensive farm development, better organisation and management in this important sphere of activity, and still wider and deeper mutually beneficial cooperation.

Theoretical Quest Brooks No Dogmatism

At the end of April, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee Mikhail Gorbachov met a delegation of the Communist Party of Uruguay

led by Rodney Arismendi, General Secretary of the CPU Central Committee. The latter gave a sweeping analysis of the processes now occurring in Latin America, which acquire international significance.

But Arismendi stressed that while it was today essential to see the novelty and extraordinariness of the changes, with dictatorships ousted and with stronger democratic regimes, notably in major Latin American countries, it would be dangerous for a communist party or for the consolidation of all national, progressive forces to approach these phenomena with the old stereotyped line of thinking. He pointed out that the lessons of history had not been lost on the CPU, which now builds its activity with regard for the national tradition, on the basis of today's realities, and not with quotations from books.

The interlocutors exchanged opinions on the essence of the vanguard role of the party at this stage, under socialism and capitalism alike. With all the inevitable distinctions, an overriding common requirement, they noted, is to have a broader democratic approach within the parties themselves, provide competent leadership, renew theory and policies, transform them into practice, and not only march together with the working class, but also find a common language with the most diverse sections of society. The role of the intelligentsia was emphasised.

The two leaders also shared their assessments of the state of the international communist movement. Here there are many problems which require a courageous self-critical analysis. The well-known weaknesses of the movement largely stem from the lag in a theoretical and political interpretation of the basic changes that have occurred worldwide and nationally over the past several decades. The search for answers worthy of modern socialism and the communist movement brooks no dogmatism, nor any nostalgia for the old stereotyped attitudes. They can only be found through joint voluntary effort.

The meeting participants agreed that creative and free discussions, respectful of each party, its history and contribution to the common cause, are indispensable for the renewal of the movement. A vigorous dialogue is needed, along with the enlistment of the research talent of a party and wider contacts and exchanges of opinions with other democratic forces. Perestroika in the USSR, Comrade Arismendi noted, creates the atmosphere and impetus necessary for such work.

Dialogue Between the CPSU and the JCP

Time has compressed the events and made them so dynamic that it now dictates active relations between communist parties. This point was underscored at Mikhail Gorbachov's meeting with Deputy Chair of the Central Committee of the Japanese Communist Party Tetsuzo Fuwa, visiting Moscow at the head of a JCP delegation early in May 1988. After noting that a certain negative period in relations between the two parties had been left behind, the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee expressed readiness to discuss any problems in a benevolent and frank spirit with the use of the 'capital of understanding' which has since been accumulated.

The two leaders' conversation focused mainly on the issue of eliminating nuclear weapons, and the importance of the programme to attain a nuclear free world by the year 2000, announced by the Soviet leadership in January 1986, was especially stressed. This aim, said Tetsuzo Fuwa, fully corresponds to the basic policy line of the Japanese Communists and to the sentiments of the Japanese public at large. However, the obstacles in its path are considerable, and the sides agreed that the situation could not be painted in rosy colours.

CPSU-JCP cooperation in the struggle for peace and the participation of the two countries' public forces in the anti-nuclear movement, which has become so prominent in modern world politics, were also discussed. On behalf of the CPSU and the Soviet public Gorbachov expressed solidarity with the signature drive for the Hiroshima and Nagasaki appeal and announced the intention of Soviet public organisations to actively participate in the 'second peace wave' too. Both party leaders said they were confident that a nuclear-free world could be attained, given a free socio-political choice for each people and country. It was suggested that the 21st century would really test capitalism's ability as a social system to exist and develop under demilitarisation. Special attention was paid to the problems of the Asia-Pacific region.

Relations Restored

The Communist Party of China and the Communist Party of Argentina have re-established their relations, which were broken off 28 years ago. China was visited by a delegation of the CPA led by its General Secretary Athos Fava. He stressed that both sides would be developing their ties on the basis of independence, equality, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other.

A Protocol on Cooperation

During the talks between a delegation of the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), paying an official visit to the People's Republic of Mozambique, and the leadership of Frelimo, the two sides discussed bilateral ties and ways to develop and strengthen them further. They expressed satisfaction at the current state of mutual relations. A protocol on further cooperation for 1988-1989 was signed at the end of the visit.

Voicing concern over Pretoria's continuing aggressive policy towards the Frontline States, the sides reaffirmed their support for the fighting people of South Africa led by the ANC and for all other democratic forces. The YSP and Frelimo greeted the struggle of the Palestinian people for their legitimate rights. The participants in the talks called for an end to the Iran-Iraq war and for resolving the conflict by peaceful means.

In Brief

COLOMBIA is living through a deep social and political crisis, noted a plenary session of the Patriotic Alliance-Left Wing Coalition, of which the Colombian Communist Party is a member, adding that the government is virtually powerless to check the wave of terrorism and violence and that, in this situation, democratic forces must unite. The plenary session appealed for the creation of a United Front of all political and social organisations of the country that favour progressive and democratic change. It also decided to arrange a national meeting 'For the Right to Life and Democracy'.

CONGO

The newspaper *Mweti* has published data on the membership and social composition of the Congolese Party of Labour. As of April 1988, the CPL had 8,679 members. Of them, workers were 13.09 per cent, peasants 18.5 per cent, junior office workers 18.5 per cent, middle-level employees 14.5 per cent, leading cadres 23.66 per cent, soldiers 0.5 per cent, junior commanders 4.3 per cent, and officers 6.5 per cent.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The 9th Plenary Meeting of the CPCz Central Committee decided in April to establish a principle according to which the posts of General Secretary of the CPCz CC and First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia may be held for no more than two terms in office in a row. As to first secretaries of regional and district party committees, they may stay in office for no more than three consecutive terms.

THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

As decided by a plenary meeting of the DCP CC, the Fourth Congress of the Dominican Communist Party will be held in March 1989. The plenary meeting self-critically analysed the reason for insufficient membership growth, although the circulation of the *Hablan Los Comunistas* weekly, organ of the DCP, had increased by almost 10 per cent. It stressed the need to consolidate the union of left-wing forces of the country.

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

In Trier, the home town of Karl Marx, an international symposium 'Marx and the Present-Day World', sponsored by the Karl Marx and Frederick Engels Foundation, has been held to mark the 170th anniversary of his birth. West German scholars were joined by representatives of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism attached to the CPSU Central Committee and of the Academy of Social Sciences attached to the Central Committee of the SED.

MOROCCO

The plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the Party of Progress and Socialism held in April discussed membership growth, improving political and ideological education within the party, and wider party work among the popular masses, especially the youth. It also drew attention to the need to enhance the role of the party press. A decision was taken to mark in the autumn of 1988 the 15th anniversary of the publication of the first issue of the party's organ — the newspaper *Al-Bayan*.

SRI LANKA

The candidates of the Unified Socialist Alliance, which comprises four left-wing parties, including the Communist, gained 64 out of the 155 seats contested in the elections to local government bodies in four of the country's nine provinces. The ruling United National Party won 88 seats.

USA

The Communist Party USA has decided not to participate in the presidential election. Instead, it will campaign for the election of 100 of its representatives to local government bodies.

exchange of views, discussion

Latin America: Democracy Must Be Won, Not Waited For

An international seminar has been held in Bogota by the Colombian Centre for Social Studies (CSS) and our journal to analyse the process of democratisation in Latin America, which is one of the most characteristic features of the present situation. Among those who took part in the discussions were scientists, trade union activists, and prominent political leaders from Colombia, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Nicaragua, El Salvador and the USSR.

Below is a brief survey of the main statements at the seminar prepared by Jose Arizala, a member of the CC Executive Committee of the Colombian Communist Party.

THE opening speech at the seminar was delivered by **Nicolas Buenaventura**, a member of the Colombian CP CC and Director of the Centre, who suggested the following simile for the work to be done: "A wayfarer making his way across a sown field that has been washed by rain and dried by the sun now and again hears the rustle of the young shoots straining to break through the thick hard crust covering the wheat field. It is a sound that gladdens the heart. I should like to hear something similar here. Let new ideas germinate and bold thoughts be expressed to break, in like manner, through the crust of stereotypes. Let there be no losers in our lively discussions, which should demonstrate how the new triumphs over the old, how life defeats death."

Indeed, one has to be bold and optimistic, and to love life when analysing the state of the democratic freedoms in Latin America, because everything that was said at the seminar, together with the facts from the various countries, tends to produce a fairly dismal picture of the past and of the present, which abound in brutalities and new misfortunes, although one must note certain successes scored by the peoples on the continent in their struggle for democracy.

Paramilitary Violence and Terrorism

The 'age of violence' was begun in Colombia in the late 1940s by the actions of the ultra-reactionary circles of the traditional parties, when they sent in the army and the police to put down the popular masses, said N. Buenaventura. Consistently revolutionary nationwide movements emerged in the 1960s in response to the state violence and attacks by armed bands. These movements had definite political objectives and took the place of the scattered guerrilla detachments of peasants. The turning point came in 1964, mainly in the Marquetalia district, where self-defence against air and ground attacks by government troops were organised by communities of smallholder settlers (one reactionary politician, with obviously provocative aims in mind, dubbed them 'independent republics').

The Communist Party leadership analysed these developments and their possible consequences, and at the time gave a clear definition of the character of the 'war' which had been unleashed. The policy of the authorities ushered in a new historical phase in the popular struggle in the form of a guerrilla movement in the Marquetalia district, it was said at the 10th Congress of the Colombian CP in 1966. Since then, many attempts have been made to stamp it out, the latest being that of President Betancur in 1984, 20 years after those events.

The seminar was informed of the changes in the country in the past period. In 1964, Colombia had 9 million urban dwellers, and just under 9 million rural dwellers, and in 1984, 17 and 8 million, respectively. In 1964, income per head was \$340, and in 1980, \$1,000. In that period, the Gross Domestic Product increased by 150 per cent, the state budget by 100 per cent, and the population by only 50 per cent. Capitalism has attained a middle level of development, industry has come to the fore in the production of the national product, and the country's foreign-exchange

earnings have grown. The gap between the rich and the poor has simultaneously widened, there has been a marked centralisation of capital, and financial speculation has run riot.

These figures eloquently show the depth of the changes, but it would be very naive indeed to assume that the conflicts produced by economic and social development and urban growth can be settled by means of war in remote rural areas. To this should be added the fact that the popular masses in the towns have generated a movement which has to develop outside the much-too-narrow framework laid down by the law, something that became quite obvious in the course of the nationwide civic strike on September 14, 1977, which exposed the tendency towards the establishment of an authoritarian state and the blanket application of the 'national security' doctrine by the government and the armed forces.

The administration of the Liberal President Turbay Ayala made use of the state of siege to enact in 1979 the so-called Security Statute, under which the army and the police have used the pretext of combating the drugs traffic to step up repression above all in the towns. Their actual purpose was to put down the population and so prevent the recurrence of a national strike like that of 1977.

There followed a spate of abduction, secret arrests, and tortures, while the government pretended that nothing untoward was taking place and invited Amnesty International to send a delegation to the country. It issued a report on April 1, 1980, bearing out all the well-known exposures and declaring that it had discovered 33 centres in various towns of the country where political prisoners were being subjected to torture. It said that there were up to 50 types of torture, all of which came under the UN definition of brutal, inhuman and humiliating treatment. Let us recall that that was a period of terror by the military in the states of the Southern Cone, and there was then the danger that it would spread to all the countries of the continent. That was when the 13th Congress of the Colombian CP in 1980 urged a struggle for democracy, so providing additional evidence that the situation in Colombia is closely bound up with that in other parts of Latin America, where there is ever wider action against fascism, for broader democratic freedoms, and against the 'national security' doctrine, which has become the continental doctrine of the militarists.

President Betancur, a Conservative, temporarily suspended the state of siege, and this automatically led to the repeal of the stringent security measures, and, in view of the people's striving for peace, issued a law on amnesty for political prisoners. The first armistice agreement was signed by the government at La Uribe on May 28, 1984, with the insurgents, as represented by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), which had emerged 20 years earlier in response to the army's operations against the peasant settlements. "That was an historic event, because the peasants had demonstrated to the whole nation the degree of the political maturity they had attained in the years of the resistance," said Buenaventura.

The restoration of peace began, and Jose Joaquin Matallana, retired general and former chief of the Colombian army's General Staff, gave this assessment to the military and political significance of that event: "In the

present state of the country, neither can the government's measures solve the problem of revolutionary violence, nor can armed groups striving for power attain their goal through the use of force. There is only one way out, and it is to find a basically political settlement of the issue."

The internal situation in Colombia has been markedly changing. Yet another political factor, the Patriotic Alliance, has emerged on the scene on the initiative of FARC and with the Communist Party's support, and together with the other progressive circles within the traditional and left-wing parties and groups, it has been working to create the conditions for uniting all the democratic forces, so opening up the prospect of a new type of power.

The Alliance emerged as a result of the armistice agreement and was first put to the test in the 1986 elections, when it became the core of the democratic opposition to the ruling regime. It won 14 seats in the Congress, 20 in the provincial assemblies, and 335 in the municipal councils. Moreover, in view of the local election returns, the Barco government has appointed as mayors 26 members of the Patriotic Alliance, among them many Communists, an unprecedented event in the history of Colombia. These successes have markedly widened the arena of the class struggle.

The establishment of the Unitary Working People's Centre, which has brought together most of the trade unions in the country, was an important event in the recent period. At the centre, Liberals, Conservatives, Social Democrats, Communists, Christians, and members of other trends meet to discuss common problems in a spirit of mutual respect. The centre emerged as a result of the years of cooperation and joint action by trade unions, and it has the support of the popular masses.

The 14th Congress of the Colombian CP in 1984 proposed that the process of democratisation should be backed up with concrete political and social reforms with reliance on action by the working people. That is the situation in which there soon appeared the first signs of the 'dirty war', which has spread like a blood stain across the country. The party has declared that there is a terrorist conspiracy by the CIA-backed ultra-right, the Condor Plan, for the assassination of the members of the Patriotic Alliance and Communists. Thousands have already been killed. The government has had to set up a 'Commission on Violence', a consultative body which is to study the terrorist groups, the causes of their emergence, and the methods of their activity. Colombia is in the grip of a kind of undeclared war similar to that which was carried on in Argentina and other countries of the Southern Cone. By the time of the seminar 400 members of the Patriotic Alliance alone had been killed. The number of victims subsequently rose to more than 600, among them Jaime Pardo Leal, Chair of the Patriotic Alliance. Another human rights forum, which was held in Bogota in April 1987, declared that the high command of the Colombian armed forces was involved in spreading the 'dirty war'.

The Colombian theologian **Gonzalo de Francisco**, speaking on behalf of the Jesuit Order's study centre, assessed the attitude of the present authorities to a peaceful settlement in these words: "In actual fact, the government lacks the authority to adopt final and resolute measures to

maintain internal peace . . . It vacillates; in other words, its decisions are half-hearted and fall short of meeting the interests of any of the social strata."

He identified two lines in the government's actions: one, the so-called 'outstretched hand and strong wrist' line (meaning a combination of dialogue and repression); and two, the elaboration of an 'improvement plan', an attempt to solve the most acute social problems in the areas which have suffered from the armed clashes. In both cases there is a noticeable urge to reduce the influence of the insurgent groups, and this is clearly at variance with the policy of the preceding government, which regarded them as the chief partner in negotiations for a peaceful settlement. In this way, the government seeks to put an end to the guerrilla movement by depriving it of mass support (provided, of course, the authorities manage to solve the problems of the local population). But this question arises: what do they actually intend to do with respect to the armed formations of the insurgents before the 'improvement plan' yields positive results? It looks as though the government is simply expecting the FARC contingents to demobilise.

In the speakers' view, Colombia's ruling classes stubbornly refuse to give up even a modicum of their privileges and to recognise the need for reforms as the sole guarantee of the restoration of peace; indeed, they have been clamouring for the widest repressions.

The ceaseless killings of members of the Patriotic Alliance by the death squads are one of the main obstacles to making the peace policy a success, and this tends to slow the consolidation of the Patriotic Alliance as a political organisation. Jaime Pardo Leal, then the Alliance's presidential candidate, openly condemned the death squads and so put his finger on the painful spot in the problem: the link between these squads and the army. Even the head of the national department for criminal investigation had to admit that military men, policeman and agents of the state security service were involved in criminal attacks.

Claims by the ruling circles and the armed forces that the guerrillas alone are to blame for the violence, as a pretext for getting an increase in the military budget and torpedoing the armistice with FARC, are another obstacle to internal peace. Similar ideas were also expressed by General John Galvin, Commander of NATO's Armed Forces, when he visited Colombia in late April 1987.

Edmundo Rodriguez Ramirez, a representative of the People's Power Movement, said that his political grouping had taken the most consistent and steadfast stand within the Colombian Liberal Party in support of democratisation as the necessary condition for restoring peace. But the people's participation in social life is being reduced by constitutional restrictions and the bipartisan monopoly of the mass media. The Constitution puts at the service of the 'historical' parties (the Liberals and the Conservatives) the entire state apparatus, and this creates patently unequal conditions for other popular organisations. That is why the People's Power Movement believes that if real democracy is to be attained, there is a need not only for political reforms, but also for changes in the country's economic and social structure.

The Night of the Generals

"Mutinous army men, with soot-smeared faces, clad in combat uniforms and red berets, like Rangers, and armed with sub-machine guns, barricaded themselves in at the infantry school at Campo de Mayo. They demanded that the government should end the judicial proceedings against those guilty of the crimes of the dictatorship, remove the ground forces' command, and guarantee immunity from punishment for the mutiny." That is how **Alberto Cohen**, a member of the CP Argentina CC, described one of the latest actions by the military, and while these were events dating to April of last year, the same scenario, perhaps with slight variations, was also used in other Argentinian coups from the 1930s on.

How did the country respond to the mutinous sortie? It was condemned by the overwhelming majority of the Argentinian people. The danger of a coup d'état was opposed by a wide spectrum of political forces: from the left to the right, with the exception of some ultra-reactionary leaders of the Peronist trade union bureaucracy. What was most important is that at the moment of crisis there was the first mobilisation of the popular masses against the putschists. There was a high militant spirit in the working people's action round the barracks at Camp de Mayo in the Buenos Aires Province, during the occupation of the premises of the municipal councils and other local organs of power, at the universities and in the urban neighbourhoods. In other words, the reaction of the population was altogether different and unlike the earlier purely verbal condemnation of military coups. The left-wing forces also behaved differently and did their utmost in defence of democracy with their own, popular and liberation programme.

The putschists' ultimate goal is to contain the growth of the mass movement, which poses a threat to the system of dependence; to block the reformist urges of the bourgeoisie catering to the internal market and enjoying the support of the working class; and ensuring the domination of big capital in accordance with the new US style international division of labour.

One should bear in mind that all past putsches in Argentina in one way or another banked on the overt or covert consent of the population. The tragic experience of arbitrary acts and crimes by those in power drove home to the people that military mutinies, kidnappings, tortures, killings and state terrorism had to be resolutely resisted. The first to formulate the slogan 'Never Again!' were human rights activists, the CP Argentina and other left-wing forces.

Still, the danger of fresh sorties by reaction should not be discounted: the repressive agencies infected with the 'dirty war' virus are still there; the 'national security' doctrine and the national defence law imposed by the putschists in 1966 are still in force. The Raul Alfonsín government, which kept intact the military élite of the dictatorship period, neglected the opportunities of its early days in power, and preferred the way of conciliation, which ultimately led it to its concessions to the mutineers in the Easter week of 1987. What is more, it requested the Congress urgently to enact a law on 'bounden duty', thereby rejecting the way of resolute

struggle against the putschists to their final rout with the support of the entire people.

Will there be a repetition of the old scheme under which governments, both the Radicals and Peronists, are being toppled in Argentina for more than half a century now? The speaker said that there is now a clash between two projects reflecting the interests of the ruling class. The first is to preserve the time-tested principle of the 'pendulum', an alternation of constitutional bourgeois-democratic, and sometimes populist, governments, and military dictatorships coming to power through coups. The second is to use the new system of political domination — the bipartisan system — with some tolerance with respect both to the right and to the left opposition, with the complete exclusion of the truly revolutionary forces. That is the framework within which there is now a search for a new role for the armed forces as the last reserve of dependent capitalism.

The process of democratisation got under way in the Latin American and Caribbean countries in the 1980s. It will gather momentum if the main protagonist is the people coming out into the streets and issuing an open challenge to the sway of the militarists in order to resolve the main issue: liberation or dependence?

Untapped Potentialities

The fascist nature of the regime made itself fully known in our country after the adoption in 1974 of the 'new order' statute, which placed Bolivia on a par with Brazil, Uruguay and Chile, which had already come under dictatorial power. Within a few months, Argentina also fell victim to such power. The entire Southern Cone, including Paraguay, was covered in a 'brown fog', said Professor **Marcos Domich**, a member of the CP Bolivia CC, when describing the state of affairs in the southern part of the continent in the 1970s. The military dictatorships imitated Nazi methods in eradicating democratic freedoms and brutally putting down popular mass action. They were inspired by the 'national security' doctrine, which they had learned from the textbooks of Pentagon's 'School of the Americas', until recently located in the Panama Canal Zone.

By the end of the 1970s, the slogan of struggle for democracy and anti-fascist unity, which was first issued in Bolivia by the proletariat alone, attracted the peasantry, the middle strata and even the national reformist circles of the bourgeoisie. The speaker did not agree with those who deny the significance of the struggle for democracy, while claiming to be leftist. He recalled that before the fascist coups in the countries of the Southern Cone, its significance was quite often minimised. The impatient urge to secure actual national liberation and social emancipation 'at one go'; the emphasis on forms of struggle repudiating the 'spineless' bourgeois parliamentarian; the mortally dangerous notion that repression and clandestine activity tend to accelerate the maturing of the revolution, which could break out at the will of a perspicacious and courageous élite — such are the socio-psychological factors which disarmed the masses. All of that has facilitated the task of reaction: under its pressure and with the

blessings of imperialism, the last obstacles to authoritarian forms of government collapsed.

"Bourgeois democracy was seen as something absolutely useless as if rights and freedoms were kindly donated to the people, instead of having been won by its persevering struggle," said Marcos Domich. It is well known, however, that General Hugo Banzer's regime disintegrated fairly rapidly and the popular movement once again went over to the offensive.

When recalling Bolivia's thorny road to democratisation, one has to point to the victory of the Democratic and Popular Unity Front in the 1980 elections. Its programme said that the front would not confine itself to restoring formal freedoms, but would do everything to achieve genuine democracy for the sake of national liberation, when a majority of the people would determine and direct the country's destinies.

Hernan Siles Suazo, who was elected president of the front, was preparing to take office on August 6, 1980. As a result of the electoral victory, the government was to include, as part of the front, the Bolivian Communist Party as well, an unprecedented event in the country's history, though not the first in Latin America.¹ But this was temporarily blocked by General Garcia Meza's coup. Twelve months later, the general found himself in total isolation at home and abroad, having been exposed as a drugs trafficker, and so was forced to hand over power to other officers. But they, too, were no longer able to keep their hold on the reins of government.

Despite the great hardships, the deepest economic crisis in the country's history and the differences between the allies in the front, one could claim that between October 1982 and August 1985 there was not just a restoration of the constitution in Bolivia, but a development of *the democratic process*. It is true that it was eventually defeated: it was denied support by the popular masses, because of a gap between their expectations and what the front could actually offer. There was also the malicious activity of imperialist agents in the working class and popular movement under the guise of 'friends of the working people'. The masses rose to the bait of economism and lost the way.

The front's main flaw was the lack, at the crucial moment, of the necessary will and resolve both in the face of an incapable government and of vacillation on the part of the allies and blackmail by 'left' pseudo-radicals and anarcho-syndicalists. But the democratic process (interrupted by the installation of the oligarchic Paz Estansoro government in August 1985), with all its bright and dark aspects, still remains a general rehearsal for the working class and the Bolivian people.

Transition Period

In the view of Professor Jose Paolo Neto of the University of Sao Paulo, who is a member of the Political Bureau of the Brazilian Communist Party, the 1980s in Latin America, notably in the countries of the Southern Cone, marked the start of a process of democratisation which essentially predetermined the collapse of the dictatorial forms of government. That was when there was a rise of the social, democratic forces, a process which

also involved the northern part of South America and the Central American region.

The local ruling classes used to regard US policy with respect over the past decade, and the local bourgeoisie mistakenly assumed that its inequitable partnership with US capital was a reliable way of speeding its own economic development. Such a strategy and the plunderous 'economic models' based on it could be practised only under *an agreement on forms of government* that were inevitably élitist and undemocratic. For such an agreement to work, also with an eye to the interests of the latifundists, there was a need for efforts by the various protagonists: the managers of banks and transnational corporations established in these countries, the local oligarchy and the military élite, all of whom controlled the centres of power and kept out the masses and the democratic and anti-imperialist forces. Under certain conditions, such a deal could lead to the establishment of an open military dictatorship.

US political and military influence began to decline in the 1980s. Transnational corporations, whether linked to local capital or not, showed themselves to be the main conduits of the neocolonial policy of imperialism. The extremely inequitable trade with the industrialised capitalist countries led to a heavy outflow of capital. As for the advantages the Latin American bourgeoisie had expected to reap from the scientific and technological revolution, its illusions were soon dispelled: dependence and exploitation further widened the gap between the countries of the region and the centres of imperialism.

Among the factors which made for the crisis of the military dictatorships and brought to the fore democratisation as the main demand of the peoples were the collapse of the imperialist policy in Latin America, the impact of the general crisis of capitalism on the local economy, the positive shifts in the world balance of forces, the successes of the foreign policy of the socialist countries, the mounting movement for national liberation, the inter-imperialist contradictions, and above all powerful action by the working masses. Great efforts must be made if the democratisation is to succeed, and while important successes have been scored, it would be wrong to underestimate the potentialities of the enemies of democracy, who could well mount a counter-offensive: they voice the interests of the imperialist or local monopolies and latifundias, and are broadly represented in the state apparatus, naturally including the top echelon of the armed forces and the police.

The decline of the dictatorship which had seized power in Brazil in the military-civilian coup on April 1, 1964, was caused by the resistance of all true democrats, and the working people's struggle which rose to a peak in the course of the 1974 elections. New features were imparted to the developing process within ten years by Jose Sarney. Since then the country has been in the process of gradual *transition to a democratic system*. It first required the removal of what remained of the dictatorship; then came the elections to the Constituent Assembly in 1986; and finally, a new constitution is being framed.

The point at issue now is the extent to which democratic principles will be reflected within the system of state institutions and what influence they

will be able to exert on the country's economic and social life. In view of the government's obligations to the nation, the communists have supported it, reaffirming their attitude of criticism and struggle against its steps that cut across the national interest and the needs of the people. From the very outset, the Brazilian CP has drawn attention to the fact that eliminating the legacy of the dictatorship requires the conduct of an economic and social policy for the benefit of the working masses, and the framing of the constitution to guarantee a democratic rule-of-law state, a process that will, of course, be neither smooth nor conflict-free.

The freedoms are being realised in practice and the process of change has continued in the country, but no stable structure of democratic institutions has yet been created, and that mainly because, after the fall of the authoritarian regime, the reactionary forces did not leave the arena and have retained the basic structures of their economic, social and political strength.

The establishment of a democratic rule-of-law state is the BCP's main objective at this stage of Brazil's history. It must have a regime within whose framework it would be realistic to expect the necessary transformations, and guarantees of the broadest freedoms and observance of the rights of the working people, women, the young, children, religious communities, Blacks, Indians and other minorities.

The Communists want a new historical bloc, democratic and anti-imperialist, and led by the proletariat, to have an ever greater role in national life so as to pave the way for socialism through democracy.

Relying on Support From the Socialist Forces

Pavel Boiko, D.Sc.(Hist.), sector head at the Latin America Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, stressed the characteristic feature of our epoch; the rise of the mass democratic movement in the non-socialist world offering realistic prospects for social progress, as the new edition of the CPSU Programme, adopted by the 27th Congress, also states.

Everyone is, of course, aware of the complexity and contradictory nature of the historical phase which first began in Latin America and which has come to be known as the process of democratisation. Imperialism, together with its allies, has tried to bend it to its own purposes: 'modernisation' and preservation of the system of political domination and economic plunder. The peoples of the continent have before them these two ways: either a reactionary, pro-imperialist, anti-popular, and anti-national way, or a progressive, anti-imperialist way leading to liberation. Facing the Latin American countries along the former way are brazen pillage by international capital; continue payments on the astronomic external debt; an ever greater drain on the economy; ever heavier financial dependence; and subsidies for transnational corporations setting up a 'new' international division of labour, which is fraught with further economic, social and political upheavals. The latter way means *opting for independent development* for the national interest and the welfare of broad masses of the population.

Hence the set of anti-imperialist and national-liberation tasks, whose

fulfilment requires struggle for democratic, anti-oligarchic and anti-monopoly transformations, and for genuine democracy: people's power for the benefit of the people. These broad aims require joint action on the international scene. It is daily ever more vital for the countries of the continent to cooperate with all the states and economic groupings taking a stand in defence of the principles of equality and mutual benefit, and against the urge of imperialism to bend the world to its dictates. Doing away with the relations of dependence imposed by imperialism and the oligarchy is now the most important objective condition for the development of the Latin American states as sovereign nations.

The socialist countries are reliable allies of the countries and peoples striving for economic independence, but the level of economic ties between Latin America and the socialist community is still extremely low as compared with the existing potentialities. The successes of the processes of democratisation and national liberation give the hope, however, that they will develop broad mutually beneficial cooperation in the near future.

The view was expressed at the seminar that steps in democratisation are nothing but a way of easing the socio-political conflicts in order to avoid revolutionary situations, something the ruling classes have used to bolster their rule. We do not share this view, because it is hardly possible, through political means like the weakening or elimination of dictatorial forms of government to prevent objective processes leading to revolutionary situation. On the contrary, under liberalisation the revolutionary process tends rather to gather momentum, considering that it is easier to organise the popular masses for struggle with the political potentialities opened up by liberalisation.

The discussion showed that the struggle for democracy is at the heart of developments both in South and in Central America. The peoples want deep economic and social transformations, being ever more clearly aware that these are impossible without political change, without the winning of freedom and independence.

It was also suggested that the struggle for democracy is worth very little unless it is anti-capitalist, and unless it is aimed to win socialism. It goes without saying that we could only rejoice at the triumph of socialist revolutions on our continent, but, despite the heroic struggle of the revolutionary vanguard even in the most developed countries, they have yet to be carried out. Both victorious revolutions in the Western hemisphere — in Cuba and in Nicaragua — were carried out with the use of armed force against the moribund dictatorships of Batista and Somoza, which did not use political methods, but repression and terror to stay in power.

It was also said at the seminar that there is no contradiction between democracy, socialism and revolution, and the struggle for revolution does not impede the process of democratisation, just as the urge for democracy does not contradict revolutionary struggle. Those who rise up against reactionary dictatorships and score success with a democratic programme — and that is just what happened in Cuba and Nicaragua — move forward *towards a socialist revolution*, even if that is not stated in advance.

The military tyrannies imposed by US imperialism and the most

reactionary sections of the local oligarchies are, regardless of their duration, exceptional forms of power which generate protest and resistance. It is in the interests of the working people to get rid of authoritarian regimes, and here struggle for civil liberties and democracy is the best weapon. Every step taken by the people towards democracy, even if it is bourgeois democracy, means a retreat of the social classes enjoying privileges under dictatorial regimes.

Clauses on civil rights and individual guarantees, naturally in the interests of the bourgeoisie, were written into the constitutions of several Latin American countries by radical sections of liberals in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today they refuse even to contemplate any new freedoms or even to respect the existing ones, because their political power is being challenged by a new class, the proletariat and other popular forces demanding observance of constitutional principles and democratic laws.

We, Communists, are fighting for real democracy under which the people take part in solving the basic problems in the life of the nation, but it would be wrong to underestimate the struggle for civil liberties. Their division into formal and real liberties because of the government's failure to match its deeds and the letter of the law does not in any way justify neglect of legislative norms, because there is a close dialectical connection between the two. Democracy is an illusion without rights and freedoms clearly defined by the law and fully publicised, and without juridical norms guaranteeing their effectiveness, a fact fully borne out by the record both of the dependent countries and of the developed capitalist and socialist countries. Real liberties begin to disappear when provisions of the constitution and the norms guaranteeing their exercise begin to be eroded.

The Latin American peoples' struggle for freedom has led to the downfall of several reactionary dictatorships. Those of them which are still there — in Chile and Paraguay — are being visibly weakened under pressure from the democratic forces. Nonetheless, one has to admit that the new regimes which have already come to power, for instance, in Bolivia, Argentina, and a number of other countries, to say nothing of Central America, are limited democracies. The communist parties and other progressive forces are clearly aware of these developments and urge the working class and all the other democratic circles to fight for genuine popular power which is sometimes defined in the parties' programmatic documents as '*advanced democracy*', an embodiment of the most progressive democratic norms.

In the countries where bourgeois parliamentarianism was recently restored, there are no guarantees that it will not be once again swept away by reaction. Less than a year after the above-mentioned developments in Argentina, a group of officers has once again come out against the constitutional government. That is not to say, of course, that all the military men belong to one reactionary bloc. It is important to draw a distinction between the majority of personnel in the army units and the militaristic top echelon which has connections with the latifundists and big capital. There are officers and men in the armed forces who have patriotic and democratic convictions, and the level of their political awareness has

been growing, producing new forms of military associations on the scale of the continent.² With the support of public opinion in each of our countries *the armed forces can be cleansed of pro-fascist elements.*

The peoples resolutely reject the recent past, and oppose state terrorism and any other form in which people are intimidated to facilitate a comeback by fascism.

Imperialism is no longer almighty. Those are wrong who believe that any step towards democracy in Latin America can be made only with Wall Street's permission, or that democratic gains are not all that important. The Declaration issued by a meeting of the communist parties of South America (Buenos Aires, July 1984) says: "All this shows that US domination in Latin America can and must be ended through the unity of action of the workers and the masses with the broad spectrum of patriotic and anti-imperialist forces."³ Things are, therefore, moving towards profound revolutionary transformations which necessitate struggle for democracy, genuine self-determination and peaceful coexistence.

¹ The Communists, for instance, took part in the governments of Cuba (1943-1944), Ecuador (1944-1946), Chile (1946-1947 and 1970-1973). — *Ed.*

² There is, for instance, the Organisation of Military Men for Democracy, Integration and Liberation of Latin America and the Caribbean, on whose leadership are several generals from Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Uruguay, Bolivia, Ecuador and Venezuela. — *Ed.*

³ *Information Bulletin*, 20/84, Praha, p. 43.

viewpoints

Elections Without Voters

Rene Theodore — CC General Secretary, United Party of Haitian Communists (PUCH)

IF one is to understand what is happening in Haiti today and why last November's elections were so brutally aborted, one has to go back a few months earlier, to the referendum on a new constitution in March 1987.

Developments in our country have run an extremely peculiar course, as will be seen from the activity of the Constitutional Assembly, which was set up by the National Government Council (NGC) from among its trusted

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people. It was opposed by the people, by the democratic forces, by the Communists and by all the political parties. Still, the regime imposed the Assembly, which was elected in October 1986 by less than 5 per cent of the votes, and additionally appointed 10 deputies.

This question arose: is one at all to recognise such an unrepresentative body, and if one is, how is one to get it to take decisions meeting the interests of the Haitians but undesirable for the ruling camarilla? The popular movement was clearly too small and inadequately organised to topple the government, and this posed a difficult problem before the Communists. There was a need to elaborate tactics that could help to secure the adoption of a democratic constitution in those conditions. Our party decided to start a nationwide campaign over the people's basic demands, and meetings and rallies were held in all the major towns.

A great many citizens wishing to take part in working out the constitution assembled in the Congress building every day. There emerged, in fact, two forums: the official assembly and the people's assembly, where there were stormy debates and criticism of concrete proposals. Round the parliament daily debates took place with the official 'law-makers', who turned out to be isolated even in their own constituencies. No one wanted to attend the meetings they organised, while thousands thronged to the rallies staged by the Communists.

In their efforts to win public authority, the members of the official assembly were forced to adopt the most popular proposals: decentralisation of state power, a change in the role of the army, a reform of the judiciary, a drive against corruption in the administrative apparatus and control of it, the adoption of labour legislation, and the assertion of national sovereignty.

The result was that the official assembly approved a basic law that was largely acceptable, but in the atmosphere of general hostility towards the provisional NGC very few were prepared to accept the proposed constitution, despite its content. Virtually all the political organisations feared that approval of the draft would be regarded as surrender to the regime, something that would arouse the wrath of the people. Our party alone had enough authority in the country at that time to say 'yes' to the constitution.

That was the first time our party faced the need to come out against the mass mood. That was when the influence of the Communists became obvious: we said 'yes' to the basic law and explained why we had done so. We were supported by the population, which expressed a readiness to vote for its approval.

However, the NGC was not satisfied with the basic law. The authorities made use of every possible administrative means to frustrate the referendum. The country stood on the brink of a military coup. We called on the people to handle the referendum: wherever there were no ballot-boxes, cardboard boxes were used, and where there were no white ballot papers (white signifying approval of the constitution), we made our own.

There was a response to our call: on March 29, 1987, nearly all the citizens came out for the adoption of the constitution. Only a few opposed it, and they were mainly Duvalierists, who mounted a fierce propaganda

campaign, painted the walls with 'No to the Communist Constitution' slogans, and tried to cow the people with the threat of a 'red takeover'. But the basic law was approved.

In response, the NGC staged a 'constitutional' coup d'état in June 1987, playing up the problems connected with the Interim Electoral Council: One of the articles of the new basic law provided for the establishment of this agency that was to be independent of the government. It was to organise the elections. The NGC countered by issuing a decree authorising the ministry of the interior to conduct the poll, and assigning to the Electoral Council the role of a mere observer. Public opinion saw the decree as a plot to help the Duvalierists return to power.

This decree was opposed by the popular masses and by all the political parties. A general strike broke out in June 1987 for the overthrow of the NGC which no one any longer believed because it had violated the constitution. Brutal repression was brought down on the people by the army and the police, which opened fire on the crowds and attacked the homes of the poor.

Virtually all the political parties then closed down their premises, and only the premises of our party committees remained open round the clock despite the tremendous risk, the shooting and the barricades in the streets. *The Communists were the only ones who strove to organise the people for self-defence.*

That was when the Group of 57 emerged, representing 57 organisations addressing their call directly to the masses, but because it had no headquarters, the people who responded to its call were unable to get in touch with it.

From June 22 to the middle of July, the strike movement paralysed the country; a mammoth anti-government demonstration was staged on July 16, involving tens of thousands of people. What could replace the NGC? The Group of 57 proposed the establishment of a committee of seven little-known leaders, a decision which did not suit anyone. The Communists believed that there was a need to set up a governing body consisting of nine persons, one from each department, who all came from the ranks of the popular movement and could provide a genuine alternative to the reactionary regime. But our initiative was not supported, and many were afraid simply because it had come from the Communists.

The July demonstration was staged on the call of the Group of 57. It was joined by our party, which responded to an invitation from the representatives of various urban neighbourhoods; we had helped to organise self-defence during the recent bloody clashes. As a result, improvised red flags fluttered over the columns, and the Communists were prominent among the representatives of other political forces.

Since then, the anti-communists and all those who simply wanted to distance themselves from our party have tried actively to divert the popular movement into a different channel. The Interim Electoral Council resumed its activity with general support, while the NGC retreated by abolishing its own decree on electoral procedures. The Catholic Church issued a statement to the effect that the NGC could be removed only through the election of a new government, and the same thing was said by

all the mass media. The masses halted their action against the regime and turned to the elections as allegedly the most reliable way of removing the council and this played into the hands of those who preached the use of 'legal' means, being fearful of a rise of the popular movement led by the Communists, and assuming that it could go too far and produce the most radical resolution of the crisis.

Our party found itself isolated, and up until October of last year we did not issue a single statement. We analysed the situation and discussed recent practice in our party organisations so as to break out of the isolation and to prevent the party from losing touch with the working people. At a news conference in early October, our party examined the course of the struggle against the council, gave a self-critical assessment of its recent excessive trust in other political organisations and commented on the various contenders for the presidency and their programmes, which were sheer expedients. The party then decided *to nominate its own candidate for the presidency* and to formulate its own programme. I was nominated as its candidate.

The Communists carried on their election campaign for a month in the light of their experience in the struggle for the referendum and carried on an honest and equitable dialogue with one and all. We staged rallies in the country's most important centres, which were attended by many hundreds or even thousands of people. There were debates, frank and concerned dialogues and answers to questions. Our party made extensive use of the radio, and meetings with journalists in various parts of the country.

As November 29, the date of the elections, approached it was becoming ever more clear that *they would be wrecked*, mainly because the leaders supported by Washington and the Haitian bourgeoisie had been unable to secure the people's support: their demagoguery had been of no avail. None of them had managed to muster even a thousand persons. Such politicians could not win an honest election.

Only two candidates could realistically expect to win votes. One of them was Gerard Gourgue, who represented the National Unification Front. He had the support of the 'petites églises',¹ the petty bourgeoisie and the mass media. I was regarded as the second realistic contender for the presidency, and many were astounded to discover that our party's candidate enjoyed popularity in the country. Consequently, the bourgeoisie and the reactionary circles had to accept a victory either of Gerard Gourgue or Rene Theodore. Gourgue himself could not be suspected by anyone either of anti-imperialist attitudes or sympathies for communism, but he was surrounded by people who held progressive views. Indeed, at one time, some of them even took part in the activity of the party of Haitian Communists.

Neither prospect suited the United States and its local allies, and despite the efforts of the Interim Electoral Council, the NGC decided to torpedo the elections. The constitutional referendum had shown that administrative boycotts did not quite work, and so on the night of November 29, 1987, the inhabitants of Port au Prince awakened to small arms fire and artillery salvoes. It was an attempt to intimidate the people so that no one should dare to go to the polling stations in the morning. But at

dawn, thousands of citizens thronged the streets, and that was when US, Dominican and local secret services went into action. Voters were massacred in cold blood, while the soldiers calmly stood by and watched. *The election was wrecked because reaction could not allow either of the candidates to win.* All the major political parties demanded an inquiry into the bloody crime and the tracking down and punishment of the guilty. Only then could another election be held. The NGC announced the formation of a commission of inquiry, but to this day no one knows what it has done, since the authorities are simply not interested in the results.

There was a wave of protests throughout the world over the November 29 events, and even the governments of the United States and the Dominican Republic came out with condemnations. At first they put the blame for the disruption of the voting on the NGC, but later confined themselves to expressing the wish that the elections, postponed to January 17, 1988, should be held without bloodshed. Meanwhile, military activity increased in the Caribbean, and US warships were plying the waters off the island. Modern tanks appeared in the streets of Port au Prince. The situation was red hot.

There was a start of persecution in the country after November 29. Almost all the political organisations in Haiti decided *to boycott the January elections.* The Interim Electoral Council was dissolved, and in its place the government set up another, making it possible to 'organise' the voting.

Preparations for the presidential election proceeded without the participation of the most influential parties. That was when the candidates of the four political groups enjoying support from the United States set up a Democratic Accord Committee, demagogically declaring that they represented 90 per cent of the electorate. These leaders proposed that a general strike should be held on January 15 and 16, 1988, but the masses did not respond.

Our party announced a boycott of the elections and called on the people to stay at home on Sunday, January 17. That day the streets of all the towns in the country were empty. A few stragglers, mainly military men, appeared at the polling stations. Even psychiatric patients were sent in by the authorities, and all of this was shown on television. Foreign journalists also cast votes in an effort to show that the elections were nothing but a farce.

That day, a powerful squadron of 31 foreign warships was stationed close to our shores. The Haitian army was put on a state of full combat alert, but not, however, for the purpose of beating back any possible intervention. This was done in order to put the people between the hammer and the anvil in the event of a spontaneous protest.

As a result, the NGC proclaimed Leslie Manigat as the country's president, although it is no secret at all that he was simply appointed to the post of head of state.

What is the situation in Haiti today? The incumbent government is extremely unpopular. Most of the ministers had to be appointed from among émigrés, a fact that speaks for itself.

The regime is isolated internationally; it has been recognised only by the

Dominican Republic and Venezuela. US public opinion is also against it so that even the Reagan Administration has withheld its open support for it. One has to bear in mind that the country's financial problems are being solved mainly with Washington's help: almost 60 per cent of the national budget revenues have come from abroad.

Haiti's economic condition is *catastrophic*, the result of the neoliberal course conducted in recent years in accordance with US prescriptions. It provided for the elimination of state enterprises in accordance with the demands of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, and a lifting of import restrictions. The country has been flooded with foreign goods, mostly US and Dominican. National production, including agricultural production, has been dwindling. The mining industry has virtually ceased to exist.

With the growth of foreign investments in assembly enterprises in the 1970s, some claimed that Haiti would turn into a 'Taiwan of the Caribbean'. But what is the actual state of things? No more than 60,000 jobs at 400 new factories were created, but it would be a mockery to call these industrial enterprises, because they use the simplest instruments of labour which do not require any skills to speak of. The raw materials come from the United States, and that is where the whole product goes as well. What remains in the country is a minimum amount in the form of poverty wages and virtually no foreign exchange. The 'economic miracle' did not materialise.

State enterprises, mainly in the sugar industry, have been liquidated in view of the reduction in the US sugar import quotas and competition from the Dominican Republic, whose economy is based on the export of sugar. Haiti's agriculture is in a state of crisis caused by the smuggling in of rice and maize from the United States.

The US monopolies have tried to orient Haitian agricultural production towards the growing of fruits and vegetables for their own market, and to turn our country into a constant importer of cereals, so intensifying its food dependence, a policy which well fits into the highly popular US idea that by the end of the 1990s food will become a kind of strategic weapon.

Haiti's state finances are in a grave condition. Smuggling is rife and profits many officials. The Haitian big bourgeoisie has no intention of abandoning its old habit of tax evasion. Corruption has grown to such proportions that the national budget falls short of plugging all the holes. The budget deficit comes to 60 to 70 per cent and is traditionally compensated for by the United States, which annually allocates tens of millions of dollars for this purpose.

Despite the grave economic situation, Haiti is a profitable market because of the \$300 million Haitian émigrés annually remit home from the United States and Canada. We have an exceptionally high level of unemployment. The condition of the people is becoming ever more intolerable.

The internal political situation is extremely unstable, which is why it is hard to make any forecasts for the future. It is no secret that *the military elite controls the instruments of power and manipulates the government*. The masses take an extremely hostile attitude to the military, and that is one

reason, perhaps, together with Washington's loud statements about the need to democratise Central America and the Caribbean, why the army has not openly taken over.

In these conditions, the Communists seek to work out *a political programme* to attract various social forces and to set up a broad alliance capable of rousing the Haitian people to struggle for a renewal of their country and for genuine democracy. In recent years, our party has concentrated its efforts on the main goal: the formation of *a People's Democratic Front*.

We took a different approach at various stages to the problem of alliances. At first, we called for the creation of committees in the urban neighbourhoods, and of the people's committees throughout the country on the assumption that their unification and coordinated activity would provide the basis for a broad bloc of popular forces with the participation of the Communists. However, a national congress of these committees, at which an organisation known as CONACOM was set up, did not become a step towards building such a front. In defiance of the will of the majority, CONACOM has, in effect, become yet another traditional political party, whose leaders have distanced themselves from the Communists and, in an effort to obtain financial support, established contacts with the US Embassy, which has been flirting with the leaders of many political organisations in Haiti in an attempt to isolate our party.

We now lay emphasis on *attaining unity in the localities*, seeking mutual understanding and cooperation between party organisations and grassroots committees and associations of the people. We must prevent our party's isolation from the masses, and believe that it is necessary to preserve the alliance of popular forces and to go on to establishing a people's front, without paying heed to the stand of the 'top echelon' of the political parties. This will help to ensure unity of action in practice and to organise mass action until the conditions are ripe for forming a democratic front on the level of the patriotic political parties and organisations in Haiti.

¹ The 'people's church', whose leaders are informed by the liberation theology. — Ed.

Economic Reform Debates In The Soviet Union

*Otto Latsis, D.Sc.(Econ.) —
(USSR)*

AT the beginning of this year, the economic reform in the Soviet Union moved from the stage of experiment, debate, search and design of the new economic mechanism to the stage of its wide application in practice. The principles of full economic calculus and self-financing, and the USSR Law on the State Enterprise (Association), which was adopted in 1987, now

already apply to more than one-half of our industry,¹ and by 1990 virtually the whole of the country's economy will be operating on these principles. One would think that it was time for the pre-reform debate to end, but in actual fact it has flared up with unprecedented heat, and that for several reasons.

There are the critical assessment and well-justified discontent over the fact that the CPSU's reform decisions are being inadequately fulfilled, and the indignation over the bureaucratic and often veiled resistance to the reform in some state and social organs, at enterprises, etc. There is also the urge to find other ways, to remove the sudden and unexpected difficulties, which occur in any new endeavour. There is simultaneously a growing wish to gain a deeper insight into the phenomena and processes which are being asserted in life.

That is most evident in the mail going to newspapers and journals: the number of letters to the editor of *Kommunist*, the theoretical journal of the CPSU CC, has, for instance, quadrupled as compared with the number of letters before the April 1985 CC Plenary Meeting. It is no longer only researchers, teachers or lecturers who write in. The major problems in social development are being discussed by workers, peasants, students and military, some of whom have not had much scientific training. Soviet society is seeking to obtain a better knowledge of itself: that is what this exceptionally important process could be said to mean.

There is especially much debate over the well-known slogan of perestroika which Mikhail Gorbachov expressed as 'More Socialism'. What does it mean? What does 'more socialism' mean, people ask when it was declared back in the 1930s that the building of socialism in the USSR had been completed, and when three decades ago statistical reports said that our economy was entirely socialist, and that private production had been eliminated. Some even ask: Is there more socialism now that we have small cooperatives and individual labour activity, whereas in the past everything was run by the state or the collective farms?

I intend to deal with three problems which are of especial concern to Soviet citizens: what is actually happening to socialist property, to centralised planning, and to social guarantees?

Let us begin with property. It was believed for a fairly long time that in our country property was entirely socialist, but that was in the statistical reports, from the standpoint of the juridical form in which social relations were clad.

But in life, in concrete practice there was much that made people doubt whether that view always fitted the facts, and above all, the assessment of how efficiently social property functioned. We know from Lenin's works that socialism can assert its superiority over capitalism only through a higher productivity of labour, but the actual performance by our plants and factories was often lower than that of capitalist companies.

That is true when they function normally, but of late it is being frankly said that the Soviet economy has developed serious distortions. Negative processes grew and created a pre-crisis situation. Many anomalous phenomena undermined the people's faith in the lofty principles of our system.

When trying to sort out things in the present, we turn to Lenin's methodology and draw a distinction between formal socialisation and actual socialisation. Back in 1918, Lenin wrote: "The principal difficulty lies in the economic sphere, namely, the introduction of the strictest and universal accounting and control of the production and distribution of goods, raising the productivity of labour and *socialising production in practice.*"² *Nationalising and confiscating an enterprise, so juridically turning it into the property of the state, does not yet amount to making it actually function as social property.* "... Confiscation can be carried out by 'determination' alone, without the ability to calculate and distribute properly, *whereas socialisation cannot be brought about without this ability.*"³

The inadequacy of socialisation today is expressed in our country not only in the imperfection of planned administration, but also in the weakening of the truly socialist social relations. Property which is common to all is in practice regarded as no one's and that also includes workers who were aware that there would be no change in the remuneration of their labour whether they did good work or bad, whether they saved or wasted the people's property entrusted to them. *The old economic mechanism, which we are now trying to put behind us, did not link up the working person's wages with the end results of the enterprise's activity.* Social property was also regarded as no one's by the plant management: for the director, very little depended on the actual efficiency of production, and much more on his personal relations with his superiors, on his ability to get the higher-standing body to reduce the plan, increase appropriations, etc. Finally, state property was also an abstraction for the ministry: the central departments had a free hand in disbursing billions of roubles, being guided mainly by their own narrow interests, instead of the interests of the entire people.

The net result was that the basic advantage of socialist property — working for oneself, instead of for an exploiter, according to Lenin — was far from adequately realised in practice.

A radical change is brought about by *the new economic mechanism* laid down in the decisions of the June 1987 Plenary Meeting of the CPSU CC, and the laws on the state enterprise and on cooperation: *it sets in motion the relations of full economic calculus, which implies full responsibility of the enterprise for the end result of its work.* Concepts like work collective, its income and self-management, as enacted in the law on the enterprise, effectively turn the working person into the master of production. It is the end result that determines the material well-being of the work collective and what each working person gets.

Such is the general idea of the measures which are already beginning to have an effect on the work of individuals and on the economic performance of the enterprises. The new attitude to material stock is a major gain of the reform, which is already in evidence, although it may not be all that profound. In the course of three five-year plan periods (1971-1985), surplus and unwanted resources accumulated on a vast scale in the economy — at the plants, factories and construction sites — and grew much faster than social production, but their growth has, for the first time,

been slowed down over the past two years. What is also important is that the *entire national-income increment* in industry, building and transport was, for the first time, attained in the USSR in 1987 through higher social labour productivity.

In short, important qualitative changes have taken place. This augurs well, although it will take much time to put the economy into a state of complete health. However, the decline in efficiency has been halted, and this creates the conditions for a radical turn for the better.

That is the answer to the question of what is happening to our socialist property. Lenin's precept is being fulfilled: *socialisation is being deepened in fact, and property is becoming more socialist* because every working person has a keener sense of being master of the whole people's property in practice.

What about such processes as the development of small-scale production, mini-cooperation and individual labour activity? We have, of course, no intention at all of revising Marx's well-known dictum that the "larger capitals beat the smaller".⁴ All other conditions being equal, the larger enterprises gain the upper hand over the smaller ones, because they are more efficient and more viable. But in reality this process is far from being a straightforward one.

A steel or motor works growing (to definite proportions) gains in efficiency because it makes use of more modern plant and technology. Such is the general law, and it cannot be invalidated by any political considerations. But in our haste to whip up the development, we have often turned a blind eye to this simple fact: the advantages of large-scale production do not manifest themselves where they do not exist. If, say, a whole trust is set up in place of a one-man barber shop, there will still be this one barber to give customers a haircut; there is no change in the barber's instruments of labour, so that the merits of the new outfit will be illusory, but its defects — bureaucracy, sluggishness and additional administrative overheads — will be glaring.

In the service sphere, and also, to some extent, in retail trade and public catering, customers are 'dispersed', and this creates the need for *individual labour*. The state enterprises we have been setting up in these spheres up to now, at large outlays in funds and resources, have often proved to be inefficient, uncompetitive and simply unprofitable. The larger the number of 'giants', the larger the losses, while workmanship and the quality of the services provided to citizens remained extremely low. The urge to effect formal socialisation where it is in fact impracticable usually produced one and the same result: the artificially implanted large-scale production failed to cope with its tasks.

Since any unmet demand tends to become a primary one, there emerged a large area of illegal individual private activity: since the demand had to be met. This is understandably an undesirable state of affairs in every respect: the conditions for the customer are worse because there is no state control of state prices; besides, the consumer finds himself in the hands of those who provide the services. The state also stands to lose because it does not receive any payment for the patent or in the form of taxes.

The law on individual labour activity has helped to put a normative

framework on what was already being done in practice, or, strictly speaking, it has for the time being created the conditions for its development. Indeed, millions of persons in the USSR are now engaged in various forms of such work. Whereas no more than 100,000 persons had legal patents to perform individual work before the enactment of the law, another 300,000 obtained official permits after its enactment. Another 200,000 now work in cooperatives. That is great progress when compared with the state of affairs in the past, but it is most insignificant in the light of what there is and what has yet to be done.

Summing up, one could say that *there has definitely not become less socialism in the USSR*. The simple fact is that the actual level of socialisation was in practice not as high as we had imagined. Having recognised these facts, we are introducing state control, regulation and assistance for a substantial part of individual labour activity, which is effectively becoming socialist to a greater extent, so meeting the interests of our society.

The second question, which is most frequently debated, is that of *the centralised planned administration of the economy*, and it has long been regarded as the key element of socialist development. It is true that this kind of approach had some exaggeration because planning in various forms is also practised by capitalism, but there is no doubt that socialism has all the conditions to apply and increasingly to orient itself towards the planning principles for the benefit of society and of all the working people. *It is not planning as such, but its character, its type, its orientation towards the public interest that has always been recognised by Marxism-Leninism as the distinctive feature of socialist production.*

The oversimplified view of the economic reform in the USSR, and in some of the other socialist countries, boils down to the view that these changes will produce what is known as decentralisation. Indeed, the most important functions of planning, as exercised by the central economic agencies, have already been transferred, either entirely or largely, to the enterprises, which now have to draw up their own plans for output and range of products, and to fix a part of the prices and sell their products on the basis of wholesale trade.

Consequently, there is, in fact, a transfer of competence from top to bottom. But does this mean that centralism in planning is being reduced? We have long been captive to the superficial dogmatic notions that reflect rather the juridical or bureaucratic procedural form of the process than its economic and social substance. Indeed, bureaucratic commands, orders and papers have come from the top. Decisions — even those which should not have been taken up there — were 'sent down' for fulfilment. However, *actual centralism does not mean command, but subordination of economic processes to the will of the social centre.* That is precisely what did not occur, or such regulation was far from adequate.

Ensuring proportional development is the main purpose of socialist planning, but over the recent decades one could say that it kept increasingly stumbling over disproportions, which should not exist in the economy under normal conditions. These have far from been overcome in practice, incidentally. The value of surplus material stocks in the USSR has

been estimated by economists at the fantastic amount of something like 170 billion roubles (for the sake of comparison, the USSR state budget in 1988 provides for outlays to finance the economy at 241 billion roubles, and for social and cultural outlays at 153.6 billion roubles). This vast capital is the immobilised labour of millions upon millions of people.

There is also a constant disproportion between the commodities available on the retail market and the cash in the hands of the population. This is popularly known as goods shortage, and it does a lot of harm to the normal process of trade, depreciating the earned rouble, eroding the material incentives for production and distorting distributive relations, so creating the soil for speculation, for what is known as secondary redistribution and gains by dishonest people.

There are also large disproportions in the investment sphere. More building projects have been started and are being carried on than the country can back up with material and financial resources and labour power, which is why the building becomes inefficient. There are also the particular disproportions between the supply and demand of concrete materials, and intra-sectoral and inter-sectoral disproportions, which means that actual development is not adequately planned.

This happens not because the work collectives have been given too much leeway, but on the contrary, because very little room was left for grassroots initiatives, and because the interests of the work collectives were ignored. They were unable to fulfil their plans under the old economic relations, when the enterprises were deprived of real rights by the old economic mechanism. *Democratisation and the extension of the rights of enterprises help to strengthen centralism, instead of reducing it.* There is no primitive contradiction between these two aspects of the dialectical unity: the less centralism, the more democracy, and vice versa. Their interaction is much more intricate. When things are correctly organised, it turns out that *the more democracy there is, the more there is of genuine centralism as well.* On the other hand, the more the rights of enterprises are infringed, the less there is also of centralism.

The third group of questions now being hotly discussed in the Soviet Union relates to the basic traditional *social guarantees* linked to the established notions among large masses of people concerning socialist society. Some fear that these guarantees may be undermined by the economic reform. Among the major gains — whose significance, one must say, is better understood in the capitalist countries — there is the guaranteed right to work and the absence of unemployment in the USSR (since 1932). It is true that now and again the Soviet press carries suggestions that some unemployment could help to raise the discipline of labour, and this view is understandable in purely psychological terms. But these emotional inducements are not the best argument for science and politics.

However, some scientists claim that the great labour shortage which has developed in our country over the decades tends to undermine moral principles, giving the working person an unjustified advantage in relations with management, making it possible now and again to dictate one's terms and so to be paid not for working, but simply for reporting to work. That is

true, but must the socialist society pay such a high price as unemployment for getting rid of that kind of shortcomings? The overwhelming majority of the Soviet people believe that we must not and cannot allow unemployment. Other incentives must be used, and it is increasing the attractiveness of jobs, without creating unemployment, but striking a better balance between the number of jobs and manpower availability. I think that in a planned economy this kind of balance can be struck with full employment. But this does not mean that a man who scorned his old job may claim a new one of his own choice.

For the time being, the discussion of this matter of unemployment is purely speculative because the country is short of millions of hands, but it could become a vital issue by the end of the century because something like 15 million jobs could be reduced through better organisation of production, changes in its structure and application of scientific and technological achievements.

Those who are made redundant in material production will move primarily into the service sphere, which in the USSR is most backward. We intend to develop it more widely, like other spheres of non-production activity.

That does not mean, of course, that there will be no problems, which have already been emerging, mainly because of the relocation of specialists from one job to another as the sprawling bureaucratic apparatus of administration is being whittled down. (In Moscow alone, for instance, tens of thousands of persons are being made redundant.) There will also be difficulties because of the changing pattern of material production. There will be a need for full or partial retraining and for material support for the people involved in the corresponding period. New legislative enactments easing the conditions for such relocation have been made for these purposes. Generally speaking, the mobility of labour resources is, in principle, bound to change, with new methods of labour training and a different labour mentality developing, so that a change of trade and even of profession in the course of one's life will become the rule rather than the exception. But all of these are problems that can be fully resolved under the present level of economic and cultural advancement.

The stability of retail prices is another topic that is being vigorously discussed, and here there is nothing like a consensus. A sizeable part of the population has, up to now, failed to understand and accept the idea on which the specialists insist and which life itself drives home. These matters are to be thoroughly considered from every angle. The important thing to note is that *the CPSU has firmly promised not to take any decisions in this sphere without public discussion and serious material compensation for any losses the population may incur.*

My own point of view is that we have, perhaps, held much too long the notion of retail price stability, which was meaningful and yielded a definite social effect at the stage when the general level of consumption and cultural development was not very high, and the structure of retail trade not so mobile. But that is a stage of the past: a peculiar consumer revolution took place in the industrialised socialist countries, including the Soviet Union, from the 1950s to the 1970s. The consumer structure became

much more diversified and exceptionally fluid, with a radical change in the product mix.

In these conditions, the ebb and flow of demand for some goods now and again tends to reach such proportions that it cannot be matched by any conceivable growth in production, so that equilibrium cannot be attained only through greater output, without a change in prices. Now and again, let us add, demand tends to be irrational, because, with the understated prices, and the level of incomes among the population, the scientifically grounded norms of consumption for some items tend to be excessive. When it comes to foodstuffs, this kind of thing even tends to harm the health of the population. In other cases, this is connected with the worsening of economic efficiency from wasteful consumption.

The important thing to understand is that the working people do not stand to gain when the retail price is understated as compared with the price balancing out supply and demand, and when distribution comes down to a 'free-for-all', as one prominent Soviet economist put it, in which it is the lucky customer — as a rule, a member of the higher-paid stratum of the population — who stands to gain, a fact borne out by sociological studies, polls and scrutinies of family budgets. Accordingly, a compensated rise in prices to the level of equilibrium, I think, could go to benefit those who now receive lower wages.

Gallop ing inflation, sharp price hikes — which amount to unjustified increases — should evidently be avoided in the future as well. A mechanism has to be created under which no enterprise could cover up its mismanagement, mistakes and losses by resorting to such methods.

Those are only some of the topics now being debated in the Soviet Union, and they show that our society has its own problems, like every other. But the socialist system has the distinction of solving its problems in the interests of the working people, by the working people themselves in a spirit of glasnost, of openness.

¹ In early 1988, more than 76,000 associations, enterprises, collective and state farms, and other establishments in the USSR employing almost 51 million persons, operated on full economic calculus and self-financing; they account for more than 60 per cent of industrial and farm output, for 100 per cent of communication services, 97 per cent of retail marketing, and 37 per cent of contract works; 88 per cent of transport and more than 50 per cent of everyday service are provided on the basis of self-financing. — *Ed.*

² V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 241.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 27, p. 334.

⁴ Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 1, p. 626.

The Planet's Flashpoints

Stones Versus Bullets

Naim Ashhab — Political Bureau member, CC, Palestinian Communist Party

FOR several months now the Palestinian uprising in the occupied territories has been throbbing on. It still bristles with militancy. Daily clashes with the occupiers mark the campaign of civil disobedience.

Itzhak Rabin, Israel's defence minister, had at first boasted that it would take just a few days to put down the revolt. But he soon found himself acknowledging the gravity of the situation. In February he already declared: Palestinian unrest would probably last another four months. True, a senior official from the Israeli defence ministry commented then: "By and large — it's the start of a Palestinian liberation war."

The Zionist regime initially described the uprising as a spontaneous movement, then took to asserting that it had been 'inspired from outside', and later a rumour spread in Israel, the USA and among Arab reactionaries that the Palestine Liberation Organisation wasn't 'in'. All of this aimed to provoke a political split between the Palestinians of the occupied territories and the diaspora, with an eye to forming an 'alternative leadership' of would-be collaborators in the well-known US plans for a Mid-east settlement.

Confronted with the revolt's strength and duration, all of these schemes went awry; the lies were exposed. The scale and organisation of protests in the West Bank and Gaza, notably the strikes and innumerable locally-based national committees, refute 'spontaneity'. Forces that earlier sought to revive the unity of PLO and are now represented on its bodies lead the movement. The uprising crowns the years of mobilising, organising and propagandising by those Palestinian resistance groups that have been active in the occupied territories. The Palestinian Communist Party is one of them.

The heroic struggle has dashed whatever hopes the occupiers and their henchmen may have had that, as time went by, there would grow a generation reconciled to a fait accompli occupation, 'acclimatised' to the conditions of oppression. Moshe Dayan, Israel's defence minister of the June 1967 war days, once remarked: "After ten years of our hold over the occupied territories, both the Palestinians and the world will have got used to the situation." Whereas earlier Palestinian revolts demonstrated the futility of such hopes on the aggressor's part, today's events have definitively shattered them. This is well evidenced by the names of the killed, wounded or detained, most of whom were born and reared during the years of occupation. It is this generation that refuses to accept the occupiers' yoke and is boldly challenging them.

Slogans of despair and hopelessness, such as 'salvage what can yet be saved', receded with the outbreak of the revolt. A group supporting a US-

Israeli-Jordanian settlement plan had been promoting them. They hold that the annexation has become irreversible and have been urging the people of the occupied territories to put up with this reality. Refocus, they say, on a struggle for democratic rights and integration into Israel's body politic by participating, as some suggested, in Jerusalem's municipal elections to start with. On their orders, lengthy articles keep appearing abroad to furnish 'theoretical support' for this defeatist mood.

The Organisation Mechanism

As the protest movement gained strength, a mechanism of the uprising emerged. It is rooted in the firmly-established Palestinian organisations of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including our party with its considerable local following. In the course of the revolt, committees of national unity have been set up on each street, at each camp and in each neighbourhood. They first sprang up in Gaza, then on the West Bank and soon began to control all of the occupied territories.

Parallel to the fighting national committees, which spearhead the armed struggle against the occupation forces and have become the real driving force of the uprising, there have appeared bodies of a different kind: committees for the supply of food to sealed-off areas, for transportation of the wounded, for the collection of volunteer-donated blood, 'strike defence' committees guarding the shops which soldiers want to open by force, information committees for the dissemination of the truth about what is happening, especially in the foreign mass media because their representatives are barred from entry into areas of clashes, and committees to ensure the holding of classes for school and college students since the occupation authorities have temporarily closed down the educational establishments.

Instances of civil disobedience have become more frequent: the resignation of policemen, tax collectors, and municipal employees in protest against the policy of the authorities; the boycotting of Israeli-made goods.

The national committees are now the bed-rock of people's power, an alternative to the official institutions which are being boycotted by the population. A national command of the uprising as an umbrella body for all the Palestinian organisations has been formed. It publishes its own information bulletin. These quantitative and qualitative changes and the growth of the committees help to unite the people on the basis of national interests.

In spite of the attempts by the occupiers to liquidate the uprising (arrests of its leading bodies, the division of the country into isolated 'squares of security'), these efforts do not produce the desired effect. In the admission of Israeli leaders themselves, the day after the closure of a committee there appear new ones, still better organised and consisting of members of political organisations and representatives of different social groups — the workers, women, the youth, the shopkeepers, etc. . .

With the start of the uprising our comrades went directly to fighting areas and began to establish contact with all those who were on the frontline, irrespective of their political affiliation. From the outset this has

been the main thrust of our party's activity. The PCP rejects a command style vis-à-vis the people and the ultimatum-like methods of 'imposing' strikes (on shopkeepers, for example). Ill-considered actions sometimes jeopardised such strikes.

The uprising takes in *all sections of the people*. Even bourgeois circles' resistance to the occupiers has definitely assumed a more *political character*. This is due to a general sense of the danger of 'expulsion' and the loss of national roots, as well as to the terror unleashed by the occupiers and their high-handedness in administrative and economic fields. The news conference held by the commercial bourgeoisie's representatives in Ramallah is testimony to this politicisation. They set out their own programme to end the strike, demanding first of all the convocation of an international conference to resolve the Palestinian issue.

More clearly than ever before, our party grasps the need to safeguard this new-found closeness in relations with such circles. We must elaborate the concept of action for national unity more profoundly, as it encompasses different social strata rallied round a common wish to get rid of the occupation.

The Character of the Uprising

Needless to say, the revolt cannot be viewed in isolation from the mass actions that preceded it. They followed one after another, at increasingly shorter intervals, especially after the session of national unity (Algiers, April 1987), which has strengthened the faith of the people in the victory of their just cause.¹ The uprising is arguably the crown of *all the previous struggle*, certainly not a mere repeat of earlier protests, even if with larger quantitative characteristics. Qualitatively, new features distinguish it:

- the clashes with the occupiers are of unprecedented duration and intensity, despite the murderous terror and brutal repression;

- the incomparable scale of the uprising, both geographically and in the degree of population encompassment. There is not an inch of soil, nor a social group on the West Bank and in Gaza which it has not touched;

- the vanguard role and authority of the *working class*, especially of the part of workers employed in the industry of Israel proper (about 150,000), have fully shown themselves during the protests. This finds confirmation both in the active participation of the proletariat in daily clashes with the occupation forces and in the non-reporting for work, which has inflicted tangible damage on the already undermined Israeli economy. The mass media of Israel assess this as a serious problem and raise the question of enlisting foreign manpower;

- leaders from *among the popular masses*, the youth, women, and workers who are not affiliated to the now-existing Palestinian organisations have come forward in the struggle. Their emergence was natural, it occurred in the crucible of fighting;

- the uprising has drawn the broad peasant masses into political action. It has confirmed the decisive role of the internal factor, of the mass struggle in the national movement for regaining the occupied territories and establishing an independent state. The Palestinian Communists have always stood by this truth. It underlaid the founding of their organisation;

— the popular revolt has knocked out of the hands of Israel's rulers their *propaganda weapon* — the charges of terrorism based on which the Zionists' repressive actions were being depicted as a means to protect the existence of the state of Israel;

— from the start of the uprising, the world became a witness of the high *fighting spirit* of our people: unarmed children, women and old men boldly challenging the powerful Israeli machine of war and violence. The great losses did not stop them. The faith of the occupied territories' population in their strength and in the righteousness of their cause has increased, and the profoundly democratic character of the struggle has been borne out;

— one of the major features of the uprising is that more than ever before it relies on *its own forces*. The events broke out amidst a general worsening of the situation in the Arab world and the reduction in the level of solidarity with the struggle of the Palestinians, which showed itself, in particular, in the decisions of the Arab summit meeting (November 1987) in Amman. In this connection one should note the revolutionising influence of the uprising on the situation in the region.

Over the past months the Israeli occupation forces have used the most diverse methods for the suppression of the uprising; the number of their troops in the occupied territories has quadrupled. At first they pursued a 'shoot to kill' policy, then began to apply the methods of breaking of bones, from which thousands of people have suffered, the gases that result in miscarriage of pregnant women, the burial of people alive, and deportation — and all this in spite of the condemnation of the world community.

Food supplies to whole areas are cut off, telephone communication, electricity, water and fuel supplies are turned off, and freedom of movement is restricted there. After five months of popular actions (as of May 8 this year) the number of killed reached 231 people, about 14,000 were detained, and thousands declared wanted.

Having despaired of quelling the uprising, the occupiers are now trying to undermine Palestinian unity from within. They are circulating fake publications, in particular on behalf of the PCP, which contain attacks on religious groups, and also in the name of the latter with criticism of our party. In a bid to shake the will of the people for resistance, Israeli secret services killed in Tunis the PLO's outstanding military leader Halil Wazir (Abu Jihad), then followed a mass intrusion of Israeli forces into southern Lebanon. The occupation authorities have undertaken a change of identification cards in the Gaza Strip in order to isolate it, force the local population to pay higher taxes, and impede passage from one part of the territory to another.

Preliminary Results

The uprising has again highlighted the Palestinian issue as the root cause of the Middle East crisis, a particularly important reminder in the context of attempts to reverse and bury the Palestinian movement. Rabin admitted at an Israeli cabinet meeting: "I feel no optimism. The Palestinians have succeeded in imposing their problem on the world community."²

Thus, the *uprising has blocked the way for efforts to get a separate Middle*

East settlement that ignores the Palestinian people and their just cause. It has touched off an unprecedentedly powerful wave of international solidarity with the Palestinians which has embraced Israel too. The successful Peace Day strike on December 21, 1987, called for by leaders of the Arab population of Israel, primarily the Communists, in solidarity with the strike of the people of the occupied territories, and also Land Day on March 30, 1988, stunned the Tel Aviv rulers most of all. These events also became a proof of the strong national bonds of our people and of the link between a solution to the Palestinian issue and the assuring of equality for Israel's Arabs.

The socialist countries and the fraternal communist parties have played an outstanding role in this solidarity campaign. In the capitalist world, the uprising sharpened the focus on the Palestinian problem, showing that it does not merely involve better living standards or 'legal' regulations for our people under a continued occupation: it calls for an end to the occupation itself. Under the impact of the revolt, the notorious 'human rights champions' have found themselves in an extremely difficult position and were compelled to support UN Security Council Resolution 606, which recognises the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, as belonging to the Palestinians and condemns Israel's repressive measures. Even in the US and West European Jewish communities, ever louder voices can be heard against the acts of murderous violence by Israel.

The large-scale actions of solidarity with our people are a reflection of the mounting worldwide rebuff to the policy of the ruling circles of the Zionist state and show an evolution of the attitude of international opinion, which comes out ever more resolutely against the occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab lands. The 42nd UN General Assembly qualified Israel's actions in the occupied territories as a 'crime against humanity'.

The uprising has split Israeli society. Although the pointer of the country's political barometer is still inclined rightwards, opposition to the expansionist policy of the authorities has increased. This manifests itself in the public speeches of representatives of different professional groups, in the many demonstrations held, with tens of thousands of people attending, in the more frequent instances of refusal by soldiers to serve in the occupied territories, and in the statements of prominent leaders, notably from both parties of the coalition government, including Abba Eban, Israel's foreign minister during the 1967 war period, General Yeshua Harkabi, the former head of Israeli army intelligence, and even a number of members of the right-wing Herut party. They all concede that the occupation has no future.

At variance with this line is the policy of Prime Minister Itzhak Shamir, who continues to say that Israel won't cede an inch of the occupied territories. He has the support of right-wing and fascist currents, especially among the settlers. These are now increasingly active in the repression, killings and torture of Palestinians in the occupied territories, and in the night raids on Arab villages and urban residential areas.

Thus, a *process of polarisation is taking place* in Israeli society. Several factors influence it: the mass struggle of the population in the occupied

territories; the realistic and correct policy adopted by the last session of the Palestine National Council in Algiers; the elaborated formula for an international conference to settle the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole; the line of cooperating with the democratic forces in Israel proper that come out against the policy of occupation and annexation and the consistent and principled fight by the Communist Party of Israel against the policy of aggression and for a just peace.

The uprising has left the occupiers in an unprecedentedly complex, dead-end situation. Two ways out of it are possible, according to Israel. One is to annex officially the occupied zones, this meaning the end of Israel as the Jewish state. In this case it would become a two-nation state with all the ensuing consequences, i.e., an acknowledgement of the bankruptcy of the theory and practice of Zionism. The other is to introduce a South African-style apartheid regime in the country.

Many Israelis are publicly speaking of the dead-end, including those who once held or are holding key government posts. Significant is present Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres' admission, made under the influence of the uprising: "The problem is not that they should cease throwing stones at us. This we can stop. The problem is what will happen if they in Gaza throw no more stones at us, but simultaneously demand of us a certificate of their nationality. Not the stones of Gaza, but its inhabitants' rights is the issue that confronts us today with all its moral and political force." However, the Labour Party's election programme proclaimed by Peres again refuses to accept the idea of creating an independent Palestinian state, to recognise the PLO, to return to the frontiers of 1967, and to dismantle Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

Visits by Reagan's emissaries to countries of the region have become more frequent of late and 'new plans and conceptions' of a settlement to the problem are being put forward. However, the 'Schultz initiative' in no way differs from the 'Shamir-Peres plan'. US Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, during one of his recent visits, declared that autonomy for the Palestinians was the core of the new US proposals for a settlement. The US President personally confirmed in a speech before Congress that the initiative, announced in September 1982 and known as the Reagan Plan, was still the cornerstone for the policy of Washington on the issue of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. In other words, all they want is a rehash of Camp David.

International Repercussions

The scale of the uprising has evoked a big response in the Arab countries. The siege of Palestinian camps has been lifted in Lebanon and a rapprochement between the PLO and Syria has taken place. At the same time, the upsurge of the Palestinians' struggle has perplexed the Arab friends of Washington, testing anew the very sincerity of their declarations on the Palestinian issue. This is particularly manifest in their attitude to popular acts of solidarity with the risen people.

Finally, the uprising has been the cause of heightened *international pressure* for a competent UN-sponsored conference attended by all the parties to the conflict, including the PLO, as well as by the five permanent

members of the Security Council. The USSR's initiative is fully consonant with this. It has called for an urgent foreign ministers' meeting of the permanent Security Council members to agree practical steps leading up to the international conference.

Meanwhile the Israeli and US ruling circles have focused on quelling the Palestinian revolt as soon as possible and on blocking the way for the conference. Leaning on US support, Israel's government ignores international law and the resolution of the UN Security Council. The US administration would reduce the solution of the Palestinian issue to separate deals under its direct control.

The continuation of Israeli occupation for so many years, the oppression of our people, and the ignoring of international law and the UN decisions would have been impossible without all-round support from the United States. However, inter-Arab politics has become the main weak point of the political situation in the region as a result of the uprising of the Palestinians.

The official position of many Arab states only adds to a US resolve to persist with its scheme. For the same reason, most of the West European countries refuse to give unqualified support to the idea of holding a competent international conference. For example, they abstained from voting on this question at the last session of the UN General Assembly.

More imperatively than ever, the uprising demands that the PLO and the Palestinian movement as a whole speed up the process of overcoming their shortcomings and failures, which it has so forcefully revealed. But respect for Palestinian consensus is essential, as well as giving up undemocratic factional activities that hamper unity in a number of mass organisations, the trade unions in particular. This especially applies to the occupied lands. Reviewing the mechanism and character of relations between Palestinian organisations there and abroad, as well as the use of the funds of the resistance movement, is the order of the day. Some aspects of the activity of the PLO apparatus also warrant reform. In our opinion, more attention should be paid to organisational and educative work among the Palestinians in exile, primarily where major Palestinian communities live.

Different Palestinian groups' aid to the rebellious people contrasts sharply, even in size of donations. Most generous have been the Palestinians living in Israel proper, rallied by a tried and tested leader — the Communist Party of Israel. They also did their best to thwart the attempts to make the population of the West Bank and Gaza starve by cutting off all food supplies.

We see the need to reinforce our fighting links with all patriotic and progressive forces and organisations in the Arab world. An equally important task is to establish permanent contact with the international circles who have raised their voice in support of our people and its righteous cause.

Such is the plan of action. Undoubtedly, the Palestinian people, steeled by decades of tragic ordeal, will cut short any attempts to 'steal' the fruits of their uprising from them. They will not allow a repetition of the bitter experience of the past when reactionary Arab regimes meddled in

Palestinian affairs, in order to break the patriotic forces of our people and deprive them of their right to take independent political decisions, as was the case in 1936 and 1948.

The just struggle of our people will continue until they reach their goal: an end to the occupation and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state under PLO leadership. International law is on the Palestinians' side. Support from their strong allies, especially the Soviet Union, the brother Arab peoples, and the world public at large, strengthens their faith in victory.

¹ The author means the 18th session of the National Council of Palestine, its Parliament in exile. — Ed.

² *Al-Ittihad*, January 27, 1988 (in Arabic).

The Volcano Of The People's Wrath

Mzala — South African journalist

THERE is, perhaps, no precedent in recent revolutionary history, when millions of people, unarmed with modern weapons but death-defying and determined to achieve their freedom, rose up and drove the government of an industrially developed country into a state of panic, even though it is backed by some of the major imperialist powers. The popular uprising, led by the black working class, plunged the apartheid regime into a crisis of political power. When its administrative and governmental resources were fully exhausted, it declared a state of emergency that has lasted for over two years by now.

Neither the meticulously planned and systematic campaign to suppress the liberation movement, nor the imposition of the state of emergency can frustrate the efforts of South Africa's revolutionary forces.

Since the start of the popular uprising four years ago, the apartheid regime has spent nearly 300 million rands¹ in combating it. The reign of terror failed to break the will of the people. On the contrary, the people have crossed the psychological threshold of submission, preserved their militant spirit and are ready to fight on. The political consciousness of the masses has risen to a new high. Last year's developments have shown that we are on the right path. Despite huge losses (30,000 leaders and activists of the anti-racist movement were detained last year), strike actions in 1987 broke all records, exceeding the 1986 figure for man-hours lost by four times.

The current uprising in South Africa differs from all previous struggles in that *its demand is, unambiguously and distinctly, the transfer of power from the racist minority to the democratic majority*. The people have rejected all reformist offers from the apartheid regime: they insist that a government based on the will of a racist minority has no right to rule over a majority. When this realisation became part of the mass revolutionary

consciousness, the leadership of the ANC-SACP revolutionary alliance called on the oppressed people to render South Africa ungovernable and apartheid unworkable. Taking advantage of new organisational forces forged in the crucible of the struggle to knit together the various threads of protest into a single rope of united democratic action, the revolutionary masses declared through their leadership in various formations that the interests of the racist government and those of the oppressed people cannot be reconciled.

It became clear from the first days of the United Democratic Front (UDF) — which was banned by the racist regime in early 1988 — that *unless the liberation struggle at the grassroots level addressed itself to the issue of political power by insisting that state power be transferred to the people, the whole concept of liberation would have no meaning in the South African context.* That way, *the question of state power was posed in our revolution not from a theoretical angle but as a result of practical political expediency.*

Almost overnight (figuratively speaking), the protest movement of the previous struggle was transformed into a revolutionary movement. All over the country, apartheid organs of administration in black townships were destroyed, and new, revolutionary organs of people's power were set up in their place. People stopped paying rent, stopped taking their complaints to the police, students stopped attending schools where the apartheid syllabus of education was being taught; instead, they created people's courts (to settle disputes among them and to punish counter-revolutionary elements) and prepared an alternative system of education to teach the true culture of the South African people to the students. People's communes sprang up in every township and declared their allegiance to the Freedom Charter, the policy document of the ANC. Millions tested their strength in the struggle, and their confidence surged. People's committees, defence units, courts and other similar organisations have gained considerable experience. At the necessary juncture, they can reappear and become weapons of our struggle in its decisive phase.

The declaration of the state of emergency set the stage for a reign of terror for millions of South Africans. The security forces were given sweeping powers to arrest without charge, to search and seize property, to impose curfews, to seal off areas and to use whatever force they deemed necessary against anyone disobeying their orders. Townships were cordoned off, and thousands of armed troops marched shoulder-to-shoulder, raiding the homes of suspected UDF members or sympathisers. Within a few months, the total of those detained, including children under 14 years of age, rose to over 50,000. Botha's secret service seeks to physically exterminate African patriots both at home and abroad. A hit man hired by the racists has recently assassinated Dulcie September, a staunch fighter against apartheid and the ANC representative in Paris.

In an attempt to conceal its activities, the apartheid regime introduced unprecedented press censorship. Not only South African journalists but also those from abroad were prohibited from publishing statements deemed by the regime to be 'subversive', from filming, recording or describing any action taken by the security forces. Many honest press and

television workers were arrested. In this Orwellian atmosphere, more than 2,500 people were killed, and the truth of what was taking place was suppressed or distorted by the apartheid media which began a campaign to discredit the morality of the freedom struggle by calling it 'black-on-black violence' rooted in ideological differences.

There is no denying that when the insurrectionary situation developed in the black townships and the people set up revolutionary organs of self-government, certain black collaborationists were deservedly punished by the people's courts, at times using very gruesome methods. But that was a reaction provoked by the terrorism of white racists. The ANC and the SACP denounced these elements of brutality in the activities of people's courts and called for strict adherence to revolutionary legality.

However, one must not forget that the enemy let loose hordes of mercenary cut-throats to fight against the patriots and to spread the lie about 'black-on-black violence'. Having lost its administrative ground in the townships, the racist regime organised terrorist mobs of unemployed and migrant workers and criminals released prematurely from various prisons. The regime encouraged the collaborationists to butcher the insurgents. Large gangs of well-armed vigilantes, backed by the racist army and police, launched assaults in the townships, especially in the Cape and Natal provinces, and the supporters of the racist regime and the uncritical commercial press in the Western countries referred to them as 'ordinary township dwellers' or even as 'older people fed up with intimidation by the radical youth'. In that way it was hoped that the apartheid authorities would distance themselves from the atrocities and pass them off as 'infighting among the blacks'. For the ANC and the SACP, the very employment by the apartheid regime of such desperate tactics is a clear indication that it is attempting to check and reverse the rising tide of the revolutionary process.

The apartheid regime is afraid to lift the state of emergency or withdraw its troops from the townships. It is failing in its efforts to recover lost ground. Even the racist Minister of Law and Order has been forced to admit that "despite security force actions, the revolutionary climate is on the increase. We have passed the stage of stone-throwing. We are now moving into a more difficult phase." But he also must have been thinking of what was going on in his own camp.

The growing dissatisfaction of the reformist part of the bourgeoisie with apartheid is a salient feature of the nationwide crisis which affects both the exploited and the exploiters. These bourgeois quarters and their allies among the owners of transnational corporations increasingly realise that apartheid impedes the development of the productive forces and hampers the transition to a higher technological level which calls for the availability of skilled labour. The conflict between the interests of capital and of the apartheid system is mounting. To us, this is a new development which has become particularly prominent in recent years.²

South Africa's economic growth has been phenomenal in the context of African economic history. South Africa was rapidly transformed from a predominantly agricultural into an industrial economy dominated by industrial monopolies closely linked with international finance capital. The

degree to which capital has been concentrated in South Africa is illustrated by the fact that, presently, only six companies control over 84 per cent of the shares on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. Three of these companies — Anglo-American, Sanlam and Barlow Rand — account for more than 70 per cent of the total.

Whereas in the past, and for the greater part of this century, foreign companies invested in South Africa *because* of apartheid which guaranteed cheap black labour (and not *in spite* of apartheid), in recent years the apartheid political superstructure has acted as a braking mechanism on capitalist development. Many foreign companies have closed their South African subsidiaries. Various South African monopolies have openly complained that the bureaucratic political structure of apartheid, including Bantustan governments and a huge army, is a drain on the country's financial resources. The slump of the racist economy has become chronic. The 1987 report of the Reserve Bank said that the low level of investment (both domestic and foreign) was the main reason for the low national income growth rate.

Enormous sums are spent to maintain the apartheid infrastructure. At the University of Cape Town, Professor Michael Savage has calculated that 12 cents of every rand voted by Parliament could be attributed to the maintenance of the multi-tiered administrative system of apartheid. For a long time, the regime maintained that the best way of ensuring the availability of cheap black labour for South African industry would be to provide Africans with inferior education in order for them not to compete with whites in skilled employment. Over the years, however, whites proved numerically insufficient to service the requirements of an expanding industrial economy. As a result, the capitalists criticize Bantu Education for not providing industry with sufficient skilled personnel.

South Africa's reformist industrialists who were previously silent on the subject of apartheid are now calling for a reform of the political system and demanding a bigger role in the direct determination of government policies. They have made open contact with the African National Congress and declared their belief that a lasting solution to South Africa's political problems is impossible without the participation of the black majority in government. They have also acknowledged the role of the ANC as expressing the aspirations of the overwhelming majority of the South African people. Since Botha's numerous projects can stabilise neither the political nor the economic situation, the dissatisfaction with government policies is likely to increase and spread among large sections of the bourgeoisie.

A profound question of strategy that faces the South African liberation movement is what role should be given to these Big Business 'reformists'. Although they are part of the ruling class themselves, their opposition role may prove important in the isolation of the most racist and militarist clique in Pretoria. Also, there is no need for the liberation movement to fear their alliance with the forces of change because they pose no immediate danger of diverting our revolution to reformism: *the people led by the working class remain the principal motive force* of change. The core of the revolution's fighters consists of urban and rural workers and township

dwellers. They act in concert with other classes and strata of South Africa's oppressed majority, while opponents of apartheid among the industrialists remain merely a part of the forces of change.

The popular uprising, the cracks in the once monolithic facade of the white minority, as well as economic necessity are forcing the regime to agree to concessions. These are limited moves towards reforming some insignificant aspects of apartheid, such as the recognition of black trade unions or the scrapping of the Mixed Marriages Act. But even this has resulted in counter-action by a large part of the white electorate — people brought up in the belief that their very existence and life depends on the presence of segregation laws. Ever since its rise to power 40 years ago, the ruling National Party has won successive elections among whites on the basis of a manifesto promising strict racial discrimination. The recent concessions made by the regime in an effort to placate the people and take the edge off the more blatant manifestations of apartheid have led to the desertion of diehard racists (long-time supporters of the National Party) to openly pro-facist organisations such as the Afrikaner Weerstand Beweging.

It follows that among the white minority, the regime is encountering opposition from both the left and the right, and its political base is contracting. Torn by contradictions, racist society is cracking up. Still, apartheid remains strong. The ANC and our party take this into account in devising our tactics for the struggle against the enemy.

Botha is trying to convince his foreign backers and his racist constituency that he has not 'softened up' and can defend their interests. South Africa can still be regarded as a springboard of imperialism on the African continent. The racists have blatantly opted for a policy of state terrorism. They resort to murderous tactics to silence the opposition of the black majority, and they also attack neighbouring African states under the pretext of pursuing the liberation forces (ANC and SWAPO). Racist soldiers have been sent to Zimbabwe to massacre peaceful villagers. In some areas in Mozambique they have butchered all in sight with chilling savagery. The apartheid death machine has rolled into Angola to kill and destroy.

Yet these military forays have not been without serious problems for the apartheid regime itself. The South African army is suffering increasing casualties in the aggression it has launched. More white soldiers are refusing to be party to these reckless gambles. In 1985, the regime announced that 7,500 men did not report for call-up duty in the army. Since then, the Ministry of Defence has refused to disclose how many conscripts fail to report for duty, saying the information is a danger to state security. But, according to the *Sunday Times* of London, an average of 25 per cent of the conscripts fail to turn up for their military camp terms. In another development, an army unit of more than 400 soldiers based in Namibia staged a mutiny in 1987 and refused to go into Angola. This is perhaps the most serious factor aggravating the regime's crisis. The war machine — the most effective weapon of the racist authorities against the black population — has become unreliable.

The combination of these conditions call to mind one of the ingredients

of a revolutionary situation which Lenin wrote about in *'Left-Wing' Communism — An Infantile Disorder*: "for a revolution to take place, it is not enough for the exploited and oppressed masses to realise the impossibility of living in the old way, and demand changes; for a revolution to take place, it is essential that the exploiters should not be able to live and rule in the old way. It is only when the *'lower classes' do not want to live in the old way and the 'upper classes' cannot carry on in the old way* that the revolution can triumph."³

In the same analysis, Lenin said that this second condition (concerning the *'upper classes'*) should be manifested by their going through a governmental crisis — when "all the class forces hostile to us have become sufficiently entangled, are sufficiently at loggerheads with each other, have sufficiently weakened themselves in a struggle which is beyond their strength".⁴ The next step in analysing the ingredients of the revolutionary situation in our case is to ascertain whether the majority of the class-conscious, thinking and politically active workers are sufficiently organised to seize power, whether they are prepared to go all the way towards their principal goal — that of overthrowing apartheid. One can see that these conditions are increasingly present in our movement.

In all the years of struggle since the establishment of the ANC and of our party, the oppressed and exploited people of South Africa have never known such a challenging moment as now. Despite the terror campaign conducted by the racist regime, the oppressed people of South Africa have learned through their own experience that organisation is the key to their victory. The ANC-led liberation front wants 1988 to become a *year of united action for people's power*. The current uprising has perfected our methods of organisation. The mass democratic movement is looking for new ways of repelling enemy attacks.

Our party's leadership has drawn an important conclusion about paying particular attention to properly organising its forces. The SACP is stepping up its activities where workers are concentrated and where it is easier to mobilise them in our struggle. Relying on worker support, we can block enemy attempts at infiltrating the SACP ranks and weakening the party from within. We have learned our lessons from the revolution. Even during a state of emergency, our youth were able to hold a clandestine conference and founded a national youth organisation from among the constituent delegates representing all the provinces of the country. The enemy learned about the conference only after the composition of its leadership was announced to the media.

Together with the ANC, the party is also conducting extensive explanatory work among the people. We hold that at the present time, organisation also means perfecting underground structures, both at factories and in residential areas. The state of emergency and the recent banning of the UDF and COSATU prove that only this underground level of leadership is capable of keeping the resistance going. Only the underground structures are able to preserve our revolutionary cadres, coordinate the various partial insurrections and combat actions of the people's army towards the build-up of conditions for a general insurrection and the seizure of power by the people.

¹ One US dollar equals 2.2 rands.

² See: Joe Slovo, 'Cracks in the Racist Power Bloc'. *WMR*, No. 6, 1987.

³ V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, pp. 84-85.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

Reflections

Was Mussolini 'Better' Than Hitler?

FOR several months now, a heated debate has been going on in Italy over the question of fascism. Today, 43 years after the end of World War II, people are asking about the degree of the blame history has put on Italian fascism and about the difference between it and German Nazism.

It all began late last year with *Corriere della Sera*, an influential newspaper, interviewing Renato De Felice, an historian and a 'biographer' of Mussolini. He created a stir by urging repeal of the 12th Amendment to the Constitution banning 'reorganisation in any form of the disbanded Fascist Party'. De Felice maintains that the amendment is not consonant with the 'current stage in the development of the Italian people's consciousness'. According to him, Italian fascism was 'less' brutal and inhuman than German Nazism, did not create a totalitarian regime and must not be blamed for the horrors of genocide. De Felice says that the ruling quarters Mussolini's supporters relied on were no more corrupt than the current ones and that their bureaucracy was even more efficient. In short, fascism would be quite up to the standards of 'modernisation' today, and it could muster nationwide support. This blatant attempt at whitewashing fascism goes beyond the framework of a professional discussion among historians and acquires a political dimension. As the newspaper *La Repubblica* says, it has again shown that "we still have fascists in Italy and they continue to hold forth pompously about the country's future".

Let us recall that as early as 1947, when the conservative forces mounted a counter-offensive, the Italian neo-fascists were allowed by the bourgeois governments to take part in the first parliamentary elections. To this day, despite the crippling setback it suffered during the June 1987 interim parliamentary elections, the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement-National Right (ISM-NR) alliance remains Italy's fourth strongest political force. Voting for it are 2.3 million people, and this has enabled it to win 35 deputies' and 17 senatorial seats in the present parliament. Prominent spokesmen of parties represented on the then coalition government attended the ISM congress held in November 1984.

The neo-fascists have proclaimed their intention of evolving from a 'negating' into a 'constructive' force. In 1983 the ISM-NR alliance began to claim a noticeable role in parliament. According to official statistics, from 1984 to 1987 it submitted to both chambers more than 10,000 draft

resolutions, amendments to bills and inquiries, that is, one-third of the total number of such motions. Some of them were aimed at revising the Constitution, instituting presidential rule and restricting the proportional representation system.

The correspondent of *l'Unità*, the communist newspaper, who was present for the first time at an ISM-NR congress in December 1987, said that the party was seeking to turn Italy's crisis and instability to its own strategic advantage. Meanwhile, he wrote, the indulgence shown by many political parties "merely makes the task of the neo-fascists easier".

De Felice's assertion that fascism was a 'boon' has touched off a storm of protests among not only professional historians but also all those who remember the lessons of the past and cherish the democratic achievements of the Italian people. Those who spoke out against De Felice belonged to different political parties and sometimes held opposite views — activists of the Communist Party, Catholic theologians, Republicans and Socialists.

As the debate has shown, democratic quarters reject the attempts at applying different yardsticks to gauge this or that version of fascism and at 'weighing' who was worse — the Italian Blackshirts from the MUTI and Aldo Resega forces, the German SS-men, the Ukrainian henchmen of Stefan Bandera or the Ustashi in Yugoslavia. The blame for starting a European conflict which escalated into a world war falls both on Hitler Nazism and on fascism as a whole, on all those who directly advocated and promoted this inhuman ideology and practice.

Fascism in Italy had the same birthmarks as its other versions — the cult of power, the pursuit of world domination, racial hatred, reliance on war as the principal means of attaining one's goals, physical extermination of opponents, and a disdainful attitude to any and all principles of international law or humanitarian values. Mussolini and his supporters bear their share of the responsibility for launching World War II: suffice it to recall that 'Il Duce' was a signatory to the infamous Munich deal which prodded Hitler to move eastward. Italian fascism was involved in genocide in Ethiopia and Yugoslavia and the atrocities in Spain and Albania. Thousands upon thousands died before firing squads and under torture. Cities and towns were razed to the ground. No cunning polemical inventions can refute these facts.

Fascist ideology could not, by its very essence, take any other shape. The regimes of Hitler and Mussolini sprang up and blossomed foully on the ruins of democracy. They were dictatorships propped up by force of arms — in Italy, in Germany, in Portugal, and in Spain.

As Michele Serra stressed in *l'Unità*, the constitutional provision De Felice and his ilk want to undermine is the moral, historical and legal cornerstone of the Italian Republic born of the anti-fascist Resistance. In the words of the Left Catholic activist Enzo Forcella, it is the basis underlying the historical and cultural unity not so much of the state as of all society. Paolo Spriano, a communist historian, emphasises that today's widespread popular support for a reform of the Italian political system does not at all imply an end to the contradiction between democracy and the fascist ideas which the leaders of the Italian Socialist Movement preach.

The sole purpose of the reactionaries' attempts to revise history is to give free rein to those who oppose democracy. They seek to whitewash the heirs of Mussolini, by presenting them as starry-eyed idealists and to bolster neo-fascism as the banner of the forces who are nostalgic for the past. That must not be allowed to happen.

Antonio Boffi
Alessandro Monti

surveys, letters, and diary

**West German Capital
On The Offensive**

Economic Survey

New trends in the economic rivalry between the three major imperialist centres — the United States, Western Europe and Japan — have been in evidence in the 1980s. The cyclical crisis of 1974-1975 was followed by changes in the direction along which capital was internationalised, and in the rate of the process. Capital was increasingly oriented towards the world market because of the relative narrowing down of the national markets in the industrialised capitalist countries; that is now pivotal to state-monopoly regulation, and here the FRG provides the most obvious example. West German capital, the most powerful in Western Europe, illustrates how national and transnational monopolies direct government policy aimed to keep and enlarge their international positions.

The following survey was prepared by **Jorge Goldberg**, a researcher at the Institute for Marxist Studies (Frankfurt on the Main, FRG).

New Orientation

THE Economic Stabilisation Law, which was designed to keep foreign trade in *balance* as the goal of economic policy, was passed twenty years ago by the Social Democratic government in the FRG. By the mid-1970s a trade *surplus* had become a problem.

The FRG's involvement in world trade is characterised by a growing share of exports and imports in national production, and for a long time now the country has had a trade surplus both in goods and services: it was 8 billion West German marks in 1960, 14 billion in 1970, and 106 billion in 1986.¹

The 'services' tended to grow faster than other lines of export. Earnings from these operations have almost trebled since 1975, while the export of goods just more than doubled. Traditionally, the FRG has had a trade deficit in the services, but it was markedly reduced in the early 1980s, and in absolute terms as well. It was the tourist trade that mainly produced the deficit. Earnings from investments abroad rose substantially after 1975, to become the major item on the service balance.

There was a marked growth in the patent and licence trade, with the FRG having a deficit, especially with the United States. But this fact should not suggest any technological lag, because the sale of patents and licences is closely bound up with the interpenetration of capital. This deficit merely reflects the strong positions held by foreign, mainly US, capital in the high-technology sectors of our economy, particularly in electronics. It is true that most studies² testify to a noticeable reduction in recent years of the US share of the world high-technology market, to Japan's marked advance, and to a stabilisation of the FRG's share.

In the 1980s, the structural policy in West German industry has been aimed to encourage technological progress, while concentrating funds along lines where there is the danger of a lag, as in micro-electronic components.³

As a result, the internationalisation of West German capital has been accelerated, but that is not the new element. Of crucial significance for understanding the economic strategy of the concerns and the government is the fact that it has been reoriented towards *the much greater role of the external market in the reproduction of capital of the major monopolies representing the technological leaders in industry*. As a result, FRG, manufacturing exports and turnover of manufacturing subsidiaries abroad went up from 1970 to 1985 to a far greater extent than the turnover on the home market, respectively by 322, 200 and 110 per cent.⁴

Growing Production Abroad

External economic activity is becoming of unprecedented significance for the concentration of capital and the growing power of the monopolies. Nearly 30 per cent of goods exports and almost 45 per cent of FRG production abroad are concentrated in the hands of only 10 major West German industrial concerns (in 1985 these were: Siemens, Volkswagen, Daimler, BASF, Bayer, Hoechst, Thyssen, Bosch, BMW, and Mannesmann).⁵

The monopolies' positions were on the whole strengthened by their expansion on the external markets, which is of great importance for the reproduction of capital. Over the past two years, the process has apparently further intensified, as new centres of economic power were produced by the merger of Daimler, MTU and AEG, and the liquidation and division of Flick, with the participation of Deutsche Bank, between other monopolies. In 1986 and 1987, West German capital swiftly expanded its production abroad and increased investments in enterprises in other countries, notably in the United States.

FRG concerns, with worldwide operations, market two-thirds of their products outside the national territory.⁶ *The urge to prevail on the world market is becoming the main constant objective of the policy of state-monopoly regulation.* The old considerations about keeping the internal and external market development in balance have receded into the background.

West Germany's expansionist strategy is increasingly determined by sectors of the economy most closely linked to scientific and technological progress: machine-building, electrical engineering, chemicals and automotive engineering. The capital invested in these industries can be reproduced only with preponderant positions in the world market, and in the current decade the dependence on external trade has further increased. Machine engineering is most integrated in the world economy.

Successful introduction of new technologies is the main element in the strategy of restructuring production on a national scale, while maintaining and enlarging positions in international competition, and this crucially depends on ensuring the external conditions of reproduction for multinational monopolies with a West German 'pedigree'. That is one of the basic reasons for the change of policy in state-monopoly regulation since the 1974-1975 crisis, which showed that balancing out the proportions between the internal and the external markets no longer meets the changed requirements of monopoly capital.⁷ After all, if only three-quarters, and in some cases less than one-half, of the producer capacities work for the internal market in the most important industries, it stands to reason that reproduction depends directly on the external market.

Such dependence does not, of course, tend to dissolve the FRG economy in the world economy. The positions of the West German monopolies on the world market are determined by the process of national reproduction, but they are also closely linked to the state policy designed for external economic expansion. That is evidence of a '*revival*' of *national imperialist strategy*. The capacity of national capitals to ensure the conditions for their reproduction depends, more than ever before in the past, on the penetrating power of state-monopoly policy on the world market.

The competition between the social systems, and the growing economic integration and internationalisation could have been expected to make for wider cooperation and coordination of common supranational capitalist interests, which is ever more imperative, even if hard to attain because it has become an absolutely vital necessity for the major monopolies to safeguard the 'national' interest.

Thus, the internationalisation of the world capitalist economy tends to generate two altogether antithetical trends. On the one hand, the need to limit the instability of the international market (because of its feedback effect on the national economy) by means of a supranational mechanism and coordination. On the other, the national monopolies are forced, at any price and at the expense of other national capitals, to keep asserting their positions on the world market, if they are not to go down, or at any rate, not to lose their global status. In many industries — cars, computers, telecommunications, nuclear-power engineering — if capital is to retain its capacity for reproduction the share of goods produced for the world market must reach at least 15 per cent. The concerns which fail to ensure due growth of their influence are knocked out or lose their independence.

The Role of Direct Investments

The monopolies' concrete struggle has a definitive influence on the international division of labour, the internationalisation of production, and the orientation of direct investments. The bulk of international trade now consists of manufactured goods, and it is increasingly becoming 'intra-industry trade', i.e., an exchange of highly similar goods between developed capitalist countries.

The international division of labour in the capitalist world has been taking shape as a result of competitive bouts between multinational concerns, and the governments are also involved in the fight for markets. Parasitic features are increasingly in evidence in the integration of the national economies. The whole sphere of international trade here is bent to the expansionist interests of a handful of monopolies that call the tune.

The role of direct investments abroad in the activity of FRG concerns has been growing from year to year. From 1976 to 1985, they more than trebled their assets abroad in the form of direct investments: from 43.5 billion to 131.1 billion marks.⁸ The export of capital has become prevalent since the early 1980s.

In 1982, according to the Federal German Bank, enterprises abroad belonging to West German capital had 1.7 million workers and employees (almost 8 per cent of the number employed in the FRG), and industrial subsidiaries abroad — roughly 1.1 million (nearly 15 per cent of the number employed in the same industries at home). Almost one-half of them were in the less developed countries, but the tendency is now on the wane.

The major concerns are the biggest employers. Even in the early 1980s, the foreign subsidiaries of 11 monopolies employed over one-half of the personnel working in West German industry abroad, and 32 concerns accounted for nearly 70 per cent.⁹ Thus, the growing international positions of 'national' capital and of the FRG's production abroad signify a *qualitative increase in the role of the major monopolies, so that a new dimension is added to their role in overall policy.*

The take-over of high-technology enterprises helps to make up the technological lag without any inputs into research. For these reasons, many West German concerns in many cases have bought up the equity of companies located in the United States. Because of the relative narrowness

of the markets, these concerns rarely set up new lines of production. As a rule, it is a question of share participation in existing enterprises in foreign countries. Such internationalisation, for its part, tends to stimulate international trade flows, mainly in the form of deliveries within the framework of the same concern, and mostly of finished products. This means that foreign subsidiaries also operate, fully or partially, as outlets for the given concern's entire range of products.

The Banks' Specific Approach

Through the major West German banks, the country has also been enhancing its role as an international financial centre. The internationalisation of banking is expressed in the expansion of operations abroad. From 1975 to early 1987, the total amount of credit operations by FRG banks went up by 146 per cent, and their credits abroad by 254 per cent.

The establishment and extension of a new network of bank subsidiaries abroad is being stepped up, as will be seen from the direct investment figures: from 1978 to 1984, West German capital in the assets of banks and insurance companies abroad went up from 5 million to nearly 20 billion marks. From 1977 to 1987, the number of FRG bank subsidiaries abroad increased from 47 to 102. In addition, a network of bank branches has been set up abroad: in that period, their number went up from 35 to 75, with 26 located in Luxembourg alone.

That is the country through which Eurocredits mostly reach borrowers in West Germany, mainly in European currency units (ECU), the artificial currency of the EEC. In many respects, FRG banks find it more profitable to operate in Luxembourg, and the advantages are described as follows: "Since 1981, the law here has ensured full banking confidentiality. No income tax is levied on foreign clients' earnings on interest and dividends and on foreign-exchange profits. No taxes are levied on foreign citizens' legacies and donations. The purchase and sale of gold are not burdened by any turnover tax. Accounts may be opened in all the convertible currencies and in European currency units. There are no limitations at all on the transfer of capital."¹⁰

The growth of international banking operations involves the emergence of 'extra territorial banking centres' where major financial institutions of the capitalist countries maintain their branches or no more than 'letter-boxes' to carry on international operations without the duty of having a minimum reserve of deposits or of paying taxes. The Bahamas and Bermuda, the Netherlands' Antilles, and Luxembourg, which West German banks prefer, are examples of such centres.

Financial 'havens' have sprung up even in the industrialised capitalist countries in the past few years. These are special accounts which are separate from other bank accounts in London, New York, and Tokyo. They are followed by Frankfurt on the Main." Conventional legislation and tax regulations in the given country do not apply to such accounts, and this makes the banks' international operations more profitable. Each financial centre seeks to attract as many such deals as possible. There is now real rivalry in liberalising their terms.

The West German mark is the second most important investment currency after the US dollar. But among the international financial centres, Frankfurt on the Main ranks only fourth, well behind Tokyo. That is why there are demands to set up a 'financial haven' in the FRG as well. The SPD group in the Bundestag called for its institution in West Berlin in May 1987 so as to make the major West German banks more competitive on the international markets. The Federal Bank and the Federal government have rejected the proposal. Efforts are for the time being confined to concentrating the bulk of the deals in Frankfurt on the Main.

At the same time there is an effort to liberalise and deregulate the circulation of currencies and capitals so as to tie in as closely as possible the national and international business. By 1981, the FRG had virtually no legal restrictions or controls on international financial operations. This line is being continued. Taxes have been reduced, and in 1986 the minimum reserve for foreign deposits was heavily cut. Their owners have been offered privileges in order to make West Germany a more attractive financial centre in international competition.

The open door policy with respect to foreign banks has almost trebled (from 41 to 112) the number of subsidiaries and branches in our country from 1971 to 1986, while turnover multiplied from 18.5 billion to 144 billion marks (a rate of growth that is double that of the aggregate turnover of internal banks). Nevertheless, the sum-total of operations of West German foreign subsidiaries and branches is much higher — nearly 400 billion marks.

The activity of FRG banks abroad is on the whole marked by a high level of concentration: by the beginning of this decade, 90 per cent of their subsidiaries and branches abroad were owned by 10 major banks. The Deutsche Bank alone handles a quarter of all the export credit operations. Since this activity is largely a preserve of a handful of major banks, they also determine the country's overall economic development.¹²

Monetary Policy Contradictions

The Federal government and FRG finance capital seek to strengthen the West German mark as an international investment and reserve currency, and they have done so with success. Aggregate foreign financial investments in FRG marks in 1986 came to nearly 1 trillion (and to 580 billion without the double count). The volume of investments on the 'Euromarket', i.e., in international credit deals, ran at a level of 13 per cent in the early 1980s, although the mark has been increasingly crowded out by the yen, which is gathering strength.

The West German mark also has a high prestige as a reserve currency of state banks of issue. In 1986, it accounted for 14 per cent of these banks' official currency reserves. It is second in the world, with a marked lag behind the still dominant dollar (58 per cent), but ahead of the yen (7 per cent).

The international rivalry of the financial centres for influence, 'openness', and privileges tends to lower the possibilities for regulating money supply and for conducting a monetary and credit policy on the national level. Internationalisation leads to lower efficiency of national

economic policy. State monetary policy is essentially designed for indirect regulation of economic processes within the country and the creation of favourable conditions for the functioning of capital. Under the impact of internationalisation, which is marked by 'freedom of movement' and 'lifting of regulations' on international payment flows, there has been a radical change in the functioning of the FRG monetary policy. It is confined to responding to the external influences and efforts to compensate the impact of international payment flows on internal money supply, which have mainly escaped state control.

The following dilemma has been indicative of the past two years. The money supply has been rapidly growing. The logic of monetarist policy requires an increase in interest rates so as to avert a growth of the inflationary potential. But this would stimulate the influx of international capital into the FRG and raise the mark's exchange rate, something that would curtail the potentialities for export. At the same time, the Federal Bank's attempts to contain the growth of the mark's exchange rate by buying up foreign currency have gone to inflate the money mass. Consequently, the national and international demands on monetary policy contradict each other, while the abandonment of regulation of the money markets has made the internal economic policy less effective. Besides, the growing authority of the mark as an investment currency worsens the competitiveness of West German goods.

In an effort to resolve these contradictions, the FRG attaches much importance to integration within the EEC framework, which is oriented towards a 'European common market' and the establishment of a common money market, but the stability of the mark in the European Community has to be paid for by a steady decline in the prices of West German farm produce, and that, for its part, requires growing subsidies for the agrarian sector, so as to support the farmers as a social pillar of the conservative forces. Besides, the Federal Republic is also apprehensive of being involved in the inflationary current of the less competitive European countries.

Creating a world market and internationalising economic activity is capital's 'profession' and one of the central processes in the development of the capitalist relations of production, a trend which has been strongly reinforced by the growth of the transnational corporations and banks in the past several decades. As for the internationalisation of capital in the FRG, one could, in summing up, point to these three consequences:

First, the growing importance of foreign markets for every sphere of the country's economy has made the major private monopolies qualitatively more important in the system of state-monopoly capitalist regulation. The concerns have traditionally dominated the country's external economic operations, so that its expansion on the world markets, intensified by the crisis processes within the FRG, is tantamount to direct orientation towards the major monopolies.

Second, the whole set of Bonn's state economic policies is now bent to the purpose of winning and preserving external positions. This has predetermined the declining effectiveness of the regulation of the FRG's internal markets, reconciliation with the major economic and social

disproportions and contradictions, and abandonment of the old strategy whose main purpose was to maintain economic equilibrium.

Finally, the policy of securing a dominant position for the FRG monopolies in the world market is a serious impediment to balancing out international economic relations, because it tends to aggravate inter-imperialist rivalry and to step up the trade war and monetary and financial upheavals.

The internationalisation of capital which, it would appear, creates the material basis for greater coordination of economic policy by the leading capitalist states, tends to become, in virtue of the dialectics of its development, a factor reducing the stability of the world economy.

¹ See *Statistisches Bundesamt, Lange Reihen zur Wirtschaftsentwicklung*, 1986, p. 214 ff; *Wirtschaft und Statistik*, 3/1987, p. 174.

² Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, *Hochtechnologien und internationale Wettbewerbsfähigkeit der deutschen Wirtschaft*, Bonn, 1984; Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung, *Zwischenbericht zur Strukturberichterstattung*, 1987; *DIW-Vierteljahresheft* 1-2/1987, p. 19 ff.

³ See *Beiträge des JMSF-7, Umbruch im Produktionsbereich*, Frankfurt/M., 1985, contains a description of FRG government policy to promote the development of the key industries.

⁴ See *Sechstes Hauptgutachten der Monopolkommission 1984/85*, p. 414 ff; Jorg Huffschild, Angelina Sorgel u.a., *Konzentration*, Köln, 1987.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ See *Arbeitsgruppe alternative Wirtschaftspolitik, Memorandum '87*, Köln, 1987, p. 85 ff.

⁸ See *Monatsberichte der deutschen Bundesbank*, 3/2 1987.

⁹ See *Multinationale Konzerne in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, hrsg. v. Peter H. Mettler, Frankfurt/M., 1985; Frobel/Heinrichs/Kreye, *Umbruch der Weltwirtschaft*, Frankfurt/M., 1986.

¹⁰ *Geist und Geld*, Verlagsbeilage der *Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung* vom 12.5. 1985, p. 4.

¹¹ See 'Finanz-Freihafen. Möglichkeiten für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Berlin?' In: *DIW-Vierteljahreshefte*, 1-2/1986, p. 47.

¹² See *Arbeitsgruppe alternative Wirtschaftspolitik, Memorandum '84*, p. 418 ff.

From Our Mailbag

Reflecting On The Concept Of The Party

Under this heading the February issue carried a debatable letter from Bulgarian scholar Dimitr Ananiev and a summary of its discussion by the *WMR* Commission on Party Experience. Our readers comment:

An Element of the Political System

I THINK it is very important theoretically to profoundly develop the concept of the ruling party. It's not the same thing as the 'nucleus of the political system' or the 'leadership role' in society. Our country's Communist Party played its role of mass/working class leader both in the underground and when it fought for power. After the October Revolution it

became the ruling party, meaning that the question was now raised not only in 'party-masses', but also in 'party-power' terms.

Clearly defining the CPSU's role in the political system of Soviet society from the vantage point of Lenin's idea of a 'party in power' would, I think, sweep away the whole lot of 'theoretical' constructions by anti-Soviet ideologues who repeat over and over that the role of the party in our society should be cardinally limited. Essentially, they accuse the CPSU of being the ruling party. But any modern society has a ruling party: it's the bourgeois parties in bourgeois society, and in socialist, the communist and workers' parties.

There is another problem. It concerns not so much theory as the practical activities of the CPSU. The party lives and operates as a separate element of the political system of society. But it functions alongside and in definite relationship with the system's other units. Such joint operation would imply clearly demarcated rights and responsibilities. Yet there is still only one regulatory document for this intricate set-up. The CPSU Rules.

But on what grounds should an inner-party document govern the interaction between leading CPSU bodies and the other parts of the socio-political structure at all levels? For this really makes it hard to demarcate the functions of the party and of state, economic and YCL bodies. Hence the tendency for excessive power concentration in the party apparatus, for voluntarism and for stagnant phenomena. Various periods of our history illustrate this.

It would seem more logical if the CPSU Rules applied strictly to inner-party life and there was another normative document for the party's relations within the socio-political structure. Say, a Law on the Party.

Andrei Dakhin
Gorky, USSR

Communists and the Mass Movements

At first look it would seem that there should be different roles played by the Party in a capitalist country and the Party in a socialist one. However, I am not certain this is true! Considering contributions are coming in from both kinds of systems perhaps the question should be discussed.

What I am most concerned about is, on the one hand, the matter of the Party in its own right, as an organisation with its own life, and on the other hand the importance of building the broad movement in trade unions, peace organisations and so on.

Of course, the quick answer is 'Build both'! But in practice this is not always that easy. I personally am a member of a very small Party club¹ in a 60,000 population city in the interior of a Canadian western province. We find that there is competition for the time — and minds — of our few members between building the Party and attending to the mass movements. The mass movement usually wins 100 per cent. This is the problem.

One of the negative results of this is that the population of our area are hardly aware that a Communist Party club exists. Then we come to the

¹ Primary organisations in the Communist parties of Canada, the USA and some other English-speaking countries. — *Ed.*

urgent business of recruitment to the Party. I think that there has to be *seen* an organisation for people to join, one that expands by its activity in its own name.

Bill Campbell
Kamloops, Canada

In the Spirit of Leninism

The current changes in many socialist countries have evoked a tremendous interest among Communists throughout the world. One can feel their breathing in the letter of Bulgarian scholar Dimitr Ananiev. Take, for example, the thesis that the party can resolve new problems successfully "if it is itself in uninterrupted development, free of the 'infallibility' complex, critically assesses the results that have been attained, and clearly sees what has to be done." Or the thought that like other organisations, the party has "its share of misconceptions, vacillation, doubts, hesitant moves, utopian notions and illusions", that "the conclusions it makes are not *a priori* truths".

I am certain that only several years ago, such a frank positioning of the question could hardly have appeared in theoretical studies of Marxist scholars of socialist countries, although it fully corresponds to the letter and spirit of Leninism. Far from all the Communists are prepared to accept this unconditionally even now. One is both awed and perplexed by the boldness with which the Soviet Communists, for example, speak of their mistakes. Is such candour really necessary? What if it leads to an undermining of the CPSU's prestige in the eyes of the world Left movement?

After a great deal of thought, I wish to state my opinion. By and large, I regard as very fruitful the current discussion in the USSR, Bulgaria and other socialist countries on the leadership role and building of the party even if sharp, unaccustomed notes can be heard in it. The only perceivable harm it may do is to those who have relied on the directive methods of leadership, those very same methods that are basically incompatible with the Marxist-Leninist understanding of the role and tasks of a communist party.

Anastasia Piperidou
Nicosia, Cyprus

In Order To Be The Vanguard Of Perestroika

Dimitr Ananiev has expressed exceptionally relevant observations under perestroika. I would just like to offer a few supplementary thoughts.

First, the concept of the party always has its practical activity in view; its theoretical model relates to the actual forms in which it carries out its policy.

Second, the directive approach may take place at a certain point, but only temporarily, for solving concrete problems in a concrete situation. Building socialism is a new undertaking, and no one can be insured against errors, mistakes or shortcomings. But if democratic principles and the norms of inner-party life are observed, matters will never go as far as

distortions or deformations, as they did in the personality cult period. The well-known thesis that the cult is almost an inevitable phenomenon does not stand up to criticism. Everybody knows what unbelievable difficulties confronted the Bolsheviks in 1917-1922. However, all problems were discussed in the Central Committee and at party congresses. It was the merit of Lenin that he ensured the observance of the principle of collective decision-making at that critical hour for the young republic.

Third, to get rid of erroneous judgements, voluntarism and deformations, the ruling communist parties need to provide full scope for an objective analysis of the processes occurring in society and to enable scholars to search for the truth independently. The party ought not to try to stand above science and absolutise and impose its attitudes on it, often to the detriment of the truth of life.

Fourth, the concept of the Marxist-Leninist party is on the whole scientific and correct, as has been fully borne out by practice. It is not its application that has brought about the deformations, but a retreat from it. On the other hand, the laws, principles and rules for party functioning and leadership need to be constantly renewed in accordance with the changing reality. Having emerged as the vanguard of the working class, our party has today become the political nucleus of the entire working people and socialist society, its base is much broader and significantly more diverse. This fact is very important for our understanding of the present-day role of the party and for the enrichment of its activity.

Unfortunately, these questions so far have not been profoundly and comprehensively researched. I am convinced that the course assumed by the CPSU, the BCP and the Communists of a number of other socialist countries will re-establish a scientific understanding of the nature of the Marxist-Leninist party, of its place and responsibility in the construction of the new life and help it to become the true vanguard of restructuring.

G. Iliev
Sofia, Bulgaria

the book scene

Nicaragua: The Thorny Path

Sandinistas, Entrevista a H. Ortega, S. J. Wheelock, R. B. Arce Castano, Editorial Vanguardia, Managua, 1987, 264 pp.

Sergio Ramirez, *Seguimos de fronte*, Ediciones Centauro, Caracas, 1985, 360 pp.

La transicion dificil: la autodeterminacion de los pequenos paises perifericos, Editorial Vanguardia, Managua, 1987, 410 pp.

The Defeat of the Counter-revolution. An Overview 1985-1987, Agencia Nueva Nicaragua, Managua, 1987, 32 pp.

LAST year was a turning point for Nicaragua in many respects: the foundation was laid for switching to a policy of 'peaceful defence' of revolutionary gains and tentative progress was made in untangling the conflict in Central America. The Sandinista leaders displayed a tremendous amount of will and resolve to reach a dramatic psychological and political change in their relations with their opponents.

The landmarks for the republic included the adoption of the first democratic constitution in its history, a fundamental law that institutionalised the anti-imperialist transformations carried out since July 19, 1979; the signing by five presidents in Guatemala of a declaration on a peace plan for Central America (which opened the way to the solution of

acute socio-economic and political problems facing the region's nations); and the dialogue the Nicaraguan government launched with 14 opposition parties and organisations on matters of national reconciliation (this dialogue involved even the most diehard opponents of the Sandinista National Liberation Front, the SNLF).

The books covered in this review help one grasp the significance of this process which is vitally important for Nicaragua's future. *Sandinistas* is a collection of interviews with prominent SNLF and government figures; *As Ever In The Forefront* by Sergio Ramirez¹ is about the liberation movement in Nicaragua; *A Difficult Transition* is an in-depth study by an international team of authors; and *The Defeat of the Counter-revolution* is a pamphlet.

The remarkable thing about *Sandinistas* is that the interviews included in it were conducted by major bourgeois journalists from Italy, Spain and France. Their questions reflect an obvious desire to corner the interviewees: "What is Sandinism today and how does it relate to Marxism?" or "One of you once said that Sandinism was an application of Marxism-Leninism to the Nicaraguan reality. Is that a valid definition?" or "How did the works of Marx and Lenin influence you?" (see pp. 11 and 13).

The Sandinistas answer without evading the questions and speak with respect about the role of the revolutionary theory and its influence on their worldview. Naturally though, they focus on the distinctive record of the Nicaraguan revolution, on the new contribution it has made and keeps making to the common store of worldwide democratic experience. Referring to the distinctive nature of their path, SNLF leaders note primarily the roots of the revolution — the political, military and ideological heritage left by August Cesar Sandino and his comrades and enriched and developed by the founders and subsequent leaders of the Front in line with the Nicaraguan situation of the 1960s and 1970s.

The record of the Sandinista revolution has shown that a radical democratic revolution inevitably brings large sections of society closer to Marxism. Bayardo Arce, a notable SNLF activist, emphasises that "a good Marxist is simply a person who applies a scientific social concept to concrete realities. This is why there can be no Sandinistas in China or Argentina or France or Spain . . . But a Marxist in Nicaragua is necessarily a Sandinista" (p. 11).

The interviewees discuss the difficulties the forays of internal and external enemies placed in the path of the Sandinista revolution. "Our honeymoon lasted only until February 1980," Bayardo Arce continues. "That was when the war broke out anew. At first it was interventionist policies to precipitate a crisis; then ever higher levels of military intervention. All that impeded the process of internal democratisation" (p. 64).

After the overthrow of the Somoza dictatorship, a wide variety of political currents emerged in Nicaraguan society, and parties and associations that had not discredited themselves by collaboration with the previous regime were legalised. The highest bodies of revolutionary government opened their doors to representatives of all social strata.

The first blow to the newborn republic was dealt in early 1980 by Alfonso Robelo (today a contra leader) who resigned from the Governing Council. That same year in November the bourgeois parties ostentatiously left parliament. Neither move provoked a political crisis. The people's confidence in the Sandinistas remained firm.

In 1981 large sections of Nicaraguan big business and right-wing politicians established direct ties with the imperialist quarters of the United States.

I recall the press conference the former CIA agent Philipp Agee gave in Managua in early 1982. He listed several types of US subversive activities aimed against Nicaragua — encouraging the opposition bourgeois parties to be more active, infiltrating the nation's financial agencies, trade unions and mass media, provoking border clashes to build up tensions, cutting off credits, and mounting an economic blockade.

In *As Ever In The Forefront*, Sergio Ramirez has this to say about Washington's policy: "When Reagan refers to us as the 'fourth frontier' of the United States, Somoza's Guard is the key element of his strategy" (p. 215).

According to *The Defeat of the Counter-revolution*, in 1986 alone official US aid to the contras totalled more than \$100 million, and sovereign Nicaragua's air space and territorial waters were violated over 900 times (see pp. 23 and 28). By 1987, more than 45,000 Nicaraguans died in the attacks launched by the contras and their accomplices. The loss of property reached \$3 billion.

Democratic change is occurring against a complicated background in Nicaragua. The first phase of this process, the Sandinistas note, involved not only objective difficulties but also subjective mistakes, an impatient 'here and now' attitude to the solution of problems. Still, internal and external subversion was the main source of the obstacles the revolution encountered, and this remains true to this day. At that time, however, no proposals on constructive peace negotiations with the United States were put forward. The Contadora Group was yet to begin its vigorous search for peace, and the governments of the Central American countries were toeing Washington's line. Today things have changed.

Helping to expand and enhance democracy in Nicaragua were the national elections of November 1984, the adoption of the Constitution in January 1987 and the quest undertaken by the nations of Central America themselves for a settlement of the regional crisis.

Does that mean that defence of the revolution by force of arms is no longer necessary? In the first collection, West European journalists asked, "What do weapons have to do with politics?" (p. 148). Replying to this question, the Sandinistas stress that armed defence of revolutionary gains, while being a forced step, is now the foremost guarantee of the expansion and consolidation of democracy. Citing the examples of Patriotic Military Service introduced in 1984, of reserve battalions and the Sandinista militia, SNLF leaders show that the role of these formations is not confined to military operations against the contras. Defence Minister Humberto Ortega holds that Patriotic Military Service has made it possible to stabilise the nation's defence, economy, and education. Militia units at factories, in

cooperatives, mountain villages, training centres, and residential areas are not only the first to repulse the bandits: they are also active in local economic and social affairs (see pp. 132-133). As one of the interviewees says, "To us, democracy means the people's participation . . . in the economic process, in culture and in defence" (p. 81).

Following up on what is discussed in *Sandinistas is A Difficult Transition*, a monograph containing contributions by scholars from Nicaragua, Panama, the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, Britain, and Belgium, Xabier Gorostiaga, formerly Director of the Nicaraguan Institute of Economic and Social Studies and head of the Regional Coordinating Centre for Economic and Social Research and the author of many books, was the initiator and one of the coordinators of the project.

I met him during the first year of the Nicaraguan revolution. At that time he was a leading adviser to the Sandinista government on economic planning. A Panamanian democrat dedicated to the ideals of social justice, Gorostiaga said his dream was a humanitarian union of scholars from different continents working to benefit the poor and the dispossessed. The study in question was an example of such a pooling of efforts. Many of the authors also worked in Nicaragua as advisers to government agencies and civic organisations.

Another remarkable feature of this book is that it is the first academic volume published in Nicaragua to offer a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the SNLF's economic policy, to highlight its achievements, criticise its shortcomings, and reveal the causes of the mistakes.

The main point of the book is that a solution to economic problems is of paramount importance for the revolution in Nicaragua or any other developing nation. The authors cite the experience of Cuba, Vietnam, Algeria, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, and Chile.

"Economic policy," they note, "is the essential condition of popular consensus" (p. 260). The task of meeting the economic requirements of citizens should not only underlie the government's strategic programme but also be pursued in day-to-day work.

In February 1984 the SNLF instituted a package of initiatives to improve the state of the economy. Referring to it, Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Minister Jaime Wheelock said that aside from the often-cited causes of the crisis (the legacy left by Somoza, the monetary and financial upheavals abroad and the external aggression), there were also mistakes in post-revolutionary economic management (see p. 265).

The authors also quote similar remarks by other Sandinistas. What, then, are the mistakes the scholars have in mind? After all, the 'mixed economy' model was regarded from the outset as particularly well adapted to Nicaragua's needs. The authors do not question this choice, but stress a different aspect: the 'mixed economy' model stipulates vigorous involvement of the state, the working class, the peasants, and the bourgeoisie in economic production, but that is precisely what was curtailed. Small- and medium-scale production was underrated. These producers were active in different spheres of the national economy but enjoyed no rights of any significance.

Nicaragua is an agrarian country, and peasants make up the bulk of its

population. According to the authors, the mistaken belief that land is not the foremost demand of the peasant gained currency in the first post-revolutionary years. Generally, the peasants were viewed as a backward and inefficient class (see pp. 274 and 275). The agrarian reform was launched late, and in some areas it did not proceed smoothly.

And now about the working class. One often hears that revolutionary change has many flaws in countries where the working class has not yet become socially strong. The authors of *A Difficult Transition* stress that the shaping of the working class in Nicaragua indeed "remains a major ideological, political, social and economic task" (p. 54). At the same time, they criticise Nicaraguan leaders for deliberately curtailing the rights of workers, for formal attitudes to the working masses. Inevitably, these shortcomings affected democracy.

The researchers also note a number of mistakes in the Sandinista's relations with the bourgeoisie. Many businessmen formed their own opinion of the frequent references (particularly frequent during the first years of the revolution) to 'stages' or 'phases' of development on the way to the ultimate goal of complete emancipation. These businessmen decided that the 'mixed economy' was merely a tactical stratagem of the SNLF, that they were to be exterminated and their property expropriated.

The researchers also identify other economic shortcomings — a bloated state apparatus, insufficient attention to the economic interests of different sections of the population, the domination of administration by fiat in the economy, and widespread bureaucratisation of the social fabric (see pp. 83, 266, 273, and 281).

Supporting the government's steps to improve the country's economy, the authors urge democratisation of the economic system as a whole. "The political plan of the Sandinistas," they say, "is to promote democracy in government, encourage pluralism, and recognise ideological differences within the framework of the national liberation project. These guidelines should be followed . . . not only in political relations but also in economic management per se" (p. 281).

I would like to conclude by mentioning another aspect. The authors of the study drew on the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, but also of Antonio Gramsci, Rosa Luxemburg, and Che Guevara. They used little-known works written by Soviet economic executives in the first years after the Revolution of October 1917. Besides, the study critically analyses Stalin's and Trotsky's concepts of socialism.

The Nicaraguan Revolution is advancing, and so are the Sandinistas. Constant quest is a form of their life and their struggle. They are looking for answers to the most complex problems. They find original solutions, they make mistakes and freely admit this, they welcome any constructive criticism which can benefit their people and peace in Nicaragua. The books reviewed in this article are evidence of this.

Natacha Smirnov

¹ Sergio Ramirez, a well-known writer, was one of the organisers in 1977 of the Group of 12, an anti-Somoza association of intellectuals, businessmen, and priests. In November 1984 he was elected Vice-President of Nicaragua on the SNLF ticket.



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